

SUMMARY FINDINGS

A SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE WATER AND NATURE INITIATIVE (WANI)

Assessment process undertaken by

The IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative for

**The IUCN Water and Nature Initiative of the IUCN
Wetlands and Water Programme**

June 2003

Acronyms

HQ	IUCN- Headquarters
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
WANI	Water and Nature Initiative
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature, International

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Introduction.....

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the Findings of an Assessment of the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI). A final Assessment Report containing recommendations, complete data analysis and a list of stakeholders interviewed will be available following the discussions with the WANI Advisory Committee and IUCN Senior Management.

Purpose of the Assessment

As part of their ongoing monitoring and oversight of the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), the Head of the Wetlands and Water Resources, and the Coordinator, Water and Nature Initiative commissioned an assessment of the experience to date of IUCN managers in planning, funding and implementing WANI.

The purpose of the assessment is to provide feedback to WANI managers, the Director Global Programme and the WANI Advisory Committee so that they may make any necessary adjustments in a timely and informed manner, thus guiding the future development of WANI.

Approach and Methodology

The assessment was undertaken by the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Initiative for the Water and Nature Initiative. Nancy MacPherson (Coordinator, M&E Initiative) provided oversight for the design of the methodology and the conduct of the process, Universal Management Group provided advice on the data collection instrument (interview guide) and Alex Moiseev (Consultant to the M&E Initiative) conducted the interviews, analyzed the data and prepared the final report. Significant logistical support in setting up interviews was provided by Megan Cartin (Water and Wetlands Office) and Marge Gaudard (M&E Office). The assessment process took place from May 20 through June 27, 2003.

A self assessment methodology using semi structured interviews was used to obtain responses from three major stakeholder groups at regional and global levels¹:

1. IUCN staff responsible for managing WANI at regional and global levels (i.e. those with current signed commitments);
2. Senior programme staff (Regional Directors, Programme Coordinators and heads of thematic programmes) at a broader strategic level; and
3. Selected Commission members involved in WANI.

The stakeholder groups listed above total 41 managers. Of the 41, 34 agreed to be interviewed, and provided quantitative and qualitative responses on questions focused on the original concept and assumptions, strategic leadership, capacity, funding, operational support, engagement of partners, factors supporting and hindering WANI, suggestions for improvement and risk. The Interview Guide is included in Annex 1.

¹ It was felt by the management of WANI that it was too early to include Implementing Partners in the self assessment since they are in the early stages of joining WANI. They will be included in future assessments once projects are fully operational. Likewise, donors will be included in a later review.

Overview of Results

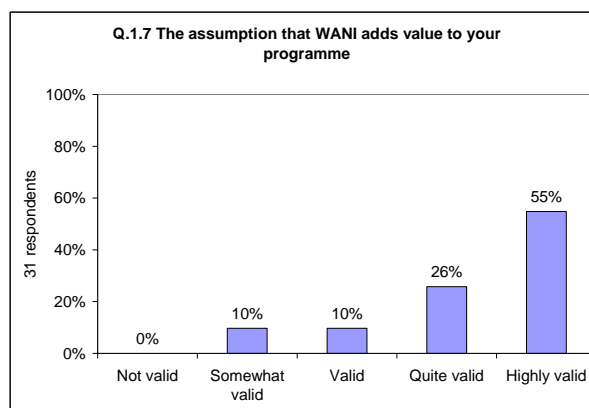
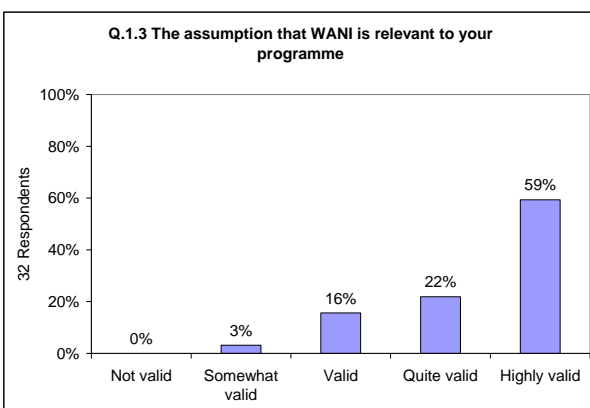
Finding 1. Overall Finding: The original concept behind WANI is still supported

WANI is considered flexible by a large majority of respondents with one qualification. Some respondents noted that a high degree of flexibility has led to considerable complexity, both in terms of what is being done, and also how WANI is being funded. At least two respondents pointed out that WANI might be too flexible and one commented that “flexibility must be balanced with rigor.”

Finding 3. Respondents were supportive but less positive about the innovation

Finding 4. A large majority of respondents think that WANI is both relevant and adds value to their programme.

While the majority of respondents who commented on this question rated WANI as both relevant and adding value to their programme, they also pointed out that IUCN arrived in the water sector without credentials or partners, and this has led to a lengthy process of establishing the necessary credentials and partnerships. A couple of respondents noted that WANI has worked best when it mirror regional programmes in terms of regional, programmatic or geographic priorities and where IUCN has a strong presence in the countries in which WANI wants to work.



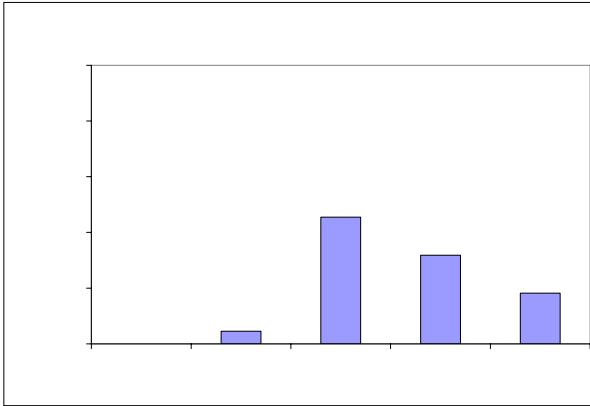
Strategic Leadership

Finding 5. Global leadership is seen as very or highly satisfactory by the majority of respondents, regional leadership less so.

Overall, virtually everyone is at least satisfied with leadership at both the global and regional levels. Half of the responses indicated that strategic leadership at the regional level is very or highly satisfactory, while almost two-thirds indicated that strategic leadership at the global level is either very or highly satisfactory.

A few respondents noted that strategic leadership is still forming in the regions. In some cases, this is a function of lack of capacity and in others a function of regions catching up to the lead provided by the global level.

Many respondents commented on either regional *or* global strategic but not both, based on their experience. In a small number of cases, there was some confusion on the difference between strategic leadership and operational support.



Respondents suggested two factors that support global level strategic leadership. The leadership shown at global level on policy work has helped place IUCN in the community of institutional actors working on water issues. One respondent noted, with appreciation, that the WANI coordinator makes an effort to visit the regions and as a result WANI is well-oriented to regional needs, and suggested that the most successful programmes occur when regional and global levels work together.

One respondent noted that while the strategic leadership provided at the global level has been “visionary,” there appears to be a lack of time and resources to be really strategic.

Capacity

Finding 6. A strong majority of respondents feel IUCN has the capacity to plan WANI projects. However, respondents are less positive on IUCN’s capacity for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

At the outset, it should be noted that WANI is in the very early stages of implementation. In most regions, planning is occurring concurrently with fundraising and hiring of key staff. Respondents tended to comment on what they had done, more so than what they will do in the future.

Overall, respondents felt that IUCN’s capacity to plan WANI projects is satisfactory, but slightly less so to implement, monitor and evaluate WANI projects. Almost three-quarters of respondents see IUCN has having above average or excellent capacity to plan WANI projects, but that percentage fell to 40 percent when asked about implementation. A significant number of respondents pointed out that more capacity will be needed for implementation and in at least a couple of cases, the respondent pointed out that hiring of appropriate staff had not yet occurred. One respondent noted that the addition of WANI to an already overstretched implementation capacity will be a challenge.

Respondents’ perceptions on monitoring and evaluation capacity were slightly better than those of implementation. Comments on monitoring capacity were split between monitoring finances or outputs and monitoring for the purposes of learning. On

monitoring finances and outputs, one respondent observed that WANI lacks even the basic capacity for monitoring. Two other respondents pointed out that information does not flow well from the regions to HQ and that WANI's model hinders monitoring and requires *at least* one full time project administrator at HQ.

On the learning side of monitoring and evaluation, respondents also spoke about other specific issues. One noted that WANI did not start with a baseline analysis, and as such, it will be difficult to analyze change. Another pointed out that it is not clear

Funding

Finding 7. Fundraising at global level is seen as more satisfactory than at regional level. Overall, co-funding is adequate, but not so in some regions.

WANI operates on a funding model that depends on a large core fund which must be matched by co-funding and parallel funding, as a condition of the use of core fund. The current WANI funding model necessitates strong fundraising capacity throughout WANI, regionally and globally. Most respondents rated fundraising at the global level as very or highly satisfactory. However, only one-quarter of respondents rated regional fundraising as very or highly satisfactory and less than one-half found co- and parallel fundraising very or highly satisfactory. This is an important distinction as the presence of a large global WANI fund has placed significant pressure on IUCN regionally to raise additional funds.

Several respondents noted that the global fund has allowed WANI to invest in policy work and help leverage the necessary co- and parallel funding, both of which have secured a spot for IUCN in the global water community.

A couple of regions have been able to leverage additional funding relatively easily, while three others are struggling with the requirement. In at least two regions, fundraising for WANI is either not meeting donor priorities or the priorities of the regional programme itself.

The issues of co-funding also link to the capacity issues raised earlier. A few respondents noted that co-funding is difficult to obtain and hard to administer. In light of the capacity issues raised and the operational support issues discussed in the next section, this might suggest that

One respondent noted that the co-funding model is becoming increasingly popular with donors and this model is supported by large and better suited NGOs such as WWF and Conservation International. This respondent suggested that this sort of model carries inherent risk for IUCN, as the emphasis on fundraising and financial administration can be self-defeating by absorbing the resources and time of senior managers which might be utilized in other ways.

Operational Support

Finding 8. Although assessed as adequate overall, a significant number feel that

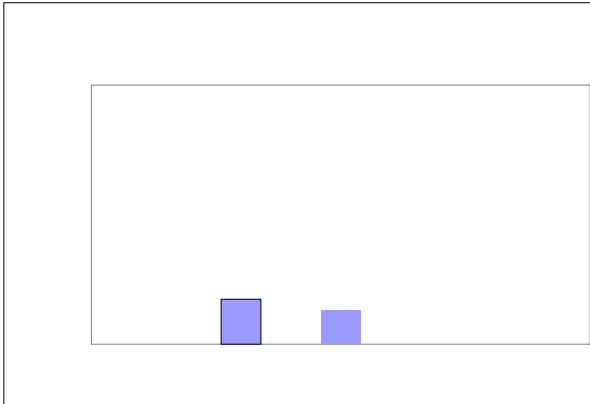
associated with project administration through multiple reporting formats and deadlines.

Technical issues in operational support were raised far less often, however they are worth noting. Two respondents commented that the development of WANI projects requires technical support from a range of disciplines and regions and obtaining this support in a timely manner requires addressing.

Engagement of Partners

Finding 9. Engagement of partners generally seen as effective, but it is too early to assess engagement at community level or in management frameworks.

Many respondents were unable to comment on how WANI is engaging at the community level and in management frameworks; however in some cases, WANI's policy work, either at global or regional level, has opened doors for engagement of national partners.



Respondents were most satisfied with engagement at these two levels. Almost three-quarters of respondents rated IUCN's efforts to engage partners at national level as very or highly satisfactory. Similarly, around 60 percent of respondents rated IUCN's efforts at engaging partners in policy work as very or highly satisfactory. It is worth

noting that only half were able to respond to questions about IUCN's engagement with community partners, in management frameworks and policy work.

Comments by respondents revealed a key factor of success in engaging partners. In one region, strong Country Offices who already have relationships with key partners, helped WANI engage at the national level. In another region, the presence of National Membership Committees has filled a similar role. Conversely, in regions where IUCN does not have similar structures, partnerships have been slow to form.

Overall, many respondents assessed the engagement of partne

slow progress in reaching the implementation stage and this was supported by some observations that IUCN had to build credentials in the water arena before funds could be raised and partnerships arranged.

Suggestions for Improvements

Finding 12. Suggestions for improvement.

In light of their responses, each interviewee was asked for suggestions to improve WANI.

Finally, risks to IUCN's image and reputation were most often identified by respondents as the need to show results on time to donors and partners. WANI is a large and ambitious programme, interacting with many donors and partners, and as such, there is risk if results are not produced.

Overall Assessment of WANI

Finding 14. An overwhelming majority (82 percent) indicate that WANI is worth their time and effort.

Many respondents offered positive comments: calling WANI a "worthwhile approach," seeing "worthwhile learning opportunities," and suggesting that WANI is "worth the time of more people within IUCN." One respondent would "like to see more programmes operating as WANI – it would be worthwhile to learn why WANI is successful and share lessons."

Recommendation 2.

Strengthen IUCN's capacity to implement WANI projects through the hiring of staff, training, technical backstopping and coaching.

Recommendation 3.

Strengthen M&E implementation at project and initiative level (regional and global) through enhancing existing M&E support mechanism (e.g. simplified WANI forms, clear reporting time tables, clear MoUs) and M&E input from regional M&E staff.

Recommendation 4.

Develop a full WANI learning strategy defining mechanisms, products, services and outcomes and building on the expertise developing under the different WANI components. Also time should be created to allow staff to reflect and 'get into' learning.

Recommendation 5.

Further strengthen the WANI fund-raising drive, especially at regional levels through the development of proposals, approaching regional-based donor agencies and networking at key policy meetings with partners and donors.

Recommendation 6.

Improve the administrative and financial support to WANI, at both the global and regional levels through HQ-regional offices direct back-stopping, improved collaboration between technical-administrative staff and timely reporting and allocation of resources. Check progress in January 2004.

Recommendation 7.

Enhance collaboration with thematic programmes at global and regional levels and with commissions. Working with IUCN members should also be given further priority. Furthermore, establishing collaboration with the GEF should be given priority.

Recommendation 8.

Communications outside of IUCN should be further improved. This can be done at global and regional meetings, but also through targeted approaches to reach (new) stakeholders or partners.

The above recommendations, the recommendations of the WANI Advisory Committee, and the decisions of the WANI

Annex 1: WANI Self Assessment Interview Guide - Questions

TAKING STOCK – A SELF ASSESSMENT OF WANI – THE IUCN WATER AND NATURE INITIATIVE

Introduction

As part of their ongoing monitoring and oversight of the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), the Head of the Wetlands and Water Resources, and the WANI Coordinator have initiated a self assessment process to take stock of experiences in implementing WANI to date.

The purpose of the self assessment process is to provide feedback to the WANI Advisory Committee meeting in July, 2003 so that any necessary adjustments can be made in a timely and informed manner, thus guiding the future development of WANI.

The self assessment will seek feedback from three stakeholder groups at regional and global levels:

1. At an operational level, from IUCN staff responsible for managing WANI at regional and global levels;
2. From senior programme staff (Regional Directors, Programme Coordinators and heads of thematic programmes) at a broader strategic level; and
3. From Commission members involved in WANI.

It was felt by the management of WANI that it was too early to include Implementing Partners in the self assessment since they are just coming on board. They will be included in future assessments once projects are fully operational. Likewise, donors will be included in a later review.

In order to obtain as candid and open feedback as possible, this self assessment process is being administered by the IUCN

Interview Guide

Background information

Where WANI started

The interviewer will ask you to respond to the following questions, using the scales indicated below. You may fill these out in advance and return them to the interviewer for use in the interview. Or you may use the interview guide to respond verbally to the questions by phone and the interviewer will record your answers and comments in each area. The advantage of the former is that it gives you more time to expand on your answers in the interview, thus providing a richer understanding of your perceptions and answers.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the request for an interview.

Respondent information

Name: _____

Stakeholder group to which the respondent belongs:

1. IUCN senior programme staff at:

Regional level

Global level

2. IUCN WANI staff at:

Regional level

Global level

3. Commission

Commission member

Questions

Original Concept and Assumptions

Please rank the extent to which the original concept and assumptions behind WANI are still valid:

	Not valid	Somewhat valid	Valid	Quite valid	Highly valid
The concept of using the ecosystem approach in the management of water resources	θ	θ	θ	θ	θ
The assumptions of empowerment, wise governance, economically sound management, knowledge and accessible information as essential requirements.	θ	θ	θ	θ	θ
The assumption that WANI is relevance to your programme.	θ	θ	θ	θ	θ
The assumption that WANI is innovative.	θ	θ	θ	θ	θ
The assumption that WANI is replicable.	θ	θ	θ	θ	θ

	Not valid	Somewhat valid	Valid	Quite valid	Highly valid
The assumption that WANI is flexible.	0	0	0	0	0
The assumption that WANI adds value to your programme.	0	0	0	0	0

Comments:

Strategic Leadership

Please rank the adequacy of the strategic leadership (i.e. vision, strategy) of WANI at regional and global levels.

	Not at all satisfactory	Not very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
Regional level	0	0	0	0	0
Global level	0	0	0	0	0

Comments:

Capacity

Please rank the extent to which IUCN has the capacity to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate WANI projects:

	No capacity at all	Weak capacity	Average capacity	Above average capacity	Excellent capacity
Capacity to <u>plan</u> WANI projects	0	0	0	0	0

Capacity to implement WANI

Operational Support

Please rank the adequacy of the operational support from the IUCN Secretariat for WANI – i.e. administration, financial tracking, MOUs, staffing.

	Not at all satisfactory	Not very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
Regional level	0	0	0	0	0

What factors have hindered the initiation and implementation of WANI.

Suggestions for improvements

What would you change, adapt, modify, cancel, do more, do less? (e.g. In regard to - shared values, scope, structure, system, strategy, staff, skills, other aspects)

Risks

What risks, if any, do you see to -

Financial viability _____

Delivery of programme as committed _____

Image / reputation _____

Other _____

Your overall assessment of WANI

Is it worth your time and effort?

Yes

Maybe

No

Comments

Thank you for taking the time for this interview.