

Title: Conservation of the coastal ecosystems of the Gulf of Fonseca, Nicaragua- Honduras- Salvador (PROGOLFO), Evaluation report, DANIDA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 2000

Evaluation Team: external

Year: 2000

Objectives of the project:

Integrated management and development coastal ecosystems and natural resources of the Gulf of Fonseca, including:

- Reduce environmental degradation and pollution;
- Enhance the availability and management of natural resources;
- Resolve conflicts between users and environmental management problems; and
- Secure access to and use of natural resources for the population groups around the Gulf who depend on these resources.

IUCN area of specialization: Marine and Coastal areas

Geographical area: Central America (Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador)

Donors: DANIDA, IUCN and the Comisión Centro Americana del Ambiente y del Desarrollo (CCAD)

Type of evaluation: Review Report

Objectives of evaluation:

- Describe the project's progress and if necessary, adjust the project to better meet its objectives; and
- Clarify proposals for solving of accumulated project problems.

Methodology:

The review was conducted in accordance with the DANIDA's guidelines for evaluations. Data collection methods included a review of project documents, interviews and meetings with members of international and national organizations, technicians, staff and stakeholders in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador.

Findings:

- 1) ***Project implementation and performance:*** The project went through an exceptionally long birth process, where one of the issues at stake was the formulation of an appropriate institutional process. The proposed structure has been mostly successful, and is considered to be a model for the execution of regional projects in Central America. However, this structure is very vulnerable because it relies on a few key people. The implementation strategies of the national components follow the initial decisions, with the exception of Nicaragua who chose to emphasize the sectoral orientation, probably leading to a more difficult collaboration among the various stakeholders. In Honduras and El Salvador, the implementation strategy was less articulated. Project proposals are designed at municipal level and submitted for possible external funding but threatened to dilute the project's original objectives.
- 2) ***Strategic management and development framework:*** Computerized databases are descriptive, rather than analytical, making it difficult to understand the relation between cause and effect or the definition of the strategic priorities for interventions. So far, little has been achieved in terms of identifying priority environmental issues and proposals for action at local, national and regional level, as outlined in the project plan of operations.
- 3) ***Technical assistance:*** IUCN was responsible for providing technical assistance in the form of short-term consultancies, through the Wetlands programme. To date, only a few have been carried out, due to a shortage of regional expertise and the lack of approval mechanisms. This has led to delays.
- 4) ***Institutional capacity:*** National teams are now in place in all three countries, however they remain quite weak and unstable. Capacity building in coastal zone management and planning remains quite limited. There is a lack of progress in other activities, namely the creation of maps, identification of key environmental issues and resource use conflicts as well as the development of pilot projects.

Recommendations

Among the recommendations of the review team, the following is highlighted:

- 1) The project strategy should be modified to help the implementing agencies refocus project activities on the main objectives. It is important to have a common understanding and knowledge of the principles and approaches of integrated coastal management amongst staff, so that sound criteria for the preparation of project working plans may be established. The involvement of local communities in the development of management strategies is an essential step towards the implementation of the project.
- 2) Capacity building should continue to be built within key line agencies and local authorities in charge of day-to-day management of resources in the Gulf Fonseca

Language of evaluation: Spanish

Available from: IUCN HQ, IUCN/ORMA