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Feedback on the final report from the MWBP Mid Term Evaluation team

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4 October 2006

Ms Setsuko Yamazaki  
Deputy Resident Representative  
UNDP Lao PDR

Dear Setsuko,

I would like to offer some comments on the final report from the Mid Term Evaluation of the MWBP (dated 20 July 2006). While IUCN appreciates the significant effort made by the MTE team in undertaking this evaluation and preparing the draft and final reports, and while we welcome and agree with the intentions reflected in the recommendations, it is important to first record two key concerns with the process and report:

1. I am aware that many corrections and comments made by the MWBP team in response to the draft report have not been dealt with satisfactorily by the authors. This ultimately undermines the report's credibility.

2. Unfortunately, the final report is presented in a way that can easily give the wrong impression about the progress of Phase A to those not closely familiar with all aspects of the Programme and its context. This has already happened in the case of the Dutch Government. Staff in "The Hague" have expressed concern about the negative assessments made in the report and the apparent high costs of the regional management structure (erroneously reported in both the draft and final reports). As you know, after receiving the report, the co-financing from the Dutch that was available for MWBP related work in 2007 – 2009 has been suspended. I would like to state clearly that IUCN does not accept many of the negative ratings given in the report and is disappointed that inaccurate information remains in the final version. Even more seriously, the suspension of the regional Dutch funding has meant that some of the country level activities that could have been continued into a next phase with new donors have been irrevocably compromised and the investment lost as staff and equipment are disbanded and disbursed.

Having expressed these concerns, IUCN has no major problems with the basic thrusts behind the recommendations as presented in section 11 and is ready and able to assist in their further consideration in collaboration with MWBP's partners.

IUCN agrees with and strongly endorses the statement that appears on page 78 which reads "*The MTE considers that substantial investment made by MWBP in phase A and the resulting successful establishment of enabling environments, albeit at different levels in the four countries, warrants further work.*"

IUCN is committed to pursuing appropriate opportunities and roles that build on the legacy of MWBP Phase A both within national wetland programmes and projects in each country, and within other regional initiatives. The scope and nature of such regional initiatives will include and go beyond what has been described in the MTE report.

IUCN looks forward to further collaboration with UNDP and the other partners of MWBP that can lead to a continuation and expansion of the important work initiated by Phase A, but under a different formulation than previously envisaged.

Yours sincerely

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