

**Mount Elgon Integrated
Conservation and Development
Project (MEICDP) :**

External Evaluation

Final Report

By

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Preface

This is the final version of the report on the external evaluation of the MEICDP. A draft of the report was discussed with representatives of all parties involved at the debriefing of the evaluation team at the Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi on Friday February 16, 2001. A preliminary draft of the conclusions and recommendations was presented for discussion during a debriefing by the evaluation team at project level in Kitale on Saturday 10 February.

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Abbreviations

CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCF	Chief Conservator of Forests
CMC	Collaborative Management Committee
CCT	Community Conservation Team
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DFO	District Forest Officer
DMU	District Management Unit
DPC	District Project Coordinator
DRSRS	Department for Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing
EARO	East Africa Regional Office
ECA	East African Cooperation Authority
FD	Forest Department
FR	Forest Reserve
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GoK	Government of Kenya
IPDA	Ideal Planning and Documentation Associates
IUCN EARO	World Conservation Union, East Africa Regional Office
KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
KEFRI	Kenya

Executive summary

This report is based on the external evaluation of the Mount Elgon Integrated w 10.98 merv

commitment. It is concluded that if external support is not continued, several expected results will not materialise, such as effective boundary demarcation of the Chebyuk excision, the integrity of the entire forest reserve boundary on Mount Elgon, and involvement of local communities in natural resource management.

On the basis of its findings, the evaluation team urges IUCN and RNE to adopt a pro-active approach towards securing external funding from a new donor for a follow-up project. Furthermore, it is recommended that RNE grant a budget-neutral extension until 31 December 2001. In addition, overall conclusions and recommendations with respect to a follow-up project are presented, as well as some recommendations regarding sub-programmes.

1. Introduction

1.1 The external evaluation

This external evaluation of the Mount Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project (MEICDP) was commissioned by the current donor of the project, the Royal

Mount Elgon plays an important role as a water catchment and is one of the five main 'water towers' of Kenya. It is the head catchment area for two major rivers: the Nzoia and the Turkwel rivers. It also provides water to the Malakasi River that crosses the small-farming area south of the mountain before entering Uganda (map 2). The Nzoia River is a critical water source for Western Province where it provides most of the water to highly populated areas before flowing into Lake Victoria. The Nzoia River crosses 123 sub-locations where the total population amounts to 1,054,283 inhabitants, according to the census undertaken in 1989 (see table 1).

The Turkwel River is one of three major rivers that feed Lake Turkana.. It provides water to the Turkwel Gorge dam and its hydro-power plant. It is the main river that crosses the semi-arid and arid areas of the region on the south west of Lake Turkana.

River Basin	Number of sub-locations	Population (census 1989)
		1,054,283

A regional approach towards conservation an

Reconnaissance Survey by PPSCSCA

The Permanent Presidential Commission on Soil Conservation and Afforestation visited the area in early 1999. RaiPly was found to be continuing to log the forest, despite the presence of the MEICDP, which had started in late 1998. The Commission considered this to be the single most important threat to the survival of the forest ecosystem (PPSCSCA, October 1999).

MEICDP's Review of the Management of the Forest Resources of the Mount Elgon Ecosystem (October 1999)

The project itself is documented in sections 3 and 4. In the present section, in order to complete our background to the ecosystem and its threats, we pay attention only to one specific activity: the study on the management of forest resources in the ecosystem, commissioned by the NPSC. The study was imple

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With respect to the logging of Elgon Teak by RaiPly, the review observed that whenever stumps from RaiPly's operations were found

2.3 Institutional environment

The institutional environment within which the MEICDP operates, is complicated and in a state of flux. Without aiming to be exhaustive, the evaluation team would like to highlight a number of the most characteristic elements of this environment.

Policy and legislation

The legal provisions for protection and management of environment and forests are scattered in 77 statutes that are not adequately harmonised⁶, creating a confusing environment for projects like MEICDP to operate in. Some of the most important elements of policy and legislation are:

1. The existing Forest and Wildlife Acts, which do not promote the sharing of benefits from forests and parks by communities.
2. The Environmental Coordination and Management Act, which was passed by Parliament in 1999. Its primary

engineering services. With the de-regionalisation of the Service, these officers were relocated. This represents a significant set back for MEICDP, which had intended for several elements of its programme to be picked up by these officers.

The FD has been under heavy criticism for a number of years for mismanagement, inefficiency and other shortcomings. The Kenya Forestry Master Plan already recommended urgent and sweeping changes, and in November 1996 the MENR contracted Price Waterhouse to conduct a review of the FDs management of industrial plantations. This study yielded recommendations for restructuring of the forestry department.⁸ Traces of these are found in the newly proposed Forest Bill. However, since the proposed changes are only at a Bill stage, none of the recommendations have been implemented as yet.

The evaluation team has concluded that given the policy and institutional environment described above, the project provides a useful experimental ground for testing new policies, acts and institutional arrangements.

3. Basic information with respect to MEICDP

3.1 The project: objectives, outputs, sub-programmes and activities

Objectives

The project's immediate objective, that which the project's interventions can expect to achieve, is given in the PFD as:

“The Kenyan side of the Mount Elgon ecosystem's natural resource base and its functions are sustainably managed and utilised.”

This is not achievable in the three years of the first phase of the project. In the PFD

- 3) Women and men of local communities and other stakeholders to be genuine and effective partners of the management institutions with respect to the management of the Mount Elgon ecosystem.
- 4) Relative dependence of women and men of the adjacent communities on Mt. Elgon natural resources base reduced.
- 5) National policy issues with respect to

3.2 Donor policy and the evolution of MEICDP

The policy of RNE with respect to the MEICDP has been rather a special case. Early 1997, the embassy fielded a consultancy team which was to appraise and redefine a 1995 IUCN/KWS/FD project proposal in which the embassy had shown interest at the time. The terms of reference for the mission reflected an interest in a long term, multi-disciplinary community based conservation and development project which required a long term commitment. This was in line with the Dutch Government's priorities at the time, which featured environmental issues and poverty alleviation very prominently. The ToR continued to specify that the project document should be set up according to the ministry's guidelines and should include a logical framework. Consequently, a Project Formulation Document (PFD) was finalised in April 1997. The goals and objectives of the project were phrased in terms of a 10 year project with a five year first phase, which had been elaborated in detail in the document.

Almost one year later, in March 1998, the embassy informed the Treasury and IUCN HQ in Switzerland that the project had been approved, but only for a period of 2½ years. In its letter to the Treasury (12 March 1998) RN Tc 0.2075 Tw 10.98 0g i4.98ld8 399Tj0.009. Tw 10.98 0 0 10.98 468.3580g i4.98ld8 39 stt

District Environmental Committee may become a suitable partner with which to establish more formal relations.

At the time of the approval of the project (March 1998) it

Progressive reduction of the long term commitment by the donor, causing undue

Visits to the Ugandan side of the Mt Elgon project by community representatives and implementing personnel were made and enabled people to draw useful lessons from this sister-project which has been in place since 1989.

(c) Forest inventory

The work on the forest inventory started in February 2001 and is currently in progress. It will contribute useful knowledge to the data base about the ecosystem

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deliver was due to misjudgement of its capacity and commitment by the CTA. The initial choice to work with DRSRS and SoK was obviously related to the commitment to work through existing institutions.

Due to these problems, some of the data needed will not be ready in good time to serve as an input into the Management Plan, as a result eroding the cost effectiveness of the activity.

(b) Support to management planning of Mount Elgon

Despite the potentially significant contribution of a Management Plan, there is little commitment on the part of KWS and the Forest Department to the process, be it in terms of support to the planning process (in October 2000 a zoning proposal was submitted to the MoU by the two staff-members working on the Management Plan but so far no reaction has been forthcoming), or with respect to a completion date and resources to implement the plan. One then wonders why make a plan, if there may be no resources to implement it. It is important to emphasise that MEICDP never had the ambition to have the Management Plan ready by the end of the current phase (the PDF considered the plan would be ready by the end of year 3) . It considers the process to be owned by the implementing partners, and assumes it will be carried forward should the project come to a halt. Under the current circumstances, this seems a rather optimistic assumption.

The development process of the Management Plan to date has weak links to other project activities (like generation of spatial data, forest inventory and lack of appreciation for a strong bias towards community orientation). The current process of developing a Management Plan is not participatory since it does not yet have sufficient mechanisms for involving the community.

(c) Forest Inventory

The forest inventory work will not be complete in good time to be fed into the Management Plan during the current project phase. Late start of implementation and the likelihood of impassable roads with the onset of the long rains (February/March 2001) were cited as some of the possible causes for delay. Also, a close examination of the implementation proposal by KEFRI raises some questions with regard to the quality of data to be generated and their eventual use by the management planning team:

details have been presented on *how* the exercise will be conducted and *what* data will be collected, but no convincing reasons as to *why* it is being collected;
the proposal is sketchy on methods of data collection and analysis: insufficient thought seems to have been invested into the relationships between the types of data collected and analysis on one hand, and the type of use it will be put to on the other;
the concept underlying the exercise is heavily biased towards wood production and weak on othe

1999 already had planned specific activities before all PRAs had been completed. This is related to the strict adherence during project preparation to objective oriented planning principles and provision of logical frameworks.

The implementation of the PRAs was an exercise in capacity building as it involved sensitisation of the communities on resource management, and on carrying out PRAs. According to the PRAs, the communities have similar groups of needs, but differing priorities and opportunities for meeting them. The PRAs for pilot communities were completed in March 1999 (Nalulingo/Chesitia and Cheptumbelio/Kalaha), July-August 1999 (Kamtiong) and July –September. Thus there have been only one to two years of implementing community action plans. There is not enough time to test the flexibility of project design in responding to changing needs and perceptions of the communities, or for the impact of interventions to bear fruit. This makes it rather difficult to assess the impact and potential for sustainability with a reasonable level of certainty.

4.2.1 Achievements

Perhaps one of the greatest achievements has been in conflict resolution - helping to diffuse the tension among previously warring communities. This has helped facilitate project activities. The communities have been able to work together with the project to develop action plans, whose implementation is underway. The PRAs are of professional quality and have contributed significantly to the knowledge base of the area.

Specifically, the following have been achieved:

a. Community empowerment

PRAs were carried out in four pilot areas. They helped build capacity, sensitise communities and in some cases helped ease ethnic tension.

Officers from collaborating agencies were also trained in PRA.

Community activities have been initiated.

Community committees (CAP) initiated¹¹, but their sustainability is questionable.

It is important that the capacity of collaborating agencies to carry out PRAs has been enhanced. Many of these agencies are relatively permanent and are therefore critical to sustainability of the project impacts. The PRA training process also serves as an opportunity to influence the way in which these agencies work towards a more participatory approach and involving communities. Thus the exercise has provided an entry point for policy influence. Formation of community committees took into account pre-existing arrangements, so that unnecessary parallel structures were not formed. Working through such committees helps to entrench community ownership.

b.

ownership and perhaps relevance of the results. Education is a matter of national policy, and any new teaching material reqCDP

exists in carrier subjects, and missing out the atmosphere almost completely. The activities on the other hand are limited to traditional tree planting and nature trails. This may be a reflection of the selected group of teachers. It will also be necessary to look into sustainability with respect to staff mobility and availability of teaching materials.

Educational activities become monotonous, unless they are imbued with meaning and have contextual relevance. Thus the need to link environmental action learning activities to immediately useful outputs as well as to long-term conservation.

Planned activities on gender equity cannot achieve the intended project outputs. Monitoring tools for assessing improved gender relations are also lacking, as is a plan of action to reach those women who do not participate in public functions. The position of youth and children has not been tackled by the project.

4.3 Sub-programme 3: Rural Livelihood Improvement

This programme has attempted to address gender equity, poverty alleviation, collaboration and participation. It has concentrated on activities that can generate immediate tangible returns or achievements. Considering the short time over which they have been implemented, long term impacts and sustainability are a matter of informed speculation.

Achievements

a. Promotion of on-farm tree planting

The project has closely collaborated with other organisations already active in the field (Vi, Action Aid, Manor House) in training communities in on-farm tree planting, home nurseries and community nurseries. Collaboration and participation have been maximised. The nurseries developed are low-cost, appropriate and of good quality. In some cases they have become income-generating opportunities for the owners. There are some successful examples of on-farm wood-lots.

b. Evaluation and promotion of small scale agricultural and off-farm enterprise opportunities

Men, women and youth have been trained in entrepreneurship and conducting feasibility studies. A number of enterprises and on-farm activities, including community cattle dips, bee keeping, production of onions, cultivation, storing and marketing of potatoes, zero grazing and soya beans have been started. In these activities, the project has very successfully cooperated with committed agricultural extension staff, even though an agreement with MoA does not exist.

Problems and analysis

It is important to note that availability of water has been a major constraint to the implementation of many of the activities. The problem of availability and quality of seeds and seedling remains.

The monitoring and evaluation plan¹³ does not seem to make sufficient provision for following up spin-off activities. For instance, after training communities in conducting feasibility studies, it would be logical to expect that there will be documentable activities arising. Setting up of new business ventures is the obvious indicator of capacity built, and yet it was evident that most such initiatives have not been reported. This also suggests a PMU staffing problem, and the limitation of partner agencies in monitoring and evaluation skills.

¹³ The M&E plan was only finalised in October 2000, and is only being implemented from 1 January 2000.

The scope of income generating activities is limited. The project limited its scope of activities because of the short time within which they had to produce tangible achievements. Also, there was limited technical capacity between the PMU and its implementing partners. For example, all those farmers who adopted zero grazing thought were required to connect the effluent to a *napier* grass stand. This was not necessarily the most effective or desirable option. The preponderance of agricultural activities is probably because the most active implementing partner has been the Ministry of Agriculture. Staff of this ministry have been very motivated and enthusiastic. It will be useful to the project and at the same time an incentive to these staff-members to offer them even more training opportunities in specific technical fields and in farmer led extension approaches than has been the case so far¹⁴.

Marketing skills are still underrepresented dimension among the new entrepreneurs. There is a programme in place with PERT consultants to provide follow-up counselling to those

The project is keen to promote links between MENOWECTO and whatever community-based tourism ventures that might develop in the project area. Some occasional collaboration may continue – for exam

Problems and analysis

Community eco-tourism ventures have not been fully evaluated. The reasons for this are two-fold: one, the current policies of

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Overall conclusions and recommendations

Overall conclusions

1. Destruction and losses in the Mount Elgon ecosystem are significant. The longer they continue, the more difficult it will be to re

is not obtained very soon, a very motivated and well functioning group of implementing personnel will soon start disintegrating. A follow-up project may have to start practically from scratch in terms of team building and availability of qualified, experienced staff which will result in the loss of the momentum built up by the project.

6. **Fundamental principles of the innovative approach taken** by the project are:

To work through existing institutions, avoiding the creation of parallel structures.

Consequently, to build up only very limited project implementation capacity.

To emphasize the need for a contribution in monetary terms and / or labor by communities before a project contribution is made.

To be cautious in funding of recurrent costs of implementing agencies.

To motivate staff of implementing agencies by enabling them to work in the communities, by offering training opportunities, by study tours, and so on.

Pressure to change these principles has often been considerable, due to past and present history of other projects and agencies active in the area. For reasons of sustainability, it is however essential to **maintain this approach**.

7. With respect to the fundamental principles listed under point 6, the evaluation team sees an **exception in the area of implementation capacity**. The workload of, and pressure on, the District Project Coordinators is such that in a follow-up project their position needs to be reinforced.
8. The **balance between and within sub-programmes seems skewed** towards easily recognisable activities (emphasis on MENP; in the livelihood sub-programme on potato and soy bean growing, and zero-grazing) and interrelationships are not very strong y
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10. The implementing partners at the district level should be granted more responsibility by their parent organisations. In discussions with the evaluation team, local level staff of KWS and FD repeatedly mentioned that they had to get permission from national headquarters for very minor decisions.
11. The fact that there has been no kingdom building by the project is judged as positive.

Overall recommendations

1. It is recommended for IUCN EARO to intensify and speed up its efforts to secure long-term donor support for rehabilitation of the Mount Elgon Ecosystem, preferably in a cross-border operation with neighbouring Uganda.
 2. It is recommended for RNE to grant a budget-neutral extension for a bridging phase of a period as long as permitted by remaining funds (at least until 31 December 2001) and to take a pro-active approach in securing support from a new donor for a follow-up project, preferably to be implemented on a regional (Eastern-African) basis. Certainty about whether or not this extension is granted is needed very soon, if further disintegration of the PMU is to be arrested.
 3. As soon as possible, IUCN EARO's agreement with GoK to be improved to include duty-free import facilities for project equipment and VAT exemption for project goods acquired in Kenya. Action is urgently required.
 4. The evaluation team recommends that the fundamental principles of the approach of the project be maintained, if a new funding agency is found.
 5. In a follow-up project, the balance between sub-programme 1 and the other programmes needs to be redressed: emphasis should be on community related activities / collaborative management of natural resources with active involvement of communities.
 6. Under programme 1 significant strides have been made towards increasing the knowledge base on the ecosystem. But there is still a need for additional in depth studies on specific bio-diversity issues. In the follow-up project, postgraduate studies by Kenyan students could be funded in collaboration with with a reputable specialised international institution under a pairing arrangement to promote inter-institutional cooperation. Emphasis in the selection of research subjects and methods should be on the applicability of expected results in conservation and development, not on scientific objectives as such (merely generating publications).
 7. The evaluation team recommends for institutional arrangements and partnership relations during the follow-up project to be reviewed along the lines indicated in conclusion no 9. A more effective translation of the MoU on the ground is an important point of attention for the future.
 8. Policy issues should not necessarily be the sole responsibility of the Secretariat of the MoU.
 9. The District Project Coordinators should be supported by a qualified technical assistant (in addition to the secretary they currently have).¹⁵ To emphasise the role and responsibilities of the implementing institutions at the local level, it could be worthwhile to consider changing the title of the District Project Coordinator into
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Appendices

1. ToR of the external evaluation
2. Programme of the mission
3. References
4. Cost-neutral extension

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Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Phase I of the Mt Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project

1.0 Background

What was meant to be a longer first phase of the Mount Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project commenced in July 1998 concludes at the end of July 2001 due to the Dutch government restructuring its bilateral relationship with the Kenya Government. The Dutch Government now wishes to evaluate the project in order to determine the reasons for whatever achievements made and the f

“Enhancement of biodiversity conservation on Mt Elgon by building up the competencies of some local communities and the partner agencies in collaborative natural resources management and seeking means of decreasing the dependency of these communities on the natural resources of Mt Elgon.”

1.2 Output

The project was designed to deliver the following five Outputs:

- 1) Improved understanding and application of knowledge of the natural resources base of Mt. Elgon.
- 2) Institutional capacities and capabilities of local management institutions for sustainable management of the Mount Elgon ecosystem strengthened.
- 3) Women and men of local communities and other stakeholders are genuine and effective partners of the management institutions with respect to the management of the Mount Elgon ecosystem.
- 4) Relative dependence of women and men of the adjacent communities on Mt. Elgon natural resources base reduced.
- 5) National policy issues with respect to Mount Elgon ecosystem addressed.

The evaluation will assess how much of the above outputs have been attained two and a half years into project implementation.

2.0 Objective and Extent of the Evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation approaches and how the project supported activities have contributed to achieving the over-all project purpose.

Specifically, the evaluation will cover the performance of the project and will assess:

What progress it has made towards the outputs and the immediate objective, as designated in the Plan of Operations, and will determine reasons for whatever progress that may have been accomplished, and the causes of any under-performance.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the organisational arrangements under which the project has been conducted, including the contribution of each of the principal organisational partners – IUCN-EARO, KWS, FD, and the Project Management Unit to the project's performance.

The appropriateness of the project design and in particular, the project objectives and outputs specified in the Plan of Operations.

The impact of the project, to what extent has the project contributed towards its long-term goals? The project

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there, and producing a first draft of the report. The Royal Netherlands Embassy will arrange adequate formal working conditions in Kitale.

By the end of the sixteenth working day, the team will have distributed an initial draft of their findings.

On the afternoon of the seventeenth working day the team will conduct a debriefing review with key stakeholders, nominated by RNE, in Nairobi.

By the end of the eighteenth day the team will submit a revised draft of their report.

Within two weeks feedback on the revised draft will have been received by the Team Leader who will submit the final version of the report within a further two weeks.

2.4 The Evaluation Team

The team will consist of three persons - an international consultant who will be the team leader, and two national consultants. At least one of the team members will be a woman.

The following skills and experience will be collectively present in the evaluation team:

- a) Collaborative natural resources management - forestry, wildlife and biodiversity conservation.
- b) Organization management and development.
- c) Agricultural development.
- d) Rural development, including rural sociology and gender competencies.
- e) Huma

Reading Material

Project Formulation Document, April 1997

Plan of Operations April 1999

Plan of Operations December 1999

Annual Workplan 1999

Annual Workplan 2000

Work-plan 2001

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Quarterly and Half Yearly Progress Reports Dec 1998-Dec 2000

Proposals for Project Activities (filed in PMU Office)

Review of the Management of the Forests of the Mt Elgon Ecosystem

Various project reports - on PRAs, Trainings.

PMU meeting minutes

Project files on the Five Programs and Project Administration

The project's website - www.mountelgon.net
