

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Mid-Term Review of Programme Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy Support Project – Phase IV, conducted by Francois Droz, Mehreen Hosain and Dhunmai Cowasjee, June/July 2003

Name of project, programme or organizational unit:

Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy Support Project, Phase IV

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

To implement the Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy as an overall development framework.

IUCN area of specialisation: Conservation Strategies

Geographical area: North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Pakistan

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit: July 2001 – June 2004

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

Donor(s): Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Objectives of the evaluation:

1. Identify key achievements, gaps, bottlenecks and constraints;
2. Review progress made in (a) identifying and supporting the mechanisms and processes that should be sustained in the future by the government, civil society and/or IUCN Pakistan, and (b) positioning district level work vis-à-vis the Local Government Ordinance of 2001;
3. Identify how future support to SPCS could be merged into the fledgling IUCN programme in Northern Pakistan, currently supported through Programme Support for Northern Pakistan (PSNP).

Note: This report is closely linked to the Mid-Term Review of the Programme Support for Northern Pakistan (PSNP).

Type of evaluation: Mid-Term Project Evaluation

Period covered by the evaluation: July 2001 – June 2003

Commissioned by: SDC and IUCN

Audience: SDC, IUCN, project staff

Evaluation team: Mixed Internal/External

Methodology used:

- Literature review (incl. SPCS reports, Phase III Aide Memoire, Planning Mission Report, Internal Review Report, etc);
- Discussions with project staff (both group level and individual);
- Focus group and individual meetings with government officials, NGOs, academia, private sector; and
- Information gathering through the press to identify current concerns in the province and in the country.

Questions of the evaluation:

In addition to examining changes in the local context and key project mechanisms, the evaluation reviewed the following questions:

1. To what extent has SPCS IV facilitated institutional strengthening?
2. Has the project been effective in developing necessary skills in select organizations, with due regard to gender?
3. Has SPCS been able to strengthen and expand the financial resource base for sustainable development in the North West Frontier Province?
4. Have learning and feedback mechanisms been institutionalized to firm the basis for informed decision-making?
5. How effectively has the SPCS been able to promote integrated planning for sustainable development at the district and lower levels?
6. How effective has the SPCS been in networking with other organizations to raise awareness on sustainable development?

Findings:

- SPCS is no longer on the agenda of all stakeholders as other issues, such as poverty and good governance, have come to the forefront. Nonetheless, the level of awareness and understanding of issues related to sustainable development within the Government of NWFP and main actors (civil society, academia, journalists) is considered impressive.
- The pace of institutionalization of the key SPCS mechanisms has been slow, with only the Roundtables and the Governmental Focal Points being considered functional. The Focal Groups within Departments, the Provincial Sustainable Development Council, and the Fund for Sustainable Development (FSD) are still not operational.
- While the quality of IUCN assistance to policy dialogue has been expressed on many occasions, a strong call for assistance in policy implementation has been repeatedly made.
- Capacity building has been greatly appreciated by both government and civil society.
- Clear indicators and simpler sustainable development monitoring processes are not in place.
- There is high level of enthusiasm at the district level in the development of district sustainable strategies with IUCN support. However, the provincial level should not be disregarded.
- A Mid-Term Review of the 10-year SPCS process was in the design stage and stakeholders were often confused between this SPCS IV mid-term review mission and the overall SPCS mid-term review, which is to be completed by the end of the year; and
- It was difficult to clearly attribute the outcomes of this phase of the project, as they often merged with the cumulative results of three phases of project implementation.

Recommendations:

The evaluation report offers an exhaustive list of recommendations, including:

- Ensuring that training needs are identified and sufficient capacity building undertaken at different tiers (provincial/district, civil society) to allow for the implementation of environmental assessment checklists/guidelines before the end of SPCS IV.
- Expediting FSD's operationalisation with a cut-off date of December 2003, thus subsequently reverting SDC contribution to other uses.
- Integrating environmental concerns into district level development planning by assisting select districts in setting up funds.
- Proposing a monitoring model of sustainable development indicators, and identifying partners ready to provide and update the data regularly.

- Distilling the best practice lessons and processes of the district strategies into ‘guidelines and operational manuals,’ to facilitate replication and scaling up.
- Undertaking a rapid analysis of local government cadres and competencies in relation to environmental management functions and an assessment of training needs for government, NGOs/CBOs and the private sector, with a specific focus on the needs for implementing the DCSs.
- Implementing small-scale initiatives focused on the poverty-environment nexus through local partnerships among government, NGOs and the private sector.
- Further promoting gender equity, with a focus on bringing in more women, including elected representatives into the existing Roundtables and in training events.
- Ensuring that the secretariat of each Roundtable has shifted from IUCN to an appropriate government department or civil society organization, while abandoning the Focal Groups concept.

Lessons Learned: Not specified

Language of the evaluation: English

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