

# **Internal Review of the Asia Regional Forest Programme**

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## Acronyms

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3I-C	IUCN fund for Catalyzing Innovation, Integration, Information and Communication
ARO	Asia Regional Office
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ELG	Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
RECOFT	Regional Community Forestry Training Centre
RFP	Regional Forest Programme
RPAP	Regional Protected Areas Programme
RTP	Regional Thematic Programme (of IUCN Asia Regional Office)
RWWP	Regional Wetlands and Water Resources Programme
WCC	World Conservation Congress
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

## Acknowledgements

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A review of this nature depends on the collaboration and openness of everyone involved and the staff in Asia Region certainly ensured that this process was both smooth and productive. Many thanks to everyone who made time to speak about the Regional Forest Programme. Special thanks to the participants of the mini-workshop, which included Andrew Ingles, Stewart Maginnis, Ranjith Mahindapala, T. P. Singh and Edmund Barrow. Of course, reviews are by their nature an intrusive and time-consuming process, so the considerable time and patience by Guido Broekhoven was very much appreciated. I would also like to thank Alejandro Imbach for his participation and for laying the methodological groundwork for this review. Finally, I would like to thank khun Petch Singhawong for her tireless efforts to find people for me to talk to, all across Asia and just before World Conservation Congress.

## Executive Summary

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The review of the Asia Regional Forest Programme (RFP) was undertaken at the request of the RFP Coordinator to generate in-depth dialogue on the past and future of the unit for learning purposes. The review took place in November 2004 and was comprised of a document review, structured and semi-structured interviews with 27 RFP stakeholders across Asia Region and from IUCN-HQ and two mini-workshops to discuss findings and possible recommendations. The results of this review are intended for use by the RFP Coordinator; however a key finding of this review indicates that this review has findings and recommendations which are potentially of use to Senior Management of IUCN-Asia and the Head of the Global Forest Programme.

### *Creation, Formation and Programmatic Priorities of the Regional Forest Programme*

The Asia RFP was created in 1997 and is one of seven Regional Thematic Programmes in Asia Region, organized into three Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups. The RFP was created both to meet a need for forest-related programming in Asia Region and to meet demand for ground-level forest conservation work which could inform global level forest policy dialogues. The RFP was both an opportunistic and purposeful creation by meeting a clear demand and as part of a strategy employed by the Global Forest Conservation Programme to regionalize its operations.

In the 2001-2004 Intersessional Period, the RFP addressed the themes of sustainable and equitable use of non-timber forest products, restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forest landscapes, collaborative management of forests outside of protected areas landscapes, forest fire management and national protected area system planning and trans-boundary protected area management. With the creation of the Regional Protected Areas Programme part-way through the Intersessional Period, the latter theme was replaced by the RFP with a theme on national forest sector policy and governance, to better reflect changes in Asia Region and meet additional opportunities and demands.

The review found that the RFP can potentially receive its mandate from three very different sources: the Asia Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group, the Global Forest Conservation Programme and the Country Offices of Asia Region.

Recommendations included:

1. Develop, as a first step, in collaboration with Forest Focal Points and Country Offices, a vision for a regionalized forest team, supported by a set of roles and responsibilities that formalizes the Forest Focal Points as an advisory body to the Regional Forest Programme.
2. As a priority demonstration, secure resources for one regionalized project (3 to 5 year term) that could support forest officers in a select number of countries and link local/country level experiences with a regional policy priority.
3. The Regional Forest Programme should immediately produce a 2005-2008 Intersessional Plan that will articulate intersessional results that are more forest-specific than the intersessional results of the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group. This plan should also show clear linkages between the RFP and the intersessional results of the Global Forest Conservation Programme.
4. The Regional Forest Programme would benefit from undertaking an institutional or stakeholder analysis of members and partners in Asia Region and ensure that this analysis covers all countries covered by the Asia Regional Office.
5. Following from the development of an RFP Intersessional Plan and an RFP Institutional or Stakeholder Analysis, there are elements of a Business Plan, such as a

stakeholder or member engagement strategy, which would be appropriate for the RFP to develop. This work should be linked to the work of the Global FCP's Membership Engagement Officer's work on screening IUCN Member's involvement in forest conservation work.

***Products and Services of the Regional Forest Programme***

Discussions with stakeholders revealed that with very few exceptions, stakeholders find the

10. ELG and RFP must explore opportunities to increase the capacity (specifically, staffing level) of the RFP to respond to integration and other issues to overcome the staffing shortfall introduced with the formation of the ELGs.

16. The RFP should pursue the Global Forest Conservation Programme's and Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group's offer to undertaking joint fund-raising with the RFP.
17. The capacity of the RFP as a whole is insufficient to meet all of its demands, including fundraising. Capacity should be increased to either permit the Coordinator to undertake more fundraising activities, or by bringing in outside assistance.
18. The format and maintenance of the RFP project proposal portfolio should immediately revert to the standards outlined in "Building and Managing the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups: A discussion paper on operationalizing Stage 1 of the reorganization."

In the course of the review process, the time devoted to discussing findings and potential recommendations revealed a strong willingness to act on the results of this review.

# **1 Introduction and Purpose of the Review**

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The IUCN Asia Regional Office (ARO) regularly conducts programmatic reviews of its different units (Country Programmes, Regional Thematic Programmes, Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups and Projects) in order to reflect on past progress and future directions of the unit. This review concerns the Asia Regional Forest Programme (RFP), which is a part of one of the three Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups (ELGs) of the Asia Regional Office, and is being undertaken at the request of the RFP Coordinator. The timing of this review coincides with the end of the 2001-2004 Intersessional Period, which is the end of an IUCN Programme planning cycle and the start of the 2005-2008 Intersessional Period. In addition, the RFP is one of the oldest regional programmes in Asia and it has never before been reviewed.

For these reasons and for the purpose of looking forward, this review was commissioned by the RFP Coordinator who thought it an opportune time for this review. The results of this review are intended for use by the RFP Coordinator, but are also expected to benefit other managers in Asia Region and the Head of the Global Forest Conservation Programme.

The review of the Regional Forest Programme is an internal review which is by its nature, quite different in intent and methodology from an evaluation. While an evaluation aims to pass judgment on performance, the purpose of a review is to generate an in-depth dialogue about the past and the future of the unit, in order to provide input to managers at different levels.<sup>1</sup>



## 1.1 Methods

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This review started with a set of evaluation questions provided by ARO on the issues of mandate and delivery, which were then turned into an evaluation matrix (Annex 1).

The review itself can be more or less divided into two parts. In the first part, the reviewer undertook a document review (publications, meeting reports, project proposals, programme descriptions, etc) and interviewed stakeholders (IUCN managers, Country Office Staff, Members and Partners) to gain a sense of the key issues facing the Regional Forest Programme.

These key issues were presented to a core group of IUCN managers that work most closely with the RFP for further discussion in a mini-workshop. This group included the Coordinator of the Regional Forest Programme, Head of Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group 1, Head of the Global Forest Conservation Programme, Programme Coordinator for Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group 1, Deputy Programme Coordinator for Asia Regional Office and the Coordinator of Forest Conservation and Social Policy for IUCN's Eastern Africa Office. The discussion helped the reviewer clarify findings and develop recommendations.

A total of 27 stakeholders (see also, Table 1) were interviewed during the course of this review. Of this, fifteen stakeholders were interviewed using a structured questionnaire to collect both quantitative data and qualitative data on their perceptions. This group generally contained Country Office Staff, Members and Partners of the Regional Forest Programme. A further twelve stakeholders were interviewed in an unstructured format on more specific issues. This group was mainly comprised of former or current Senior IUCN Managers.

Keeping in mind that the purpose of the revi

**Table 1: Who are the Regional Forest Programme's Stakeholders?**

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Stake</i>
Senior Managers, IUCN and Asia Region (includes Global Forest Conservation Programme, Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups, IUCN-ARO Senior Managers)	See the RFP as a source of technical information; as a potential partner; as a potential competitor for resources; as a source of impact on IUCN's reputation and credibility

- Restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forest landscapes;
- Collaborative management of forests outside of protected area landscapes;
- Forest fire management;
- National protected area system planning and trans-boundary protected area management.

Halfway through the 2001-2004 Intersessional period, the fifth theme was changed to “National forest sector policy, planning and governance.” The switch reflected two changes within the RFP and Asia Region, namely the creation of a Regional Protected Areas Programme (RPAP) which assumed the work that the RFP had undertaken in protected area landscapes and the emergence of forest governance work.

**Box 1: 2001-2004 Intersessional Results for the Asia Regional Forest Programme**

**Forest Ecosystem Conservation & Restoration**

- Knowledge and awareness of stakeholders is enhanced about forest ecosystems, habitats and species, and their management
- Human and institutional capacity for conserving and restoring forest ecosystems, habitats and species is enhanced
- Policies, laws, strategies and action plans to conserve and restore forests are developed, adopted and under implementation in all countries

**Sustainable & Equitable Use**

- Knowledge and awareness for promoting and achieving equitable and sustainable use of forests is enhanced among stakeholders
- Human and institutional capacity for equitable and sustainable use and management of forests is enhanced
- Policies and laws that influence equitable and sustainable use of forests are analyzed and where appropriate reforms are advocated
- Gender aspects with respect to the equitable and sustainable use and management of forests are incorporated into programmes and projects of IUCN and its key partners

**Programme Management & Development**

- The Regional Forest Programme is managed effectively, efficiently and accountably
- ARD's programme development and management systems are supported
- Financial resources are secured and funds are deployed and managed efficiently, effectively and

## **2.1 Creation and Evolution of the Regional Forest Programme**

This section discusses the history of the Regional Forest Programme. For internal reviews such as this one, it is important to depart from a common understanding of the Programme's formation and the circumstances which have guided its recent history.

The Regional Forest Programme was both an opportunistic and purposeful creation. At the global level, the Forest Conservation Programme felt its policy work was insufficiently informed by work in the regions. Also, the creation of the RFP was both facilitated by and coincided with, emerging development of the Asia Regional Programme.

Creation of regionalized Forest Programmes was a strategy employed by the then-Head of the Global Forest Conservation Programme to ensure that the Global Forest Programme at HQ was reflective of work in the field. At the time, there was not much forest programming occurring in Regional and Country Offices, so the Global Forest Programme started to support forest staff in various regions and formed a network of forest officers around the world. A key strategy of the Global FCP during this period has been the re-distribution of core forest funding to regional forest programming to ensure the presence of forest officers in key regions, which in turn has supported the flow of field-based lessons back to HQ which can then be fed into international forest policy work.

At this time, the Asia Regional Office did not exist, with each Country Office instead reporting directly to HQ. With the formation of the Asia Regional Office, the RFP was centralized in Bangkok with a number of the other RTPs. In 2003, the RFP was folded into Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group 1, one of three Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups in Asia Region.

The Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups were formed in 2003 to "...better reflect and deliver an ecosystems and livelihoods approach to nature conservation – one that is based on simultaneously improving both the socio-economic and environmental situation of the region."<sup>2</sup> As part of this process, ELG1 approached all Country Offices to scope out the demand for technical inputs from the RTPs, including the RFP. These consultations with Country Offices have informed both the RFP's intersessional and annual planning processes.

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<sup>2</sup> ELG website

The ELG is comprised of seven functional Regional Thematic Programmes which are, in theory, able to work together as a multi-disciplinary team.<sup>3</sup> ELG's roles include:

- Managing a regional technical programme
- Assisting country programmes
- Undertaking multi-country work
- Addressing cross-border and trans-boundary issues
- Developing work in new countries and themes
- Engaging and interacting with regional organizations
- Linking spatial levels and locations
- Supporting and guiding the global programme.

ELG works using essentially the same strategies as IUCN does: increasing knowledge, empowering stakeholders and influencing governance structures. Where ELG differs somewhat in intent, is the extent to which the structure is explicitly aimed at supporting work that tests and validates what an ecosystems and livelihoods approach means in practice.

The ELGs emerged as part of the re-organization of the Asia Regional Office to simplify the management structure of ARO and to enable a programmatic reorientation so that ARO can “better address livelihoods and ecosystems issues in an integrated way.” The re-organization emerged after considerable thought.<sup>4</sup> In 2002, former FCP Head Don Gilmour wrote a piece called “Thoughts on restructuring of ARD” with some specific suggestion on the rationale for supporting Regional Thematic Programmes such as the RFP. Gilmour suggested that:

- Country Offices are unable to support dedicated in-house specialists for all technical needs. A RTP could fill the function of providing this expertise and this could be shared by the Country Offices.
- A Regional Thematic Programme could add-value to Country Offices by providing programme coherence, building and maintaining technical excellence and facilitating collective learning and knowledge management.
- RTPs, formed at the regional level, would also have the opportunity to undertake multi-country or transboundary work, link Country Offices to regional partners, IUCN Commissions and IUCN's Global Thematic Programmes, or fill a need for technical work in countries without functioning Country Offices.
- RTPs would be an ideal mechanism for sharing the knowledge generated in the region to inform work at the global level.

Finally, recognizing that while Regional Thematic Programmes are very useful mechanisms for supporting technical and thematic work in Asia Region, there were simply too numerous to properly manage and integrate into the Asia Regional Programme. Thus, the ELGs provide an interesting structure in which to manage the RTPs. For IUCN, the ELGs in Asia Region provide a relatively unique structure. The ELG “manifesto” outlined a plan by which RTPs would maintain considerable autonomy, while creating and contributing to a common plan.<sup>5</sup> Central to this

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<sup>3</sup> The ELG website lists eight Regional Thematic Programmes, however the RTP on mountains appears to be still emerging as a programme.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, the manifesto -- REFERENCE

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Ingles and Lucy Emerton, 2003. IUCN in Asia: Building and Managing the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups, A discussion paper on operationalizing stage 1 of the reorganization. Unpublished discussion paper.

structure was the opportunity and obligation for RTPs to plan together and work together to produce results. This aspect of integration between RTPs is discussed in more detail in the section on Partnerships and Integration.

## **2.2 Mandate and Programmatic Priorities of the Regional Forest Programme**

***Finding**                      **The Regional Forest Programme potentially receives its mandate from three very different sources: the Asia Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group, the Global Forest Conservation Programme and the Country Offices of Asia Region.***

The mandate of IUCN as a whole is formally set by its Membership at the World Conservation Congress every four years through the Resolution Process and adoption of the Intersessional Programme. For the Asia Regional Forest Programme, the source of its mandate is somewhat more complicated, including the Asia Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group, the Global Forest Conservation Programme and the Country Offices in Asia Region. All three undertake Intersessional and Annual Planning separately, although these plans are linked into the overall IUCN Intersessional Plan. While the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group and the Global Forest Conservation Programme are very compatible in terms of objectives and strategies, these are still two entirely different programmatic units that could create programmatic pull in two slightly different directions for the Regional Forest Programme (see Box 1). During the most recent Intersessional planning process, the Global Forest Conservation Programme was careful to align itself with proposed regional forest programmes, including Asia Region. Finally, in terms of mandate, there is an element of historical pull on the overall direction of the RFP from its early success in South-East Asia.

The mandate and programmatic priorities of the RFP can and should also be informed by regional stakeholders. However, there is neither a systematic consultation process, nor any sort of institutional/stakeholder analysis of members and partners in Asia Region. Typically, this analysis is included in a Situation Analysis. Documentation on the RFP does discuss the forest situation in Asia, but not the institutional context in which it is operating.

An examination of the RFP's documentation and discussion with senior coordinators suggested that there is sufficient need for the RFP to articulate intersessional results



wanted to complete was agreement on a set of roles and responsibilities for forest





Almost all respondents see the RFP's programmatic themes as either very or somewhat relevant (Figures 1 through 5). Ranked in order of relevance, the themes of the RFP seen as "very relevant" by stakeholders:

- "Sustainable and Equitable use of Non-Timber Forest Products" (93%),
- "Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest Landscapes (93%),
- "Collaborative Management of Forests outside of Protected Areas" (86%)  
and
- "Forest Fire Management" (31%).

The relatively low approval of the Forest Fire Management Theme reflects the importance of the issue across Asia Region. In Indonesia, where most of IUCN-Asia's forest fire work has been undertaken, the theme is of critical importance. In other parts of Asia where forest fires are less of an issue, the RFP does not address this issue.

It is perhaps interesting to note this discontinuity in IUCN's work overall. On the one hand, the RFP works in Indonesia solely on forest fire work. However, countries such as Indonesia, Brazil and Madagascar among others, are mega-centers of biological diversity, suggesting that IUCN should be active. At first glance, the choice to work solely on forest fires in Indonesia seems a bit odd, considering the work that could be done by IUCN across a range of thematic programmes in a place such as Indonesia. However, a wider view of IUCN's work across the globe reveals that these exceptions do exist; that IUCN works in some places, but not others for reasons that may seem opaque to outside observers. This may be a function of sheer opportunism, IUCN's flexibility, the ability to respond to urgent issues or a response to demands placed on IUCN by Members and partners. In the instance of the RFP's forest fire work in Indonesia; all three explanations are at the root of its involvement. In many cases, an initial opportunity can produce the entry points necessary for more strategically focused work, if that is something IUCN sees as important. This is not intended to be a criticism of how the RFP has determined its programmatic priorities, but an observation of the larger forces at work within IUCN as a whole.

Finally, "National Protected Area System Planning and Transboundary Protected Areas" as a theme also scored relatively well, with 65% of respondents indicating that this theme is very or somewhat relevant to stakeholders in the region (Figure 5). The theme has since been replaced with a focus on forest governance and policy and protected areas work has shifted to the Regional Protected Areas Programme.

This review did not specifically ask stakeholders to commend on the relevance of the new theme "National forest policy and governance," however the frequency with which the topic was discussed by stakeholders suggests that this theme rates highly.

Stakeholders were asked specifically on what other areas the RFP could focus. A bit of caution should be used in interpreting these results, as the perceptions of stakeholders reflect their knowledge of the programmatic priorities and work of the RFP, however incomplete.

The most mentioned suggestions included poverty-livelihoods issues, forest policy, planning and management and economic valuation of forests. Of those three areas, the RFP has already worked on poverty-livelihoods issues through its NTFP work and its participation in the IUCN 3I-C project on conservation and poverty. Poverty-livelihoods issues also form the umbrella of the ELG Intersessional Plan, to which the RFP contributes. The poverty-livelihoods issue is indicative of the issue raised above: that different stakeholders have different knowledge of what the RFP is doing. In the course of this review, stakeholders revealed a range of opinions, from “the RFP should do more work on poverty-livelihoods issues” through to “the RFP appears to be protecting its turf and should not be taking the lead on poverty-livelihoods issues.” It is always interesting to inquire with stakeholders their impressions as to what a programme *should be doing*, given the often uneven awareness of what a programme *is doing* on a day-to-day basis. The preceding quote suggests a tension where likely none exists, just a lack of awareness of other structures. In this case, the RFP was far from taking a lead on poverty-livelihoods issues, but instead was integrated into the global 3I-C project on that topic, originating from HQ and worked with RWWP on the livelihoods training.

The RFP has also created a theme around National Forest Sector Policy and Governance and recently secured a project on forest law enforcement and governance. One senior coordinator noted that the RFP does not focus on forest species

did develop a number of project proposals for species related work, and recently the RFP secured a small grant to work with TRAFFIC on the trade of medicinal plants in China.

In support of suggestions for thematic work, respondents indicated that the RFP should focus on building partnerships with FAO, ASEAN and ITTO in the region, which the RFP has done. Some stakeholders suggested working with a range of national partners, such as national forest departments or national offices of WWF, although other stakeholders indicated quite strongly that national-level partnerships are clearly managed by the Country Offices themselves. The issue of partnerships is covered in more detail in subsequent sections.

The recommendations (below) are potentially applicable to all Regional Thematic Programmes. The extent to which each RTP is already undertaking the following was beyond the scope of this review, however a common set of planning standards facilitated by the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups would be appropriate for all RTPs. Further discussion between RTPs and ELGs may reveal synergies and value-added that could provide a common pool of knowledge from which each RTP could draw, in particular stakeholder, institutional, membership and donor intelligence.

**Recommendation**      *The Regional Forest Programme should immediately produce a 2005-2008 Intersessional Plan that will articulate intersessional results that are more forest-specific than the intersessional results of the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group. This plan should also show clear linkages between the RFP and the intersessional results of the Global Forest Conservation Programme.*

**Recommendation**      *The Regional Forest Programme would benefit from undertaking an institutional or stakeholder analysis of members and partners in Asia Region and ensure that this analysis covers all countries covered by the Asia Regional Office.*

**Recommendation**      *Following from the development of an RFP Intersessional Plan and an RFP Institutional or Stakeholder Analysis, there are elements of a Business Plan, such as a stakeholder or member engagement strategy, which would be appropriate for the RFP to develop. This work should be linked to the work of the Global FCP's Membership Engagement Officer's work on screening IUCN Member's involvement in forest conservation work.*

### 3 Products and Services of the Regional Forest Programme

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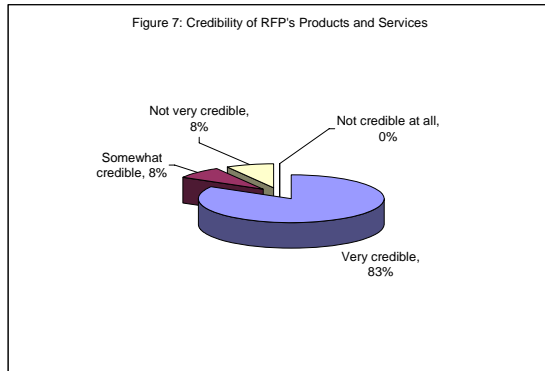
*Finding*

*With very few exceptions, stakeholders find that the products and services of the RFP are highly relevant to audiences IUCN is trying to reach, of high quality and credibility.*

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familiar (see Figure 6). However, over three-quarters of stakeholders find the RFP's products and services to be very credible (83%, Figure 7), naming the 3I-C case studies as particularly credible.

One respondent wondered what impact these publications are having and indicated









It would also be worthwhile, perhaps at the level of ELG, to think about what RTPs stand to gain from partnerships and what cost is appropriate. It was correctly pointed out by multiple stakeholders that some partnerships require considerable investment to understand the partners mandate and priorities, to find entry points and appropriate strategies for engagement and to build the personal relationships and trust that underpin partnerships, among other issues.

**Recommendation**      *[Repeated from above] The Regional Forest Programme would benefit from undertaking an institutional or stakeholder analysis of members and partners in Asia Region and ensure that this analysis covers all of the countries covered by the Asia Regional Office.*

**Recommendation**      *The Regional Forest Programme and other Regional Thematic Programmes, in collaboration with the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups would benefit from an exercise defining what partnerships should entail, whether with IUCN Members or other partners in Asia Region, to support a more strategic approach to forming partnerships.*

## **4.2 The Regional Forest Programme and Integration**

**Finding**                      *The experience of integration with Country Offices, the Global Forest Conservation Programme, other Regional Thematic Programmes and the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group has been very mixed.*

**Finding**                      *The common factors that support effective partnerships and integration include resources, trust, and shared priorities, while the factors that work against partnerships and integration include time, capacity and communication.*

In theory, the RFP is integrated with four different types of actors: Country Offices, other Regional Thematic Programmes, the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group and the Global Forest Conservation Programme. The intent of forming the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group was to assist that integration and give each Country Office and Regional Thematic Programme more possibilities to address conservation issues from an integrated ecosystems and livelihoods perspective. As this is a relatively new structure to IUCN, the success or failure of this endeavor is of interest Union-wide.

The Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups *are* groupings of Regional Thematic Programmes, however, it is assumed that the ELGs are *not just* a grouping of RTPs, but instead will manifest emergent properties that are more than the sum of the activities of the RTPs.

Discussions with stakeholders and senior coordinators reveal integration has been a very mixed experience for the RFP.

With *Country Offices*, the RFP is expected to provide technical advice, assistance with fundraising and implementation, an opport



influencing the global agenda on forest governance by linking that policy debate with regional experiences.

Why is this so? What are the positive factors that promote integration? The formation and maintenance of the “Global Forest Team” a group of representatives of the Regional Forest Programmes with the Global Forest Conservation Programme has been purposeful and strategic. Early on, the FCP recognized the need to inform its global policy work with experience on the ground and sought a mechanism to ensure this link. Within IUCN, this is a good example of the strategic development of a formalized policy-practice loop that incorporates global and regional elements. This structure has become more formalized in recent years through the Forest Conservation Advisory Group and the introduction of joint programming on selected topics.

Also, the Global and Regional Forest Programmes share resources, programmatic priorities and perhaps most importantly, a long history together. For the Ecosystem and Livelihoods Group, which is a relatively new structure, this is an important point.

From the three experiences above, a *common set of questions around factors that prevent and facilitate integration* can be identified. While the perceptions of stakeholders are valuable in helping to address the issue of integration, there appear to be explanations beyond the failure to communicate (whether it is linked to a capacity issue or not), there are other factors at work:

1. ***What is role of ELG in facilitating integration between RTPs; and between RTPs and Country Offices?*** The ELG has set an overall direction and Intersessional Programme from which the RFP is able to derive its own direction. This process has been based on fairly extensive consultations with Country Offices. The RFP, similar to the RWWP, maintains a set of focal points in each Country Office, a structure which is unique to these two RTPs. Despite this, there is a perception that the RFP’s priorities and work are not well communicated and integration is happening very slowly. What value-added could the ELG provide? The ELG could provide value-added by linking individual RTPs on common issues and by providing common platforms (projects, cross-cutting initiatives, etc) and mechanisms (planning meetings, joint publications, etc) in which to share commonalities between RTPs. However, the key to success so far has been the existence of common purpose and opportunities. For the RFP and Global FCP, the common opportunity of the 3I-C project on poverty-livelihoods allowed the Global FCP to create some integration between itself and a couple of regional Forest Programmes. Similarly, initiatives pitched at the ELG level that would combine the talents of multiple RTPs might create the opportunity for integration and a common platform otherwise lacking. This review did not have the mandate to examine the role of the ELG in detail, nor the work of other RTPs, so this is offered as a suggestion if it is not already being undertaken.
2. ***What is the responsibility of the RFP in communicating its work and priorities?*** The simple answer is that the RFP is as responsible as any other RTP in reporting on its priorities and work. However, there is also a corresponding responsibility on the part of other stakeholders, including other RTPs and Country Offices to absorb and respond to what the RFP is communicating about itself. Certainly, the RFP is under-staffed to communicate both in formal terms about its programme



## 5 Delivery of the Regional Forest Programme

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**Finding**                      *The Regional Forest Programme delivers well on the issues on which it is able to engage in the locations where it is working, however, the RFP does not work in all parts of Asia Region or on all issues evenly.*

**Finding**                      *The capacity of the RFP to deliver was eroded during the 2001-2004 period, by moving staff into the ELG structure and adding tasks to the RFP's Coordinator's workload. The risk of further erosion of capacity includes the inability to deliver on activities in the 2005-2008 period and the inability to deliver on joint programming activities with the Global Forest Conservation Programme*

Very few programmes within IUCN account for delivery of their programme on a yearly or quadrennial basis. Where programmes do report on success for failure in delivery, there is an opportunity to reflect not only on what was accomplished or not, but some of the possible factors that contribute to effective programme delivery. As part of the Global Forest Team, the RFP participates in periodic meetings (every 18 months or so) of the Forest Conservation Advisory Group (FCAG) and it does report on progress in delivering its programme. The most recent report and FCAG meeting coincided with this review.<sup>10</sup>

The 2001-2004 Regional Forest Programme included 26 results, of which 22 were substantive results related to forest conservation and a further four were related to the operations of the RFP itself. As part of its report to the FCAG, a rough analysis was undertaken of the extent to which these results were achieved.

- 19% of annual results were fully achieved (18% of the substantive results, 25% of the operations results), including a significant number of activities implemented;
- 23% of the annual results were almost achieved (23% of the substantive results, 25% of the operations results), including several implemented activities;
- 31% of the annual results were partially achieved (32% of the substantive results, 25% of the operations results), including several implemented activities;
- 12% of the annual results (only substantive results) were addressed only through a limited number of activities; and
- 15% of the annual results were not achieved (14% of substantive activities and 25% of operations activities), nor were any significant activities implemented.

Thus, the RFP has shown modest success in delivering an ambitious programme over the past four years, which included a reorientation away from protected areas planning toward national forest policy and poverty-livelihoods issues.

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<sup>10</sup> Progress Report (2001-2004): Asia Regional Forest Programme for FCAG Meeting, Bangkok, November 2004 (unpublished internal report).

Quadrennial Results that were fully achieved, with a significant number of activities implemented:

- Analyses of forest rehabilitation policy and practice undertaken in selected countries and disseminated (K)
- Capacity of stakeholders to develop and implement Protected Areas systems plans enhanced (E)
- Capacity of stakeholders to undertake or support forest restoration enhanced (E)
- ARD/ELG management structures supported by appropriate participation of RFP staff (O)

The most important and visible products and services produced by the RFP in the Intersessional Period included a series of national-level Forest Landscape Restoration workshops, the 3I-C case studies from the Lao PDR and Vietnam on poverty and conservation, the two ForestPACT pledges and publication in Thailand and a myriad of project proposals in collaboration with Country Offices on a variety of forest issues.

In his report to the FCAG, the Coordinator of the RFP offered the following constraints facing the RFP in achieving the 2001-2004 Programme:

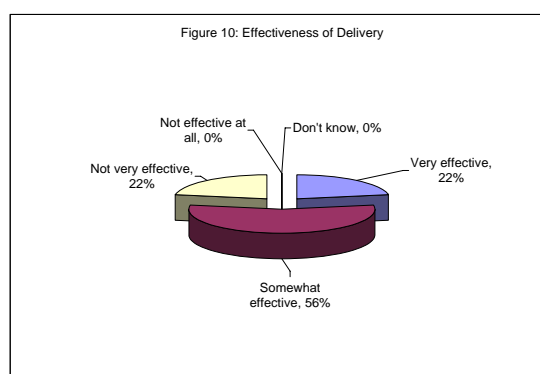
- The 2001-2004 Programme was designed based on the assumption that the RFP team would consist of a Coordinator, a Programme Officer and various junior staff. From February 2003 onward, the programme operated without a Programme Officer, a serious constraint given the nature of both the proposed programme and the size of Asia Region.
- Considerable time was spent on non-RFP activities, supporting ARO, ELG and Country Programme Development, particularly the Thailand Country Programme.
- Fundraising was difficult during the Intersessional Period as some donors have withdrawn from the region, investment in forest conservation is down world-wide and potential donors and partnerships with Country Offices did not yield return.

The report noted that actions to correct these issues are underway.

Most respondents (78%, Figure 10) agree that the RFP has been very or somewhat effective in delivering its programme, while 22% thought that the RFP did not deliver its programme very effectively.

Examples of good delivery identified by respondents included the Forest Landscape Restoration workshops, the work on Non-Timber Forest Products, the RFP's publications and more generally, the ability of the RFP to link partners.

Examples of perceived poor delivery provided by stakeholders were not numerous; however there is a perception that the RFP is not doing much work in South Asia. As part of the discussion of good and poor delivery of the RFP's Programme, respondents were asked to identify any factors which may be







took over the Chief Technical Advisor's duties on the NTFP project in Vietnam for three months. Any issues then, of delivery of the RFP plan, fundraising, integration and engagement of partners must therefore, be considered in the light of diminished time available to the RFP.

**Recommendation**      *Continue the work started with the 2001-2004 RFP plan by developing a realistic 2005-2008 Intersessional Plan that builds on the Quadrennial Results of ELG1 and ARO and is informed by the Global Forest Conservation Programme. Review this plan on an annual basis and report (at least internally) in a format similar to the one used for the RFP report to the FCAG.*

**Recommendation**      *Strengthen fundraising by gathering and maintaining a database of donor intelligence, undertaking joint programming and engaging donors earlier in the proposal.*

**Recommendation**      *The current capacity of the RFP should be, at minimum maintained, and preferably expanded. At minimum, the RFP should be led by a dedicated and senior Coordinator. However, the capacity to implement the RFP was insufficient to deliver the 2001-2004 Regional Forest Programme. To deliver a programme similar in scope to the 2001-2004 programme, capacity should be increased at ARO to support communications, interactions/integration with other elements of ARO (other ELGs and COs), reporting, implementation and some aspects of fundraising. Ideally, an investment should be made to support a forest officer in one or more Country Offices, reporting directly to the RFP, rather than the Country Office. As resources permit, this model should be extended throughout the region so that each outposted forest officer is responsible for supporting a reasonable number of Country Offices.*

**Recommendation**      *Recognizing that IUCN in general, and ARO in particular, does not have the luxury to solely support specialists working on only one issue, the Head, ELG and Regional Director, ARO, should immediately discuss options to alleviate non-RFP activities.*



*policy-practice and local-global linkages are maintained and strengthened”*

***Cost-recovery from RFP-managed projects*** combines management fees with staff time “sold” to the project. These projects are under the control of the RTP, so if chosen carefully, can be instrumental in helping meeting programmatic priorities. However one senior coordinator estimated that an RTP must recover 27-28% of the project’s income in order to meet its costs in managing the project. There is also a risk of taking on an increasing number of projects to meet costs across the project portfolio.

***Cost-recovery from Country-office projects.*** In this scenario, the RTP is paid for its technical advice from projects managed by Country Offices. This is a favorable model both because it meets the original intent of having RTPs in the first place, but also because it shares the management of these projects, lessening the burden on the RTP. However, as discussed in the workshops there needs to be a strong element of trust between any two units in IUCN undertaking joint programming, whether it is between a global thematic programme and a regional office or a RTP and a Country Office. Joint design of projects (as opposed to arranging collaboration at a later stage in the project cycle) and clear agreement on arrangements for distribution of roles, responsibilities and (financial) benefits will help to implement joint activities successfully.

***Sharing income from Country or Regional framework agreements.*** At present, this

undertaken first before any conclusions about the financial model and fundraising efforts are formed.

**Recommendation**      *The RFP, in collaboration with ELG, should immediately improve its donor intelligence, so that project proposals can be better matched with donor priorities and donors can be engaged earlier in the process.*

**Recommendation**      *The RFP should pursue the Global Forest Conservation Programme's and Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group's offer to undertaking joint fund-raising with the RFP.*

**Recommendation**      *The capacity of the RFP as a whole is insufficient to meet all of its demands, including fundraising. Capacity should be increased to either permit the Coordinator to undertake more fundraising activities, or by bringing in outside assistance.*

**Recommendation**      *The format and maintenance of the RFP project proposal portfolio should immediately revert to the standards outlined in "Building and Managing the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups: A discussion paper on operationalizing Stage 1 of the reorganization."*

## **6 Conclusions and Challenges for the Regional Forest Programme**

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Overall the Asia Regional Forest Programme is a well-regarded programme that is

## **Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix**

AREA	QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES
<b>Mandate – past</b>	Is the fundamental purpose for the existence of the unit clear?		Interviews – historical and IUCN-Asia
	How was the unit established – opportunistic or intentional?)		As above
	To who is the RFP work content relevant?  What are its driving forces in terms of programmatic priorities	To whom within IUCN is RFP's work relevant?  How does RFP undertake its planning processes? Is there a current situation	Interviews with members, partners, donors, ELG, FCP.



<p><b>Delivery – past</b></p>	<p>What did the RFP deliver (outputs and activities)?</p>	<p>What products did RFP deliver? Who used these products?</p> <p>What outputs did RFP deliver? Did RFP reach its intended audience?</p> <p>What activities did RFP undertake to deliver products and outputs?</p>	<p>Document review + interviews with IUCN-Asia managers</p>
	<p>How effective has the RFP been in achieving its own programmatic results and/or in contributing to those of the Union?</p>	<p>How well do project and programmatic activities deliver programmatic results?</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with IUCN staff</p>
	<p>How well is the work of RFP integrated with the other components of IUCN?</p>	<p>How well integrated is RFP with ELG?</p> <p>How well integrated is RFP with Asia Regional Programme?</p> <p>How well integrated is RFP with FCP?</p> <p>How well integrated is RFP with other IUCN programmes?</p> <p>What mechanisms does RFP use to manage its integration with other programmatic units?</p> <p>Are there mechanisms which could enhance integration of RFP with other programmes?</p>	<p>Interview with IUCN staff + workshop</p>
	<p>How are relationships with working partners managed?</p>	<p>Who are RFP's partners?</p> <p>Are there partners in Asia region who would link well with RFP?</p> <p>How do RFP's partners regard their working relationship with RFP?</p>	<p>Interviews with members, partners and donors.</p>

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	the RFP both within and outside of IUCN?	vis the external environment?	members and donors
	How efficient is the RFP's delivery?	Efficiency based on whose perception? **	** Interviews with donors and IUCN staff
<b>Delivery – future</b>	Based on past experience, are there any adjustments that the FRP needs to do to their delivery of products, results or processes?	Is RFP meeting its potential in delivery of products, results or services?  Does RFP have a communication plan?  How does RFP monitor its (a) results (b) use of products?	Interviews + workshop  Documents
	Are there any adjustments to be made to the programmatic aspects of the fund-raising strategy?	Is there a RFP fund-raising strategy?  Is there a business plan for ELG or IUCN-Asia? Is this an appropriate business model to support RFP?	Documents + workshop
	Are there any adjustments to be made in linkages with other components of IUCN to mutually strengthen delivery and credibility?		Interviews + workshop
	Are there any adjustments to be made to in handling partner relationships?		Interviews with partners, members and donors
	How programmatically viable looks the RFP over the next 3-5 years?	What are the risks and opportunities facing the RFP?  How does IUCN-Asia's (or ELG's or RFP's) business plan support the future work of the RFP?	Interviews + workshop

## Annex 2: Documents Consulted

### Asia Region - General

1. IUCN in Asia – Ecosystems and Livelihoods Growing Together
2. Proceedings of the IUCN Asia Regional Conservation Forum (downloaded)
3. Securing the Union's Future in Asia – A framework for the development of the IUCN Asia Programme 2000-2005 (downloaded)
4. Securing our Future in Asia's Changing Environment – Proceedings of the IUCN South and South-east Asia Regional Conservation Forum

### Non-Timber Forest Products

5. Non-timber Forest Products and Local Livelihoods (Blockhus, Wickramasinghe, Nurse and Perez), IUCN, 2002.
6. Marketing Research for Conservation and Development: Case Studies from Vietnam (Raintree, Le Thi and Nguyen), 2002.
7. Regulation of the Trade in Timber and Non-Timber Forest Products in the Lower Mekong Basin Countries, IUCN-RFP, 2001
8. Sustainable Management of NTFPs in Lao PDR: A Discussion paper for the forestry strategy to the year 2020 for Lao PDR, IUCN Asia RFP, 2002.

### Forest Landscape Restoration

9. Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest Ecosystems (Gilmour, Nguyen, Xiong), IUCN, 2000.

### 3I-C Project on Poverty Alleviation and Conservation

10. Assessing the “enabling environment” in Vietnam for linking forest conservation with poverty reduction: A policy analysis for Vietnam (Morris and Ingles), IUCN, 2003.
11. Bitter Bamboo and Sweet Living: Impacts of NTFP conservation activities on poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods (Morris), IUCN, 2002.
12. 3I-C Country Desk Study: Poverty Reduction and Forest Conservation in Lao PDR, IUCN, n.d.
13. Domesticated NTFPs, secured livelihoods: Impacts of NTFP domestication and agro-forestry on poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement (Nguyen, Morris, Le Thi, Raintree)

### Project Fire Fight

14. Community Involvement in and Management of Forest Fires in South East Asia (Sameer Karki). IUCN and WWF, 2002.

### Programme Descriptions

15. Summary of IUCN's Forest Programme in Asia 2000-2003
16. IUCN Forest Conservation Programme Strategic Plan (draft 2004)
17. IUCN Asia Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group Intersessional Programme 2005-2008 A

22. IUCN in Asia: Building and Managing the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Groups: A discussion paper on operationalizing Stage 1 of the reorganization of regional thematic programmes. (Ingles and Emerton). 2003.

#### Workshops

23. Proposal to WCC: Ecosystem Management: Steps to Sustainability: Forest Landscape Restoration – Working Across Scales
24. Regional Workshop on ITTO Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests, Chang Mai, 31 March – 4 April 2003 (Ingles and Broekhoven)
25. Internal Agreement between IUCN-HQ FCP and IUCN ARO South-East Asia Sub-regional Forest Programme, re: IUCN ARO organization of regional workshops on FLR in China, Thailand and Pakistan, dated 25 March 2004.
26. Sustainable Livelihoods – a Joint Learning Assessment (2004)

## **Annex 3: Review Participants**

- William Jackson, Director Global Programme, IUCN
- Stewart Maginnis, Head, IUCN Forest Conservation Programme
- Simon Rietbergen, Acting Head, IUCN Ecosystem Management Programme\
- Andrew Deutz, Policy Advisor, IUCN-US
- Carole Saint-Laurent, Senior Forest Policy Advisor, IUCN & WWF
- Ecosystem Management Programme\