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 credibilt reporn Tc 0.

_____
_____