INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

Distr.
GENERAL

CRF(XXXVI)/4
23 May 2005

Original: ENGLISH

THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION
19-21 June 2005
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

SYNTHESIS REPORT ON EX-POST EVALUATIONS

Overall Evaluation of ITTO Transboundary Community Participation Projects (Ecuador, Indonesia, Peru and Thailand) in Biodiversity Conservation

SUMMARY

PD 16/97 Rev.3 (F)
Integrated Buffer Zone Development for Sustainable Management of Tropical Forest Resources in Thailand (Thailand)

PD 2/00 Rev.2 (F)
Bi-National Conservation and Peace in the Condor Range Region, Ecuador-Peru (Ecuadorean Component) (Ecuador)

PD 3/00 Rev.2 (F)
Bi-National Conservation and Peace in the Condor Range Region, Ecuador-Peru (Peruvian Component) (Peru)

PD 38/00 Rev.1 (F)
Management of Kayan Mentarang National Park (KMNP) to Promote Trans-Boundary Conservation along the Border between Indonesia and Malaysian States of Sabah and Sarawak - Phase I (Indonesia)

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Abbreviations

CI-Peru	Conservation International – Peru
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
INRENA	National Institute of Renewable Natural Resources (Peru)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NGO (NGOs)	Non-Governmental Organization (s)
PA (PAs)	Protected Area (Protected Areas)
TBCA	Transboundary Conservation Area
TEI	Thai Environmental Institute
UNESCO	United Nation Organization for Education, Science and Culture
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN)
WWF-I	World Wildlife Fund – Indonesia

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Overall Evaluation of ITTO Transboundary Community Participation Projects (Ecuador, Indonesia, Peru and Thailand) in Biodiversity Conservation

SUMMARY

ITTO financed several transboundary projects related to community participation in biodiversity conservation. Four of these projects, completed during 2003 and 2004, were selected for a special overall appraisal, to be based on the results of ex-post evaluations carried out in March and April 2005, by a team of independent consultants[1]/. The overall objective of this task is to provide concise diagnosis of the four selected projects so as to point out the successful and unsuccessful outcomes, the reasons for successes and failures and the contribution of the projects towards ITTO´s Objective 2000 and the ITTO Yokohama Action Plan and to draw lessons that can be used to improve similar projects in the future.

The selected projects for this overall report are: (1) PD 2/00 Rev.2 (F): "Bi-national Conservation and Peace in the Condor Range Region, Ecuador-Peru (Ecuadorian Component)", (2) PD 3/00 Rev. 2 (F): "Bi-national Conservation and Peace in the Condor Range Region, Ecuador-Peru (Peruvian Component)", (3) PD 038/00 Rev. 1 (F): "Management of Kayan Mentarang National Park to Promote Trans-boundary Conservation along the Border between Indonesia and Malaysian States of Sabah and Sarawak-Phase I" and, (4) PD 16/97 Rev. 3 (F): Integrated Buffer Zone Development for Sustainable Management of Tropical Forest Resources in Thailand"

The methodology applied for the preparation of this report is the usual. The author has been the team leader of the ex-post evaluation mission for the four selected projects, being given the opportunity to visit each one (from March 28 to April 30). The emphasis of the appraisal has been placed on the following subjects: (1) the actual and potential biodiversity conservation value of the results of the projects, (2) the relevance of the results in terms of local community participation in biodiversity conservation, (3) the effective impact of the project results in transboundary collaboration for conservation, (4) the impact and potential impact of the results in benefited populations and (5) the cost/effectiveness and other managerial aspects of the projects. Decurrently from the above, answers were provided to other concerns of the terms of reference, such as the relevance of the projects for ITTO and other concerned actors.

Lessons learned for future projects

The needs for and the objectives of similar projects in the future. The need for similar projects in the future is obvious and very large considering the demand side. It is also an appropriate strategy for the fulfillment of ITTO's responsibility with regard to biodiversity conservation applying its core capacities and, simultaneously, assisting other efforts to manage tropical forest protected areas (PAs). On the basis of the results of the four reviewed projects it is possible to suggest that ITTO should intervene in biodiversity conservation in or related to PAs when: (1) the effort of the project must be placed where local population (in the buffer zone or inside the PA) is the determining factor for forest biodiversity conservation; (2) the bulk of the environmentally friendly development alternatives for local population fall in the central area of actuation of ITTO (forest management, forestation, forest industry) and; (3) the value of the forest biodiversity is highly endangered and exceptional, specially as forest genetic resources for the future, and located in important producer countries. It is less evident why the ITTO must prioritize working in

[1] / The mission in Ecuador and Peru was integrated by G. B. Wetterberg (USA), M. T. J. Padua (Brasil), C. R. Bueno (Brasil) and M. J. Dourojeanni (Peru/France). The mission to Indonesia and Thailand was integrated only by Wetterberg, Padua and Dourojeanni.

biodiversity conservation in international boundaries. This may or not be a necessity, according to each case.

Innovative approaches/designs for projects aiming at community participation in biodiversity conservation. None of the analyzed projects had innovative approaches or designs' aiming at community participation. In the past two decades almost everything was tested in terms of community participation in biodiversity conservation and it is unlikely new approaches can be invented. However, the four projects were designed on a careful selection of the best available practices. These can be summarized as follows: (1) empowerment of local communities' leadership, through organizational assistance, carefully promoting democratic approaches (all projects); (2) abundant but precise up to date information about facts concerning project's objectives, including its administration (all projects); (3) respect for local traditions, especially indigenous people's customary rules, while using them to incorporate biodiversity conservation elements (especially Ecuador, Indonesia and Peru); (4) assisting indigenous leadership to enter in contact, at the appropriate level, with national or regional governmental authorities (especially Peru and Ecuador); (5) acceptance that, time being, some traditional approaches to conserve biodiversity, such establishment of conventional PAs may not be possible (especially Ecuador, also Peru); (6) redefinition of limits of existing PAs when these include populated areas without biological value (Indonesia); (7) land titling for indigenous people as a pre-condition to set aside PAs (Peru); (8) selection and training of indigenous or local people as promoters and conveyers of project results and goals (all projects).

Differently from so many other community based conservation projects, three out of four reviewed projects had a very clear notion that their primary finality was biodiversity conservation and not community development. Thailand was the exception. In the other three countries community development was considered as a precondition for biodiversity conservation, and most of the money and efforts invested were dedicated to it, but it was not the main target of the project. This difference may seem semantic but, as results showed, it was a key element for the success.

Appropriate target groups. Target groups were very well selected. As indigenous people were the determining factor for biodiversity conservation they were correctly selected as the principal target. On the other hand, all population sectors were addressed or consulted as needed, including local and regional authorities, non-indigenous people and, as an example, also mining and logging interested parties in Ecuador and Indonesia, respectively.

The organizational arrangements for the projects. The organizational arrangements for the project were conveniently settled. It is important to highlight that, excepting the Thai project, all were located in very distant regions implying very high costs of transportation. This is why, in the three other indicated projects, the implementing organization established an operational base in the nearest town. All projects received adequate political and administrative support from the central offices of the executing agencies, located in the countries' capitals. No major administrative difficulties were registered.

Follow up and evaluation practices. The selected projects were initially approved as first phase of long duration operations. And, in all cases, the ex-post evaluation teams strongly supported the financing of a second phase. As a matter of fact, the first phases of these projects whereas very successful, provided results that are not self sustainable without a second and even a third phase.

The ex-post evaluation team proposed some changes in the second phase drafts, in order to take advantage of the analysis carried out. Its main common recommendation was to include more activities that relate to the ITTO core function and experience, such as forest management, reforestation, second growth forest management, agro-silviculture, wildlife management or forest

products. The team generally proposed less pure science or biodiversity research and fewer agriculture activities.

Evaluation procedures adopted by ITTO were adequate. However, regarding ex-post evaluations it may be advisable that they be slightly longer. In the remote areas the team visits were dependent on weather, water levels in the rivers, availability of light aircraft, and other factors that could limit certain evaluation aspects.

Supplemental, alternative activities, processes, procedures and/or follow up programs in the field of community participation in biodiversity conservation. Project results are sufficiently positive as to suggest that the so often criticized community based conservation programs may be successful provided they are clearly guided, in every included activity or action, by their finality regarding biodiversity conservation. The experience gained with the four reviewed projects may suggest ITTO not only to continue financing operations that include PAs buffer zones or people inside PAs but also that it may be rewarding to conduct projects in indigenous land, even when those are not related to any actual or future PA.

Conclusions

Comparability of the reviewed projects. Despite having commonalities the four projects also have significant differences that greatly impacted in execution and results. The Thai project is substantially different from the other three and cannot really be qualified as a "transboundary community participation project in biodiversity conservation" and, as well, it is not evident that local population economic activities were ever an important threat to biodiversity. And, political circumstances have not allowed the Indonesian project to fully develop its transboundary aspects.

Overall project's formal results. The four projects achieved all expected results, in different degrees, and also several valuable non expected results. One project duplicated the number of expected results with important non expected results. A closer examination of the formal results demonstrates that some of the objectives and expected results where not fully achieved. Often, these lower than expected results are a consequence of excessively ambitious and unrealistic goals and/or of language utilized in project proposals.

Overall attainment of objectives. The overall results of the projects, considering their relatively low cost, the extreme social and geographical difficulties they faced and their short time of execution were all successful and very cost-effective. Where specific numbers or products were required in the logical framework (number of nurseries established, hectares planted, number of species management plans generated, etc.) the projects attained or exceeded their objectives. The difficulty was often associated with the end result, not the target numbers. The evaluation team sought to determine if the nurseries remained viable, the workshops included the right audience, or if the plantations lived.

Achievements related to conventional biodiversity conservation. The Peruvian project achieved the substantive result of obtaining indigenous people's acceptance for the establishment of a new mid size national park and the probability of another future reserve. The Ecuadorian project established three small protected areas. The Indonesian project was able to obtain consensus for a redefinition of the limits of the Kayan Mentarang National Park and also an agreement for future Dayak's behavior within the Park. These results, and others, such as management plans, biological studies and cartography were also important. However, the new proposed or established protected areas in Peru and Ecuador are not fully representative of the biological diversity of the Cordillera del Condor, nor adequate to ensure the long term survival of the biodiversity they contain. These results, if not associated to other measures, will not achieve the overall goal of biodiversity conservation. In the Thai project there is no evidence that to work

in the buffer zone might have any significant impact on biodiversity conservation as people were not exploiting park's resources.

Achievement related to biodiversity conservation through indigenous people's participation. These results were, in relative terms, much more significant than those directly associated to PAs. But, the by all standards excellent and promising results achieved in the first phase of the projects need to be sustained in the second and probably in a third phase before becoming permanent. They greatly depend upon (1) tangible results of sustainable management alternatives that were outlined, but not initiated; (2) population growth and, (3) government's fulfillment of its responsibilities regarding infrastructure and services.

Community participation in biodiversity conservation. The partial results so far achieved in the four projects seem to confirm that it is possible to conserve biodiversity with participation of local or indigenous communities provided there is clear understanding that biodiversity conservation is the pursued finality.

Transboundary collaboration results. Even in the cases of Ecuador and Peru, the "transboundary results" of the projects were not exceptional. There were formal results, but little or no collaboration with practical meaning for biodiversity conservation was achieved. Transboundary collaboration did not apply to the Thai project. Indonesia and Malaysia had fruitful exchanges and a binational biodiversity expedition during the project, but relations between the countries deteriorated and any transboundary collaboration has essentially stopped.

Other results related to indigenous people. In order to achieve environmental results, the projects had to provide solutions to several other aspects related to indigenous population such as organization and empowerment of the indigenous leadership and, in the case of Peru, even the preparation of a proposal for indigenous communities titling review. Most of these results are permanent in nature.

Other results for non indigenous people. The projects provided original and unprecedented planning tools to regional and local authorities and, in the case of the Thai project, launched new organizational alternatives such as a credit cooperative and a revolving fund.

Governmental authorities' participation and response. All four governments officially supported the project. However, only the Peruvian and Indonesian forestry authorities provided limited support (implying budget) during execution and expressed willingness to assume larger responsibilities for the near future with regard to the PAs. No public agency in the four countries is considering assuming actions and costs necessary to keep alive community participation in biodiversity conservation in the buffer zones.

Relevance of the projects for executing agencies. The four executing agencies (Fundacion Natura, CI-Peru, WWF-I and TEI) are NGOs. All considered the projects as highly relevant and they are deeply interested in their follow up with ITTO participation or with other funds. The Indonesian Ministry of Forestry was named the co-executing agency, together with a NGO, but one problem with that project was the definition of the roles of each agency.

Non-governmental organizations as executing agencies. The four projects confirmed that to develop governmental projects with NGOs as executants is a rewarding approach. In all cases the governmental authorities consulted expressed satisfaction with project results and with the working relationship. The team observed exceptional project leadership from most of the involved NGOs.

Relevance of projects results in function of ITTO objectives, plans and strategies. The projects did not address the core function of ITTO related to tropical timber, reforestation or forest

industries. However, they were highly relevant to a number of objectives (ITTO 1994 Objectives) and the Yokohama Action Plan 2000-2006.

Appropriateness of design. The project proposals were adequately designed, justifying their approval by ITTO. However, most projects were (1) too ambitious considering funds availability, time framework, working conditions and capacity of control of external factors; and (2) failed in establishing the correlation of activities and actions with specific objectives, often mixing them. Too often, the design required the NGO to carry out an action beyond its legal competence such as "establish a protected area system". Or else the specific project objective was not written as an action-oriented infinitive verb statement. For example "sustainable community development" might better have been stated as "to enhance community development" or "to promote sustainable community development".

Implementation, administration. The four projects developed up to date and appropriate strategies of implementation. The four were very fortunate in the selection of tactics to improve empowerment of leadership and local participation in the project. Regarding other matters all projects applied the best available techniques. Administration was carried out well and no problems were confronted.

Costs and cost structure. The four ex-post evaluations found costs and cost structure adequate. Their general cost-efficiency was above the average of equivalent projects.

Sustainability. As of today, the sustainability of the results of the projects is not really ensured. The ITTO funding for the second phases is consequently indispensable.

Recommendations

Second phase of the projects. As three of the four projects were essentially preparatory or planning phases, the final results of the projects are drastically depending on the ITTO financing of their programmed second and possibly third phases.

Emphasis in ITTO core experience in project related to community participation in biodiversity conservation. Three of the four projects made no use of the core experience of ITTO regarding forest management, legislation or regulation, reforestation or forest industries. It is recommended that in a second phase the capacity of the ITTO in these fields be applied more intensively in order to promote sustainable economic alternatives.

ITTO continued involvement in community participation in biodiversity conservation projects. As PAs are targeted by other international organizations it seems logical that ITTO select working niches such as community participation in biodiversity conservation and, to a lesser extent, on transboundary biodiversity conservation. These options also may benefit from ITTO experience in forest management, reforestation and forest industries, to be applied in buffer zones or in indigenous land. A buffer zone project adjacent to an important tropical national park provides a relatively inexpensive "good face" for the organization.

ITTO involvement in transboundary community participation in biodiversity conservation. Despite in some cases it may be relevant to develop efforts to promote transboundary projects associating biodiversity conservation and community participation; in many others this may result in unnecessary accumulated complications provided the main objective is indeed biodiversity conservation. Therefore, it is advisable that ITTO finance these kind of projects only when it is clearly necessary.

ITTO should build into projects early and on-going verification of key activities, and not be involved in projects that can't be confirmed. When carrying out a Project Completion Report or an ex-post evaluation, sufficient time should be allotted to permit thorough field inspections of the end results identified.

ITTO should require, as part of its Project Completion Report, a summary of actual expenditures as related to project activities. That would follow the same format as the outputs and costs related to activities presented in the project proposal document, but would have the true expenditures summarized at project completion.

ITTO should have "community participation in biodiversity conservation" projects designed for longer than two year periods and build into them a process for timely approval of follow-up phases without intervening gaps. All project required more than the 24 months initially approved and all of them would have required at least three years to do a better job. All projects lacked continuity between phases.

Governmental responses to projects and result's follow up and sustainability. Considering the relatively low involvement of governmental agencies in the evaluated projects and their sustainability, ITTO may wish to consider the following measures: (1) to request governments to provide a larger share of the project costs, (2) to condition disbursement of following phases to fulfillment of minimal government's contractual obligations, (3) when projects are developed in buffer zones request the active involvement in the project of governmental agencies related to rural development and, (4) condition new projects in the same country to its behavior regarding the previous conditions.

Non governmental organizations as executing agencies. Considering the good results obtained, it is advisable that ITTO continue favoring the participation of national non governmental organizations as executing agencies for its projects.

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