Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:
Review of the Innovation, Integration, Information and Communication (3I-C) Project on Poverty and the Environment, managed by the Forest Conservation Programme, prepared by Dan Gilmour, February 2004

Name of project, programme or organizational unit
Innovation, Integration, Information and Communication (3I-C) Project,
a partnership among the Forest Conservation Programme/IUCN Headquarters; Forest Programme, Asia Region; Forest Programme, Eastern Africa Region; Commission for Environmental Economics and Social Policy (CEESP); and Commission for Ecosystem Management (CEM).

Objectives of the project, programme or mandate of the organizational unit:
To develop a strategy and approach that enable IUCN to demonstrate the link between poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem management, and to build effective partnerships with social development organizations.

IUCN area of specialisation: Poverty and Environment

Geographical area: Global; Asia and Eastern Africa

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organisational unit:
March 2002 – October 2003

Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit: CHF 230,000

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

Objectives of the evaluation:
To assess the effectiveness of the 3I-C process and the usefulness of its products; learn from the experience; and assess how the innovative thinking coming from the project was integrated and institutionalized within IUCN.

Type of evaluation: Formative project evaluation

Period covered by the evaluation: March 2002 – October 2003

Commissioned by: IUCN

Audience: IUCN

Evaluation team: External

Methodology used:
- Document review;
- Face-to-face interviews with key informants at the IUCN headquarters;
- Telephone interviews with key informants not stationed at the IUCN HQ.

Questions of the evaluation:
1. Analyze the process that has been used to implement the 3I-C Project;

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2. Evaluate the effectiveness/appropriateness of the process within IUCN's management/cultural context;
3. Analyze how the knowledge generated from the project was integrated into the Forest Conservation Programme and its 3I-C partners;
4. Evaluate the usefulness of the project products in terms of achieving 3I-C's objectives;
5. Comment on the approaches used to communicate the project's messages and lessons learned;
6. Comment on the relevance of the 3I-C approach within IUCN to identify and explore innovations – with suggestions for improvements.

Findings:
- Project results generally exceeded planned outputs. Key elements to achieving success included: commitment and active participation of the FCP Head, the Global Programme Director, and the Director General; a strategically and managerially well thought-out project concept; use of existing partnerships within the forest programme; flexible management arrangement; regular feedback, etc.
- Rather than following a linear process, implementation was characterized by a series of planning-action-reflection-learning loops.
- Learning came from various sources, notably workshops, case studies, and analytical writing.
- Process management was flexible, adaptive, and involving a high level of participation.
- Internal information flows were managed effectively by regular interaction within and between the inner Core Team and a broader Reference Group. Externally, IUCN's position paper presented at the World Summit for Sustainable Development positioned the organization as a significant player in the conservation-poverty debate.

Recommendations:
Suggestions that emerged during the review process included:
- Allowing for some form of sabbatical period where staff is divorced completely from the exigencies of everyday program activities for the sake of pursuing innovative ideas.
- Allocating part of the budget to bringing in people who can take on some or all of the normal program activities for defined periods of time so that massive backlogs and work overloads do not occur.
- Appointing people who are not programme heads as process managers for some 3I-C projects.
It is also emphasized that institutionalization of pro-poor concepts into the psyche of the organization will require more than organizational adjustments; it should rather be seen as generational change. Focused organizational changes should be considered as necessary but not sufficient steps.

Lessons Learned:
Without some form of management incentive, it is difficult to instill attitudes and behaviour patterns in staff towards adopting a learning culture and being innovative. The best results have come from approaches such as the 3I-C Project where incentives are accompanied by arrangements that are designed to free people from day-to-day tasks of running normal programmatic activities.

Language of the evaluation: English

Available from: IUCN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative, Gland, Switzerland