

**Title:** "Sustainable Marine Biodiversity Conservation: Linking Tourism to Marine and Coastal Protected Areas"

**Evaluation Team:** internal and external

**Year:** 2002

**Project Objectives:**

The goal of the overall project was to: "*Contribute towards ecologically and economically sustainable marine and coastal biodiversity conservation through integration of coastal community livelihoods, development of coastal tourism and marine protected areas.*"

The four objectives designed to achieve this goal were to:

1. *Assess the role of selected local communities in coastal tourism and marine protected areas (MPAs)*
2. *Assess the links, including impacts, between coastal ecosystems (terrestrial, wetlands, marine) important for integrated development of tourism and MPAs*
3. *Design and implement appropriate strategies and guidelines for the conservation of biological diversity through demonstration activities that link marine/coastal tourism and MPA development with the participation of local communities*
4. *Facilitate sharing of experiences obtained during project implementation between the two regions involved –Eastern Africa and Central America- and derive lessons learned with global applications*

**IUCN specialization area:** Protected Areas

**Geographical area:** Belize, Panama and Kenya

**Donors:** BMZ- German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Overall project cost:** US\$ 602,141 over four years

**Type of evaluation:** Final Internal Review

**Evaluation objectives:**

The internal review of the BMZ project is a self-assessment of the achievements, impacts, and lessons learned during project implementation.

The specific aims of the evaluation are to:

- ✍ Assess the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation
- ✍ Evaluate the impact of project activities and related outputs, including their contribution to the overall goal of the project
- ✍ Determine the project's relevance in relation to the needs of the stakeholders and environment
- ✍ Assess the long-term sustainability of the actions initiated
- ✍ Identify lessons learned with respect to the project's strategic approach (the processes and mechanisms chosen to achieve the objectives)

### **Methodology:**

- ? A desk review of the project document, work plans and progress reports and other relevant documentation to review and assess achievements thus far, and performance regarding work plans, in particular
- ? Consultation of project partners, staff and key stakeholders through interviews, meetings and questionnaires, where appropriate

There two project components (Central America and Eastern Africa) were evaluated separately, using identical methodology to identify the same elements and answer the same questions, and then consolidated.

### **Findings:**

- 1) The most important contribution of this evaluation lies in the identification and analysis of lessons learned and conclusions and recommendations regarding the project design and operating structure. Planning, approaches, operational arrangements (management, M&E) and financial administration were analyzed for elements important to IUCN with respect to inter-regional initiatives in partnership with local NGOs and GOs and the development of demonstration experiences.
- 2) Although this document also refers to lessons learned of a thematic nature, particularly those associated with links between tourism, marine protected areas and community participation, this is not an innovative contribution since outputs to identify such experiences and lessons were included in the project itself: regional workshops, the inter-regional workshop and the final project report.
- 3) The project presented weaknesses in planning, and neither the articulation between different levels (project document and demonstration areas) nor the scope of objectives were clear. As a result, the project focused more on outputs at the level of the demonstration areas than at the policy or institutional level that would have made it possible to validate strategies and mechanisms for an "integrated approach in developing coastal tourism and marine protected areas" with potential global application.
- 4) Project initiatives tended to respond to needs and problems in the demonstration areas using local capacity. To varying degrees of success, the three areas supported local processes already underway and were thus perceived as highly relevant by partner organizations and local groups.
- 5) It was pointed out that the lack of an "exit strategy" was a weakness in project design and, as a consequence, the project "*just closed*." Consequently, since then there has been little or no follow-up or any consideration of future options.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) It is suggested that planning for projects under IUCN responsibility involve a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system with the minimum standards of quality established by the IUCN Global M&E Initiative.
- 2) Although the project achieved outputs and outcomes in themes of interest to the IUCN, one cannot say that outputs and outcomes at a higher level of MPA

biodiversity conservation were achieved. Processes were experimental and therefore valuable, but the experience obtained should be examined more closely at both the procedural and demonstrative level in order to obtain globally applicable experiences contributing to IUCN's higher objectives.

- 3) Project procedures should include requirements for ongoing documentation of all management and technical decisions in order to prevent the loss of institutional memory during staff changes.
- 4) The purpose of undertaking inter-regional projects should be reviewed to assess their usefulness and relevance.
- 5) It is important that IUCN explicitly define what determines the demonstrative character of an initiative and act accordingly, clearly defining elements to be validated so that the exchange of experiences in the demonstration areas can lead to the identification of replicable elements under particular conditions.
- 6) It is important to define strategies ensuring the continuity of project outputs and outcomes.

During interviews it was repeatedly suggested that an analysis be made of the cost-benefit relation of economic investment in the inception and planning phase versus investment in activities and products at the demonstration areas.

***Language of the Evaluation:*** English

***Available From:*** IUCN M&E Initiative