

Evaluation Abstract

Title, author and date of the evaluation report:

Joint Review of the IUCN Global Biodiversity Programme, Phase III, prepared by Stephen Turner and Meg Gawler, July 2002

Name of project, programme or organizational unit

Global Biodiversity Programme

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

The IUCN Global Biodiversity Programme involved a comprehensive set of objectives, including synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related agreements; development and implementation of incentive measures and financial systems supporting conservation; tools and methodologies for biodiversity assessment; government implementation of effective biodiversity planning processes; strengthened capacity to minimize the effects of climate change; biodiversity implications considered in decisions and policies affecting biodiversity, etc. A complete list of programme objectives is available in Annex 5 of the evaluation report.

IUCN area of specialisation: Biodiversity

Geographical area: Global, with regional sub-projects

Project or programme duration, length of existence of organizational unit:

Phase I (1993-1996); Phase II (1997-1999); Phase III (under evaluation): 2000-2002

Overall budget of the project, programme or organizational unit:

CHF 10 million (Phase I, II and III)

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

Objectives of the Evaluation:

The evaluation aimed to assess the relevance and effectiveness of Phase III results, with a particular focus on the programme approach. Specifically, it was designed to:

1. Assess the extent to which expected results were achieved;
2. Describe and assess the relevance and effectiveness of the partnerships created among IUCN Global Thematic Programmes, Commissions and Regional Programs;
3. Describe the institutional influences and effects that have occurred in the UICN Programme and can reasonably be associated to Phase III of GBP;
4. Highlight programmatic and organizational lessons learned with regard to the approach taken.

Type of evaluation: Final Programme Evaluation

Period covered by the evaluation: 2000-2002

Commissioned by: SDC and IUCN

Audience: SDC and IUCN

Evaluation team: External

Methodology used:

This evaluation represents a ‘joint effort’ between SDC and IUCN, who jointly commissioned the report and collectively developed the Terms of Reference. Following a series of introductory discussions at the IUCN headquarters, an evaluation matrix was created. An open-ended questionnaire constituted the central tool of the evaluation, followed up by direct or telephone interviews with respondents. Three versions of the questionnaire were developed for: 1) IUCN secretariat personnel; 2) IUCN commission members; and 3) representatives of donor agencies and NGOs. A detailed review of programme plans and indicators was also conducted.

Questions of the evaluation:

The evaluation asked questions focused on assessing performance (including programme effectiveness, efficiency, coverage of Key Result Areas) and approach (i.e. programme relevance to biodiversity priorities; character and accomplishments of established partnerships; effectiveness of vertical and policy-science-practice linkages; planning and management of innovation; and institutional influences and effects), and finally how should IUCN structure its future relationship with the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

Findings:

Despite multiple redesigning and poor monitoring and reporting, Phase III of the GDP has been assessed as largely relevant to IUCN’s biodiversity concerns. It has also been considered fairly effective in contributing to the organization’s overall intentions.

The programme achieved high policy utility and accomplished significant conceptual, methodological and capacity advances in a range of areas. Important progress has also been made in promoting vertical integration within IUCN as well as in encouraging partnerships between the Regional Conservation Offices, Commissions, and global programmes.

The Evaluation Team identified a dichotomy between the programmatic policy work driven from IUCN headquarters and the excessively fragmented work in a wide range of areas, undertaken on a project basis by various programme partners through a series of grants. As a result, despite the good strategic vision of IUCN’s Biodiversity Policy Coordination Division (BPCD), the programme lacked focus and direction. While laudably participatory in its planning, GBP’s communications, monitoring and reporting were obstructed by the heavy bureaucratic burden of an overloaded BPCD coordinator.

While the principle of using GBP funding as seed money was positively assessed, the requirement that all activities should be co-financed proved to be unreasonably restrictive, leading to frustration and perceived under-performance in some cases. Although the principles of this approach are appropriate, the Biodiversity Planning Meetings are believed to have failed to achieve an appropriate balance between participation and direction.

Recommendations:

The evaluation report offers a series of recommendations, including:

- Continued support for IUCN's work on the CBD, particularly in maintaining and enhancing the advocacy and advisory services provided to governments.
- Building upon GBP's policy achievements as part of an evolving strategy for IUCN's interactions with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Joint advocacy strategies and lobbying work plans with other conservation organizations are suggested in this regard.
- At the programme level, a more strategic and programmatic approach is recommended, which focuses on the big picture and explicitly fosters learning. IUCN should seek to achieve a balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches, as well as between empowerment, delegation and direction.
- At the administrative level, a better financial reporting system should be put into place. IUCN should ensure that the same financial tools are used by project managers and finance staff, and that reporting and approval requirements are clearly communicated, understood by all, and implemented on time.
- Although IUCN has high credibility in the CBD, there may be other MEAs in which it can work effectively. A strategic, prioritized approach to the array of MEAs and related bodies like the World Trade Organization is recommended, thus applying some of the approaches successfully pioneered with the CBD.

Lessons Learned:

Not explicitly specified.

Language of the evaluation: English

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