

**Government of North West Frontier Province
IUCN-The World Conservation Union
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**

**Mid-Term Review
of
Programme Support for Northern Pakistan
PSNP**

Review Period: July 2001-June 2004

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Abbreviations

ACS	Abbottabad Conservation Strategy
ACS	Additional Chief Secretary
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
CCS	Chitral Conservation Strategy
CIP	Community Infrastructure Project
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCO	District Co-ordination Officer
DEPC	District Environmental Protection Committee
DLFSD	District Level Fund for Sustainable Development
DLG	De Laas Gul (local CSO)
DPOs	District Planning Officers
EA	Environmental Assessment
EDO	Executive District Officer
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIROP	Essential Institutional Reforms Operationlisation Program
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FRC	Frontier Resource Centre
FSD	Fund for Sustainable Development
GoNWFP	Government of North-West Frontier Province
IUCNP	IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Pakistan
LEAD	Leadership for Environment And Development
LG&RDD	Local Government and Rural Development Department
LGO	Local Government Ordinance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NARIMS	National Reconstruction Information Management System
NAs	Northern Areas
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
P&DD	Planning & Development Department
PC-I	Planning Commission Performa 1
PEPA	Pakistan Environmental Protection Act
PHP	Project for Horticultural Promotion
PRB	Project Review Board
PSDC	Provincial Sustainable Development Council
PSNP	Programme Support for Northern Pakistan
RBM	Result Based Management
RTs	Roundtables
SD	Sustainable Development
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
SDNP	Sustainable Development Networking Programme
SMART	Self Monitoring And Reporting Template
SMEDA	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
SMG	Senior Management Group (IUCNP)
SNI	Sarhad NGO Ittehad
SPCS I, II, III or IV	Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy Support Project – Phase I, II, III or IV

1. Introduction

This is the second report from the Mid-term Review team covering the SDC-

However one element is emerging: the importance of the district strategy for sustainable development. Thanks to the devolution process and to the stipulation that each district develop a 'vision' for itself, IUCN was well paced to assist select district governments in the NWFP in this process, drawing on the lessons learned from its work in the Abbottabad and Chitral districts.

The results were that it was relatively difficult to see the PSNP **but as a complement to SPCS IV**. The PSNP became a **transition** phase meant to complement the SPCS IV project work and the IUCN programme for the North of Pakistan, as initially foreseen, is taking longer to emerge. While work on many different fronts with many partners was visible, it hard for the MTR team to extricate a clear guiding vision for that work. In section 5, we propose some options.

2. Assessment of progress made

2.1 Institutional Strengthening

PSNP is on track in the different activities listed under the institutional strengthening component, even though major efforts were needed following the reorganisation of the government at the provincial level post the devolution plan. One task foreseen in work plan was the organisation of the mid-term review of the Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy itself. The GoNWFP and IUCN Pakistan have used lessons learned from the National Conservation Strategy MTR to develop this particular review. An SPCS MTR Steering Committee has been notified, an SPCS Coordinator from both the government and IUCN side been nominated, a 3-member external review team appointed and the review process finalised. The exercise started in mid of 2003 and will continue till the end of the year.

Feedback suggests that the SPCS MTR should have started earlier, in 2002, as its in-depth and evaluative approach to the SPCS would have assisted in focusing the exit phase of the SPCS IV project. It is unfortunate that preoccupations with getting SPCS IV established should have drawn attention away from this exercise. Since the final report and recommendations will be completed by the end of 2003 and be approved within the first quarter of 2004, PSNP will have very little time to advocate for the implementation of the main suggestions.

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partnership with the Agriculture Department contributed towards the establishment of a WTO Cell in the department.

It appears most of the capacity building work has been carried out with the government departments and less with CSOs. However, given the uneven capacity of CSOs in the NWFP, it may be better to focus efforts on this sector.

Discussion and debate on select emerging environmental issues such as: WTO, drought, nexus between poverty and environment, poverty and sustainable livelihoods, adopting the landscape approach in mountain areas, rehabilitating key forest, water, and dryland ecosystems, and forward

possibly, issue green credit cards. It is difficult however to identify if the move by the Bank is being done for charity purposes or is based on a real understanding of the importance of putting more emphasis on sustainable investment. The MTR is not convinced that these efforts will have a large impact in the Province.

Recommendations:

IUCN should assess its resource mobilisation support to small-scale CSOs, and phase out by

2.6 Networking, Catalysing and Awareness

PSNP has endeavoured to provide support to key civil society partners in policy research and awareness raising initiatives to create a positive impact on decision making for sustainable development. In this regard, it has provided support, at different levels, to relevant forums and institutions like the Sarhad Conservation Network, Pakistan Environment Protection Foundation, LEAD Pakistan, Sarhad EPA, NRDF and the Peshawar Press Club.

Numerous actions were realised, publication of leaflets undertaken and distributed. However the MTR team did not perceive a structured approach to the different levels of intervention (macro, meso, micro) nor a differentiation of approach between awareness and 'catalytic' work. Taking into account the limited means available, a selective approach towards strategic players should be designed to maximise impact and efficiency.

Recommendations:

IUCN should improve its outreach to strategic players within academia, private sector, the press and the government to influence the 'bigger' trends (PRSP, governance).

IUCN should focus on completing the environmental education work targeted at primary schooling and find new partners to pursue this work.

IUCN should focus on those academic institutions or organisations that can produce baseline data for sustainability indicators.

3. IUCN Pakistan

The scope and mandate of PSNP has been taken to include IUCN Pakistan's national forest programme based in the Sarhad Office and the portfolio managed by the IUCN Pakistan Northern Areas Programme office in Gilgit.

3.1 IUCN Institutional Strengthening

Over the years, IUCN Pakistan has developed human resource, financial and administrative systems and processes that could service a larger and more mature organisation. The next evolution was taken in September 2001, of decentralising select programme, financial and human resource responsibilities to the other offices, including the Sarhad Office; this was following a Programme and Management Review in April 2001. Both the SPCS Manager and Office Head became part of the Senior Management Group in IUCN, which decides on policy and advocacy aspects of the Country Programme. Equally, the Sarhad Office is represented in the group developing a strategic direction for the IUCN Pakistan Programme.

As part of the forums set up to discuss programme issues, the Northern Pakistan Managers' Forum has met three times to discuss common problems and brainstorm on solutions among the different projects in Northern Pakistan. It brings together managers from SPCS IV, PSNP, ACS, CCS, the Northern Areas Office, and the two MACP offices in Chitral and Gilgit.

Feedback from partners and MTR team's own experience suggests that the office in the NWFP is operating well. Harmonisation and coherence between the two programmes in the north and with the national Programme is taking shape through various mechanisms.

Regular contact is maintained with the public sector partners and discussions have taken place with the political leadership. However, in the MTR team's estimation, the dialogue with the most senior levels of government in the NWFP has not been as sufficient as possible or as close. This has had its consequences in that IUCN will have to invest heavily in convincing the provincial government that it has a role to play in the new trends shaping current work, that is, in poverty alleviation, good governance and the social sectors. The frequent change at the highest level within the public sector makes it imperative that mutual confidence at this level between GoNWFP and IUCN is maintained through constant dialogue.

Recommendations:

IUCN should consider if its integration and harmonisation processes have to be done on national level and if specific efforts integrating the teams operating in the North only, are necessary¹.

IUCN should take the necessary steps to improve the quality of the dialogue with the most senior levels of government in the NWFP.

3.2 IUCN Forest Programme

IUCN Pakistan has also based its national forest programme in the Sarhad Office. Together with SPCS IV, the forest programme worked on formulating various rules for the NWFP Forest Ordinance 2002, reviewing NWFP's Forest Vision 2025 and strengthening the NWFP Forestry RT. Other activities carried out by the programme include two case studies on community management of forests (one each in the NWFP and NAs), and technical input to several government initiatives in the forestry sector e.g. input into a funding proposal on a Northern Areas Natural Resources Inventory and into a funding proposal on Pilot Project on Restoration of Private Forest in NAs. The forest programme has also developed a national forest programme framework that includes a portfolio of 10 projects concepts for marketing to donors.

The one-person forest programme has suffered from changing staff. The first head had to move to the Gilgit as Head, Northern Areas Programme Office and the second, back to his previous position as the Field Manager, Dir-Kohistan Project, Environmental Rehabilitation in NWFP and Punjab. Several rounds of interviews have yet to yield a suitable candidate for the position.

Recommendation:

Ensure that the forest and agriculture policy work is completed and handed over to the respective government departments by June 2004.

Develop new proposal jointly with partners who will be in a position to implement these proposals. MTR would not recommend IUCN to build up additional capacity in its offices to implement forest projects.

3.3 IUCN Developing Core Competencies

IUCN Pakistan views its staff as its most important asset and has tried to commit funds towards training and skill development. Under PSNP, a comprehensive training needs assessment of staff in Northern Pakistan was carried out. Following this, staff has been offered training in project development/management and technical skills. Also, a secondment from the Sarhad Office to the

¹ ***see as well chapt.4.***

4.1 Financing the IUCNP Northern Programme

The PSNP framework required IUCNP to mobilise complementary support from sources other than SDC to meet the programme expenses. Clear quantitative objectives were stipulated in the initial document.

The Mission found different interpretations on this particular issue. According to the IUCN-SDC contract, IUCN would raise additional funding to complement the SDC funding either through project or programme funding. In December 2002/January 2003, the matter seemed to have been resolved by an arrangement to meet the co-funding requirements of PSNP through other project monies working towards the same objectives.

According to IUCN a final arrangement on this particular issue was reached at a May 30, 2003 meeting between IUCNP and SDC where a detailed explanation was proposed on how co-financing can be understood. The results were that activities funded through a series of projects financed by other donors could be considered as co-financing of PSNP and would meet SDC requirements. A detailed cost distribution was worked out to allocate funding from different donors to the 6 main PSNP objectives amounting to 36'122 USD for 2003.

MTR considered that this funding arrangement was to be seen as a short term solution valid up to the end of the contract (June 2004). According to MTR's understanding the expectations from SDC were oriented toward programme funding in the long term and *that a donor consortium for Northern Pakistan be established as an overall agenda for their investments in Northern Pakistan.*²

MTR estimates that IUCN has undertaken efforts in three fields:

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4.2 The IUCNP Programme in the North

IUCN has presented how complementary and mutually interlinked are its different programmes and projects in the northern part of Pakistan.

The MTR Mission has been able to identify that exchanges of experiences and group discussions have taken place at the manager level, and synergies have started to happen between different projects.

The Northern Areas Programme has both contributed to and benefited from the work being conducted in the NWFP. The NAs has been part of the forums created for Northern Pakistan and PSNP: the PSNP Steering Committee, the NPMF and the PSNP workplanning process. Staff was seconded to support the land use planning initiative in the NWFP and there was an exchange of forest professionals between the two areas. 'Modular' training, that is training over a period of time, through LEAD-P was offered to key partners in both areas and to staff from both offices. Concepts and background papers have been exchanged frequently, for example on innovative financial mechanisms and on the knowledge management system.

However, having been exposed to these different elements, the MTR did not get the impression of a coherent integrated Programme in the north. The NWFP programme is mainly concentrated on SPCS activity and the Northern Areas programme is composed of two projects, one on the Northern Areas Strategy for Sustainable Development process and the other on NA component of the Mountain Areas Conservancy Project.

In addition the government set-up is quite different in the two areas. In the NWFP, the provincial authorities are based in Peshawar and in the Northern Areas, authority is shared between Gilgit and the relevant Federal Authority in Islamabad. This represents the reality that IUCN has to work with and is one of reasons why the two regions are managed by two separate IUCN teams: one in Peshawar and one in Gilgit. The two areas of work in the North are quite complex and diverse, and the authorities and local population have strong individual identities. The partners operating in the North and in NWFP are not the same and have different approaches.

In addition the donor community (CIDA, NORAD) is not in favour of additional specific meetings on a sub-regional basis such as an artificial "Northern Programme". Taking into account the numerous meetings the donors have to attend, they would favour coordination on a national level. In addition the donor community would favour project funding and do find it difficult at this stage to allocate institutional programme / core contribution to an environmental organisation such as IUCN. The context in Pakistan has changed and key issues are now no longer

arrangement. The programme if there is any, in the North should make sense in terms of coherence of objectives, structure and financial viability.

5. Vision for IUCN Pakistan in the NWFP and Northern Areas

The general situation in the NWFP is challenging in economic terms, as well as politically and socially. The environmental situation continues to deteriorate and while the concept of sustainable development is understood by many, concrete application of its principles need to be more visible. New concerns such as poverty alleviation are emerging and coming to the forefront and political tensions and pressure at the international level need careful management by the government. IUCN has done important work in assisting the GoNWFP move towards holistic integrated development planning. However, adapting to the new context and trends has to be undertaken.

IUCN has several strengths to meet this challenge:

- Unusual ability to engage with government on policy issues
- Strong relationship with stakeholders
- High quality, professional team including support staff
- Understanding of international issues
- Openness and transparency in operations
- Organisation of high standards

The key element is confidence building at the highest level in the Province. At this stage, the MTR has the impression that the dialogue has been concentrating on institutional mechanisms, on policy issues, on knowledge but not enough on the overall affairs at the provincial level.

The MTR team has the impression that IUCN is engaged in very many fields, providing advice to many departments on policy and field issues besides engaging with CSOs, the private sector academia and the press. Active on all fronts, IUCN is trying to answer to too many partners, with too many expectations.

The devolution of power has created new and additional expectations, demanding concrete and visible translations of sustainable development concepts. The validity of policy needs to be demonstrated in the field and impacts have to be seen. The IUCN-initiated grassroots consultation process has now to return back to the district with new ideas, thus closing the loop, but the next stage of implementation has still to be undertaken. Whilst the concept of sustainable development remains totally valid, it needs to be adapted in the context of PRSP and the devolution of power.

In order to be in a position to meet these challenges, IUCN needs to articulate its 'vision' for the next 4 years. A clear strategic and limited focus has to be chosen in order to measure effects and impacts. In this vision, the link between poverty and environment must be clearly spelled out.

IUCN has to reflect and decide on several issues such as:

1. **Leave the responsibility of the SPCS in the hands of the government.** The government is in the driving seat in terms of planning and development. IUCN can assist and should continue to do so in terms of policy advice and training, on request.
2. **Regain the capacity of being able to conduct dialogues at the highest level in the provincial government.** This is still possible given IUCN's reputation for value added and good quality work.

3. **Concentrate on a few specific issues, if possible, at different levels.** IUCN has the ability to work at many different levels - national, provincial and district. It must balance its policy work with implementation or demonstration projects, developing concrete solutions to common governance problems, so that the practical application of policies developed during these last 10 years, particularly at the district level, can be seen.
4. **IUCN has to form limited and strategic strong alliances** in the province and on the national level to improve its effectiveness, particularly in fields outside its traditional strength such as economics and trade. IUCN should not build this capacity within itself.
5. **IUCN must reduce its size to become a robust and agile organisation.** IUCN must have the means to outsource tasks or services, wherever possible, to multiple partners, NGOs or the private sector available in Pakistan or in the region.

Several specific steps have to be carried out at the provincial and district levels.

IUCN needs to focus on policy work in selected areas at the national and provincial level. At the provincial level, its main partners would remain the P&DD and LG&RD. The focus would be on training and on developing monitoring indicators, taking into account the limited resources within P&DD. The training component should be integrated, if possible, in a training scheme run by the government.

At the district level, IUCN should assist in the implementation of the district strategies and work with its partners to **demonstrate** that local level governance can improve the environment and the wellbeing of the people concerned.

A monitoring instrument adapted for these different levels has to be established and data regularly produced for it.

There are risks to this strategy. As the IUCN programme loses the SPCS project and becomes smaller, its voice on policy may become less pronounced. After 12 years of work on the SPCS, the shift to a programme that is more district and field oriented may face difficulties, particularly as expertise in poverty reduction work is limited. As an institution, IUCN has worked mainly with government and less so with the CSO sector. The shift towards more balance among stakeholders would have to be done carefully.

At the provincial level, it should continue to advise on a limited number of key policy