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**Report**

**External Review of**

**the IUCN/NORAD projects**

**Cam 033 and Cam 008,**

**July 1999**

**Prepared for NORAD and IUCN-ORMA**

by

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## **Preface**

This review is a combination of two tasks as catered for in project agreements between NORAD and the Mesoamerican Regional Office of the World Conservation Union (IUCN-ORMA): the final review of **CAM 008 Regional Wildlife Program for Central America** and the midterm review of **CAM 033 Wetlands and Coastal Zone Program**.

The review team consisted of four members. The team leader was selected by NORAD:

**Dr. Odd Terje Sandlund**, research director at the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA), freshwater biologist, who has participated in previous evaluations of projects funded by NORAD, as well as in the 1999 external review of IUCN.

Two team members were selected by IUCN-ORMA:

**Dr. Jorge A. Jimenez**, director of Organization of Tropical Studies (OTS), Costa Rica, biologist with expertise in coastal systems and wetlands management.

**Mr. Emilio Vargas**, sociologist, professor and researcher at the Wildlife Regional Program of the National University of Costa Rica.

As a trainee to gain experience in this type of work, NORAD and the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management (DN) selected an additional member, **Ms. Mari Lise Sjong**, development geographer, senior consultant at DN.

In addition to the standard elements in project reviews, the Terms of Reference asks for an assessment of options for future support to IUCN-ORMA from NORAD. Hence, a draft of the report is made available for a LFA-workshop on a possible future NORAD-supported program, held in August 1999.

On behalf of a hardworking and harmonious team, I hope that this report is a positive contribution to the important work on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Central America.

Trondheim, August 1999

**Odd Terje Sandlund**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General recommendations**

#### **ORMA should give priority to:**

- **influencing policies and decision makers,**
- **develop capacity in members and partners to strengthen the role of civil society at the local, national and regional level,**
- promotion of legislation and economic and environmental policies that create a favourable framework for local communities to use their biodiversity resources in a sustainable way,
- further develop their role as a broker and facilitator, bringing together institutions and organisations with different approach to and interests in the biodiversity management questions at hand.
- **adopt a holistic approach to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the equitable sharing of benefits from this use,**
- **concentrate field demonstration projects to a few bioregions or catchment areas where resources from many projects may be pooled to facilitate a truly holistic approach, and to include more aspects of sustainability.**

### **Program achievements**

#### **CAM 008 Regional Wildlife Program**

The first phase of the CAM 008 Regional Wildlife Program for Central America (1992-1994) emphasised the role of wildlife management in the local community economy, while the second phase (1994-1999) focused on a more integrated approach to community development through wildlife management. Technical assistance, training and demonstration projects were the major strategic components to reach the four original objectives:

- a) Provide technical assistance to rural communities to develop and implement wildlife management plans;
- b) Develop and implement model development projects based on the sustainable use of wildlife;
- c) Assist governments to provide technical extension services to rural communities to develop and implement plans for the sustainable use of wildlife;
- d) Advise governments on policies to facilitate rural community participation in projects involving the sustainable use of wildlife.

#### **This review concludes that:**

- **The program has played a relevant regional role during the decade, and is now able to show important results especially regarding the capacity of institutions and communities to move towards the complex goal of protecting and using biodiversity in sustainable and equitable ways.**
- **The program objectives and consistent outcomes have been increasingly relevant for government institutions in many Mesoamerican countries.**
- **Essential institutional capacity has been built in legal departments of wildlife-related government bodies. The participatory and holistic approach of the Program has led to important discussion and dissemination of the new legal perspectives, creating a multi-dimensional basis (i.e., biological, social, economical, political, legal, gender) for policy making.**
- **The impacts of Hurricane Mitch on Central America have reinforced on politicians and public opinion the need for adequate environmental management. This has, and rightly so, resulted in reorientation of priorities in the technical assistance and institutional-strengthening components of the project.**

## **CAM 033 Wetlands and Coastal Zone Program**

The CAM 033 Wetlands and Coastal Zone Program is a three-year (1997-1999) project with the overall goal to contribute to conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and coastal zones in Mesoamerica. The program follows on earlier NORAD-funded wetlands projects. The project should:

- support key governmental and non-governmental institutions in their efforts to conserve and manage wetland areas;
- develop and consolidate a network of specialists throughout the region;
- disseminate results from research;
- support development of strategies and management plans;
- develop practical examples of sustainable and local management; and
- contribute to the governments' fulfilment of their obligations in relation to international treaties.

### **This review concludes and recommends that:**

- Since the start of first wetlands project with NORAD support, all countries in the region have signed and/or ratified the Ramsar convention, providing a common legal framework for wetland management initiatives.
- A number of diverse initiatives have been launched throughout the region. These initiatives have received technical support from IUCN-ORMA, and have had a positive synergistic effect on the project implementation.
- **In the remaining months of the CAM 033 project, the Program staff should focus their efforts on fewer thematic and geographical areas, involving only those institutions and communities interacting within a prioritised set of geographical areas.**
- **The Wetland Program should continue to strengthen the National Working Groups and consider the support of these groups beyond the term of the present project. Further development of these groups will significantly improve wetland conservation capacity throughout the region.**

### **Impact and sustainability indicators**

Based on the observations in relation to Cam 008 and 033, the following impact/sustainability indicators may be proposed.

#### **Regional level:**

- **Regional or international agreements developed and signed or ratified.**
- **Regional collaborative policies developed and adopted.**
- **Regional network of experts established and active.**
- **Regional status of the natural resource in question stable or improved.**

#### **National level:**

- **National legislation developed, adopted and enforced.**
- **System of national reporting to international environmental conventions established and functioning.**
- **Policies on wetlands, wildlife, biodiversity and other environmental matters developed and adopted, based on best (scientific and traditional) knowledge.**
- **Structures for national support to local communities regarding management of natural resources established (e.g., extension services, legal definitions of rights and responsibilities, etc.).**
- **National status of the natural resource in question stable or improved.**

**Local level:**

- **Local community organisations established and active. Activities may be related to the project tasks or to other matters of relevance to the local community. (“Structural sustainability”).**
- **Local communities actively pursuing the project activities some years after the termination of external project input. (“Sustainable activity”).**
- **Local communities maintain and exercise their rights and obligations in relation to the local biodiversity resources.**
- **Management of biodiversity resources integrated into the general system for resources management at the local level.**
- **Project ideas and principles taken up, modified and adopted by local communities outside the project (“multiplier effect”).**
- **Participative process of evaluation involving local people and government representatives established.**
- **Local status of the natural resource in question stable or improved.**

**Future activities**

Based on our interviews and observations, we propose the following elements as important in the discussions towards a possible integrated program for NORAD support.

**Thematic areas**

Experiences from CAM 008 and 033 demonstrates that the ecosystem approach to biodiversity management should be a guiding principle, instead of the species-habitat approach.

- Ecosystem management is the priority in the new plans of GOs, along with finding solutions or alternatives for the people that live within or around the protected areas.
- Sustainable use is an important dimension of conservation and that conservation should be implemented in terms of the ecosystem approach and integrated rural development.
- IUCN-ORMA’s expertise in legal aspects of conservation and management of biodiversity is an important asset to be utilized in any future activity, as conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are urgently in need of appropriate legal frameworks, as are also the rights and obligations of local communities.
- The disastrous impacts of Hurricane Mitch shows the importance of sustainable catchment area management to reduce environmental risk.
- **Future programs should have a proper balance between ecological and social science matters, while strengthening community participation.**

**Operational matters**

- It is strongly recommended that IUCN-ORMA establish effective co-ordination among the thematic programs. Regardless of the compartmentalisation of the funding structure, the need for a holistic and integrated approach to biodiversity management necessitates co-ordination between Wildlife and Wetlands, as well as Social and Evaluation-Monitoring areas. One way to achieve this would be to organise monthly meetings between thematic area coordinators to create space for strategic discussions and to benefit from sharing experiences. Another (additional) action would be to organise annual workshops with ORMA staff and invited guests from government institutions, universities, Commissions and members.
- **It is recommended that IUCN-ORMA maintain an approach which means indirect involvement in field projects, and that their participation comes in the form of collaboration with partners and technical and educational support in activities consistent with the expertise of its personnel.**

- **IUCN-ORMA should be enabled to provide continued advice and technical/educational support to local and national GOs and NGOs, with the aim to service local community organisations.**
- **Contributions to projects from local communities, as voluntary labour or in funds, should, whenever possible, be recognised in IUCN financial reports.**
- **The contact and involvement of IUCN members and Commission members in the region should continue and be further developed and strengthened.**
- **The small incentives program (SIP) of CAM 033 is a format of support that should be maintained and strengthened. However, in a future integrated program, SIP should support a wider range of issues beyond research and education, but be more concentrated around a given project or geographic area. More flexibility in the size of grants may also be needed.**
- **We recommend the establishment and active use of a Technical Advisory Committee as an overseer of project performance.**
- **We recommend to maintain and strengthen interchanges between organisations and groups, with a focus on communities and technical programs working in or around geographic areas prioritised by the program.**
- **ORMA supervisory staff should receive training on project development, evaluation and monitoring.**
- **Development and maintenance of databases associated with biological, socio-economic and legal issues related to wetlands in the region should continue, and, if feasible, be extended to other ecosystems. The information should be made available through internet and periodic publications widely disseminated throughout the region.**
- **IUCN-ORMA should continue and strengthen their role as a contact point between regional or national NGOs and development agencies and international foundations, to assist in obtaining support for biodiversity-related projects..**

#### **Geographic and ecosystem considerations**

- **IUCN-ORMA should maintain a regional (Mesoamerican) focus for their programs.**
- **The field demonstration projects to be included in a integrated program should, however, be carefully selected. We recommend that field demonstration projects should be focused on fewer geographic sites and should be reoriented towards bioregional or catchment area management, concentrating the different actions (small incentives, institutional and organisational strengthening, training, information, etc) within a given number of areas or basins.**
- **IUCN-ORMA has a unique position in their ability to bring together different groups and institutions, also across national borders. Areas for field demonstration may therefore be bioregions or catchment areas (river basins) shared by two or more countries.**

#### **Time scale**

- **NORAD should consider entering a long-term programme or framework agreement with ORMA, alternatively to allow a separate budget line for staff time for strategic discussions in any project agreement with ORMA.**
- **NORAD and ORMA should develop agreements that allow for long-term (e.g., ten years) activities, although with the necessary monitoring and evaluation (e.g., every third year) to ensure corrective measures, if needed.**



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background for the review

This review concerns two different projects, CAM 033 and CAM 008, being implemented by the Mesoamerican regional office (ORMA) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) with funding from NORAD. The first IUCN programme for wetlands in Central America was started in 1988 with support from NORAD. In 1990 a Marine Coastal Programme was started. In 1997, NORAD approved funding of **CAM 033 Wetlands and Coastal Zone Program**, for 1997-1999. The first phase of **CAM 008 Regional Wildlife Program for Central America** received NORAD support from 1992 to 1994. The second phase started in 1995, and has been extended for one year to end in 1999.

According to the project agreements, CAM 033 should be subjected to an external mid-term review in early 1999, while a final project review should be undertaken for CAM 008 in 1999. It was later agreed to merge these two reviews. This will facilitate the work in progress to merge the two thematic areas into one program with possible NORAD-support. An important step in this process is an LFA-workshop to be held in August 1999, and the review report is intended to provide input to that workshop.

One additional aspect of the review was to assess IUCN-ORMA's cooperation with other actors (NGOs and GOs) in the environmental sector in the region, and the overall role and influence of ORMA in Mesoamerica. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the review are given in Annex 1.

### 1.2 Description of the projects

#### 1.2.1 CAM 008 Regional Wildlife Program for Central America

This eight-year program aims at creating institutional and community capacities in the Central American region regarding the planning and execution of wildlife management. The sustainable use of wildlife species was focused as a means to contribute to rural development and conservation of the species and their habitats. The first phase of the program (1992-1994) emphasised the role of wildlife management in the local community economy. The second phase (1994-1999) adjusted to the local realities and focused on a more integrated approach to community development through wildlife management, valuing also other social dimensions of possible impact, as participation, administration, gender issues and education. Technical assistance, training and demonstration projects, all through participatory methods, were the major strategic components to reach the four original objectives:

- e) Providing technical assistance to rural communities to develop and implement wildlife management plans;
- f) Developing and implementing model development projects based on the sustainable use of wildlife;
- g) Assisting governments to provide technical extension services to rural communities to develop and implement plans for the sustainable use of wildlife;
- h) Advising governments on policies to facilitate rural community participation in projects involving the sustainable use of wildlife.

Program activities were carried out in all the Central American countries, except Honduras, with different emphasis in time, budget and type of outcomes. The most relevant demonstration projects, in terms of integration of program objectives, were carried out in Jocotal (El Salvador), Cosigüina (Nicaragua) and Isla de Cañas (Panama). The program has produced a series of reports and publications, which document the most important aspects regarding limitations and results (see Annex 4).

### 1.2.2 CAM 033 Wetlands and Coastal Zone Program

This is a three-year (1997-1999) project with a total budget of USD 985,659. The overall goal is to contribute to conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and coastal zones in Mesoamerica. For this purpose the project should:

- support key governmental and non-governmental institutions in their efforts to conserve and manage wetland areas;
- develop and consolidate a network of specialists throughout the region;
- disseminate results from research;
- support development of strategies and management plans;
- develop practical examples of sustainable and local management; and
- contribute to the governments' fulfilment of their obligations in relation to international treaties.

Program activities have been carried out in all Central American countries. The program is described in more detail in documents and reports given in Annex 4.

### 1.3 Methodology of the review

The general objective of this review was to understand the level of achievement in both programs (CAM 008 and 033) in relation to the original objectives, and to look at specific opportunities to improve IUCN performance towards the future in relation to wildlife and wetlands. The impact of both programs on conservation and sustainable development was specifically assessed. Following the *"Handbook for Evaluators and Managers"*, published by NORAD (November 1993), the review focused on five main components: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

A combination of methods and sources of information were used in order to gather and interpret the relevant facts:

- a) Review of suggested review itinerary provided by IUCN-ORMA (Annex 2).
- b) Review of relevant documents from both programs, i.e.: project proposals, external evaluations, annual and semi-annual reports and formal publications.
- c) Extensive exchange with IUCN-ORMA Regional Director, thematic area and program co-ordinators and working teams.
- d) Individual or group, semi-structured interviews with 50 representatives of main parties involved in both thematic areas in four countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama and Nicaragua (list of interviewees in Annex 3).
- e) Review Team meetings to discuss and exchange preliminary conclusions and recommendations after each country visit.
- f) Direct observation and interviews at two field sites: Isla de Cañas in Panama (CAM 008 Field Demonstration Project), and the South-eastern part of Lake Nicaragua (Archipelago of Solentiname, Guatuzos and San Miguelito) for CAM 033 field activities.
- g) Drafting of the Review Report the last two days of the Mission, and debriefing with NORAD's representative and ORMA's two program coordinators and membership coordinator, providing the main conclusions and recommendations.

The limitations of this review mission derive mostly from the short time available (12 days). The report is mainly based on written and oral information, and much less on fieldwork at project sites. The team visited only two out of many possible sites. However, 70 people, including representatives from IUCN (7), government agencies (15), non-governmental organisations (25) and local community leaders (20) were interviewed. During field work, the team to some extent divided tasks among themselves. Dr. Jimenez paid special attention to the CAM 033 project, while Mr. Vargas focussed on CAM008. Nevertheless, the whole team participated in all meetings, and discussed and prepared an integrated review report.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

The report follows the recommended report outline in NORAD's "Handbook for Evaluators and Managers", with each of the main chapters containing two parts to cater for the two projects. Recommendations and conclusions of a general nature, and those pointing towards a possible merged "biodiversity conservation and sustainable use" program have been given a general heading. There is also a chapter discussing the role and impact of IUCN-ORMA in the region, in relation to the recent external review of IUCN at the global level (Bruszt et al. 1999).

## 2. Project relevance

### 2.1 CAM 008 Wildlife

#### 2.1.1 Rationale and context of project at its inception

CAM 008 started its field demonstration projects and related activities in 1992. The first proposal aimed at contributing to economic development of rural communities, and to conservation through management of wildlife, in accordance with IUCN's mission. In the early 90's the Central American countries showed little or no progress regarding wildlife management and its necessary institutional framework, neither at the local, regional nor national level. On the other hand, the trend of habitat alteration continued at a solid pace, threatening the future of several species and local economies and livelihoods. Few human resources in governments had been trained to respond to this situation, wildlife conservation and management did not have a clear legal status, and there were no strong community projects to show the potential and relevance of community management in terms of economic and ecological benefits.

At its inception, CAM 008 foresaw this potential and gave a clear focus to the activities in two fields of action:

- a) supporting and building capacity at the community level in order to develop, organise and consolidate wildlife management plans, which in the near future would contribute to the local economies, as examples with multiplying effects, and as relevant contributions to conservation of the species and their habitats; and
- b) developing technical and legal capacity in GOs and NGOs, which would be in charge of the implementation of field demonstration projects, along with local community people or organisations.

Technical Assistance and Training were instrumental for achieving those objectives.

The CAM 008 co-ordinator, technicians and administrative personnel, as a team, are deeply committed to this set of relevant objectives. They have participated as facilitators, trainers and self-evaluators during the process, creating favourable conditions for the involvement of different parties in demonstration projects and related activities.

#### 2.1.2 Changes in project context during implementation

It became apparent, by the end of CAM 008's first phase, that there was not such a clear link between **economic** development of communities and wildlife management plans. The mid-term review report found the program objectives to be "too ambitious or naive" in terms of project planning. The idealism with which the program started had to adjust to the real conditions. In itself, the contribution of wildlife management to economic development of rural communities is very limited. Consequently, the scope of the project changed. Development at the local level was then understood not only related to the **economic** dimension but also with the **organisational and educational** aspects, including **equity** between members of the communities and between genders.

These aspects were emphasised in the second phase of the program. Budgets for Demonstration Projects were reinforced (increasing from USD 10,000 to 20,000), to increase impact.

The broader “bio-political” context also changed. New ideas on conservation strategies emerged in mainstream policies after the Rio de Janeiro 1992 Summit. IUCN as a global Union played a significant role in this process. The “wildlife” concept was soon absorbed and, to some extent, “outdated” by the “biodiversity” concept.

The relevant progress showed by the program – recognised by both previous external reviews – were adjusted to the new principles for biodiversity and ecosystem management, giving the program a new context from the mid 90’s. This was particularly the case in Costa Rica, where the ORMA wildlife team was involved in the drafting and national debate on the new Biodiversity Law. In 1999, when both decade and program end, this change in context influences the future options and scope for the continuation of IUCN’s efforts regarding wildlife conservation and sustainable use.

**Nevertheless, this review concludes that the program has adapted to those changes in scope and context, and played a relevant regional role during the decade. The program is now able to show important outcomes, which represent meaningful steps, especially in the institutional and community capacities to move towards the complex goal of protecting and using biodiversity in sustainable and equitable ways.**

### **2.1.3 Relevance of project in relation to partner country priorities**

Protection and sustainable use of ecosystems are in a general sense national, regional and local priorities of government ministries or agencies related to environment in the countries visited. ANAM of Panama, MINAE of Costa Rica, MARN of El Salvador, and MARENA of Nicaragua all coincide in defining protection and sustainable use of biodiversity as top priorities in their agendas. **The program objectives and consistent outcomes have been relevant for these government institutions.**

However, the mission also found that government officials look at the environment with somewhat differing emphasis or scope. **Ecosystem management, instead of the species-habitat approach, seems to be the priority in the new plans, along with finding solutions or alternatives for the people that live within or around the protected areas.** Interviews with government officials emphasised the need for economic and socio-economic studies, which would complement the biological research. Some of the NGOs and community representatives stressed the same point. **In general, the country parties interviewed agreed that sustainable use is an important dimension of conservation and that conservation should be approached in terms of the ecosystem approach and integrated rural development.**

Although the program has had a consistent emphasis on sustainable use for conservation, IUCN, in general, is still perceived, by some interviewees, as emphasising conservation instead of sustainable use.

## **2.2 CAM 033 Wetlands**

### **2.2.1 Rationale and context of project at its inception**

The Central American region is characterised by a high diversity of wetland and coastal habitats with over 100 of them of international importance. The region had up to very recently, however, shown very little awareness regarding wetland conservation and management issues. A very small

body of persons and institutions has been addressing these issues and most of their activities have been done isolated from similar activities in the region. Local and national institutions have low competence and capacity for wetland management. Throughout the region, technical information and an adequate legal framework for wetland management is scarce. Specific international treaties, such as the Ramsar Convention, had not at the inception of the first wetlands project been signed by all countries in the region.

In this framework the IUCN-ORMA decided to re-launch its Wetland Program with the goal of developing local and regional capacity for the sustainable management of wetland areas.

### **2.2.2 Changes in project context during implementation**

The most important contextual changes during the project implementation has been:

- The signature and ratification of the Ramsar convention by all countries in the region, providing a common legal framework for wetland management initiatives.
- A number of diverse initiatives have been launched throughout the region, e.g., a regional training centre in Costa Rica; the program “Wetlands for the Future” by the U.S. Wildlife Service and the Ramsar Bureau; the Central American Commission on Environment and Development’s projects on coastal management; the European Union supported project on mangroves of Guatemala; etc. All these initiatives have in a synergistic way helped the project implementation.
- The impact of Hurricane Mitch on Central America, which reinforce on politicians and public opinion the need for adequate environmental management, have resulted in reorientation of priorities in the technical assistance and institutional-strengthening components of the project.
- Staff changes within the Program has resulted in the selection of a new Program co-ordinator which resulted in a transition period where some activities were delayed.

### **2.2.3 Relevance of project in relation to partner countries’ priorities**

All countries throughout the region are signatories or parties to the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, indicating strong interest to properly manage and conserve these ecosystems. Some countries, e.g., Costa Rica and Guatemala, are in the process of approving specific legislation for the conservation and management of wetland areas. Around 8% of the region’s land surface is covered by wetland ecosystems and the role of these ecosystems in supporting commercial and artisanal fisheries and wildlife populations is widely recognised by most government agencies.

### **2.3 Relevance of the projects in relation to donor priorities**

The major priorities and strategies of Norwegian development co-operation in the environmental sector for the period 1997 – 2005 are outlined as follows:

- Development of sustainable production systems
- Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity
- Reduced pollution of soil, air and water
- Preservation of cultural heritage and management of the natural environment’s cultural values

Norwegian development assistance should therefore aim at, e.g., the following actions:

- Develop recipient countries’ personal and institutional competence and capacity to actively take part in international negotiations and global processes.
- Support efforts to implement international environmental commitments and other environmental priorities.
- Promote integrated environmental management.

- Promote local community participation and the role of women in environmental and natural resource management.
- Focus on the sustainable use of natural resources and biological diversity instead of classical protection.
- Support pilot projects that may demonstrate the relationship between ecologically sound management of natural resources and increase in the population's welfare.

Both CAM 008 and CAM 033 are consequently extremely well in line with Norwegian priorities in development assistance.

### 3. Efficiency

#### 3.1 CAM 008 Wildlife

##### 3.1.1 Progress compared to plans

Cam 008 has been able to focus on its original objectives, which were kept in a consistent manner through the years: to promote sustainable use of wild resources; to advise governments and NGO's regarding wildlife management initiatives; and to facilitate the implementation of demonstration projects. Most of the projects worked well along these lines, and only three out of ten projects had to be terminated because the involved government agencies did not show capacity to respond properly or to report on expenditures. Two of those projects failed in the past, one in Costa Rica (Caño Negro) and another in Nicaragua (Los Guatuzos), both related to caiman populations in the border between these countries. One important reason for the successful performance of most of the projects was that budget adjustments were done on a timely manner, following recommendations by external evaluations. Most of the projects increased their individual budget allocations (from USD 10,000 to 20,000) in order to maximise their potential and be able to reach the phase of sustainability towards the end of the project.

The first mid-term review (1992-1994) emphasized the fact that the project had a "*too short time frame, too low financial base and too ambitious objectives*" (Wegge 1994, 14). Such combination was not likely to succeed in the long term. After this evaluation, the time and financial terms of the project were revised and adjusted, and the objectives changed in scope, maintaining their original essential definition. The second mid-term review (1994-1996) found that each field demonstration project had progressed in meaningful terms at different levels (Wegge & Smith, 1997, 23), and recommended to focus on a list of tangible outcomes or benefits to be reached by the Program with the communities. This review team found that the Program progressed according to the general plans for the period 1997 to mid-1999, regarding technical advice to governments (including legal advice), technical assistance to government and non-government extension services and supporting the field demonstration projects (see point 4.1.2 below).

The Program continued its practice of elaborating annual operating plans that take into consideration the mid-term evaluation recommendations. Each annual plan specifies objectives, activities, goals, expected outcomes, strategy, indicators, budget and responsibilities.

The large majority of specific recommendations has been addressed by the Wildlife Program team. The project visited in Isla de Cañas, and also Cosigüina and El Jocotal, show a good level of achievement in terms of moving towards sustainability. The main limitations (poverty and related issues, e.g. wildlife trafficking), is outside the Program's control.

### 3.1.2 Costs and utilization of resources compared to budgets and plans

The Program worked according to the annual operating plan, which included the breakdown of anticipated budget for each activity. Financial reports provided by the Program describe in detail all the costs in the field demonstration projects. Revision of this information reveals that the Program spent the budget according to plan. The following table shows the budget distribution between IUCN-ORMA and the field demonstration projects and other related country activities. ORMA retained about 70% of the budget for staff salaries, administration and extension services (USD 755,297), while the field project activities, carried out in each country (including the coordination cost) represented 30% (USD 305,033). The percentage of budget not spent each year was higher for the field projects than for the overall budget. Some of the budget lines of ORMA, like “regional coordination”, “educational materials” and “legal, social and economic consultants” indicate activities with direct impact on field projects.

*Table 3.1 CAM 008 Wildlife Program budget (USD) by year (1994-1998), according to expenditures in ORMA and in the field and percentage of annual budget not spent. Data are from IUCN-ORMA's Financial Reports.*

YEAR	ORMA		COUNTRY ACTIVITIES			TOTAL	
	spent	percentage	spent	percentage	not spent (%)	spent	not spent (%)
1994	102,144	68,5	47,000	31,5	6,9	149,144	1,7
1995	157,836	67,9	74,709	32,1	12,1	232,545	3,0
1996	161,071	70,5	67.263	29,5	12,1	228,334	4,8
1997	189,692	72,9	70,612	27,1	10,3	260,304	1,9
1998	144,554	76,1	45,449	24,9	3,2	190,003	5,4
TOTAL	755,297	71,2	305,033	29,0	8,9	1,060,330	3,4

### 3.1.3 Achievement of results

According to the information presented in the next section of this report (4. Effectiveness) the results of CAM 008 are satisfactory. This Review Team does not have any extensive knowledge about similar projects in the region. However, we would like to point out that CAM 008 has achieved incomparably better results than the Iguana Verde project, which received significant NORAD-support in 1991-96 (Sandlund et al. 1993, 1996). It is clear that CAM achievements are, in general, satisfactory in relation to inputs. However, we provide some recommendations to achieve further improvements in chapter 8 of this report.

### 3.1.4 Results in relation to resource utilisation

This Review Team did not find any indicators of misuse of funds within the Program, except for the two field projects that were soon terminated in Costa Rica and Nicaragua (see Table 4.1). Those funds were not recovered. Available human and financial resources from the Program, governments and communities seem to be consistent with the outcomes of the Program. It should be kept in mind that communities provide non-reported human resources (particularly unpaid labour by men and women) which are important for any project success.

## 3.2 CAM 033 Wetlands

### 3.2.1 Project progress compared to plans

The working plans of the project are over-ambitious, in the sense that there are too many activities and a lack of prioritisation within each major program component. Nevertheless, a significant number of important activities have been conducted within each component. An overall appraisal of progress in each component may be summarised as follows:

Component	Progress
Technical Assistance to Organizations	Good
Regional Network of Experts	Good
Information Dissemination in the region	Good
Support for National Strategies and Management Plans	Slow
Examples of Sustainable Management	Very Slow
Policy/Legislation Development	Slow
Support for International Treaties	Good

### 3.2.2 Costs and utilization of resources compared to budgets and plans

Up to May 1999 the project had spent a total of USD 545,263 (about 55% of the total budget). Out of this, 32.3% has been utilised to cover salaries (excluding the salary of the co-ordinator of the documentation center). This percentage is above the 26.7% originally budgeted. Other components also show expenses above budget, for example travel (7.14% vs. 6.1%), and office expenses (8.6% vs. 4.7%). Expenses dedicated to project activities total USD 214,164, which represents 39.2% of the total expenses. This is 7.8% less than the budgeted amount. Overall budget execution, therefore, follows the proposed budget, whereas individual components depart from the budget. More than 50% of the executed budget has been used to cover expenses in ORMA's office with only 39.2% actually invested in project activities.

### 3.2.3 Achievement of results

In general terms most of the expected results have to some degree been achieved. Important results are, e.g., the establishment of a regional network of specialists, wetland working groups in each country, an adequate training program, and an incipient information system on wetland issues. Less than satisfactory results have been achieved in the demonstration project component. Results in this type of activities may, however, demand a more long-term operation than two years.

### 3.2.4 Results in relation to resource utilisation

The activity that has consumed more resources (USD 98,974), up to date has been the information dissemination component, which includes the wetlands documentation center. While important results have been achieved in this area, results do not correspond to the amount of resources utilised up to date. Scarce dissemination throughout the region, together with little results in the "Tool-Box" component of this system are the main limitations.



## 4. Effectiveness

### 4.1 CAM 008 Wildlife

#### 4.1.1 Expected achievement of objectives when the project was designed

The Program was expected to provide technical assistance on wildlife management to rural communities, to develop and implement model development projects, to assist governments in providing extension services to rural communities and to advise governments on policy making related to wildlife. All these objectives aimed at the goal of sustainable use and conservation of wildlife species and their habitats, through participatory methods. The Program maintained this set of objectives during the eight-year period, making important adjustments in the emphasis of individual projects, according to national, regional and local conditions.

#### 4.1.2 Actual achievement of objectives at time of evaluation

The following were achieved in relation to the five objectives listed in paragraph 4.1.1:

1. The Program provided technical assistance to the demonstration projects on a regular basis. This was done in different ways and covering different areas of knowledge and expertise. The Program hired national biology consultants for Cosigüina (Fernando Esquivel) and Jocotal (Manuel Benitez), under supervision of the coordinator at ORMA. Isla de Canas received technical assistance from Lyneth Cordoba, a member of ANAM staff, who worked permanently in the Wildlife Refuge. The permanent presence of the biologists from the beginning was clearly important to the Program objectives. Other consultants from different Central American countries were also in charge of specific tasks. One example is the economic evaluations of the field demonstration projects mentioned above. The economist Victor Salazar (Funproteca), assessed the projects in Cosigüina and Isla de Cañas. Technical assistance was also directly provided by the Program team, e.g., in relation to participatory methodologies, organisation of workshops, conflict resolution, and processing and writing-up of project experiences.
2. Model development projects were developed and implemented in most of the countries (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Summary of the projects established by the Program and some of the relevant facts related to outcomes and limitations.

Country	Period	Project	Observations
Nicaragua	1992-1994	Rural community development through wildlife use in Refugio Los Guatuzos and Delta del San Juan	The project was terminated after two years of experience. MARENA did not have response capacity, and did not provide reports on expenditures.
Nicaragua	1992-1999	Green and black iguanas management under semi-intensive conditions in Cosigüina.	The project met most of the objectives regarding technical assistance, training and community participation. Economic significance is very limited and trafficking of wildlife (i.e. the iguanas) constitutes a serious threat to sustainability.

Nicaragua	1998-1999 (?)	Paca breeding in Los Guatuzos Refuge	The Wildlife Program supported this Swiss-funded project through ANCON, which trained seven FUNDEVERDE farmers and provided the initial breeding stock of young animals.
Panama	1992-1994	Extension services for sustainable use of wildlife in Panama	ANAM and the Program developed a meaningful co-operation relationship from which both benefited at different levels. ANAM's technicians participated actively in training activities.
Panama	1992-1999	Marine turtle egg management in Isla de Cañas Wildlife Refuge	The project met most of the objectives regarding technical assistance, training and community participation. Economic significance is limited but with better perspective through tourism and general Refuge Management Plan. Biological data needs to be processed in order to assess ecological impact of project, and to provide feedback to the local community that collects the data.
Panama	1993-1995 (?)	Captive breeding of the green iguana in Cabuya.	In 1996 (?), after the Program suspended activities in this project, ANAM continued providing technical assistance. The community in 1999 still works breeding iguanas for release into the wild.
Panama	1992-1999	Captive breeding of paca in Aguas Claras.	Technology has been improved, economic studies finished and educational materials distributed. Some limitations: high initial investment, lack of co-ordination with community organisations and no data available on past and present hunting pressure on paca.
Guatemala	1992-1994	Management of wildlife for economic development in the Peten, Guatemala	This project was handed over to ARCAS, as recommended by the first mid-term evaluation. Recent visits to the project area in 1998 show continuation of project activities.
Costa Rica	1992-1994	Caiman management in Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge.	The project was terminated after a year of experience. MINAE did not have response capacity and did not present reports on expenditures. Preliminary data on caiman populations were collected by the project.
Costa Rica	1996-1999	Resolution of a conflict: Conserving the habitat of the green macaw in Costa Rica.	The project has been successful so far. Opposed parties met at the negotiation table, accepting Program mediation. Uncertainty regarding the State Incentives Program's ability to conserve the habitat is an important threat to sustainability.

El Salvador	1994-1999	Management of the whistling duck in Jocotal Lagoon Refuge.	The project has been successful regarding the whistling duck management, but communities need a wider range of options. Conflicts between parties arise partly due to lack of co-ordination between IUCN's wetlands and wildlife Programs. New promising perspectives are associated with the effort to develop a management plan for the Refuge. Conflict resolution abilities are essential in this work. The wildlife Program has expertise in conflict resolution and could play an important role; however, it seems that the wildlife Program team will be left out of the process (this needs further investigation).
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3. The Program has developed a series of training and capacity-building activities related to wildlife management. Workshops and technical exchanges have been organised through the eight-year period. Technicians from government institutions and community leaders have participated in educational trips to learn from other model projects. Technicians interviewed by the review team recognised the great value of access to technical information provided by the wildlife Program. Officers of ANAM agree that the institution has been strengthened by the contribution of the Program through training and technical assistance, and that the activities of the Wildlife Management Component could not be carried out without IUCN support, despite its small financial contribution.
4. The Program has worked systematically in policy formulation, contributing to create consciousness and legal frameworks supportive to sustainable use and conservation of wildlife at the regional, national and local levels.
  - At the regional level, legal advice was provided to the Central American Commission of Environment and Development (CCAD) and to the Central American Interparliamentary Commission of Environment and Development (CICAD). Some relevant publications were produced by the Program: *State of the Environment and the Natural Resources (1998)*, *Lists of Fauna of Importance for Conservation in Central America and Mexico (1999)*, *A Necessary Encounter: the Management of Wildlife and its Juridical Regulations. A Central American Diagnosis*, and a popular education text: *Convention on Biological Diversity: A Text for All*. The Program also supported development of the positions of the Central American countries in the Conference of the Parties of the Biological Diversity Convention (1998).
  - At the national level, the Wildlife Program influenced six Central American countries. In **Panama** the Program participated in the process of developing the Wildlife Conservation Law and its regulations, in the formulation of the Wildlife National Plan and in the juridical and institutional analysis of biodiversity. In **Costa Rica** the Program participated actively in three relevant initiatives: Wildlife Conservation Law, Biodiversity Law and the State of the Nation Report. In **Nicaragua** the advice has covered two related activities: Legal Framework for the Biodiversity Conservation Project and the juridical and institutional analysis of biodiversity. In **El Salvador** the Program supported the development of regulations for the Wildlife Conservation Law. In **Guatemala** it helped to assess the Law for Hunting and in **Belize** the Program participated in a diagnosis about wildlife legislation and institutional framework.
  - At the local level two activities are mentioned: advisory services to the whistling duck management project in El Salvador and consultation of the cinegetic calendar in Uaxactun, Guatemala.

**These experiences have helped to build institutional capacities in the legal departments of wildlife-related government bodies. The participatory and holistic approach of the Program has led to important dissemination and discussion of the new legal information and perspectives in different parties, having a multi-dimensional context (biological, social, economical, political, legal, gender) as a base for policy making. IUCN-ORMA has clearly stressed through the Wildlife Program its expertise in legal aspects of conservation and management of biodiversity. This is an important asset to be strengthened toward the future as conservation and sustainable use is urgently in need of appropriate legal frameworks.**

#### **4.1.3 Factors and processes affecting achievement of objectives**

Some factors, both external and internal to IUCN, have inhibited the Wildlife Program potential. Impact of flooding, drought and hurricanes have posed serious threats to some of the model projects. Adverse social conditions have also played a role in trafficking of wildlife, undermining the ecological impact of some of the projects. These factors are outside the control of the Wildlife Program. In the case of Cosigüina, the community has created an important expertise in breeding green and black iguanas, but as the trafficking still represents an important source of income – even for some of the project beneficiaries – the risk of losing the investment is high. However, the emphasis of the project on participatory methods and building organisational and technical capacities in the community has proved to be a key asset in order to react, efficiently, to adverse weather conditions, as demonstrated recently in local community response after Hurricane Mitch.

Several internal factors in IUCN-ORMA have affected to different degrees the Program performance. It appears that administrative procedures could be improved in terms of efficiency and planning inside the Regional Office. The relationship between members, Commissions and secretariat also give room for improvement.

## **4.2 CAM 033 Wetlands**

### **4.2.1 Expected achievement of objectives when the project was designed**

Main expected results at the moment of proposal design were:

***The establishment of a regional network of specialists in the field***

Establishment of a communication system for information exchange

Promotion of research programs in different institutions

Development and promotion of demonstrative projects

Support for international treaties

The proposal does not provide a detailed timetable for the expected achievement of these results.

### **4.2.2. Actual or expected achievement of objectives at the time of the review**

Through the most recent program working plans available to the review team, the following assessment of the achievement of results may be made. While the program has produced significant achievements in the networking, communication system, and support for the components related to implementation and follow-up of treaties (objectives 1, 2, and 5 above), the achievements in components 3 and 4 are restricted. This partly reflects an underestimation of the complexity of these tasks at the proposal stage.

### **4.2.3. Factors and processes affecting achievement of objectives**

Program activities have included a wide array of tasks, institutions, and geographical areas. This dispersed approach has resulted in a clear dilution of efforts by the program staff, which to some

extent has made it more difficult to reach the project objectives. The progress of the demonstration project, and research promotion components are to a large extent dependent on the work of other implementing agencies and the priorities of other funding agencies. Together with the changes in program staff, this has affected the implementation of these objectives. In a more general venue, the short funding cycle of the program limits the adequate development of the demonstrative projects. Community development projects usually require several years to achieve significant results.

## **5. Impact of the projects**

### **5.1 CAM 008 Wildlife**

#### **5.1.1 Local priorities, needs and demands**

The design and implementation of the different projects within the Wildlife Program had the direct input and feedback of national and local institutions. The participatory approach, carried out in a consistent manner by the program through the years, guaranteed the necessary adjustments to the local priorities, regarding the scope of the program. Through the interviews and field observations, the Review Mission confirmed that one important outcome of the program was its capacity to adapt to the changes in context and find appropriate actions according to new situations.

#### **5.1.2 Foreseen and unforeseen impacts on target groups and other affected parties**

National and local demands on training, technical assistance, legal advice, access to relevant information, advice on participatory methodologies, access to some equipment and revolving funds were met. Some other parties, not directly involved in the program, have also benefited from the program outcomes. Researchers, educators and policy makers in the field of conservation and sustainable use of resources in the different countries find in the Program's staff and publications a useful set of trained resources and carefully edited materials that can support their work. The Program Staff has been asked several times for technical support by several institutions.

#### **5.1.3 Foreseen and unforeseen impacts at the institutional level**

Impacts at the institutional level includes:

- Developing organizational capacities at the community level, including the creation of a context for increased self-esteem and environmental consciousness in local women and men directly involved in the project.
- Strengthening institutional capacities in the wildlife related GO offices and NGOs, including the technical training of a group of wildlife specialists from the different countries which becomes part of the "critical mass" of competence needed for future programs.
- Implementing a participatory methodology in a creative manner, and making a special effort to document the different phases, so that others can also learn from the program experiences.
- An important set of publications, in which two types of documents are especially relevant: the critical summaries of the field demonstration project experiences and the reports on legal matters regarding wildlife in Central America.

The multiplying effect, and other important impacts, are detailed in the Conclusion section. See also the section on Sustainability.

#### **5.1.4 Other major impacts of the project**

These impacts can be explained by a series of related events: a) the stability of the basic technical staff (coordinator, social expert, legal expert) through the years, b) the concern of the staff on

methodological matters, especially in regard to the critical know-how of the participatory methodologies, c) the effort to implement in the field, in a creative but responsible ways, the theoretical background discussed on community participation in wildlife-habitat management, d) the indispensable financial support from NORAD, e) the practice of working out annual operating plans which followed up on mid-term external reviews, f) the capacity to focus on the objectives of the project and the IUCN Mission statement and, *last but not least*, g) the local community ability to find relevant human and financial resources to contribute to the project objectives without refunding.

## **5.2 CAM 033 Wetlands**

### **5.2.1 Local priorities, needs and demands**

Achievement of the objectives of the project may satisfy needs and demands of local and national institutions. The training and institutional strengthening components are of great relevance. The impact of these two components has been important and greatly appreciated by all the target institutions. It is our opinion that this impact could have been greater if a more focused approach had been followed during project implementation. E.g., a lower number of institutions might have received more continuous support. This would provide a more permanent impact.

### **5.2.2 Foreseen and unforeseen impacts on target groups and other affected parties**

A substantial improvement of national and institutional capacity throughout the region has occurred as a result of the project activities. The establishment of national networks and working groups results in positive synergetic effects. Many of them were not foreseen, such as the development of other related projects, such as the “Mangroves of the Pacific coast of Guatemala”; the establishment of a wetland training center in Costa Rica; and a proposed Regional Ramsar Center in Panama. Importantly, the project has influenced the development of national legislation in, e.g., Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Guatemala, and the ratification of the Ramsar Convention by all countries of the region.

### **5.2.3 Foreseen and unforeseen impacts at the institutional level**

The subject of wetland conservation and management has increased its relevance and status among institutions in the region, largely due to the information and training supplied by the project. Working through state agencies such ANAM in Panama, MARENA in Nicaragua, and MARN in El Salvador, the project has strengthened the government capacity to conserve and manage wetland areas.

### **5.2.4 Factors and processes that explain project impacts**

The issue of wetland conservation and management is being pursued by several institutions throughout the region (e.g., USFWS, CATIE, PRMVS, PROARCAS). The synergetic effect of these varied activities has contributed to the positive impact of the Cam 033 project activities. The institutional needs for training and information on wetlands issues has proved fertile ground for the project. The regional infrastructure of IUCN provides an ideal platform for project implementation.

## **6. Sustainability**

### **6.1 General comments**

Both the wildlife (CAM 008) and the wetlands project (CAM 033) have worked on the regional, national and local levels. Sustainability is a difficult parameter to measure, and the impacts at the various levels are widely different. At the national level, development and adoption of laws and policies related to biodiversity, wetlands and wildlife management as a result of ORMA's promotion of principles and ideas, and input of a technical nature, are sustainable and concrete impacts.

At the regional level, ORMA has been an active and to some degree an indispensable factor in the development of various initiatives, such as the Mesoamerican Biodiversity Corridor, and input to CCAD in relation to regional environmental agreements and activities. Since the first NORAD-supported wetlands project started approximately eight years ago, all Mesoamerican countries have ratified the Ramsar Convention.

At the local level, community organisations have been developed to implement management schemes for local resources. The local field projects of the wildlife project may not in any particular case turn out to be a sustainable activity in a strict economic sense. However, more importantly, they serve as focal points for awareness raising and environmental education, and they serve to develop and solidify local community structures and organisations that enable the community to tackle other challenges and tasks. The cases of Cosigüina and Jocotal communities being able to react quickly and adequately to the effects of Hurricane Mitch is a good example of this.

In some cases, e.g. Jeten in Guatemala, the fact that the activities related to wildlife are still going on two years after the finalisation of project involvement and support indicates that the original activity will also be sustained if the community perceives it as socio-economically viable.

### **6.2 CAM 008 Wildlife**

#### **6.2.1 The extent to which the project is or will become sustainable**

Long term involvement, as a precondition to reach sustainability, has already occurred in the Wildlife Program in most of the demonstration projects and advice activities. After 8 1/2 years, community organizations, GO offices and NGOs have developed, to some extent, the needed capacities to make significant moves towards sustainability. It is apparent that ANAM-Panamá has been strengthened by its relationship with the Program, and so have community structures and organizations in Cosigüina, Isla de Cañas, Jocotal and Sarapiquí. These organizations are able to carry out field demonstration projects on their own; they have the technical know-how regarding the management of the species in question. The project in Uaxactun, El Petén, Guatemala, is still functioning four years after the Program left. The iguana project in Cabuya, Panama, is also still working with ANAM's and community support. However, sustainability is affected by important external factors, mainly regarding market conditions and availability of some related financial resources.

#### **6.2.2 Factors affecting sustainability**

Markets for wildlife products, and other economic factors in the Central American countries, are difficult to measure, control and predict. Economic studies were carried out in each project, following a relevant recommendation from the mid-term review. These studies reveal that paca management still faces serious difficulties; that iguana trafficking threatens the Cosigüina project;

and that the olive turtle management should be complemented by tourism activities in Isla de Cañas in order to reach a better sustainability status, and a similar situation occurs in Jocotal.

Wildlife management does not provide the communities with a reliable economic, long-term alternative. It is also apparent, that the future conservation perspectives of green macaw in Costa Rica largely depend on the government program of incentives for forest protection. Many of these factors are outside the Program's sphere of influence, and call for a more integrated approach in which ecosystems and biodiversity, rather than species-habitat, are managed to provide other alternatives for people to survive and improve their living and environmental conditions. A relevant contribution of the Program in this direction is the strengthening of national and local institutional and organizational capacities, and the support for relevant national policies.

### **6.3 CAM 033 Wetlands**

#### **6.3.1 The extent to which the project is or will become sustainable**

Most activities in projects of this type demand long term involvement to reach sustainable results. Objectives such as the establishment of working groups, regional networks and demonstrative projects will demand continued support beyond the life of the present project if sustainability is to be achieved. While some national networks, which have benefited by previous or parallel efforts, will be able to survive project termination, in other countries there is a high risk of these networks disappearing after the project ends. **Both ORMA and NORAD should explore ways to provide continuation to these activities if sustainability is to be achieved.**

#### **6.3.2. Factors affecting sustainability**

Consolidation of working groups and national networks, as well as the impacts of training activities, institutional awareness development and the sustainability of demonstration projects will demand several years continued activity at a minimum level to reach sustainability. The consolidation of a critical mass of trained and motivated government officials, researchers and community leaders will require a long-term continued support. Staff changes in the target institutions and change of leaders in the communities involved will demand continued efforts until the critical mass of competence has been formed.

#### **6.3.3 Future of the project**

In the remaining months of the project, the Program staff should focus their efforts on fewer thematic and geographical areas, involving only those institutions and communities interacting within a prioritised set of geographical areas.

Because of the nature of the activities pursued by this project, there is a need for the Wetlands Program to continue along these lines in the upcoming years. Launching other initiatives, such as the freshwater and fisheries initiatives, would be detrimental to the activities so far pursued, unless significant human and financial resources are added to the Program.

### **6.4 Indicators for impact and sustainability**

Based on the observations in relation to Cam 008 and 033, the following impact/sustainability indicators may be proposed.

#### **Regional level:**

- Regional or international agreements developed and signed or ratified.
- Regional collaborative policies developed and adopted.
- Regional network of experts established and active.



- Regional status of the natural resource in question stable or improved.

#### **National level:**

- National legislation developed, adopted and enforced.
- System of national reporting to international environmental conventions established and functioning.
- Policies on wetlands, wildlife, biodiversity and other environmental matters developed and adopted, based on best (scientific and traditional) knowledge.
- Structures for national support to local communities regarding management of natural resources established (e.g., extension services, legal definitions of rights and responsibilities, etc.).
- National status of the natural resource in question stable or improved.

#### **Local level:**

- Local community organisations established and active. Activities may be related to the project tasks or to other matters of relevance to the local community. (“Structural sustainability”).
- Local communities actively pursuing the project activities some years after the termination of external project input. (“Sustainable activity”).
- Local communities maintain and exercise their rights and obligations in relation to the local biodiversity resources.
- Management of biodiversity resources integrated into the general system for resources management at the local level.
- Project ideas and principles taken up, modified and adopted by local communities outside the project (“multiplier effect”).
- Local status of the natural resource in question stable or improved.

### **7. Lessons learned**

IUCN has formulated a set of “lessons learned” for each of the two programmes. These are lessons learnt at different levels, some related to the project itself (operational lessons) and some to the societal consequences of the project (development lessons). The paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 below are based upon IUCN’s formulations as well as the team’s own experiences and analysis.

The difficult essence of natural resources or biodiversity management often lies in the relationship between local communities and the state, or between “periphery” and “centre”. Based on the experiences in Isla de Cañas, the Wildlife Program has pointed out some principles of a general nature.

#### **a) State-community relationship**

This type of projects take time and resources. Respect and sincere communication are most needed. In order to reach institutional strengthening, communities must get support from the State and both parties should learn from failures and successes through the process.

#### **b) Technical and traditional knowledge**

Both parties learn from each other. The concrete local activities have a multiplier effect on younger generations and on other communities and visitors, and a motivational effect on the community as a whole

#### **c) Institutional policies**

National policies should take into account the real needs of the communities. Opportunities should be created for the people (including from the start women and children) to participate in decision making. The capacity of communities to organize and grow collectively deserves trust from both

GOs and NGOs. Project activities and ideas may then become part of daily lives and thus sustainable.

## **7.1 CAM 008 Wildlife**

### **7.1.1 Operational lessons**

- Information and documentation, no matter the category, has little value unless it is received and understood by target groups.
- Project input in terms of money is usually more than duplicated by the receiving community in terms of economic resources and unpaid labour.
- If a project is to have a real impact on the lives of the participants, it is imperative that participants have a strong sense of ownership to the project.
- Conflicts, or opposed interests, are not necessarily detrimental to a project. If conflicts are handled correctly, they may as often as not produce new ways of thinking and thus contribute to development.
- Conflict resolution abilities are important in order to overcome difficult obstacles in the path towards conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Coordination with, rather than isolation from, other thematic areas, is an important consideration in terms of integrating lessons.

### **7.1.2 Development lessons**

- Success in community organisation does not only depend on project inputs; it depends to a large degree on the capacity and strength of individuals in the community.
- Rural sectors, peasants and indigenous peoples are not homogeneous groups, and strategies must be based on analyses of specific needs and opportunities. Traditional knowledge must be acknowledged.
- Conservation objectives will not be met through project efforts if the structural framework (i.e. legislation, law enforcement, control) does not exist and/or is not functioning.
- When basic needs are not met, conservation is an inappropriate approach. "Conservation is saving; poor people have nothing to save."
- Strengthening of the community in terms of organisation, capacity, economy etc. will in the long term be beneficial to – if not a prerequisite for - conservation objectives and the sustainable use of ecological resources.
- Participatory processes take time, but are far more effective and sustainable in the long term. They also contribute to the multiplying effect of any project.
- Community use of wild resources is not necessarily oriented towards gaining access to international markets, but tend to focus on local consumption and local markets.
- If women are given the chance to participate in project activities, they will participate, and often take on responsibilities traditionally held by men.
- Confusion exists between the notions of value and price and its impact in economic analysis.
- Successful demonstration projects/local experience is a very important factor in convincing policy makers of the need for, e.g., new legislation.
- In order to strengthen institutions and organizations, communities and governments must cooperate and learn from failures and successes through a participatory process in which both parties are conscious about rights and duties.
- Policy making which affects community life finds an indispensable source of ideas in the organized experience of local organizations and individuals.
- The role of the State in development should be weighed in appropriate terms according to the situation in each country. Cooperation with governments should adapt to the development approach defined by each party and to its flexibility.

- Proper attention should be given to the fact that participatory methodologies strengthen democratic practices in the local level.

## **7.2 CAM 033 Wetlands**

### **7.2.1 Operational lessons**

- It is difficult to develop good impact indicators and sustainability indicators, in particular in short term projects.
- It is difficult to measure impacts of short term projects (3 yrs in the case of Cam 033).
- The separate impacts of IUCN activities is difficult to measure when IUCN inputs (money, staff time) is only a small part of total project activities. However, by working together with other organisations and institutions, resources are pooled, synergies created, and the sustainable impacts of projects are increased.
- Goal oriented operating plans are invaluable tools for defining areas of action, collaboration and assistance.
- It is difficult to demand specific products from volunteer groups, such as the national working groups on wetlands. Volunteer groups are fragile, and depend to a very large extent upon members putting their own time and resources into the operation of the group.
- Although follow-up for demonstration areas in the field has been constant, local actors expect greater participation and technical involvement from IUCN. It is important that IUCN clarifies its role vs. local actors at an early stage.
- The wetlands network does not function as such unless specific issues are being addressed.
- Due credit should always be given to participating institutions or organisations.
- Documentation and information tend not to reach intended target groups. Efforts should be made to ensure a proper dissemination through appropriate means.
- Interchange of staff at or between all levels and regions contribute to important networks.

### **7.2.2 Development lessons**

- The impact of the programme over a period of three years will be quite limited. In order to have a real impact a project/programme will have to develop over a period of preferably not less than 10 years, with appropriate adjustments and corrections carried out on the basis of regular reviews.
- An integrative approach (including institutional strengthening, policy generation, individuals networking, community organisation) will be required to achieve sustainable development on any wetland area.
- Bioregional planning and an ecosystem approach to management will be needed if a successful wetland management program is to be attained.

## **8. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **8.1 General aspects**

#### **8.1.1 Co-ordination between projects/thematic areas**

The joint review of the Wildlife Project (CAM 008) and the Wetlands Project (CAM 033) allowed us to observe the clear dissociation between the two projects in most of the field sites and within the organisations consulted. The lack of integration of the projects reflects a lack of co-ordination among ORMA's thematic areas. For the Wetlands Project, where bioregional planning demands an integrative approach, this lack of integration is a negative factor that should be corrected immediately.

Various groups interviewed (e.g., government institutions, field technicians in charge of projects, and community organisations) converge in a positive opinion of the Wildlife Program and the support it has provided in relation to their needs. Cam 008 is perceived by interviewees as an efficient facilitator, and a co-ordinator of institutional efforts that is able to bring together different parties, even with conflicting views, as in the case of the Green Macaw National Commission in Costa Rica. IUCN-ORMA has helped local groups of people to meet in workshops and achieve collective outcomes, thus strengthening organisational capacities. IUCN-ORMA provides valuable technical information and support to the field managers of the projects and is also punctual in delivering budget allowances according to the needs.

Throughout its implementation, the Wildlife Project was able to benefit from an efficient network of local and national organisations that would likely survive the project (such as in the case of the Jocotal Lagoon and the Isla Cañas). However, in both cases the Wetlands Project does not benefit from this organisation and works with other local organisations (in Jocotal) or does not work at all in the area (Isla Cañas). At the same time these organisations has received considerable support in areas such as gender issues and administrative capabilities; by associating itself with these groups the wetland program would benefit from those already strengthened areas.

However, there is consensus amongst a relevant number of the parties interviewed about the inconvenient consequences of the lack of co-ordination between the Wildlife and Wetlands Programs. In some cases (e.g., MARN, El Salvador), this was perceived as detrimental because of the conflict of interests and diminished project impact.

In the case of Solentiname we observed the potential of such coordination, where the Social and Wetlands Thematic Areas have co-operated to successfully strengthen the gender dimension of the project at the local level.

It is strongly recommended that IUCN-ORMA revise its ways of co-ordination between the different Thematic Areas. This concerns co-ordination not only between Wildlife and Wetlands, but also involving the Social and Evaluation-Monitoring areas.

We recommend that effective co-ordination among the thematic programs at ORMA should be achieved immediately and that the Wetland Program, in particular, integrate the expertise generated in other programs within its activities. When deciding sites for program implementation, the different thematic programs of ORMA should jointly decide upon the sites where integrated activities would maximise the impact of the projects.

### **8.1.2 The role of IUCN-ORMA in projects**

Interviewees in all four countries visited consider IUCN-ORMA as a facilitator and co-ordinator. The projects have been able to establish a positive relationship, to a variable degree, with government and non-government institutions, at local and national levels, focusing on co-ordination, technical assistance and training. Associating with government agencies has been a highlight in El Salvador and Panama, where government officials have facilitated the training of the staff and its participation in the field demonstration projects.

It is recommended that IUCN-ORMA maintain an approach which means indirect involvement in field projects and limited participation with direct technical support in activities consistent with the expertise of its personnel.

## 8.2 CAM 008 Wildlife

### 8.2.1 Social vs. ecological issues

Cam 008 has given an important emphasis to the social processes, building institutional and community capacities through participatory methods. This strength is already reflected in the final reports and the histories of each demonstration project. The approach has favoured the sustainability of most of the demonstration projects, and improved their multiplying effect. Involved communities seem motivated to increase their contribution in terms of e.g., voluntary labour. Community organisations have improved their structures and have made important steps toward gender-sensitive approaches. According to interviewees, the communities of Cosigüina and Jocotal demonstrated their advances in community organisation by reacting adequately and efficiently to Hurricane Mitch.

The emphasis on social issues and participatory approach may have led to the ecological dimension of some of the demonstration projects having been overlooked. While data on the population trends of the whistling duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) have been collected and analysed with community participation in Jocotal, this analysis is not yet available for the olive turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) in Isla de Cañas. As a consequence, the objective interpretation of the real ecological impact of the community effort to manage the turtle eggs is difficult.

In Cosigüina, rough data provided by Mr. Esquivel, consultant biologist of the wildlife project indicated that a total of 8407 iguanas (*Iguana iguana* and *Ctenosaura similis*) have been produced by the project. According to a 1998 report to IUCN a total of 8195 iguanas are poached and trafficked in the regional market over the same period. This is the reason that the local groups do not consider the activity of rearing and releasing iguanas into the wild to be sustainable after the project has ended.

On the other hand, for the Jocotal case, a government official from El Salvador thinks that "*there are too many scientific studies in El Jocotal... maybe it's enough. We need more answers about the options for the people, the economic value of the wetland, not about wildlife*". A government official from Nicaragua considered that IUCN has emphasised the concept of conservation, which does not properly consider and integrate the urgent needs of the people related to the wildlife species. This does not contribute to prevent the illegal trafficking of wildlife.

In Cosigüina and Isla de Cañas community members have been involved in the collection of biological and social data. In Isla de Cañas, people of the community are recording data about the turtles. However, ANAM does not have the software to process it and analyse it. While this approach has a great educational value for the community participants and also has the potential to develop community responsibility towards the resource, ANAM must report annually back to the community based on the data collected.

It is recommended that in future programs, IUCN-ORMA should look for a proper balance between ecological and social science matters, while strengthening community participation.

### 8.2.2 Follow-up of previous reviews

Proper attention was given to most of the main recommendations coming from the two mid-term evaluations. Our interviews and our limited direct observations show evidence of improvements in terms of:

- a) strengthening a gender perspective,

- b) integration of projects into general development community plans,
- c) moving towards self-sufficiency of target groups,
- d) termination of IUCN site involvement,
- e) local and regional market studies for products of wildlife management,
- f) investigation on turtle egg production and natural mortality of eggs, and
- g) focus on socio-economic aspects.

However, the degree of progress in relation to the recommendations is variable.

- a) The gender perspective has been strengthened in most of the field projects, especially in Jocotal, Cosigüina and Isla de Cañas. Interviews with women at these localities showed increased participation by women during the project period. The women were motivated, assertive and proud of assuming project responsibilities traditionally held by men.
- b) Community Plans are not a responsibility of Demonstration Projects but depend on the initiatives of local governments and organisations. Jocotal and Isla de Cañas are moving towards Management Plans, which encompass several aspects beyond the specific objectives of the Wildlife Program. Activities stressed in both communities are most likely to be relevant parts of those plans. Future projects should aim at IUCN-ORMA and partners providing input to community plan development.
- c) Jocotal, Cosigüina and Isla de Cañas seem to have reached already a capacity enabling them to continue their wildlife projects on their own, the first two with a subsistence and conservation purposes, and the third integrated to the market. Both Cosigüina and Isla de Cañas would continue in a similar manner only if the community derives from it some income or benefit that could not otherwise be produced via other activities. Lapa Verde National Commission in Costa Rica depends largely on the existence of national incentives to conserve the forests.
- d) In the second phase of its development, Cam 008 terminated direct involvement with communities. Its presence was mostly as a facilitator through government agencies, NGOs, external national consultants and community organisations. The role of facilitator sometimes includes mediating between conflicting parties. As a mediator IUCN takes the risk of being in the middle of a conflict.
- e) Economic studies were done for each demonstration project in Jocotal, Cosigüina, Isla de Cañas and Agua Buena. However, the relevant information does not seem to have circulated enough amongst the parties, inhibiting further discussion and follow-up. Regional markets are unstable, heavily effected by natural events as droughts, hurricanes and flooding, and therefore, difficult to predict. Economic studies found that wildlife management at the scale proposed in the Cosigüina and Agua Buena projects is not profitable.
- f) Recorded data on the turtle population of Isla de Cañas have not been analysed, due to lacking capacity in ANAM.
- g) One of the strengths of Cam 008 has been the focus on social aspects, especially those regarding education, organisation and participation. Through this approach an important asset has been built in Jocotal, Cosigüina, Costa Rica (Lapa Verde Commission) and Isla de Cañas. It is difficult to assess in more concrete terms to what extent the present organisational capacities are outcomes of IUCN involvement. But IUCN-ORMA clearly stands as an important catalytic force and a contributor to the development of community organisation.

The interviews with ANCON did not show clear indicators that the recommendation about *"strengthening communication between communities and ANCON"* has been addressed in the last year. ANCON originally approached the Agua Buena community, identifying farmers in order to work with them on an individual basis. In July 99, they expect that one of those farmers would start a new community organisation to promote paca breeding.

### 8.2.3 Project input to local field projects

Cam 008 spent during the first period of 1992-1994 a 40% of its budget in the demonstration projects (10,000 USD per project), while the other 60% remained at IUCN-ORMA headquarters as staff and administration costs. This relationship may have varied for the second period of 1995-1997, as individual projects raised their budgets to 20,000 USD per year. Though it was not a common comment from interviewees, the team observed that very small amount of money was allocated for important project components as “revolving funds”. At the same time the communities are providing labour and money in greater proportion according to their resources. The Isla de Cañas Cooperative, Isleños Unidos, pays room and board for the police who help in beach patrolling and contributes with labour for guarding the turtle nursery. The Omar Bacca Cooperative (Cosigüina) keep releasing iguanas into the wild while the government cannot control poaching. PRODEMUSER (also in Cosigüina) reports having had to use extra unplanned resources from their own funds in order to meet the terms of the agreement signed with IUCN.

**The proportion of contributions from IUCN in relation to local community inputs should be revised. IUCN-ORMA should look for ways to improve this aspect in terms of increasing the budget to be spent directly at the local level. Community contribution should be properly recognised in IUCN financial reports.**

### 8.2.4 Legislation

Relevant legislation, regarding wildlife conservation and sustainable use, has been approved by the legislative assemblies in several of the Central American countries during the last eight years. Cam 008 has actively promoted this process, helping national partners and government institutions in the process of drafting and discussing new laws and policies, and providing direct technical assistance and training to legal departments of wildlife-related institutions.

This technical assistance and training keeps its relevance when Cam 008 comes to its end, while new developments are on foot. Nicaragua will start soon the process to draft and discuss the new Biodiversity Law. IUCN-ORMA is expected by government officials and other parties to be the facilitator of that process.

It is strongly recommended that IUCN-ORMA is provided with funds to continue the support to development of policies and legislation in the region, as proper legislation is the basis for any sustainable management of these resources.

### 8.2.5 Multiplying effects

One of the main purposes of the Cam 008 demonstration projects was to create a multiplying effect. There is no doubt that this objective was met over the project period and at different levels.

From the **educational point of view**, the projects first influence people of the same communities beyond the smaller groups participating directly. In fact, the initial community groups grew in number through the years. Youngsters and children of the same starting communities benefit educationally by participating directly in the wildlife management activities, “learning by doing”.

At the local level, the **government and non-government technicians, teachers and administrative personnel** working on a permanent basis, also have learned from the project activities. This is true both for Jocotal, Isla de Cañas and Agua Buena. The learning that took place relates to different dimensions such as biological aspects, organisation, participation, and community potentials.

At another level, **visitors to the communities** were also exposed to the project activities. ANCON has placed a demonstrative paca-breeding site at Finca Cabuya where 7 thousand visitors from 450 primary schools come each year, according to ANCON figures. Tourism is also increasing in Isla de Cañas, where the co-operative has built three cabins and plans to expand with four more. Six trained local guides offer their services to visitors.

Materials produced in the Cosigüina project have been used in **university courses on wildlife management** in the Universidad Centroamericana in Nicaragua and the National University in Costa Rica. Professors and students from UCA visit the project and learn about wildlife community management.

At the wider local level, Jocotal and Isla de Cañas have attracted the interest of **nearby communities**, which want to replicate the experience with their neighbour's advice. Olomega in El Salvador, Cambutal in Panama, and several surrounding communities in Cosigüina have expressed interest and undertaken some actions to start similar projects.

The multiplying effect has also reached national and international levels, especially by **exchanges between community projects**, and also by using the project experiences for training activities in other regions and countries. ANCON, for example, reported five training activities regarding paca-breeding methods in Panama with 200 farmers and in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Colombia with a total of 114 farmers. The Jocotal experience may influence a project of Fundacion del Rio in San Miguelito, Nicaragua. Isla de Cañas and Ostional, two coastal communities in Panama and Costa Rica, have shared their experiences concerning management of sea turtle eggs.

The project has to a large extent concentrated on producing written educational materials, paying special attention to appropriate illustrations. In rural communities, oral tradition and direct experience are the fundamental ways of learning. The workshop approach, to some extent applied by the project, seems closer to the learning methods of rural communities, if organised and carried out in an appropriate way. The multiplying effect, with more local communities in need of educational services, creates a need to revise the emphasis in a way that has not been anticipated in the objectives of Cam 008. Another important aspect of having other communities interested in establishing their own projects is that those new experiences will depend on support from government agencies and community organisations. The capacity already developed may be adequate, but there is no experience yet to prove it.

**IUCN-ORMA should be enabled to provide continued advice and technical/educational support to local and national GOs and NGOs, with the aim to service local community organisations.**

8.1.6 Critical mass trained.

8.1.7 Integrated programs: wetlands, wildlife, social aspects, review and monitoring. overcoming broken perspective of IUCN. Managing ecosystems. Options: Jocotal, Isla de Canas and Solentiname, the three of them with general management plans in perspective. Mediator, facilitator and conflict resolution expertise needed in Jocotal. IUCN and rural sustainable development.



## **8.3 CAM 033 Wetlands**

### **8.3.1 Overall achievements**

The overall impact of the project up to this date has been positive, especially in the following components:

- establishment of regional networks of specialists,
- support for international treaties, and
- development of a communication system for information exchange.

Its role in demonstration projects has been more variable, some projects (such the mangroves of the Pacific coast of Guatemala) has received substantial support and information, while in other demonstration projects (such as the Guatuzos Wildlife Refuge) the role of the project has been limited to small contributions. While still in its midterm, the project has been successful in establishing a network of individuals and institutions. Even while still in an incipient stage, this network has potential to become a very important player in the wetland conservation effort throughout the region. Some field activities, especially related to training and field demonstration projects are lagging behind schedule, mainly based to the late start of the project and changes in staff composition.

The following are the main conclusions of this project evaluation, followed by specific recommendations. It should, however, be kept in mind that the time left of the present wetlands project does not leave much space for implementing any change of direction. Many of the recommendations below are therefore more relevant for a possible future integrated ecosystem or biodiversity management program with NORAD support.

### **8.3.2 Geographic concentration**

The project is an important vehicle for the implementation of the ecosystem management principle in wetland areas. Through its influence in some projects (such as the Guatuzos Wildlife Refuge in Nicaragua) the Wetlands Program has achieved the incorporation of a wider perspective within the management plans of the area, promoting bio-regional planning in the management vision.

However, the limited resources of the project are also being invested in many other ways, from very diverse thematic efforts (such as in the small incentives program) to widely dispersed geographic sites, to broader initiatives at the national level (such as the fostering of national working groups). This dilutes the potential benefits of more integrated efforts within a given basin. Areas such as the south-eastern Nicaragua Lake and the nearby Caño Negro wetlands provides good opportunity for trans-boundary coordination.

We recommend that the activities on the project should be focused on fewer geographic sites and should be reoriented towards bioregional management, concentrating the different areas of action (small incentives, institutional strengthening, training, information, etc) within a given number of areas or basins.

### **8.3.3 Government policies**

Many of the demonstration projects to which the Wetland Program has been providing technical assistance interacts or are influenced by the decisions or regulations of national or local agencies. Some of these decisions can seriously affect the performance and success of those projects. The Wetland Program should play a more proactive role to sensitise government agencies acting in wetland areas where projects are being developed. Providing environmental information, developing training programs at the executive and judicial branches of the national and local governments, the Program would facilitate the implementation of conservation activities in those prioritised wetland areas.

**We recommend a closer contact of the Program with government agencies working at prioritised wetland areas. Training and educational activities that increase the awareness of these agencies to conservation and sustainable management issues should be implemented.**

#### **8.3.4 Training of project staff**

Training activities for staff and participants of on-going projects in the region have proved very successful during this first half of the project. Much needed information is being transmitted through these activities to the technical staff and executors of the projects and these training events are very much appreciated. Special efforts should be made to incorporate, when possible, local experts into these events, preferably out of the National Working Groups already selected, facilitating in this way the creation of a local network of experts.

We recommend to maintain and strengthen the training activity component of the project,

including relevant concepts and methodologies to develop a bioregional perspective within the

existing management projects in the region.

#### **8.2.6 Small Incentives Program**

The Small Incentives Program (SIP) is proving a very effective mechanism to foster wetland-associated activities throughout the region. However, the implementation of the SIP should be integrated with activities from the training and institutional-strengthening components of the project to produce a synergistic effect. Also more flexibility in terms of amounts provided for each incentive and time limits for each small project should be sought. A significant improvement in the mechanisms used to promote the SIP should be achieved in the remaining time of the project. A small number of requests and the interviews with many individuals throughout the region indicate that the SIP is little known within the region.

We recommend to maintain and strengthen the SIP. This program should support a wider range of thematic issues beyond research and education, but be more concentrated around a given project or geographic area. A more systematic and broader promotion of the program should be achieved in the next months.

#### **8.2.7 National and regional priorities in wetland conservation**

Establishing national priorities for wetland conservation might seem very relevant, but they assume that a sizeable body of institutions and individuals working in wetlands is already in existence in the region. Although a goal stated in the proposal, and therefore an activity already developed by the project, it seem to us these activities have had limited impact in the region as originally proposed. The methodologies used to select priorities reflect the need for better in-house capacity to develop this type of exercises underlying the need for more in-house training in goal formulation and project management. The initiative, however, has had a positive effect within the framework of the consolidation of National Working Groups. The development of these groups is an important achievement of the project that has to be secured for the future, with further support, both technical and financial. Eventually these working groups should play an important role as advisory groups to national or local organisations, directly involved with the implementation of projects in wetland areas.

We recommend that the Wetland Program continues to strengthen the National Working Groups and consider the support of these groups beyond the term of the present project. By

facilitating their development, IUCN will impact significantly wetland conservation activities throughout the region.

### **8.2.8 Technical Advisory Committee**

The consolidation of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been of high relevance to the project. Although late in its consolidation within the project time frame, this body ensures an external continued review of the project's performance. The achieved composition of the group is adequate although the frequency of its meetings has been low.

**We recommend the continued participation of the TAC as an overseer of the project performance. Committee meetings should be more frequent with a periodicity of at least one meeting every six months.**

### **8.2.9 Inter-project exchange**

A very significant achievement of the project has been the interchange of staff among local or national initiatives throughout the region. Meetings where community based organizations or technical programs are allowed to exchange information and experiences has a very important catalytic effect in the development of a regional network of experts and institutions.

**We recommend to maintain and strengthen these interchanges, focusing on those communities and technical programs working in or around geographic or thematic areas previously prioritised by the program.**

### **8.2.10 Goal-oriented planning**

Throughout the review it was clear that however well intended, many of the training and institutional-strengthening activities were designed and supported without a strong goal-oriented plan. Naive planning and follow-up of the projects, lack of systematisation in the communication strategies, and the scarce co-ordination with other programs within ORMA has reduced the potential impact of the project. ORMA represent a good vehicle to the development of the project but lack of goal-oriented workplans, and a opportunistic approach for project support, has to be corrected.

**We recommend the development of permanent training programs for ORMA staff on project development, evaluation and monitoring. This training would be of special relevance to staff in supervisory roles.**

### **8.2.11 Project experience information gathering and dissemination**

In many of the initiatives in which the Program is associated, a large amount of technical information (biological, sociological, economical, legal) is being generated. But neither the local initiatives nor the program are pursuing a systematic process to capture and make available this information to other partners throughout the region. The use of basic metadatabases for the datasets generated in projects supported by the wetlands program would strength, the development of a solid network of people and institutions in the region.

We recommend to increase the development and administration of databases associated to

biological, socio-economic and legal issues related to the wetland projects in the region. This

information should be recover in a systematic way and made available through internet and periodic publications widely disseminated throughout the region.

#### **8.2.12 Information center**

The dissemination of technical information, including information about other initiatives throughout the region, has been a very positive achievement of the project. This initiative needs, to be maintained and strengthened to ensure a broader impact throughout the region. The bibliographic database, a main product of the documentation center, has had a limited impact and its availability is little known in the region.

We recommend the program maintains and increases its role as clearinghouse for technical documentation and relevant information on wetland-associated initiatives. This will require a more systematic approach for information dissemination to ensure a wider more effective information distribution.

#### **8.2.13 Liaison function**

The wetland program should play a linkage role making small organisations aware and in contact with other potential agencies that would donate to/support them, especially in development-type of activities. The Program should not be directly involved in the implementation of development-type of projects, but rather seek the involvement of other agencies or national NGOs specialised in these areas.

We recommend the program staff intensifies their contacts with development agencies, international foundations and regional or national NGOs, gathering information about them, making this information available to local and national organisations and trying to link those interested parties

#### **8.2.14 The facilitator role**

During the implementation of the project, the Program should concentrate on the role of facilitator, giving ample credit to the local and national organisations in any publication generated out of the projects. Some isolated complaints of insufficient recognition for other agencies contributions to the project has been voiced out during the interviews.

Program staff should make their best efforts to properly recognise other agencies contributions into the project implementation. Publications should not over-emphasise credits for IUCN at the expense of other partners involved.

#### **8.2.15 International agreements and legislation**

The support of the program in developing decrees or international treaties such as Ramsar Convention, has been a positive achievement of the project. Diverse legislation activities yet to be generated throughout the region would benefit for the advise and technical support of the Program. Technical support on legislation development to the national agencies should be maintained and

strengthened within the Wetland Program. Particular care must be taken to play only the role of facilitator and technical advisor in this process.

**We recommend the Wetland Program maintains its role as technical advisor and facilitator in the process of generating national legislation related to wetland management and conservation.**

### 8.2.16 Budget allocations

The financial analysis of the executed budget, indicates an unbalance between the amount of money expended in ORMA (~55%) and that expended in field activities. This unbalance is partially due to the sub-execution of field activities, partially due to the late start of the program and changes in program staffing during the last year. Salaries of all staff involved in the project should be reflected in the salaries line of the budget and not included within field activities, such the case of the person in charge of the documentation center.

We recommend a close monitoring of the project expenses. The program staff should take the appropriate measures to set back on balance the project budget, speeding the execution of field activities that have lagged behind.

## 9. The role of IUCN in Meso-America

### 9.1 ORMA's long term plans and strategies

As a regional office of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), ORMA relates both to the goals of IUCN as a global organisation, and to the regional demands as well as the needs of members, governments and communities in the countries included in the Mesoamerican region. IUCN's role and function as a global, but decentralised, organisation is still under discussion and development, as for instance discussed in the recent external review (Bruszt et al. 1999). In that report, of particular relevance to regional offices are for instance the recommendations relating to possible framework agreements between donors and regional offices, the more active involvement of members through regional biodiversity forums, the facilitation of collaboration between members within the region and with members in other regions, and the more active use of Commission members at the regional level. ORMA is commended for already to have started work along some of these lines, e.g., to help establish members' committees in the countries of the region.

It was decided by IUCN in the Mesoamerican region some years ago to close the country offices and run the operation from the regional office (ORMA) in San José, Costa Rica. Some government representatives met by the review team in El Salvador and Panama expressed that the performance by IUCN in their country would have improved if there had been a country office. The structure of IUCN at the regional level should be adapted to the local conditions and the actual level of activity. There are significant expenses associated with a country office, particularly as any office of IUCN should embrace a minimum number of persons to create a team with some impact. A significant project portfolio is needed to justify these expenses, and presently the IUCN activities in any single Mesoamerican country is not at this level. This is also related to the willingness of donors to pay overhead on projects, to cover the additional expenses for administration, etc.

ORMA is presently working according to the strategy and programme outlined in "Mesoamerican programme 1997-2000: Four key years" (IUCN-ORMA 1997). Three goals are identified in this regional programme:

- Influence local, national and regional policies related to conservation.

- Strengthen capacity of Union members, commissions and secretariat, as well as associated organizations and local communities with which IUCN-Mesoamerica works in specific actions.
- Promote and facilitate communication among the different sectors mentioned in Goal 2 and other institutions, in order to strengthen the Mesoamerican Agenda.

This strategy and programme is being evaluated in 1999 by regional members, commission members, and secretariat. The Regional IUCN Forum planned for October this year will have a special agenda item on this subject. The strategy and regional programme for the next four year period will be developed based on this evaluation, and with input from members, commissions and secretariat.

At present ORMA's vision for the coming years is presented in various documents. The pamphlet "The Mesoamerican Challenge", produced for IUCN's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1998, provides a relatively comprehensive list of the environmental challenges facing the region. Among the headings are "Crusade for biodiversity", "A model for sustainable development", and "Policy with environmental vision", indicating that ORMA still considers influencing policies at regional and national levels a major task. The pamphlet does not, however, indicate ORMA's priorities in the work to deal with these challenges. These will stem from the programming process mentioned above.

The document "Attitudes needed to face the challenges of sustainable use of biodiversity...", which is a summary from the "Proposal 2000"-workshop "Sustainable community use of biodiversity" presents the general objective as follows: "Promote actions to reduce loss of biodiversity and improve quality of life, guaranteeing access and equitable distribution of benefits, in order to expand development opportunities for larger sectors of civil society". This clearly indicates that natural and social sciences must be integrated in the quest to reach sustainable use of biodiversity. The specific objectives deal with regional efforts to conserve biodiversity, dialogues that recognises that the region is multiethnic and multicultural, and involvement of local communities.

In the most recent document dealing specifically with ORMA's relation with NORAD, "Framework program proposal NORAD-IUCN 2000-2004", the general goals are to:

- Capitalize on IUCN's knowledge and expertise to promote better environmental actions that contribute to risk reduction in a region subject to multiple threats.
- Influence decision making at the local, national, regional and global levels in order to strengthen environmental efforts.
- Develop institutional capacity in members and allies to facilitate proactive environmental strategies.

As is also evident from other recent project and programme notes made available to the review team, the disastrous effects in the region of Hurricane Mitch has prompted the inclusion of environmental management to reduce risk and community vulnerability as a priority.

The review team agrees with the view that influencing policies is a major challenge. We would like to point out that IUCN is in a unique position to bring real experiences at the local level into the national and regional policy development work. This is also increasingly being realised by government institutions and other agencies in the region, which asks for ORMA's assistance in staff competence development and technical input related to biodiversity and wildlife management.

Future field demonstration projects should be reduced in number and increased in size so that IUCN's input is more evident, and that more elements of IUCN's wide expertise is applied, e.g. in terms of ecosystem management, sustainable use of wildlife, socio-economic aspects of community based management, legislative issues, etc.

**Recommendation:****ORMA should give priority to:**

- **influencing policies and decision makers,**
- **develop capacity in members and partners to strengthen the role of civil society at the local, national and regional level,**
- **adopt a holistic approach to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the equitable sharing of benefits from this use,**
- **concentrate field demonstration projects to a few bioregions or catchment areas where resources from many projects may be pooled to enable a truly holistic approach.**

**9.2 ORMA's role and influence**

In the region, IUCN (i.e. ORMA) may play roles at the regional or cross-boundary level, at the national level and at the local level. At all levels, ORMA should play the role of facilitator or broker, helping to establish contact and collaboration among institutions and organisations to support conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The Lapa Verde project in Costa Rica is but one example where ORMA has brought together organisations and institutions with diverging interests with a view to find a common solution.

Representing a global and regional network of experience and expertise, ORMA should continue providing technical support to development of environmental policies and legislation, follow-up of international environmental conventions, etc. It is, however, important that this support is given in response to demand expressed by the relevant authorities, and in a collaborative manner. It should be accepted by donors that the exact impact and influence exerted in this type of work is not easily measured, but that it none the less is very important. IUCN-ORMA has a good standing among the GOs met by the review team, and their influence on policies may therefore be great.

**Recommendation:**

**IUCN-ORMA should prioritise promotion of legislation and economic and environmental policies that create a favourable framework for local communities to use their biodiversity resources in a sustainable way, and further develop their role as a broker and facilitator, bringing together institutions and organisations with different approach to and interests in the biodiversity management questions at hand.**

**9.3 ORMA's sustainability**

ORMA cannot in the foreseeable future be expected to sustain its activities without donor support directly and/or through core support channelled through IUCN headquarters. The membership fees in a relatively poor region like Mesoamerica will not be sufficient even at a much lower level of activity.

At the operational level, ORMA need to create space for the thematic areas to meet regularly to discuss strategies and experiences. Any one thematic area touches upon and to some extent overlaps with the others. It will therefore be detrimental to the effectiveness of operations if the present lack of time for meetings between thematic area co-ordinators is allowed to continue. This must be remedied regardless of future funding structure for the thematic areas. The donors should accept and promote this co-ordination, as it will create synergies and strategic thinking to enhance all thematic areas and projects. Some of this activity may also be organised as training workshops for staff.

Possible funding of this activity may be sought either through donors entering framework agreements directly with ORMA (as recommended in Bruszt et al. 1999), or by including separate budget lines in the individual project budgets. NORAD's agreement with CATIE may be one practical model to ensure this line of activity.

Our observations from Cam 008 and 033, as well as other experiences, demonstrate that steady long-term, goal-oriented activities in a program or project is what gives sustainable impacts at the various levels of society. A moderate, steady input of resources over ten years is better than the same effort concentrated to three years.

**Recommendations:**

- **ORMA needs to organise monthly meetings between thematic area coordinators to create space for strategic discussions and to benefit from sharing experiences.**
- **NORAD should consider entering a long-term programme or framework agreement with ORMA, alternatively to allow a separate budget line for staff time for strategic discussions in any project agreement with ORMA.**
- **NORAD and ORMA should develop agreements that allow for long-term (e.g., ten years) activities, although with the necessary monitoring and evaluation (e.g., every third year) to ensure corrective measures, if needed.**



Annexes

1. Terms of reference
2. Itinerary for the review team
3. List of persons consulted
4. Literature and documentation
5. List of acronyms

## Annex 2

**ITINERARY FOR THE FIELD WORK OF THE REVIEW**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Country</b>
Monday 12 July	Arrival of OTS and MLS to San Jose (delayed!) Meetings at IUCN-ORMA office, presentations of CAM 008 and 033 projects	Costa Rica
Tuesday 13 July	Meetings at IUCN-ORMA Meetings with Green Macaw Commission, SINAC, Costa Rican members, Gerardo Budowski	Costa Rica
Wednesday 14 July	Travel to San Salvador Meetings with MARN, University of El Salvador, El Salvador members, El Jocotal group Departure to Panama	El Salvador
Thursday 15 July	Meetings with ANCON, ANAM, and Panamanian members Departure to Isla de Cañas	Panama
Friday 16 July	Meetings with Isla de Cañas community organisations, local ANAM staff	Panama
Saturday 17 July	Departure to Panama City	Panama
Sunday 18 July	Departure to Costa Rica (San Jose), travel via Los Chiles (Costa Rica) and San Carlos (Nicaragua), to Solentiname	Costa Rica
Monday 19 July	Meetings with project staff and partners, Solentiname, Los Guatozos Review team discussions	Nicaragua
Tuesday 20 July	Meetings with partners, San Miguelito Review team discussions	Nicaragua
Wednesday 21 July	Departure via San Carlos to Managua Review team discussions	Nicaragua
Thursday 22 July	Meetings with MARENA, Universidad Centroamericana, Nicaraguan members, Cosigüina group Review team discussions	Nicaragua
Friday 23 July	Debriefing with IUCN and NORAD staff	Nicaragua
Saturday 24 July	Report writing, departure of EV and JAJ to Costa Rica	Nicaragua
Sunday 25 July	Departure of OTS and MLS to Norway	

## Annex 3

**LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED****IUCN**

- Enrique Lahmann, director
- Vivienne Solís, coordinator of Wildlife programme
- Rocío Córdoba, coordinator of Wetlands programme
- Ivannia Ayales, social emphasis, Wildlife programme
- Francisco Pizarro, project assistant Wetlands programme
- Patricia Madrigal, legal emphasis, Wildlife programme
- Mario Sagastizado, project assistant, Wetlands programme
- Jesús Cisneros, coordinator membership liason unit

**COSTA RICA**

- Luís Rojas, Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservación (SINAC)
- Gerardo Budowski, member of the Technical Advisory Committee
- Rosa Bustillo, Proyecto Corredor Biologico Talamanca Caribe
- Carlos Chavarría, Proyecto Corredor Biologico Talamanca Caribe, representative of the Membership Committee

## Green Macaw project

- Gabriel Rivas, Friends of the Earth
- Luís Marín, Apreflofas
- Trinidad Rodríguez, ASCOMAFOR
- Luís Mejía, UNA
- Rocío López, Asociación Bienestar Ambiental de Sarapiquí
- Oldemar Mejía, APAIFO
- Félix Díaz, Asociación Ecologista El Baro

**EL SALVADOR**

- César Funes Ábrego, Ministerio del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
- Francisco Chiras, member of the Tecnical advisory committee
- Manuel Benítez, consultant coordinating Jocotal project for IUCN
- Melanie Machado, national coordinator IUCN

## Wetlands group/small incentives

- Emilia de Quintanilla, ASPAGUA
- Analia Hueso, Biology School
- Tania Rosales, Biology School
- Zolia Esperanza Pérez, Asosiación Biólogas

## The Laguna Jocotal project, representatives from:

- Concultura
- MARN/PANAVIS
- Museo Historia Natural
- FUMA

**PANAMÁ**

## ANCON

- Raúl Fletcher
- Augusto González
- Javier Guerrero
- Oscar Vallarino, director

- Dilia Santamaría, member of national working group on wetlands
- Zuleika Pinzón, Fundación Natura. Member of national working group on wetlands and member of technical advisory committee

#### ANAM

- Kruskaya Díaz, member of national working group on wetlands
- Erasmo Vallester, member of national working group on wetlands
- Vanessa Bernal
- Linette Córdoba, ANAM representative on Isla de Cañas

#### Cooperativa de Isleños Unidos, Isla de Cañas

- Prinio Ballester, legal representative of the cooperative
- Jorge Ríos, vice president of the cooperative
- Leodora Arcia, secretary of the cooperative
- Aida Vargas, administrator of the cooperative

### **NICARAGUA**

#### MARENA

- Roberto Statajen, Minister of Environment
- Sandra Tijerino
- Mauricio Fonseca
- Fatima Vanegas
- Johny Monte
- Justo Pastor Núñez, member of the Mesoamerican committee, member of technical advisory committee
- Martín Lezama, coordinator of national working group on wetlands

#### Cosigüina project

- Maria Mercedes del Rio, executive director Prodemujer
- Almarina Solís, legal advisor Prodemujer
- Fernando Esquivél, consultant in biology
- Victor Salazár, private consultant
- Angel Pozo, president, Cooperativa Omar Bacca
- Petrona Martínez, board of Omar Bacca

### **NORAD/Norwegian Embassy, Managua**

Alf Friisø, 2. secretary

## ANNEX 4

## LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTATION

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- Activity plans working groups on wetlands