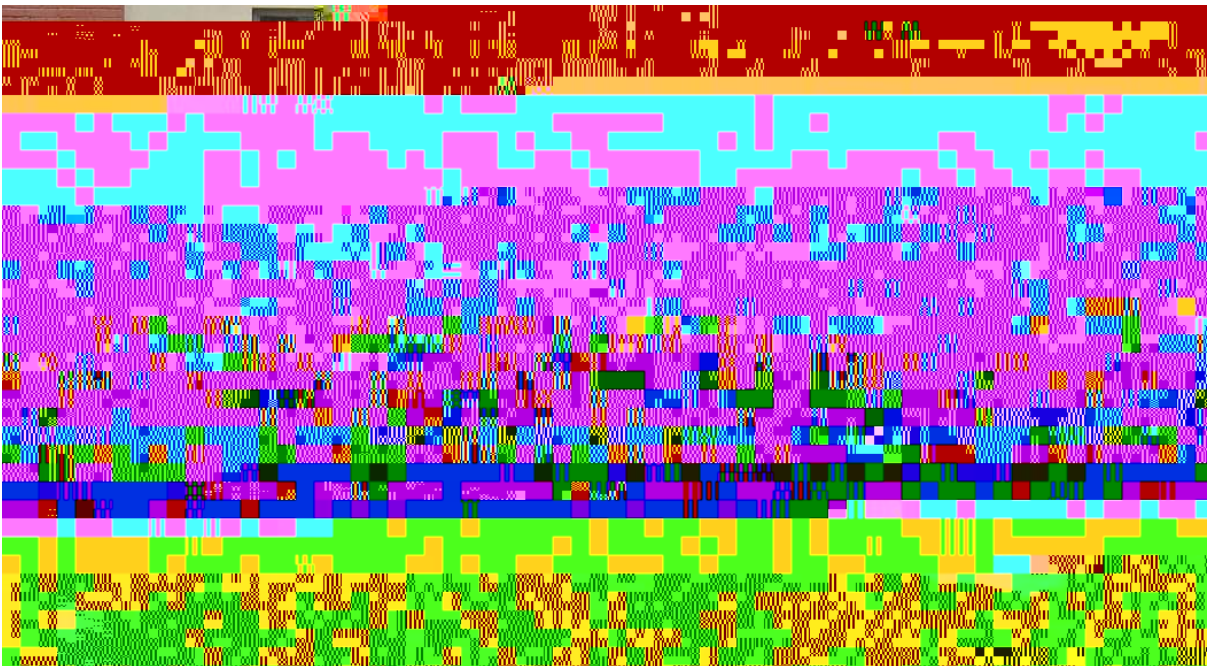


# IUCN Nepal Program Review Review Report



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The internal review of the IUCN Nepal Program was completed during the month of June 2005 by a joint team from the Asia Regional Office (ARO) and the IUCN Nepal Country Office (IUCN-N) led by the IUCN Asia Regional Director. This review is part of a regular cycle of internal program reviews carried out across different units of IUCN in Asia. The last review of IUCN Nepal was carried out in 1999 and a similar program review was just completed for the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group 2 (ELG2) based in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

This review is focused on the programmatic aspects of IUCN-N taking into account the findings of the recent joint assessment of the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC)-supported IUCN-N program and providing recommendations on a response to these findings. As well, the internal review aimed to identify priorities for collaboration with both existing and emerging regional thematic programs, and with key partners and donors.

While this review focused on programmatic issues, it also addressed financial, organizational and human resources issues related to the delivery of the program. The core Review Team included:

- Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director (Team Leader)
- Sagendra Tiwari, Acting Country Representative, IUCN-N
- Kent Jingfors, Regional Program Coordinator
- Udaya Kaluaratchi, Regional Human Resources Director
- Julia Robinson, Program Coordinator, IUCN-N
- Purna Bahadur (PB) Chhetri, Coordinator, Regional Mountains Program

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORs)

The key objectives of the review were:

- (a) To assess IUCN-N Program's relevance and effectiveness in the global, regional and national contexts taking into account the findings of the SDC review (April/May 2005);
- (b) To assess the appropriateness and adequacy of structure and systems that are supporting

- Meetings with key donors, partners and government agencies to discuss and explore opportunities for further collaboration;
- Analysis of the findings from the joint SDC review and preparation of an IUCN response;
- Communications with key regional staff (Heads of ELG 2 and Regional Emerging Program) prior to the Nepal visit to discuss opportunities for enhanced regional involvement with the Nepal program.

The detailed agenda for the review is included in Annex 2.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.1 Joint SDC-IUCN Nepal Assessment

While a formal mid-term review (MTR) was not envisaged in the SDC Credit Proposal for Phase 5 (1<sup>st</sup> January 2003 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006), the changed and increasingly complex implementation environment in Nepal prompted the need to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the project in the present conflict situation and to make recommendations on changes required in the remainder of the phase. This assessment was done through a joint workshop with external facilitation held in IUCN-N on May 2-3, 2005. The assessment workshop examined Program achievements, strengths and shortcomings and identified key issues to be looked into during the final evaluation (scheduled for early 2006) and suggested potential areas of SDC support to IUCN-N after Phase 5.

##### Key Findings

The assessment concluded that very good progress has been made by IUCN-N despite the very difficult circumstances in Nepal. Specifically, the conclusions were:

- a) Both the program contents and modality (in terms of strengths and drawbacks of the flexible and responsive programmatic support) are **relevant** to the current context in Nepal and still remains within the overall mandate of IUCN. The participatory approach has laid the foundation to stay relevant and adapt as a response to the conflict. The work done by IUCN

monitoring and exploring new partnerships. In addition to the above, IUCN has continued to be effective because it is trying to address the underlying social causes of conflict that are inequity, rights and livelihoods.

- Development of an emergency response plan for field staff outlining the indicators and steps needed for quick response to escalating conflict. There is considerable experience of working in high-risk conflict situations within IUCN Asia Region and Albert Heatherly (Head of Administration, RDO) should be the focal point for helping IUCN-N develop this plan;
  - Focusing on program development and donor diversification during the remainder of the phase, in addition to completing the ongoing work at the field and national levels. There is considerable opportunity over the next year and a half to use the flexible SDC program support to build a larger and more diversified IUCN-N program.
- b) IUCN-N should try to engage in the Donor Diversification Group (either through SDC or UNDP) to stay on top of the ongoing discussions on donor focus and priorities, and to see where IUCN-N can add value or fill gaps if/when donors reduce their support for natural resource management interventions.
- c) IUCN-N should make some immediate changes to its organizational structure to enable sufficient focus on program development and donor interactions (see Annex 3).

#### 4.2

e) A review of the current program and organizational structure (see Annex 3 for details)

of the political and management issues related to the program. The Regional Program Coordinator will continue to provide overall programmatic support to IUCN-N;

- c) In addition to current IUCN-N-regional collaboration (WANI/ IWRM, DSS, environmental justice, PA financing & watershed valuation, implementation of GEF wetland project), the following areas should be further explored for joint project development: environmental justice/ equity; environmental economics (including greening the development process); environmental and NRM governance (including community conservation areas, MEA synergy); medicinal plants & NTFPs; access & benefit sharing; conflict & conservation; and adaptation to climate change.
- d) During visits to Nepal, regional ELG staff should continue to share IUCN's work in the region and globally through seminars as this strengthens IUCN's image, visibility and credibility in Nepal (particularly for emerging areas where IUCN has limited current capacity in Nepal).
- e) For the IUCN-N program to grow, a number of organizational changes are required. These are outlined in detail in Annex 3. In summary, the Acting CR assignment will continue until at least the end of 2005. To enable the A/CR to focus on representational duties and building strong relationships with donors and key partners, the A/CR should no longer directly supervise field projects - instead, a Senior Program Officer should be recruited to do this. Additionally, recruitment should be initiated immediately for a new Programme Coordinator (PC) to overlap with the departure of the incumbent who is (unfortunately!) moving on for family reasons. The PC position is key to program development, coordination and the continued good team work of the IUCN-N office;
- f) Attempts should be made to strengthen the IUCN National Committee in Nepal to take on an advocacy role on national environmental issues. It is recognized that often conflicting interests among members make it difficult to develop common positions that could be used to influence government decisions, particularly in the current political climate of Nepal. With respect to species-specific conservation issues (e.g. continued rhino and tiger



- b) Approximately 70% of the current budget (\$612K out of annual budget of \$850K) comes from SDC support. Regional projects currently account for only about 10% of the portfolio and, of this, SANDEE contributes 5%. Clearly, the portfolio needs to be diversified by seeking funding for longer, larger projects and by increasing the contribution of regional projects to come closer to the target of 60:40 (national vs. regional project contributions);
- c) Based on financial scenarios of differing probabilities of SDC funding continuing and the UNDP/GEF Wetlands project being approved (Annex 4), it is clear that even in the best case scenario (20% reduction in SDC support and 100% implementation of the GEF project), additional income is required to cover costs over the next 5 years.
- d) Funding opportunities from bilateral donors in Nepal is currently very limited as these are either withdrawing or focusing their support on humanitarian assistance. Hence, the focus needs to be on the multilaterals or, possibly, exploring “gaps” from closing projects (e.g. DANIDA, EU, Australia) or adding on to existing large NRM projects (e.g. LFP, BISEP-ST);
- e) The best bet for a new large project is the UNDP/GEF Terai Wetlands Conservation and Sustainable Use Project (\$4 million over 5 years) that has been under development for a number of years. There has been some resistance from UNDP and government in agreeing to IUCN’s implementation role (modified NEX) in this project. However, based on our discussions with the new UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, there appears to be senior level support within UNDP for IUCN’s role in this project. IUCN-N should capitalize on UNDP’s support to convince HMG (MoF and MoFSC) on IUCN-N’s role;
- f)

## Recommendations

- a) Market IUCN as “a long term partner in Nepal” that can contribute towards sustainability, convening power and neutrality;
- b) Engage more directly with the donors both to keep on top of changing priorities and to find opportunities for an IUCN-N niche. This engagement should be both at the senior (A/CR) and operational (PC/Head ESL) levels;
- c) Encourage SDC, both at the country and global levels, to continue providing flexible program funding beyond 2006 (preferably at current levels) to facilitate program development and leverage donor diversification;
- d) Focus on securing a strong IUCN implementation role in the UNDP/GEF wetlands project with government support (but minimal interference);
- e) At the earliest opportunity, ELG1 (RWWP) should visit Nepal to scope out IUCN-N's role and contribution to the Himal WANI project and help build partnerships with key national and regional water stakeholders;
- f) Similarly, ELG2 should take the lead in developing enhanced capacity in IUCN-N to address environmental economics issues and in facilitating stronger linkages with SANDEE. There is a need for both financial and technical support to invest in economics capacity;
- g) ELG1 should involve IUCN-N in the development of a regional medicinal plants project.
- h) Include Nepal as a priority country for regional and global proposals. Explore joint proposal development in areas highlighted above, preferably in multi-year projects.
- i) Involve IUCN-N (and other country programs) from the early design stages when developing regional proposals. Currently, some regional proposals are developed without adequate consultation and review by country programs resulting in confusion about roles and responsibilities during implementation.
- j) Continue to explore means of full cost recovery and operational efficiency including use of staff and services for co-hosted regional projects.



## Annex 2. Schedule for IUCN-N Program Review

Time	Program Review Activities	Remarks/ Logistics
<b>May 30, 2005 (Monday)</b>		
12:30	Arrival, hotel check-in	Arrival of KJ, ULK & PB Hotel Himalaya
2:00 - 5:00	<b>Initial Team meeting.</b> Brief overview of IUCN Nepal Program - main projects & programs, and team. Discussion of SDC findings. Review of agenda for the week.	KJ, PB, ULK, ST, JR, SK, RCK, UD IUCN Meeting hall
<b>May 31, 2005 (Tuesday)</b>		
9:00 - 1:00	<b>Discussion on IUCN-N Program:</b> 1. SWOT analysis of Program (builds on IUCNN analysis) 2. IUCNN new program priorities and opportunities 3. Collaboration with ELGs/ CPs - builds on IUCNN ideas and new directions of ELGs/ CPs	KJ, PB, ULK, ST, JR, SK & RCK  IUCN Meeting hall
2:00 - 5:00	<b>Discussion on IUCNN Operations:</b> 1. Focus on: staffing & organogram; coordination structures & systems; financial health & resourcing (including OABC list) 2. Builds on: SWOT analysis of Operations (IUCNN analysis) & new directions in Asia including reorganization	KJ, ULK, PB, ST, JR, SK, RCK, UD, BS  IUCN Meeting hall
<b>June 1, 2005 (Wednesday)</b>		
9:00 - 1:00	<b>Continued discussion:</b> 1. Response to the SDC/ IUCN review. 2. Development of recommendations for ARD.	KJ, ULK, PB, ST, JR, SK, RCK, UD
12:30	AMK arrive and hotel check-in	Summit Hotel
2:00	<b>Briefing to RD</b> - on agenda, external meetings and internal review progress to date	AMK, KJ, ULK, PB, ST, JR, SK
4.30	<b>IUCN-N members meeting</b>	Aban, ST, DJ, KJ, JR
6:30	<b>Dinner meeting hosted by Dr. Sultan Hafeez, ADB</b> <i>Focus: Collaboration with IUCN Nepal</i>	Aban, KJ, PB, ST
<b>June 2, 2005 (Thursday)</b>		
9:00 - 12:00	<b>ARD/IUCNN meeting</b> - findings and recommendations of the internal program review and next steps	AMK, KJ, ULK, PB, ST, JR, SK, RCK, UD, BS
1:15	<b>Mr. Ramesh Wor Khanal, Joint Secretary, Foreign Aid Division, Ministry of Finance (MoF)</b> <i>Focus: IUCN N program and MoU</i>	AMK, KJ, PB, ST
3:00	<b>Dr. H. K Upadhayaya, Honorable Member, National Planning Commission (Chair of IUCN Nepal PSC)</b> <i>Focus: NPC IUCN Partnerships, Support to IUCN</i>	AMK, KJ, PB, ST

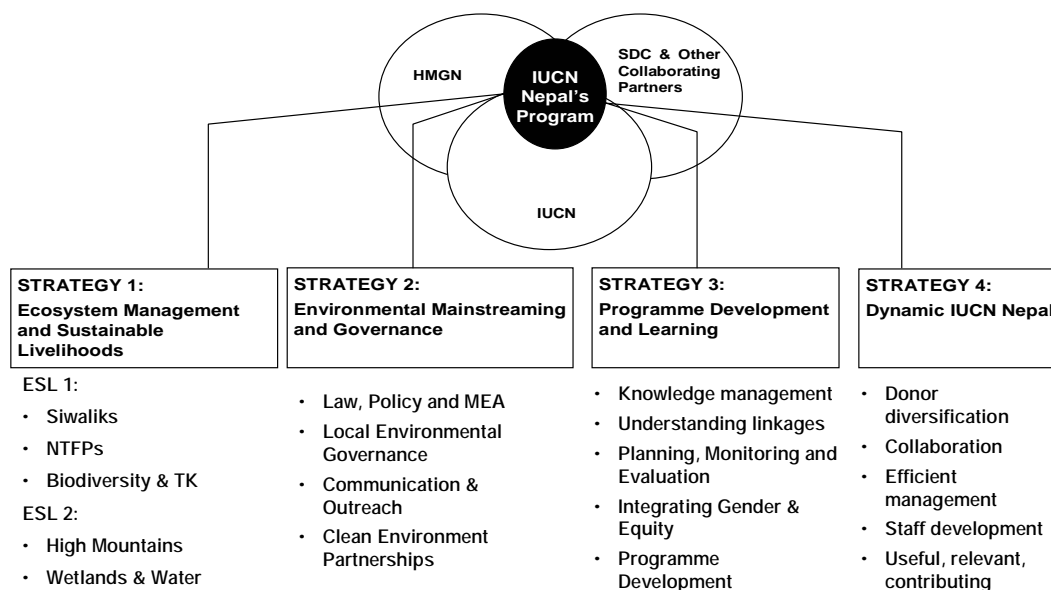
Time	Program Review Activities	Remarks/ Logistics
4:00	<p>Mr. Ananta Raj Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)</p> <p><i>Focus: MoFSC-IUCN Partnership, MoU extension, GEF Wetland project</i></p>	AMK, KJ, PB, ST



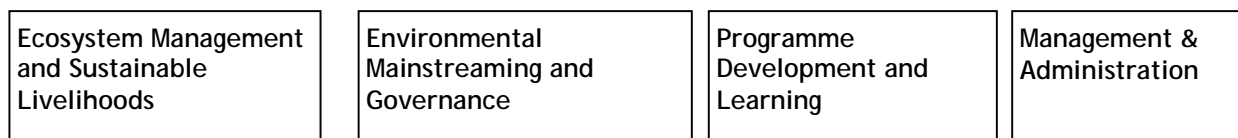
### ANNEX 3. IUCN Nepal Program Structure

For SDC Phase 5, a program framework was developed to address 4 primary strategies: Ecosystem Management and Sustainable Livelihoods, Environmental Mainstreaming and Governance, Programme Development and Learning and a Dynamic IUCN Nepal with the following components:

## 2003 - 2007 Programme Framework



As of May 2005 the following people were involved in implementing the various components of this framework, in part because of financial limitations:



#### Head (ESL 1) - ST

- Siwaliks (SKP & team)
- MAPs (GA & team)
- Biodiversity & TK (KS)
- PAs & DSS (ST/SK)

#### Head (ESL 2) - SK

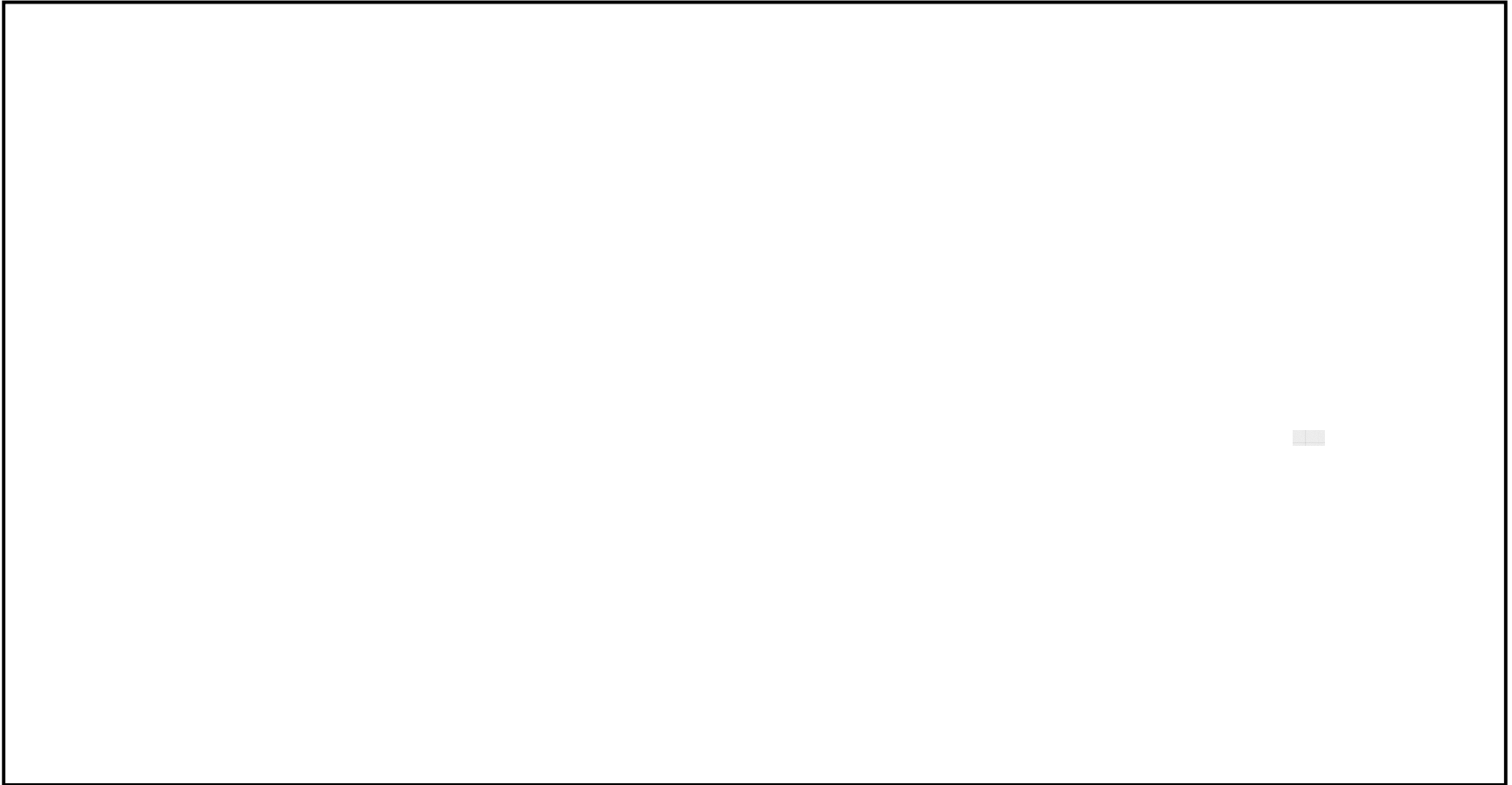
- TMJ (SKP & team)
- Wetlands (SK & team)
- Water (+SUS)

- Governance, Rights & Law (NB/JR)
- Integrating Gender & Equity (JR/ NB)
- Communications & Outreach (DJ, DA, SA/ST)
- Climate change & Air Quality (RS/JR)

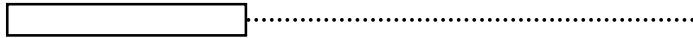
The challenges with the current structure in trying to focus on programme development and donor diversification for the remainder of the Phase 5 period (i.e. until December 2006) include:

- Acting CR is currently supervising field projects and is involved in a number of other thematic areas in addition to trying to represent the IUCN Nepal Country program;
- The Programme Coordinator (PC) is also involved in supervising a number of staff in the Environmental Mainstreaming and Governance unit and leading activities in this unit in addition to leading programme development and learning;
- The current PC is also soon leaving and there is an immediate need to recruit a strong professional (preferably expat) to fill this gap;
- A number of key capacities are lacking (e.g. gender and social equity, environmental economics) while other capacities may not be directly rele





IUCN Nepal  
Organisational Chart (*proposed  
changes June 2005*)  
Headquarters  
↓  
Region



ANNEX 4.