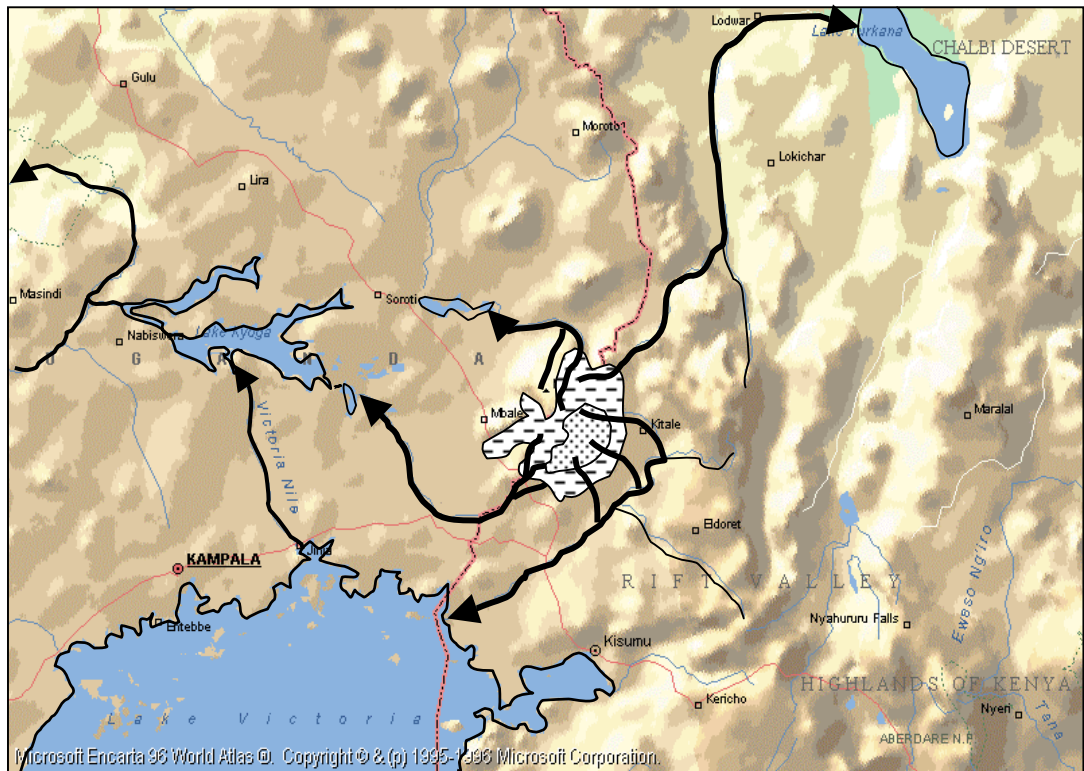# FINAL APPRAISAL of the
MT. ELGON REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM
CONSERVATION PROGRAMME (MERECP)

By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a short-term appraisal of the programme document brief "Mt. Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme" (MERECP) prepared by IUCN-EARO under EAC. The revised programme document is partly based on experiences from two recent national projects dealing with the Mt. Elgon area in both countries and an external appraisal finalized in May 2002. In addition to the programme document brief, several other documents feed into the overall ambitions of the programme; including monitoring and evaluation and research activities.

Relevance

1. The programme holds a double ambition of sustainable biodiversity management and livelihood security activities in a transboundary setting and as such forms a novel pilot and demonstration initiative of far more than regional and national interest. It could potentially become a "lighthouse" for similar undertakings in many developing countries.
2. The programme is clearly relevant for both regional (EAC), national (Kenya and Uganda), and local level actors and substantial support is voiced both in policy documents and through interviews with key officials.
3. The revised PD also has a clearer focus on local users and rural livelihoods than the previous PD; not only on economic activities but through Resource Use Agreements also on wider aspects of rights-based development.
4. The programme is thus both clearly relevant and suitable as an object for Norwegian support.

Process, design and structure

1. The inception phase process has been pronounced participatory and open in its embracement of stakeholders at various levels, securing good and legitimate activities, insight, and support for the programme. Even monitoring, evaluation and research activity planning have involved relevant stakeholders.
2. The programme design; coherence and consistency between goals, purpose and activities are placed within a well-designed logframe, developed through participatory workshops with all stakeholders (requested in Appraisal 2002). Some comments are still made on choice of indicators. One could possibly also discuss the relationship or a merge between the last two objectives. Another issue is if the logframe should reflect the particular challenges of the different legal frameworks in the two countries, and risks this may pose for the transboundary programme ambition.
3. Programme activities have been spelled out much clearer and now forms innovative and exciting ideas for the future. The role of ICRAF in this respect seems to have been a success. We would also stress the explicit ambition to harmonize and coordinate local level District Development Plans, the District Environmental Action Plans and park related activities and that local authorities now can include programme funds in their own work plans and budgets.
4. A transboundary ideal ambition could be one common biodiversity resource within one organisational structure, with one biodiversity plan, a joint economy internalising all external effects, and with a common set of participatory, livelihood practices. In real life; and in planning the programme, ground realities have given less potent ambitions. The team has spent much time on

discussing this with stakeholders, and accepts that these are complex issues; both relative to national sovereignty, to institutional and organisational boundaries and territories, legal frameworks and local level heterogeneity on ecological, economic, socio-cultural and other dimensions.

5. A particular risk factor in this context relates to the need for legal reform on Kenyan side related to collaborative resource management, Boundary management and the Forest Bill. One could possibly approach Kenyan authorities for the possibility of establishing Mt. Elgon as a test case, with an exemption from the present bans on collaborative management. This must be followed up politically.

6. Crosscutting issues of gender, socio-cultural aspects and HIV/AIDS should be more explicitly dealt with in the PD.

7. Corruption and other issues of (good) governance are not raised explicitly in the PD, and this should be rectified. In planning of programme design and organisational structure, concern has been built in, but it is not explicitly accounted for in the PD.

8. The programme structure; with actor structures, authority lines, flows of funds etc. is complex. The team has spent much time on discussing this. The complexity of field realities, of goals and activities, and the transboundary ambition presumes complexity, and the revised PD has in addition (on request also from Appraisal 2002) included a substantial number of actors at local level in addition, not making the structure easier. But it anchors activities in local institutions. The team feels that the presented structure is necessary, but that it still forms a risk factor for the programme. We have not found alternative or good ways to simplify, without loosing local participation dimensions and commitment.

9. The role of EAC in this transboundary programme is crucial both for harmonization and for conveying experiences to other regional sites and also to own policy development. EAC has strong commitment for the project; both in formal documents and also voiced through interview.

10. IUCN is among the most competent and proficient actors in East Africa to undertake a pilot and demonstration programme of this kind, and may also be able to convey lessons learnt to other sites, countries and continents. They are unfortunately also expensive, and we still feel that their role should be phased down throughout the programme period. We return to this.

Monitoring, evaluation and information management

1. There are separate documents developed through workshops with stakeholders on participatory monitoring and evaluation, and the outcome is of high quality.

2. There is a separate report from a workshop with stakeholders on information needs for the programme execution and for more general research activities, and key institutions are identified in both countries (National Museum in Kenya, Makerere University in Uganda) (recommended in Appraisal 2002).

3. For any pilot and demonstration scheme, careful assessment of baseline conditions, participatory and process oriented evaluation of changes and effects are crucial for documentation and widespread dissemination of experiences and results.

Donor coordination and other programmes
1. Some projects under the Nile Basin Initiative in the Mt. Elgon area could overlap with the MERECP. The PD states plans to secure coordination.
2. The recent establishment of the Lake Victoria Development Project under EAC is meant to become a secretariat that can host and implement relevant programmes; such as NELSAP (where Norway is a donor) and even MERECP when IUCN withdraws as coordinator. This may hold an important solution for organisational anchoring of this kind of transboundary programme.
3. An interesting, though somewhat unclear process, relates to the application to establish Mt. Elgon as a Biosphere Reserve, and to what extent this may inflict on the substantial sustainable use ambitions of MERECP.
4. Donor coordination is also sought in the programme activities at local level, especially concerning livelihood activities, even if not discussed in detail in the PD.

Assessments of sustainability
1. Programme sustainability is a crucial question. IUCN still lacks a willingness to plan for its own withdrawal as the main implementing institution. We suggest that a deadline (May 2007), after a mid-term review, is given for IUCN to make an exit plan for its role as the implementing body by the end of the programme period. A new institutional arrangement should be planned for, while also developing ideas for financial support for a prolonged period. We suggest that the LVDP initiative is assessed in this connection. Other, more bilateral structures could also be investigated.
2. The programme's organisational complexity has been discussed, and it must be seen as a risk factor, also in a sustainability context.
3. The programme's field activities, especially with the recent inclusion of ICRAF efforts are very promising and add substantial value to overall programme ambitions and enhances sustainability of programme ambitions
4. The programme's strong policy support at different levels is conducive to long term sustainability, even if the present economic expenditures in the programme is most likely clearly beyond what national or even regional institutions would or could cater for. One can always argue for global responsibilities for biodiversity management but it is also important to be realistic and practical. We therefore also suggest that IUCN looks into how to, in the long run, cut down on costs; both in organisation and activities, and also look into how to enhance incomes; in park tourism, forest plantations etc. but also in direct field level livelihood activities.
5. The evolution of the processes and products of Resource Use Agreements holds an important key in the programme. They have improved relationship to local people and also support a rights-based development, which is good.
6. The programme is an environmental programme and has as one main goal to sustainably conserve the environment. The transboundary nature of the programme could also help secure a broader dissemination of programme ideas, activities and experiences, enhancing sustainability in a broad way.
7. Local heterogeneity; gender, socio-cultural issues, HIV/AIDS, corruption are all issues that could have been better and especially more explicitly handled in the PD, also in relation to sustainability. The participatory and inclusionary approach also in programme implementation, however, could secure that such concerns are addressed in the field.

Overall recommendation
We thus clearly support to the programme and believe that it holds important pilot and demonstration qualities for the difficult task of merging environment and development concerns. The transboundary dimensions enhance the pilot and demonstration values, but also complicate structural and organisational design. The crucial role of IUCN in the starting phase of the programme should not preclude that we recommend RNE to negotiate; both lower management fees; and in particular that an exit plan should be developed midway through the programme.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Norwegian Embassy in Kampala, Uganda, has requested an appraisal of the programme proposal "Mt. Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP)", prepared by IUCN's Eastern Africa Regional Office (EARO). Terms of Reference for the appraisal, including a general document format, are enclosed in Appendix 1.

The appraisal team included the following members:
- Paul Vedeld, (team leader) Professor, Department for Environment and Development Studies, University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway
- Astrid van Rooij, Independent Consultant, Kampala, Uganda.
- Frode Sundnes, trainee, Department for Environment and Development Studies, University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway
- Ivar T. Jørgensen, Senior Advisor, Norad, Norway

The Team visited various government and public institutions in Kampala, during the mission carried out between 1.3 - 8.3.2005 (see itinerary, Appendix 2). The consultancy was facilitated by IUCN-EARO through an agreement with the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala. We thank involved parties for important inputs in the process. This also includes some substantial comments made by IUCN to a draft version of this report, enclosed as Appendix 7. We have included much of this in the final report; but not all, of course.

The report follows guidelines given by Norad's handbook for appraisals, with an analysis of relevance, institutional and organisational design, project activities, budget allocations, governance, information management, donor coordination and long term sustainability issues.

A particular feature of this appraisal is that we have been able to, and also been asked to build on the much more comprehensive appraisal made in 2002, where also a number of critical issues where raised (see Appendix 4). The TOR for the present study requests the team primarily to check in what form and to what extent these concerns have been met in the revised document. For each section in the report, we therefore give brief account of main points and problematic matters raised in the initial appraisal (in italics); and then comment on how the new project document (PD) and the monitoring and evaluation plan meets these issues. In addition, the TOR request a particular focus on some items; the transboundary ambition of the programme; the challenge of the complex organisational structure; measures to secure long term sustainability; and mechanisms for co-ordination with related regional programmes in the Lake Victoria area. So it shall be.

2. ISSUES ON PROGRAMME RELEVANCE

This section assesses issues of programme relevance; to national plans and priorities, to coherence with Norwegian policies and how the programme has relevance for key end users of the programme's outputs.

2.1 RELEVANCE FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PLANS, PRIORITIES AND BUDGETS

The PD02 states that the programme is very much in line with both regional and national plans and priorities. It states that biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and the environment are priority areas in both countries as well as for EAC and refers to that the programme document (PD) already had been approved by the two involved Governments as well as by EAC. The document also notes that both national plans and legal frameworks in the two countries are well in line with the programme's visions and activities. At the regional level, the documents refers to EAC's stated policy on fostering co-operation in joint and efficient management and sustainable use of natural resources and on the adoption of common policies for conservation of transboundary ecosystems, and for capacity building programmes.

The team finds that little has changed in these respects. We have been reassured by relevant authorities at regional and national levels that the programme enjoys substantial political support. Through our meetings we were also impressed by the insight, commitment and openness various government bodies displayed in discussions around both overall ambitions and their conversance with more detailed elements within the programme.

The team has been requested to look into the EAC Strategic plan 2001-05 and the EAC mandate on poverty alleviation.

The EAC Strategy states (p.38-41) a number of ambitions on cooperation in the point 4.3.3 on Tourism and Wildlife Management such as;
- "a collective and coordinated approach to the promotion and marketing of quality tourism" and an "ambition to establish a regional approach"
-"The states are committed to developing a collective and coordinated policy for conservation and sustainable utilisation of wildlife and other tourist sites in the community". It involves harmonization of wildlife conservation and management policies
-Under "Cooperation in Environmental and Natural Resources" the Mt. Elgon Watershed is mentioned as an area of common interest for harmonisation. The strategy states that "Management programmes for transboundary ecosystems already identified by the Environmental Committee in EAC , such as Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Elgon shall be harmonised and coordinated during the strategy period".
- There is also a separate section on the Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin, where Mt. Elgon holds an important position.

An additional point made in the present PD, is that the experiences of the transboundary programme will fit well into EAC ambition to test and develop EIA Guidelines for Shared Ecosystems.

Concerning poverty alleviation, the programme has an expressed ambition to improve livelihoods of poor rural people through activities that at the same time both directly and indirectly can off-set pressures on vulnerable forest resources. We have not been able to access the EAC mandate on poverty; but it can be no doubt that the integrated approach of the programme on environment/poverty alleviation both fits into national poverty alleviation plans and that it is has a general strong poverty orientation.

The programme also holds important relevance for good governance issues. The establishment of protected areas in the region with substantial resource use restrictions, and where Mt. Elgon is no exception, has often come at the expense of local people. For Mt. Elgon's transfer to a national Park, there was no impact assessment nor any types of compensations paid; and resentments are still commonplace in the area, of lost access to forest, fuel and fodder resources. The launch of Resource Use Agreements has helped improved relationships between local people and the state. Such "everyday state-making" where people meet the state in positive encounters, must be seen as innovative examples of promoting good governance.

An additional asset of the regional programme, and its "relevance" is the mutual possibility for learning; both at national and at regional levels. We return to this issue later in the report.

A final issue concerns budget matters and to what extent this programme may be thought to displace local willingness to invest in the same area. Given the economic realities of EAC, of the two countries, and in particular at local government level, we think that the programme as such may help local authorities in developing approaches contributing to local level economic growth and development, rather than displacing investments.

We thus find that, also in line with the Appraisal from 2002, that MERECP is a priority programme area, regionally, nationally and even locally.

The EAC approval of the PD 2005 will, according to IUCN, involve the ENR Technical Committee (April 2005) and the EAC Council of Ministers (May 2005). In between, the EAC will seek formal approval by KE & UG.

2.2 RELATIONS TO NORWEGIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE POLICIES

The AR2002 regarded the proposed programme to be well in line with general Norwegian development and environmental specific assistance policies as the programme combines environment and development activities in a good and innovative way. This is also shown with reference to all relevant policy documents. The proposed programme was further found to cover all four environmental priority areas of the Norwegian environmental development strategy. The team also stressed the general outline of the PD, as well as the participatory way it has been developed, to be well in line with the ecosystem approach and with the main principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which both countries are signatories.

The present team finds that these viewpoints are still valid. Even further, the participatory programme development process and its increased detailed emphasis on outreach activities and poverty focus, have in fact improved the relevance of the programme relative to Norwegian policies and principles in particular related to governance and poverty alleviation. The programme also holds an interesting and innovative profile in promoting south-south cross-country cooperation and as such may serve into governance and institution- building principles of Norwegian development assistance.

2.3 RELEVANCE FOR KEY END USERS OF OUTPUTS FROM THE PROGRAMME

Key users are defined as the authorities in charge of natural resource management as well as local government bodies and local people themselves working with activities to enhance the livelihood of poor people in the two countries. This relates not only to direct resource use and biodiversity conservation, but also to experiences gained on developing organisational competence and implementation proficiency, in particular on working with local people.

The AR2002 reports that the proposed programme was clearly relevant to these groups' needs and priorities, although the activities to be undertaken in the outreach components should be spelt out more clearly. They reported that the programme was designed to cover all reserved lands in the Mt. Elgon area, as well as a "buffer zone" of roughly 5-10 km below the borders of the reserve. They also reported concern about the problems for the facilitator of the programme to accommodate as many as possible of the user's needs and priorities into a regional context. Even for the tourism/ecotourism sector to the Mt. Elgon area, being one of the most promising issues to consider in a regional context, there might be particular difficulties, as Uganda is promoting tourism mainly through the UWA and MTTI, while in Western Kenya tourism is promoted through a private company.

The revised PD has been improved on several of these concerns. First of all, the programme activities are now spelt out much more in detail, so that it is possible to assess the potential benefits for key users more comprehensively.

Secondly, the revamping of the PD has also stressed much more local people's needs, and it has taken on in a much more comprehensive way local government down to district level and even below. There are now ambitions to facilitate the harmonisation of local development plans, District Environmental Action Plans and park management and outreach plans. The implementation of in particular outreach and even extension activities is now being integrated in local institutions, allowing district level authorities to include programme resources in their own work-plans and budgets. This is a substantial step forward also in more long-term sustainability of programme activities as we return to in section 6. In line with this is also the expansion to a 15 km operational area around the protected areas.

The ambition of harmonisation is to promote activities such as tourism, biodiversity management even on the Kenyan side, so that one at all can work with collaborative management systems as the present legal framework in Kenya prohibit this.

3. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND DESIGN

In this section we first of all briefly outline an "ideal transboundary programme". We thereafter discuss issues concerning the presented programme's design and organisation and the systems suggested for monitoring and evaluation and information management. We also look briefly at the suggested financial flows and budgets and some cross-cutting challenges for the programme.

3.1 AN IDEAL TRANSBOUNDARY PROGRAMME

A transboundary ideal ambition could be to address one common biodiversity resource with one common biodiversity plan within one organisational structure internalising all activities planned for. One should also have one common legal framework and a common economy internalising all external effects, and with a common set of participatory, livelihood practices.

In real life, and in planning the programme, ground realities have given less potent, but at the same time more practical ambitions. Instead of having one common biodiversity resource, one has had to address two national parks, and several state owned and communal forest reserves, where legal frameworks, organisations and purpose differ widely.

The team has spent much time on discussing this with stakeholders, and accepts that these are complex issues; both relative to national sovereignty, to institutional and organisational boundaries and territories, legal frameworks and local level heterogeneity on ecological, economic, socio-cultural and other dimensions.

As we shall see, the programme strategy is therefore focusing more on harmonising activities on biodiversity management and legal frameworks, carrying out similar outreach activities in the two countries, trying to bridge tourist activities, sharing experiences, carrying out joint research etc.

3.2 PROGRAMME DESIGN

3.2.1 The project development process
As recommended in the appraisal of 2002 the project embarked on an independent inception phase in February 2004. A workplan for this phase which should run from February 2004 to June 2005 was developed. Most outputs mentioned in the workplan have been accomplished and a revised and updated programme document has been submitted.

Contrary to the earlier project document, the PD 2005 has been developed in full collaboration with all stakeholders through consultative meetings and participatory workshops on various topics. The most outstanding were:

- mobilisation workshop;
- visioning workshop;
- stakeholder consultations in Uganda and Kenya;
- research agenda development workshop;
- budget outline workshop; and

- monitoring & evaluation workshop.

Interviews held with stakeholders were open and it was noted that all stakeholders knew about the programme and expressed a sense of ownership to the programme. A selected group had been involved in development of the budget, which was also later discussed in a workshop. It should be noted that none of the people consulted for the appraisal had seen the final Programme Brief as given to the appraisal team. This may be due to the fact the fact that it had just been printed and not yet distributed to all stakeholders.

Thus, it seems as if the participatory process itself has created a change of mindset of involved stakeholders compared to the former PD. The process has been highly participatory and stakeholders do find themselves in the PD 2005.

3.2.2 Quality of underlying analysis and planning activities
One major point of the underlying analysis and planning activities in 2002 was that the proposed organisational structure was not optimally designed to cater for harmonised activities, and in particular for the more long-term capacity building of institutions and for the local ownership to programme focal ideas.

The project proposal has changed substantially from the one appraised in 2002. Many of the issues raised then have been taken into account and worked out in more detail. However, the PD 2005 does still not explicitly describe the strategies bridging the problems, context analysis and the logical framework. This information is known through the various stakeholders meetings' reports.

The general approach to link up the idea of a holistic ecosystem to administrative systems in Uganda and Kenya still seems important. A regional harmonisation of legal frameworks is a main task of the East African Community (EAC), and they report to work with this. The programme will clearly stimulate dialogue between the various partners about harmonisation of legal aspects. While the relevance of the programme to the EAC has been described, research based findings to influence policy does not seem to be part of this.

An ideal transboundary management programme as discussed in 3.1 may not be possible within the time frame of the programme. The team has discussed this in length with the stakeholders and accepts that these are complex issues, which are relative to various issues like national sovereignty, to institutional and organisational boundaries, legal frameworks, and local heterogeneity. However, the programme holds a double ambition of sustainable biodiversity management and livelihood security activities in a transboundary setting (contrary to the PD 2002 which was designed for two national programmes rather than one regional programme) and as such forms a novel pilot and demonstration initiative of far more than regional and national interest. This initiative with all its experiences in biodiversity management, collaborative management and tourism management may influence policy and legal harmonisation and work towards the ideal transboundary programme.

The Appraisal 2002 commented on the lack of description of the planned activities. The PD 2005 has improved greatly in these aspects as most planned activities under the four different objectives have now been described in detail. In addition, the number of key result areas has been reduced from six to four which improved the logic of the intervention. The importance of livelihood approaches within an ecosystem approach has been acknowledged through objective 2.

The appraisal 2002 would like to have assessed inclusion of several activities, among others collaborative management. This has happened with most activities and details can be found in Appendix 4. Activities are to have a regional character in general meaning that all activities can be carried out in both countries. The NFA pointed out that co-operation across the two countries' borders should be enhanced by linking cross-border communities, and that provisions should be made for the development of social contracts and conservation byelaws. Indicators have also been stated up to output level in the PD 2005. The draft Monitoring & Evaluation Action Plan developed in October 2004 has even more details including the need for baseline data, methodologies for changes over time and who is responsible. The project area has been described in geographical terms, and the activities will define who will be the direct beneficiaries as not each activity is suitable or necessary everywhere in the project area. For example, boundary demarcation has already been carried out in Uganda, but not yet at the Kenyan side.

The proposed organisational structure is still complex in terms of actor structures and authority lines, but after much discussion between team and stakeholders, the complexity was acknowledged and it was recognised that in particular the important inclusion of actors at local level enhances the programme but generates complexity. Section 3.3 gives more details on organisational structure.

Through the programme activities capacity building for the longer term is catered for. As all implementing partners have been involved in a participatory manner in the design of the PD 2005 ownership of the programme focal ideas is strengthened.

Compared to the PD 2002 activities have been spelled out much clearer and now form innovative ideas for the future. More detail about the logical framework can be found in the next section.

3.2.3 Assessment of the logical framework
The presented logical framework is coherent and well designed (see *Appendix 5*). Certain objectives and/or outputs are not yet clarified due to the complexity of the programme. This also relates to monitoring. The final report of the inception phase will go into detail of these problems.

As stated before, indicators have been developed up to output level in the logical framework. Most indicators are not yet quantified basically due to the lack of baseline data. The programme is aware of this and has clearly stated in the draft Monitoring & Evaluation Action Plan that the acquisition of baseline data will be a first priority when starting the execution of the programme. The indicators of the goal, purpose and the four objectives are discussed below.

Goal: Integrated ecosystem conservation and management for sustainable development and enhanced well-being to people and the environment

Defining indicators for the goal seems to be too ambitious as the project purpose normally alone contributes to the goal. The indicators to measure if the goal has been achieved seem viable, though it has to be noted that the programme is designed for only a four-year period. This period may be too short to enable the programme to achieve all ambitions.

Purpose: To enhance the conservation status of Mt Elgon ecosystem to environment quality and livelihoods

Three indicators have been identified for the purpose; namely i) incidences of floods, ii) water quality and iii) availability of timber outside the protected area. Some of the indicators are problematic within the four-year timeframe of the programme. For instance, a timber source needs on average at least ten years to mature. Measures to decrease incidences of floods and landslides may need a longer time to be registered than four years, and the same can be said for improving water quality and quantity. It is thus hard to see a direct link between the objectives, outputs and the activities and the indicators for the purpose. In addition, the indicators do not mention anything about improved livelihoods even if this is a major part of the programme to reach the goal of alleviating poverty. Therefore it may be necessary to scale down the achievements the programme envisages.

Objective 1: Conservation and management of natural resources in and outside the protected areas promoted

The objective of promotion of conservation and management of natural resources should be clarified better. As the indicators are achieved conservation and management of natural resources inside protected areas will be enhanced, but they do at present not indicate what is to happen with natural resources outside the protected areas. This should be included.

Objective 2: Enhanced sustainable development in Mt Elgon ecosystem

The two indicators mentioned are in principle valid. However, an increase in forest cover on targeted farmers' land holdings may not be realistic or related to income generation. As the number of targeted farmers will most likely be low, this suggested indicator may not be appropriate for the objective and should be replaced.

Objective 3: Conservation and management needs of Mt Elgon ecosystem integrated into national, regional and international development frameworks

The indicators mentioned reflect the three outputs well and should be adopted as they are.

Objective 4: MERECP effectively implemented as a regional transboundary programme

The indicators state clearly the impact of the outputs and are therefore recommended. The indicators defined for the 13 outputs are in general achievable and measurable.

The logical framework is thus found to have good coherence between goal, purpose, objectives, outputs and activities. The objectives are good, as many conservation projects tend to only concentrate on biodiversity management. However, some of the indicators, especially for the purpose, should be looked into.

The NFA called attention to the need to learn from other programmes similar to MERECP. The logical framework has to reflect site-specific issues and outputs to facilitate measuring impact. This could be done by developing site-specific 'micro-log frames' based on the main logical framework.

3.2.4 Information needs and knowledge gaps

The AR2002 commented that the list of topics to reduce information needs and knowledge gaps were in line with issues raised in the two national workshops and the regional meeting. However, the listing still lacked to some degree overall analytical and thematic coherence. There was furthermore nothing said about the organisation of this work and the institutional anchoring of the efforts.

As the PD 2005 has changed priorities also for research, the description has been modified in order for management decisions and actions to be based on credible information and knowledge. During the inception phase, a research agenda development workshop was held in which the proposed logical framework was reviewed for research needs and opportunities. This has been in line with a proposal from the Appraisal 2002. The research needs were compared with the research priorities of the host institutions. Research priorities, including interdisciplinary topics, were identified for the programme and implementation modalities and mechanisms for sharing and access to information was developed. Although the research agenda was developed according to the outputs in the logical framework, the PD 2005 still lists these themes without thematic coherence. The suggestion is to, in line with the recommendation of the appraisal 2002 to split the research needs in direct information and knowledge for the implementation of the programme and another, more long-term knowledge generation activity, including basic research efforts. Although both types of activities are represented in the research topics under output 1.5, it is not clear from the PD 2005 what topic belongs where. The draft Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan indicates what baseline data are still required and that should be incorporated in the PD 2005.

ICRAF advised the appraisal team to highlight the need for MERECP to strengthen the programme's science-based approach. According to ICRAF, there is a need for landscape-based analysis of threats to biodiversity conservation and development potentials. Also, a need to invest in research to identify optimal tradeoffs between the different stakeholders in the Mt Elgon region was emphasised.

After addressing the various information needs and knowledge gaps it will be necessary for the programme to document its experiences and disseminate this in order for others to adopt such a programme. Therefore, information management is considered of utmost importance. This is partly dealt with in the draft Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan.

3.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The necessity of a broad and comprehensive documentation strategy is stated in the 2002 Appraisal Report. This is essential if the programme is to be seen as a pilot and demonstration activity, and model to be replicated in other places. The need for an organisational structure was further emphasised for participatory monitoring of the activities.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is according to Annex 3 in the Programme Brief challenging due to the programme's complexity of stakeholders, activities and objectives. As a result of a workshop in Nairobi, October 2004, a draft Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan has been developed. One of its objectives is to establish a Monitoring and Evaluation "Coordination Unit", with the responsibility of designing the overall Programme M&E system, through consultations with implementing institutions. This will also involve reviewing indicators, establishing baselines, reviewing the monitoring system and developing an electronic database for collected data. This has been further discussed above under the knowledge gaps and information needs section.

The programme's logical framework has an output stating that the MERECP implementation progress and performance should be effectively monitored and evaluated (Output 4.1) (part of the objective of effectively implementing MERECP as a regional transboundary programme, Objective 4). This implies, according to the draft Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan, which in addition to continuous programme progress reports, a Mid-term review and an End of Phase evaluation will be carried out by external evaluators.

The appraisal team recommends that this action plan be incorporated in the Programme Brief, possibly as an Appendix.

3.2.6 Consistency (goal, objective, outputs, inputs, budget outline)
As earlier stated, the logical framework presented in PD 2005 has changed substantially from the one appraised in 2002. The goal, objectives and outputs seem to be more realistic. The intended outputs will lead to the achievement of the proposed objectives. It could be argued that the logical framework could be simplified. However, for monitoring purposes, certain sets of outputs have been split (e.g. output 1.2 and 1.3, and output 2.1 and 2.3).

The appraisal 2002 stated that it is important to realise that the key to managing transboundary ecosystems sustainably, is to manage and monitor the human activities that affects the ecosystem. To address this issue and to be able to monitor this complex programme it is proposed in PD 2005 to have a special output for internal as well as external monitoring (output 4.1). In addition, this will enable the various actors and countries in the programme to share positive experiences.

Issues concerning inputs and budget outline will be discussed under paragraph 3.4 of this document.

Overall it can be stated that the programme design has improved substantially compared to the PD 2002. A **regional innovative pilot and demonstration programme** has been developed in a participatory manner, which will give all stakeholders a chance to implement the programme. The major issues of a transboundary programme have been addressed, namely **biodiversity management and livelihood security**. The logical framework is thus coherent–with a few comments on indicators- and will guide the project through its various interventions.

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS

3.3.1 Institutional and organisational structure of the programme

The project document of 2002 showed the following institutional and organisational structure of the regional programme:
- The key partner institutions will be the EAC, UWA and the FD in Uganda, and the KWS, the Forest Department in Kenya and Mt. Elgon County Council in Kenya
- The five involved districts (Mbale, Kapchorwa and Sironko in Uganda; Trans Nzoia and Mt. Elgon in Kenya), together with relevant institutions such as NGOs and CBOs are also planned to be included.
- Programme activities will be implemented through key partner institutions and is supposed to be integrated with their work programmes and policies, through the Programme Steering Committee arena.
- IUCN will play a co-ordination and implementation role between the partner institutions as well as providing appropriate technical support for management of the ecosystem; through the PMU. All financial resources will be routed through IUCN.
- The "geographical unit" comprises the two National Parks, the two Forest Reserves and one National Reserve, together with an area within approximately 5 – 10 km from the reserved area boundaries
- The PSC, led by EAC, has the main overall strategic and guiding functions, approves plans, budgets and reports, and provides linkages to government ministries and processes
- The PMU, led by a Project Team Leader appointed by IUCN-EARO, will be responsible for the daily management and implementation of the programme and will be directly answerable to IUCN
- All actors e.g. on local (parish/location) or district level carrying out field activities will be contracted by PMU
- An ecosystem management plan will be developed within the first six months and serve as the basis for regional and national interventions.

Most of the organogramme (see *Appendix 6*) remains the same and the organisational structure is still complex. However, some important changes have taken place since the PD 2002, such as:
- The Forestry Department in Uganda does not exist anymore. The National Forest Authority is now responsible for the CFRs while the District Forest Service (DFS) will be responsible for the remaining 70% of the forest resources. The DFS will falls under the responsibility of the districts but is not yet operational.
- The geographical programme area has been extended to all districts surrounding the protected areas and with an extension to 15 km away from Park boundaries. However, the activities to be carried out will define among which target groups to work with (through indicators).
- The Programme Management Unit is mean to be a very lean institution within the existing IUCN offices in the region. One technical coordinator and an institutional development advisor will be employed together with two support staff.

- The programme envisages developing a broad Mount Elgon Ecosystem Conservation and Development Strategy. This will be a comprehensive strategy, where an ecosystem management plan is to be one element. Through this strategy, a common plan between all actors in Uganda and Kenya will be developed where long-term strategies will be defined. Its exact goals, incentives and structure is not yet developed.
- In each participating implementing institution there will be a focal desk. One person will coordinate for that particular institution all programme activities and will be responsible for reporting to IUCN/PMU. The programme coordination committee will according to the PD 2005 meet in semi-annual meetings. Communication within implementing institutions should however be addressed.
- The PSC is split in two groups that comprise the total PSC. The core team will be the most essential for the programme and have more frequent meetings. Members from the programme coordination committee will be co-opted when and if need arises.
- NGOs and other implementing partners have not yet been identified but a survey is underway. They may select among themselves a focal person for the programme.
- The role of NORAD and the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala is still unclear. Besides being the funders of the programme, they could also have an advisory role.

The complex structure is to remain as suggested in the PD 2005 in this first of its kind transboundary programme in East Africa, where many actors will have a chance to participate. During the process oriented programme approach it will become clear what the real challenges are. The participatory monitoring process should assist the programme in its achievements. The institutional set-up will be reviewed half way through the programme. The organogrammes drawn and the text in the PD 2005 are not always clear enough on some of the above mentioned issues and they should therefore be incorporated in the said arrangements.

3.3.2 Assessment of involved partners and agencies
The roles of the various partners have been described in the PD 2005, except local government bodies and local institutions.

1) The role of EAC
On page 53 of the PD 2005, the undertakings of the EAC are described in detail. As EAC will host several planned transboundary programmes, it seems reasonable that this programme will be put under their umbrella. However, EAC is not to be an implementing agency and it therefore evolves the responsibility for implementation to its state members. Facilitation and financial management will be contracted to IUCN.

In the appraisal 2002 it was stated that a programme officer may be paid to assist the coordination unit for Environment and natural Resources. Last year the Wildlife and Tourism sub-committee of EAC declared that this programme should be under their wings. However, as the focus is on natural resources and not on wildlife only, the main committee on Environment and Natural Resources made a final decision that the programme will be under them. This had implications for the institutional set-up in

Uganda as the Ministry for Water, Lands and Environment would be the lead agency and not the Ministry for Tourism, Trade and Industry. In addition, the Lake Victoria Commission to be based in Kisumu, Kenya, may be the future home for MERECP. Being an implementing body of the EAC, they will be in position to co-ordinate its activities with other on-going and planned interventions and there will be no need for a programme officer as stated above.

In order to facilitate the process for one ecosystem management, the EAC has embarked on harmonising the following:
- tourism fees;
- one visa for East Africa; and
- other relevant legislation.

This will be important for the future implementation of transboundary programmes.

The Programme Steering Committee (PSC) under the chairmanship of the EAC Sectoral Committee on Environment and Natural Resources will have the overall responsibility for the programme. It will:
- approve both the overall four-year work plan to be developed during the inception phase, and the annual work plans and budgets;
- approve the semi-annual and annual reports and statement of accounts;
- provide strategic direction and policy guidance to the programme;
- recommend MERECP desks and TORs; and
- provide linkages to government ministries and processes in Kenya and Uganda.

The PSC will have 12 members, divided in one core and one essential team. The core team will be of most importance to the programme's implementation. The place of IUCN in the PSC has to be revisited as they are responsible for implementation while the PSC is overseeing the project.

As funds will be transferred directly to IUCN for implementation there should be no additional impediment.

IUCN has been accorded an observer status within the EAC's Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

2) The role of IUCN
IUCN is a most competent and proficient organisation to facilitate this programme in transboundary management as they have extensive experience in the programme area on both side of the borders and they can easily draw on additional technical expertise.

IUCN's undertakings are clearly spelt out in the PD 2005. It will facilitate the programme in terms of financial flows, in terms of subcontracting various institutions to perform particular activities, including NGOs and CBOs, and in terms of appointing people to work within the programme. It will not hire staff of implementing partners to carry out project activities. This is entirely the responsibility of these implementing institutions.

Other issues mentioned in the appraisal 2002 remain valid i.e. building partnerships and IUCN's adequate capacity and competence to manage this complex programme.

It has to be stressed that IUCN is purely a technical advisor and facilitator and that the real ownership rests with the implementing partners.

However, it is still unclear how IUCN will gradually reduce its role in this programme by handing over to others. The budget indicates the development of an exit plan half way through the programme, but gives no further indications in this respect. In discussions with IUCN options like the Lake Victoria Commission were discussed.

3) The role of key public institutions
The undertakings of the governments of Kenya and Uganda are described on page 54 of the PD 2005. Some issues from the appraisal 2002 are still valid, while others have been overtaken by events.

The Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (MWLE) in Uganda and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR) in Kenya are central institutions that will be involved in the programme. Because of their central nature, these institutions will not be involved in the day-to-day implementation, and their main role will be to provide resource support, policy guidance and linkage to other relevant government ministries necessary for the successful implementation of the programme. They are represented in the PSC, and as such their role is mainly approval of annual workshops and budgets.

In Uganda, UWA, under the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, will be the main responsible partner in the programme, represented by the Director of Field Operations together with the Deputy Director of Community Conservation. As almost all the reserved areas on the Ugandan side have been declared a National Park under the responsibility of UWA, including most of the forest plantations, there are little formal responsibilities left for the Forest Inspection Division in MWLE. The NFA is responsible for Namatale Central Forest Reserve and forest plantations, while the District Forest Service (to be established) is responsible for the remaining forest area.

In Kenya, the responsibility will be shared mainly between KWS (the National Park), the Forest Department (the Forest Reserves), and the Mt. Elgon County Council/District administration (the National Reserve).

The institutional set-up in Uganda, despite UWA being a part of MTTI and not a part of MWLE since 1995, is much simpler than in Kenya. UWA as a parastatal is organised in three departments:
- Field Operations (subdivided into a Field Operations Section to where the Chief Warden reports; and a community conservation department);
- Planning and Tourism Development; and
- Financial Services.

Both the current Wildlife and Forest Acts in Kenya still lack provisions for collaborative management, a key element in the proposed programme. However, the forest policy and the Forest Act in Kenya are currently being reviewed, and this will probably result in a new style of management of forestry resources where stakeholder participation and decentralised decision making will be introduced. Rules and regulations for community participation in forestry management and for implementing collaborative management systems are currently being developed. In

the proposed Forest Act there is also a provision for retaining a part of the revenue from forestry activities at the local level. It is generally recommended that the central institutions on the Kenyan side take on the responsibility for review of relevant policies and mechanisms as a matter of urgency in order for Kenya to benefit from the programme resources.

The policy framework in UWA in Uganda allows for community participation in resource management and benefit sharing inside Mount Elgon National Park (MENP), which is not the case in Kenya. The current KWS policy does not allow community access to the National Park resources. An additional problem is the fact that there are still no direct benefits for the local communities on the Kenyan side in developing tourism inside MENP, or even a proper management of plantation forests, as all revenues to KWS or FD will go back to Nairobi.

Collaboration between UWA and KWS, as planned for in MERECP, presupposes similar policies regarding community involvement and benefit sharing. This is not the case now. This means that for the MERECP ecosystem approach, a broad framework for the ecosystem management has to be harmonised, although the details of implementation might be different reflecting realities in each country. The dialogue on policy harmonisation between UWA and KWS regarding community participation in the management of the ecosystem should be initiated as soon as possible. An early enactment of the new forest policy and Forest Act in Kenya would be helpful in this regard. The role of the EAC has to be acknowledged in this process.

4) The role of local government bodies
The role of local governments in both Kenya as well as Uganda is not clearly stated in the PD 2005, while they are considered key implementing partners of the programme. Linkages between field and central government will be facilitated by the MERECP Coordination Committee (MCC) comprising of the focal desks (i.e. person) in each implementing institution. Its main task is to form the official linkages between field level activities and the centre. The Terms of Reference for the MCC are as follows:

- implement M&E strategy;
- prepare/review progress reports;
- develop annual work plan and budget; and
- coordinate MERECP activities in host institutions.

The five districts and Mt Elgon County Council within the programme will be part of the MCC.

5) The role of local institutions: CBOs and NGOs
The PD 2002 emphasised to open discussions with NGOs and CBOs in the programme area on how they can participate in the activities, especially relating to livelihood security during the inception phase as they will be crucial in mobilising the local population and in capacity building of communities. ICRAF has embarked on a survey to map NGOs in the programme area during the inception phase. According to discussions with IUCN MERECP will not deal directly with CBOs but they will be part of the implementation through their links with the NGOs and district technical departments.

Although not all stakeholders have been described in detail in the PD 2005, it is clear that also NGOs and CBOs are part of the programme. The complexity of the organisational structure seems to be warranted given the combined ambition of biodiversity management and local participation in a regional context and also the fact that MERECP is a pilot and demonstration scheme.

3.4 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

3.4.1 Financial management structure and cash flows
The AD02 noticed a lack of enthusiasm both in the Ministry of Finance and in MWLE, particularly in Uganda, related to the fact that the financial flow of MERECP is not designed to be channelled through the central ministries, but rather be trusted to IUCN as the facilitating agency. The report refers to negative experiences of involving central ministries in handling financial flows in the former project on the Kenyan side, and the dangers of establishing corruption prone financial systems. The team therefore supported the proposed financial set-up in the PD. The team still commented upon that funds where not routed through District level authorities; understandable from a corruption point of view, but more problematic from a long term institution-building, local ownership and sustainability point of view. They recommended a gradually move over to relying and trusting local authorities.

This system of IUCN receiving the funds is maintained and the present team's experience during our interviews is that this function is now accepted by the different stakeholders, and in fact also recommended by several actors, including EAC.

A change has been made in that the revised programme now both allocates funds through national level focal desks to involved ministries, and also through District level bodies. This enables District level authorities to incorporate programme activities in their own work-plans; with financial support from the programme. This must be seen as a move in right direction to secure local anchoring and ownership; even if such a system preconditions stern monitoring, evaluation and audit control from relevant bodies.

3.4.2 Budget by programme items
The AR02 analysed the PD on the budget by programme items (see Table 1) and found that programme planning, support to EAC and project management costs absorbed around 42% of total costs. Ecosystem management and biodiversity activities took 29%, whereas village level activities constituted 22%. Tourism and forest plantation another 5%. IUCN suggested taking 12% of the total budget in overhead. The appraisal team argued that there was an over-emphasis on planning and initiation costs and an under-emphasis on in-field activities in local communities.

The way we read the figures in Table 1, and mark that this is not based on a careful scrutiny given time and data available is that despite the AR02 recommendations to reduce overhead and other costs to IUCN, the amount allocated seems to have increased, as has costs to general project management.

The budget share suggested for EAC has been reduced as also recommended in the AD02. EAC is not to be an implementing body, and this is, according to IUCN, accepted by EAC.

Table 2 Summary of the MERECP budget

Programme item	2002 Key Result Area	2002 Amount (USD)	2002 % of total budget	2005 % of total budget	2005 Amount (USD)
Programme planning and EAC support costs* Project implementation Programme support costs EAC coordination	6.0	1,211,750	25	32.3%	454,000 981,000 120,000
Ecosystem management and administrative systems strengthened	1.0	624,750	13	20.4%	981,000
Conservation status and biodiversity value improved	2.0	454,750	10		With above
Effective collaboration with institutional partners and neighbouring communities established and maintained	3.0	1,034,750	22	20.8%	999,000
Financial sustainability of Mt. Elgon ecosystem enhanced	4.0	244,750	5		With above
Transboundary conservation processes and institutional arrangements	5.0	302,250	6	7.4%	360,000
Capacity building for EAC (direct costs)	6.0	215,000	5	0?	0?
Sub total; all activities		**4,088,000**	**86**	**80.7%**	**3,886,000**
Contingency		102,200	2	4%	194,300
Project management costs IUCN staff time and management fee*		586,628	12	15.3%	734,454
Grand total		**4,776,828**	**100**	**100**	**4,814,754**

* The budget items are different for 2002 and 2005

The share to the 4 KRA activities, which is for a large part allocations to local, field level activities seems to have gone done from 56% to 48.6%.

In discussions with IUCN about this, it was made a point that it is difficult to compare the two budgets as the budget lines and activities have been changed.

We suggest that RNE discusses and negotiates the budgets based on a closer scrutiny; both related to assessing how much different actors should and do receive, and to how much is allocated to different activities, including project planning and implementation. One should have a particular eye to reduce the IUCN direct support substantially. In this context, it seems pertinent to mention the fact that Norway gives an annual core funding to IUCN exceeding USD 2 million/year.

We also recommend that negotiations should also be directed towards increasing budgets for field level activities, in particular to rural livelihood activities- in line with poverty alleviation priorities. An additional point is that this being a pilot and demonstration scheme; having such a heavy administrative cost bias as part of the structure is unfortunate.

On the other hand, it could be argued that precisely because it is a pilot and demonstration project, more administrative and quality implementation resources is warranted to secure quality implementation demonstration effects. We do recommend that RNE look deeper into this issue.

3.5 GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER AND CORRUPTION

The appraisal team of 2002 gave the following recommendations regarding issues as gender, human rights, HIV/AIDS, governance and corruption;
- *to monitor the progress in the issue of resettlement (Benet)*
- *give more attention to the issue of collaborative management*
- *HIV/AIDS should be built into the programme, particularly at the community level activities, also involving the Ministries of Health*
- *a strategy should be developed to address the problem of corruption, and the development of such strategies receives attention during the inception*
- *transparency and accountability should be further addressed*

The crosscutting issues mentioned above are given some attention in the PD2005, but only on a general basis. Output 3.3 states that MERECP 'will strive to integrate these crosscutting social issues in all its supported activities as proposed in the following activities', as the integration of such issues 'determine the quality of human well-being'.

The AR02 commended the programme for laying some emphasis on gender, and the issue is discussed in section 4.3.11 dealing with crosscutting issues. Still, this discussion should go further than these general statements. According to Ugandan gender policy one should mainstream gender concerns in the national development process in order to improve social/legal/political/economic and cultural conditions of people in Uganda, and these efforts should integrate strategies and actions that address gender into policies, plans, programmes, projects, institutions and laws. Issues of gender are imperative to consider in relation to rights, economic activities, resources allocation, and management and utilisation of resources at a local level, with participation of the beneficiaries.

Section 4.3.12 mentions the need for transparency, participation and information in decision making processes. Such issues of governance are crucial and should be given more attention, as management of natural resources has important governance implications. These are resources of daily importance of every single household, and the way access or non-access is managed is crucial for their livelihood. Involving the local population in decision making on natural resources is a very relevant entry point for developing local governance structures.

The legal access to natural resources also is important from a rights-based perspective. Traditional user rights are often disregarded by new management

structures like e.g. national park administration. The right to have access to food and livelihood options is also a human right according to the convention of human rights. Human rights issues of this kind is a problem in both Uganda and Kenya. It was stated in discussions with the IUCN that they intended to take on a facilitation and mediation role in such cases (e.g. Benet), and could also contribute with assessment and support for land demarcation.

The programme design and organisational structure reflect that issues of governance and corruption have been considered, but they should be stated and discussed more clearly in the PD. A recommendation from AR02 is therefore still valid; to develop a strategy to address the problem of possible corruption at regional, national and local levels, identifying particular risk factors.

The PD05 includes in its activities an assessment of the impact of diseases on natural resources management, looking at HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB. As with the other crosscutting issues mentioned in this section also HIV/AIDS should be better integrated into the program.

A general statement on how to integrate crosscutting issues in MERECP supported activities is mentioned (Activity 3.3.1). Still, the appraisal team feel that this should be analysed to a greater extent, also discussing further activities that address these issues.

3.6 REALISM AND RISK FACTORS

The external factors and risk elements, internal and external, still exist as stated in the appraisal 2002. The PD 2005 does not really address them. They are stated as assumptions but no further descriptions have been made. The factors are:

- the organisational structure;
- collaborative management of protected areas;
- donor dependency in future; and
- security problems on both sides of the borders.

The organisational structure remains complicated and it will be a challenge to achieve a smooth working relationship among all partners in the programme. The EAC is currently in a better position than earlier in 2002 due to some experience to deal with transboundary programmes. It is heavily involved in harmonising legislation and is able to settle disputes through its own mechanisms. The EAC is in the process of establishing the Lake Victoria Commission planned housed in Kisumu (Kenya). This will give this programme an opportunity to be integrated in the EAC programmes, which will not only give this programme a chance to be embedded within the EAC but this will also contribute to its sustainability.

Since 2002 the institutional set-up of the forestry sector has changed in Uganda. The National Forestry Authority (NFA) has been established with a mandate to manage the Central Forest Reserves which comprises 30% of the forest resources in the country. The District Forest Services –which is not yet in place- should cater for the remaining 70%. Further institutional arrangements have been discussed in 3.2.

The donor dependency in future still exists but the programme has looked into this. Sustainability issues are assessed in chapter 6.

On both sides of the border in the Mt. Elgon area are security problems. On both sides there are problems of cattle rustling which are more based on local cultural "traditions" in the surrounding areas. With cattle raiders now often being equipped with modern weapons, such incidents tend to become more violent and harmful than before. The general security issues of the area are therefore still posing a significant risk element for the programme. It therefore is recommended that shared, transboundary patrolling to enhance security is considered as a part of the regional activities within the programme.

4. DONOR COORDINATION AND OTHER PROGRAMMES

4.1 REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

The 2002 appraisal team recommended that co-ordination with related projects and programmes in the Lake Victoria catchment area must be given attention in the inception phase. The programme seen as most relevant was the Nile Equatorial Lake Subsidiary Action Programme (NELSAP project 3.3), which is part if the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and deals with the three watersheds draining Mt. Elgon. This implied a recommendation that the NELSAP should cooperate thoroughly with the MERECP to establish an efficient sharing of responsibilities, both to avoid overlapping of activities, and to avoid "competing" for the same local resource persons and institutions in both countries. The advice also included harmonisation of programme activities, establishment of formal meeting points and coordination meetings between the two programmes' Steering Committees.

The PD05 follows to a large extent the appraisal recommendations. Since 2002, another initiative has, however, developed as part of the EAC development agenda, namely the Lake Victoria Development Programme (LVDP). LVDP also incorporates NELSAP, with the intention 'jointly to maximise the economic and social benefits while ensuring effective environmental management protection' (EAC Strategy 2001-2005).

In the logframe of the programme brief one objective covers the integration of conservation and management needs of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem into national, regional and international development frameworks (Objective 3). The output under this objective is to integrate the values and benefits of the Mt Elgon Ecosystem water catchment into regional development frameworks.

It is further stated that an integration of the two programmes will make them both benefit from and contribute to the synergies available for enhanced benefits.

On activity level (Activity 3.1.1.), integration with the Lake Victoria Development Programme is emphasised. According to the programme brief, the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem Vision is consistent with the Lake Victoria Basin Vision, and to ensure that the two visions fully recognize each other, MERECP will support processes that

redefine the Mt Elgon Ecosystem Vision and seek integration in the Lake Victoria Vision and programme. This will take place by:

- Consultations to redefine the Mt Elgon Vision
- Develop and support mechanisms for integration of MERECP with LVDP
- Develop and integrate NELSAP programme activities on Malaba-Malakisi and Sio rivers that drain from Mt. Elgon with MERECP

In discussions with MERECP the issue was further discussed, and the programme coordinator emphasised that the programme aims at implementing activities of regional character, through Objective 3, and as the Lake Victoria Basin also includes Mt. Elgon, it should be integrating as a component in LVDP.

Integrating LVDP and MERECP could also be beneficiary on the issue of who will coordinate the implementation when IUCN withdraws, as the LVDP is setting up a desk in Kisumu, which could potentially serve as a PMU after the first phase of the programme.

There is also an ongoing process of getting the Mt. Elgon area on both sides of the national border accepted as a Biosphere Reserve under UNESCO's World Heritage Site system, as also mentioned in the AR02. This will, if implemented, give the countries responsibilities of conserving the Biosphere Reserve and all its components, also recognising the co-existence of human beings. According to several sources interviewed, this will not interfere in the implementation of the activities in other programmes or overlap with these. The Biosphere Reserve statutes are according to several sources flexible and will allow for all MERECP activities. Also, by the time this change comes into effect, the MERECP will have reached its end, and might have built a good basis for a transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

Activity 3.1.4 in the MERECP addresses the need for the programme to integrate national obligations to international environmental agreements in the programme activities. Such agreements, relevant to the Mt. Elgon ecosystem, are the three Rio Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, CCD), CITES and the Bonn convention.

Most concerns raised in the AR02 on this issue have thus been addressed and we would especially emphasize the Lake Victoria Development Programme. If this becomes a regional implementing agency, it should be scrutinized as a potential body for taking over PMU functions of the present MERECP, currently held by IUCN.

4.2 REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES OF OTHER DONORS

The 2002 appraisal assessed the collaboration with other relevant donor-supported activities in both countries to be fairly adequate. Still, the importance of liaison with other on-going donor-supported activities in the Mt. Elgon area was emphasised, both during the lifetime of the programme and with provisions to extend these relationships also after the phasing-out of MERECP. It was further recommended that mechanisms for involvement of organisations should be worked out during the inception phase of the programme, as relevant institutions receiving support from other donors could be actively involved in community level mobilisation, needs assessments, planning, resource mobilisation and overall capacity building for sustainability.

The programme assumes an active cooperation between the different stakeholders, including NGOs and CBOs, and it is stated in the programme brief that these will be selected and engaged as appropriate. More specifically, when it comes to technical or specialized agencies it is stated that such institutions will be assigned tasks to implement specific activities according to annual work plans.

The appraisal team would have wished for more detailed plans on the involvement of NGO's and technical institutions in the programme, at the same time recognising that such plans are difficult to make without secure funding for the programme, and as involvement of such actors depend on each activity and on the level of implementation, as argued by IUCN.

During discussions with different stakeholders the team learned that some action has been taken during the inception phase to get an overview of NGOs and CBOs relevant to the implementation of MERECP activities, as a survey was initiated in collaboration with ICRAF to identify such local groups to partner with. As far as the appraisal team known, this is yet to be completed.

A project that should be considered in relation to the implementation of MERECP is "UWA-FACE", a project that support tree planting in the degraded areas of Mt. Elgon.

5. ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

We address the quality of the programme goals and activities in relationship to if it is likely they will be sustained and developed further after donor and IUCN withdrawal. We discuss sustainability (as described in Norad manual) related to the following issues; overall programme features, degree of policy support, economic and financial matters, human rights, environmental issues, socio-cultural aspects, technical and technological issues and issues relating to health and HIV/AIDS.

5.1 PROGRAMME FEATURES AND LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The MERECP is intended to be a pilot project with good demonstration properties. The programme is therefore by itself not necessarily designed to solve similar comprehensive challenges in the region, and not even to deal with all people/park issues in the Mt. Elgon area. The RNE support is also limited relative to the overall

needs in the area, programme activities are pilot and demonstration projects, and other donors, national or local institutions or NGOs/CBOs have to carry out such projects on a larger scale for the future. A main programme idea is to show how management challenges related to reserved forested areas may be handled, and positive experiences might hopefully be replicated elsewhere in the region or in developing countries in general.

Looking at the programme features, one may distinguish the sustainability discussion at two levels;
- To what extent is the programme organisation itself sustainable?
- To what are field level activities suggested and demonstrated sustainable?

5.1.1 Programme features
The AR02 raised a number of issues relating to features of the programme and activities for sustainability such as;
1) There is a lack of clear provisions and plans for how activities and processes will be continued upon donor withdrawal and when the role of IUCN as technical facilitator for the programme is phased out.
2) The inception phase of MERECP should make a plan for phasing-out external support to the activities after 4.5 years. Long-term sustainability of programme activities as well institutional and organisational mechanisms are key issues in this context.
3) Setting up separate programme institutions to a large extent are staffed and paid by IUCN, may not maximise opportunities for integration and capacity building, as this may isolate the project from national or regional policy development, and it may also inhibit the development of ownership by the managing institutions. One could consider to integrate in the programme's workplan a mechanism whereby more and more of IUCN's responsibilities, including financial flow, physical assets and staffing, will be handed over to the involved regional (where relevant), national, local and even community structures during the lifetime of the programme.
4) Officials from the main involved institutions firmly believed that resources to run effective patrolling and controlling activities inside MENP had to come from outside donors. Today, e.g. some 60% of UWA's financial resources are based on donor funds, including soft loans from World Bank programmes. Representatives both in UWA and KWS would not immediately believe that a heavier emphasis on cheaper, and probably in the long run more sustainable, collaborative management systems could replace significant parts of the traditional centralised management efforts. These opinions are not in line with current ecosystem approach thinking, and neither conducive to a long-term sustainability of programme activities.
5) Considering needs for capacity building in involved local administrative structures in both countries, particularly related to the management of MENP, and the long-term institutional sustainability of the programme, the proposal of establishing the MERECP headquarter away from all existing relevant administrative structures should be evaluated thoroughly.

The present team has the following observations;
1) There are still no plans for IUCN stepping back and identifying local national implementing institutions. This is a serious problem. We recommend that such a plan such a time-bound plan is developed immediately after a mid term appraisal; and that a set date (May 2007) is given for its gradual implementation. In discussions with

IUCN, this issue was raised directly, and one idea that emerged is to consider the Lake Victoria Development Project's secretariat as a possible heir to the present IUCN/PMU arrangement. There can also be other solutions to be looked into; incorporating the to countries' main implementing bodies.

2) The inception phase has not addressed the issue of donor and IUCN tuning down their role as implementing agency. This is both problematic and difficult to understand given the clear suggestions by the Appraisal and RNE.

3) More of IUCN's responsibilities, physical flows of funds and activities will now be delegated to lower levels and to district bodies; both compared to the last programme phase, but also related to the previous project document and as such the advise of the AR02 has been followed in this respect. This is an important asset of the revised document.

4) The PD does not much address activities to reform mindsets and management cultures in participating organisations directly, but both through activities workshops and even the regional harmonization measures, we believe that a gradual change process is being started by this programme.

5) The geographical location of the PMU unit has been a controversial matter; and is now de facto suggested to be the two IUCN offices in Nairobi and Kampala. On the other hand, much field activities are being delegated to District authorities and to UWA/KWS and FD. One could still question whether the programme's stakeholder's long-term learning and thus sustainability of the programme would best be served by IUCN presence in Mbale and/or Kitale in liaison with UWA and KWS/FD in Kenya.

5.1.2 Programme activities

The AR02 highlights the resource use agreements as very successful interventions, that can be continued upon donor withdrawal without much resource use and that also will be introduced in Kenya. Many suggested rural outreach activities are profitable in their own right. A valuable contribution from the MECDP on the Ugandan side has been the setting up of a Conservation Training Centre in Kapkwai, Kapchorwa District. This idea should be copied on the Kenyan side. It is essential that MERECP from the very start plans for how such Training Centres can continue their activities also after the duration of the programme.

These issues is deemed by the team to be among the best elements of the programme; both in relation to pilot, demonstration and innovation, but also in a sustainability context. If people and institutions deem activities profitable, they will continue also beyond donor withdrawal.

5.2 POLICY SUPPORT MEASURES AND SUSTAINABILITY

1) The AR02 stated the need of the inception phase of the programme to facilitate for the involved institutions at all levels, and particularly at the district and the relevant community levels, to consider the success of the programme as their responsibility.
2) Mechanisms should be built to make sure that a mentality of achieving a better management of the ecosystem, and for achieving an improved and sustainable standard of living among the communities around the reserved areas, are being promoted.
3) Initiatives, involvement in concrete activities, and achievement of sustainable, tangible benefits should ideally be vested in the local level to a much larger degree

than in the IUCN, or in the EAC, or even in the involved central ministries and institutions of both countries.
4) At the regional level through EAC, it should be an ambition to achieve a harmonisation of legal frameworks concerning collaborative management measures in conservation areas, concerning boundary issues, and on issues like biodiversity monitoring, tourism, poaching, patrolling, reactions against violation of park rules.

1) One striking feature of the inception phase by IUCN has been the implementation of participatory workshops and delivery of concessions to local level bodies in order to secure support for the programme at all levels. This is good.
2) These participatory ventures should also enhance local ownership to the programme.
3) There is an increased willingness and more concrete plans for local level initiatives in the revised document. This should, however, as we have stressed previously, be followed up with an increased budget share for the same.
4) EAC has pushed a number of issues relating to legal harmonization forward, both concerning tourism, gate fees, visa issues, legal frameworks on wildlife management and participation. (see EAC strategic plan). This is in line with AR02 comments.
5) We also believe that a long-term output related to policy support is that the experiences will be spread, and should also have policy impacts for the future; not least related to IUCN's competence in knowledge and experience dissemination.

Apart from that, we have shown earlier how the programme fits well with present development plans and documents at national and regional levels and with expressed political support from line ministries and EAC.

5.3 ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MATTERS AND SUSTAINABILITY

According to the AR02 the MENP can never become economically sustainable in itself, which for a public good may not be a goal. But narrowing the gap between incomes and costs may still be an aim. Suggestions are to enhance forest plantation incomes, develop policies so that more incomes from park and plantations are retained locally (improved incentive structure) and improve tourist activities.

At the activity levels the AR02 suggests to improve and increase economic activities for local people and to look closer into various benefit sharing arrangements and payments for community park control activities etc. It is also suggested that financial officers of the five districts are given full account of the financial flows and budgets.

The present PD suggests to put emphasis on forest plantation activities and enhance the tourist industry and is thus in accordance with the AR02. The present (perverse) incentive structure where individual parks and protected areas are not allowed to keep or get income shares from own activities is unfortunate. A local retention of incomes for park related activities will require policy changes at national level. However, this seems to be an issue that require long term advocacy at high political national and even regional levels.

Benefit sharing is regulated in Uganda to be up to 20% of gate fees and constitutes in the range of 5 million Uganda Shilling annually (for 1 million people) and is thus a

very marginal contribution, given present visitor figures. The plantations also yield some funds for local development activities; but again, there is no comprehensive discussion on options for benefit sharing in the PD, except for the Resource Use Agreements.

The Taungya/Shamba system is not discussed in the PD, but IUCN has made the following comments to the team:

In Uganda, the Forest & Tree Planting Act (2004) provides for private sector involvement in tree planting in Forest Reserves, which created a Tree Planting Fund to provide incentives to tree planting (timber production). The policy is different for the soft wood plantations in MENP - Uganda, and it involves local people in tree planting in the two plantation sites (Kapkwata & Suam) in form of taungya system.

In Kenya, the matter of shamba system is at national level across all forest reserves. Statements attributed to GOK indicate that shamba system is suspended for the time being because GOK is reviewing how best to administer the system for the future.

Concerning the proposal that financial officers of the five districts should be given full account of the financial flows and budgets, this is not addressed; but the districts are now suggested much better involved in the physical and economic planning and implementation of activities, which has positive feedbacks on sustainability issues.

5.4 HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Human rights emphasises political and civil rights with freedom of the press, speech, movement and assembly; freedom to organise for individuals and groups, the right to vote and to petition the government; and entitlement to due process of the law and other legal protections. More recent thinking also emphasises fundamental rights to basic necessities for an adequate standard of living, including employment, tenurial rights, nutrition, shelter, social security, health care and education; all of which are particularly important for the poor.

In the AD02, two issues are raised; one on the case of the Benet; where conflicts over land rights within and outside the park has been an issue; but that there is hope for a solution and second relates to the resource use agreements that allocates some user rights to local people.

The position that IUCN has taken on the Benet issue is one of rather than going into and try to solve the issue, one points to that the state and the judiciary has to resolve the conflicts, but that the project hopefully can take on a conflict resolution role. This seems reasonable, even if a more proactive and successful role could enhance ambitions of enhanced legitimacy of IUCN/UWA towards local people and improve chances for sustainability of programme ambitions.

The Resource Use Rights, despite being assessed as a success (se fi. Sletten 2004), still holds a position where unequal power relations are manifested. UWA can at any time unilaterally discard the agreements. As such, poor people do not have strong position should or when conflicts arise, and there is no independent body or arbitrator

in place to negotiate between "two equal partners". The issue that Kenya at present do not have provision for such agreements i has been mentioned, but also constitute a sustainability risk factor.

The programme document do not raise issues of corruption or bad governance, but is an issue that can obviously threaten programme sustainability at local, national and regional levels and it is also a particular threat to poor people.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The AD02 stresses UWA and KWS/FD and their abilities to sustainably manage the environmentally resources through staff development and capacity enhancement and ensuring that the basic infrastructure and resources are provided. One should also develop and implement effective collaborative management systems. The report also stresses that the monitoring of the actual resource use inside the reserved areas by surrounding communities should be taken more seriously. In particular, the development of a biodiversity conservation monitoring system is recommended.

The revised document has made substantial advancements in these respects and a participatory monitoring and evaluation plan is developed, that we believe can be continued upon donor withdrawal?

The resource use agreements will in our opinion also be possible to continue upon donor withdrawal, even though some economic resources must be made available.

The definite improvement in biodiversity resources that has been observed in Mt. Elgon has also improved water and climatic conditions both locally and regionally. Many local people are aware of such effects and this improves the project's legitimacy and thereby also its sustainability.

The Mt. Elgon Conservation and Development programme that has been operating on the Uganda side since 1987 has often been commended for its important role in conserving the ecosystem values of the region. Various reviews in 1993, 1998 and 1999 have all commented positively on the importance of conservation in this region.

5.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS, GENDER AND SUSTAINABILITY

The AD02 stresses a commitment to integration of gender in the PD captured in KRA 4 focusing on "effective collaboration with institutional partners and neighbouring communities". The programme plans to "integrate gender into community conservation activities", and the programme will also have a focal person for gender issues. In addition, gender equity is specifically addressed under the section on social-cultural aspects. While present in programme activities on the Kenyan side, it was noted that the PD deliberately leaves out details on the process and content for gender integration, largely because these issues will be a part of the discussions during the inception period of MERECP.

The team feels that gender should have been more explicitly addressed than the 9 sentences found on page 52 in the report. As the programme has a process

perspective, we still feel that inclusion of gender perspectives and interests can be facilitated throughout participatory planning and implementation processes of the programme and that will be important in the long term sustainability of the programme and in particular on the various suggested activities at local levels.

A special assessment of gender implications of the various project activities should be carried out, in order to be able to operate the project in a gender sensitive manner.

The local heterogeneity of ecological conditions, of ethnic composition and local knowledge and use of resources, of economic frames for livelihoods (as transport and markets), and not least of differing social and economic status (landless, widows, disables, sick, orphans) make blueprint approaches to extension and agreement activities a potential threat to long term sustainability. We believe that the participatory approaches developed and used in the programme will capture and handle such heterogeneity.

5.7 TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The AD02 stressed that in a sustainability context, it is important that the structures and systems that are developed during the programme can be sustained upon donor withdrawal. Too heavy reliance on cars and transport, IT, good infrastructure, expensive and complex technology in the monitoring of biodiversity resources, in extension efforts and activities etc. was seen to threaten a long-term sustainability in this context. The programme is planning to build capacity in the use of equipment purchased for the management of the ecosystem.

The programme does not deal with this in a coherent way. To some extent, the inclusion of district and lower level bodies with rather small funds seems wise; but it is still unclear how low-key monitoring and evaluation initiatives are, and to what extent these may prevail upon donor withdrawal. The same goes for some of the extension activities.

To the extent the programme is seen as a pilot scheme more than an implementation of a programme, more resource use may be warranted in order to secure good demonstration activities, also from a - somewhat different though - sustainability perspective. (That well demonstrated and functioning activities may be more tempting to adopt by other actors).

5.8 IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON PROGRAMME SUSTAINABILITY

The AD02 states that the PD does not mention these issues at all. The team considered HIV/AIDS important because of its potential to undermine performance of community initiatives. The scourge results in loss of productive labour necessary to improve economic conditions in both countries. It was recommended that the programme involves the Ministries of Health during the development of community level activities.

The revised PD states under crosscutting issues that one needs to address these issues better through assessments and analyses of how diseases impact on natural resource

management, and that such issues must be integrated into the conservation and development programmes of MERECP. This can be done through the process approach of developing a strategy for the programme, but seems to be unnecessary vague at this point in the programme planning process.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. PRINCIPLES AND CONDITIONS FOR PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION

The programme holds a double ambition of sustainable biodiversity management and livelihood security activities in a transboundary setting and as such forms a novel pilot and demonstration initiative of far more than regional and national interest.

The PD is in line with regional (including the EAC treaty) and national plans and policies in both countries. There is also an ambition to harmonize both planning and development activities at District level. The PD has a clear focus on local users and rural livelihoods; not only on economic activities, but through Resource Use Agreements also on wider aspects of rights-based development.

The programme is thus both clearly relevant and suitable as an object for Norwegian support.

The inception phase process has been pronounced participatory and open in its embracement of stakeholders at various levels, securing good and legitimate activities, insight, and support for the programme. Even monitoring, evaluation and research activity planning have involved relevant stakeholders.

The team also stresses that the rationale behind the programme's overall design; the goals, purpose and key result areas in principle are in line with the principles of an ecosystem approach, and the principles laid down under the Convention on Biological Diversity to which both countries are signatories. The programme has a well-designed logframe, developed through participatory workshops with relevant stakeholders.

Programme activities are now clearer spelled out than the previous PD02 and forms innovative and exciting ideas for the future. The role of ICRAF in this respect seems to work well. We also stress the explicit ambition to harmonize and coordinate local level District Development Plans, the District Environmental Action Plans and park related activities and that local authorities now can include programme funds in their own work plans and budgets.

A transboundary ideal ambition could be one common biodiversity resource within one organisational structure, with one biodiversity plan, a joint economy internalising all external effects, and with a common set of participatory, livelihood practices. In real life; and in planning the programme, ground realities have given less potent ambitions. The team has spent much time on discussing this with stakeholders, and accepts that these are complex issues requiring a complex structure; both relative to national sovereignty, to institutional and organisational boundaries and territories, legal frameworks and local level heterogeneity on ecological, economic, socio-cultural and other dimensions.

The programme structure; with actor structures, authority lines, flows of funds etc. is complex. The team has spent much time on discussing this. The complexity of field realities, of goals and activities, and the transboundary ambition presumes complexity, and the revised PD has in addition (on request also from Appraisal) included a substantial number of actors at local level in addition, not making the structure easier. But it anchors activities in local institutions. The team feels that the presented structure is necessary, but that it still forms a risk factor for the programme. We have not found alternative or good ways to simplify, without loosing local participation dimensions and commitment.

The role of EAC in this transboundary programme is crucial both for harmonization and for conveying experiences to other regional sites and also to own policy development. EAC has strong commitment for the project; both in formal documents and also voiced through interview.

IUCN is among the most competent and proficient actors in East Africa to undertake a pilot and demonstration programme of this kind, and may also be able to convey lessons learnt to other sites, countries and continents

There are separate documents developed through workshops with stakeholders on participatory monitoring and evaluation, and the outcome is of high quality.

There is a separate report from a workshop with stakeholders on information needs for the programme execution and for more general research activities, and key institutions are identified in both countries (National Museum in Kenya, Makerere University in Uganda) (as recommended in AR02).

For any pilot and demonstration scheme, careful assessment of baseline conditions, participatory and process oriented evaluation of changes and effects are crucial for documentation and widespread dissemination of experiences and results.

Some projects under the Nile Basin Initiative in the Mt. Elgon area could overlap with the MERECP. The PD states plans to secure coordination.

The recent establishment of the Lake Victoria Development Project under EAC is meant to become a secretariat that can host and implement relevant programmes; such as NELSAP (where Norway is a donor) and even MERECP when IUCN withdraws as coordinator. This may hold an important solution for organisational anchoring of this kind of transboundary programme.

Donor coordination is also sought in the programme activities at local level, especially concerning livelihood activities, even if not discussed in detail in the PD. efforts are BEING made to identify NGOs and groups at the local level to partner with, in both Uganda and Kenya.

The programme's organisational complexity has been discussed, and it must be seen as a risk factor, also in a sustainability context. The programme's field activities, are very promising and add substantial value to overall programme ambitions and it enhances sustainability of programme ambitions. The programme's strong policy

support at different levels is conducive to long term sustainability, even if the present economic expenditures in the programme is most likely clearly beyond what national or even regional institutions would or could cater for. One can always argue for global responsibilities for biodiversity management but it is also important to be realistic and practical.

The evolution of the processes and products of Resource Use Agreements holds an important key in the programme. They have improved relationship to local people and also supports a rights-based development, which is good.

The programme is an environmental programme and has as one main goal to sustainably conserve the environment. The transboundary nature of the programme could also help secure a broader dissemination of programme ideas, activities and experiences, enhancing sustainability in a broad way.

Local heterogeneity; gender, socio-cultural issues, HIV/AIDS, corruption are all issues that could have been better and especially more explicitly handled in the PD, also in relation to sustainability. The participatory and including approach also in programme implementation, however, could secure that such concerns are addressed in the field.

The appraisal team recommends the following matters to be discussed by the parties negotiating the programme:

- Clarify the ambitions around a coherent biodiversity management plan for the two countries and links to the "strategy"

-Programme sustainability is a crucial question. IUCN still lacks a willingness to plan for its own withdrawal as the main implementing institution. We suggest that a deadline (May 2007), after a mid-term review, is given for IUCN to make an exit plan for its role as the main implementing body by the end of the programme period. A new institutional arrangement should be planned for, while also developing ideas for financial support for a prolonged period. We suggest that the LVDP initiative is assessed in this connection. Other, more bilateral structures could also be investigated.

- IUCN's substantial management fee and general budget allocation should be discussed by the parties. They should look for a recommended priority so that more funds relatively speaking are allocated to rural livelihood and poverty alleviation activities.

- One should discuss if the logical framework should reflect particular challenges of the trying to harmonise different legal frameworks in the two countries, and risks this may pose for the transboundary programme ambition. A particular risk factor in this context relates to the need for legal reform on Kenyan side related to collaborative resource management, Boundary management and the Forest Bill. One could possibly approach Kenyan authorities for the possibility of establishing Mt. Elgon as a test case, with an exemption from the present bans on collaborative management. This must be followed up politically at high levels.

- The parties should discuss to what extent crosscutting issues of gender, socio-cultural aspects, HIV/AIDS, corruption and other issues of (good) governance should be more explicitly dealt with in the PD.

- An interesting, though somewhat unclear process, relates to the application to establish Mt. Elgon as a Biosphere Reserve, and to what extent this may inflict on the substantial sustainable use ambitions of MERECP.

- The parties need to discuss the incorporation of research and monitoring and evaluation elements at present available in other report, possibly as annexes to the main report.

- We recommend that IUCN looks into how to, in the long run, cut down on costs; both in organisation and activities, and also look into how to enhance incomes; in park tourism, forest plantations etc. but also in direct field level livelihood activities.

Overall recommendation
We thus clearly support the programme and believe that it holds important pilot and demonstration qualities for the difficult task of merging environment and development concerns. The transboundary dimensions enhance the pilot and demonstration values, but also complicates structural and organisational design. The crucial role of IUCN in the starting phase of the programme should not preclude that we recommend RNE to negotiate; both lower management fees; and in particular that an exit plan should be developed midway through the programme.

6.2   FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The team acknowledges that both the programme document and the budget has been participatory in nature.

A revised budget should be approved by the PSC in the first annual meeting.

There are no descriptions of how transboundary institutions and project implementation will be financed upon donor withdrawal. This should be addressed in the suggested plan for IUCN's withdrawal as the main implementer from MERECP.

The project should aim to revise and improve the district level incentive structures for increasing incomes from tourism, park and forest plantations.

The appraisal team recommends that efforts are made during the lifetime of the programme to make sure that a direct link between income-generating activities related to the use of MENP and the forest plantations, and income to the local authorities and communities, is established in both countries.

The appraisal team recommends that a relatively smaller share of the budget is spent on: General support to IUCN's national offices, the IUCN-EARO headquarter and project staff being hired and paid for through IUCN.

6.3   DIVISION   OF   RESPONSIBILITIES   BETWEEN   INVOLVED PARTIES

The appraisal team acknowledges that the programme satisfies conditions given by Norad's policies, by the two involved countries' policies and by EAC's policy. The revised document is much clearer on authority lines, roles and responsibilities between different parties and bodies, than the previous PD.

The rights and responsibilities rendered to local people through the collaborative management agreements and strict observance of their rules and regulations by the communities can be a key contribution to environmental sustainability. The monitoring of the actual resource use inside the reserved areas by surrounding communities should be taken more seriously. It is commendable that a participatory biodiversity conservation monitoring system is suggested.

The LVDP initiative seems to be an interesting new development to be looked into as a possible future host for ME

The appraisal team recommends that some provisions for handling disputes or disagreements are added to the PD. This also goes to the Resource Use Agreement where one should consider to involve an independent arbitrative system where the two parties negotiate in conflict cases. The present system, where UWA unilaterally can discard the agreements, generates a system of asymmetric power relations, not conducive for good working relations.

6.4   PARTNER'S   ADMINISTRATIVE   CAPACITY,   QUALITY ASSURANCE, ACCOUNTING, AUDITING AND REPORTING

The present project document and the monitoring and evaluation report reflect a good system for programme management. The involvement of District level authorities and letting them plan with programme funds in work plans and local budgets is a substantial step forward towards local anchoring of the programme at large. This will also be in line with a gradual reduction of IUCN's role as implementer. The planned involvement of local NGOs and CBOs is also good and can foster local ownership. It also facilitates a transition phase from a donor-supported scheme to a self-sustaining process.

The PD now gives clear provisions for reporting frequency and contents, for auditing procedures and for implementing income-generating activities at local level.

The financial officers of the five involved districts are now given full accounts of the financial flows and budget plans of the programme throughout its lifetime.

The appraisal team recommends that the central level in both countries are encouraged to support successful activities initiated under the programme in their ordinary budget outlines to secure some sustainability of the programme.

6.5   GENDER, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND HIV/AIDS AND CORRUPTION

Regarding gender, there is little explicitly documented in the report, but there is emphasis on involvement of men in the process of engendering the entire programme, and one may also argue that many of the suggested activities will directly benefit women as a target group.

The human rights issue is only mentioned in relation to the Benet people on the Ugandan side of the Mt. Elgon, and also addressed indirectly in terms of the Resource Use Agreements. The programme's approach on the resettlement, on that of working with conflict resolution activities seems wise.

The human rights issue is also inferred through emphasis on collaborative management, which is meant to result in a more equitable relationship between the local people and the managers of protected areas.

Although statistics on HIV/AIDS in both Kenya and Uganda may understate the scale the problem, they confirm that the pandemic is real and carries with it the potential to reverse the anticipated economic gains.

While the PD recognises that corruption poses a threat to programme performance and in addition identifies some of the potential problematic institutions, such as the central ministries, it does not provide any detailed strategies to address the problem. The appraisal team recommends that development of such strategies receive attention.

Funds allocated for all types of activities under MERECP should be made public for all stakeholders, as is the current practice with grants received from the central government to district administrations in Uganda. It is recommended that Kenya adopts a similar procedure with posting of development funds and expenditures in public offices as a basis for transparency and accountability.

6.6   REQUIREMENTS FOR REVIEWS AND EVALUATIONS

With the addition of more focused research and monitoring components within the programme, the appraisal team does not want to recommend other measures for reviews and evaluations than the standard procedures for such schemes referred to in Norad's Development Co-operation Manual. One should develop a plan for gradual phasing   out   the   role   of   IUCN   as   the   main   implementer.

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Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference

1. BACKGROUND

NORAD decided in January 2004 to support the Inception Phase of the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECEP), and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala is considering support to the Implementation Phase of MERECEP. Due inter alia to the many and complex issues and concerns raised in the appraisal of the original MERECEP project document, it was decided to support an Inception Phase separate from the Implementation Phase. The decision to continue the support to the programme will be based on an assessment of the revised MERECP programme document, in particular:

1. Foreseen measures to deal with the complexity of the Programme, clarifying inter alia the involvement and contribution of governmental and non-governmental institutions on national and local level in both Uganda and Kenya, and the plans for integration of project activities into regular government structures of the two countries.
2. Measures to secure long term sustainability
3. Mechanisms for co-ordination with related regional projects and programmes in the Lake Victoria area.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the appraisal is to contribute to the embassy's assessment of the revised project document for the MERECEP Implementation Phase.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The consultant shall assess the relevance, design and sustainability of the proposed programme. The appraisal report format in the MFA/NORAD Programme and Project Cycle Manual shall be used as a checklist for identifying the most important aspects to be assessed.

The appraisal shall put emphasis on assessing to what extent the recommendations from the Appraisal Mission have been addressed, linkages between environment-poverty-livelihoods have been highlighted, and key interventions and institutional arrangements for the Implementation Phase have been defined in the revised programme document, in particular:

a) Lessons learned from Integrated Conservation and Development Projects recently concluded on Mt. Elgon and selected other places to guide the design of MERECP.
b) The Rationale and Value added by MERECP as a trans-boundary regional ecosystem Programme to the EAC and partner states with emphasis on:
    -   EAC 2001-2004 Strategic plan on shared ecosystems
    -   EAC mandate on poverty eradication
    -   Significance of managing Mt. Elgon ecosystem as a trans-boundary / regional programme
    -   Value of Mt. Elgon biodiversity to the people of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem
    -   Requirements by Kenya and Uganda to meet their national conservation priorities for Mt. Elgon ecosystem as well as

meeting their obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity

c) The roles, commitments and needs of EAC and key institutional partners (IUCN, UWA, FD, KWS, County Councils and Districts) as well as other stakeholders with local, national, regional and international constituencies with emphasis on:
   - Mandates and roles of EAC and institutional partners towards conservation and sustainable livelihoods
   - Involvement/mobilisation of other stakeholders
   - Appropriate institutional arrangements for MERECP implementation
   - Mechanisms for securing institutional partners obligations and commitments to the MERECP
   - Mechanisms providing participation by other stakeholder institutions
   - Cost-effective implementation and co-ordination mechanisms and arrangements
   - How to secure sustainability and meet capacity building needs of collaborating institutions (and stakeholder organisations)

d) Formulate a vision and define key interventions to improve livelihoods/income generation opportunities for local populations, with regard to relevant sector policies and national plans for poverty eradication in Uganda and Kenya.

e) Define participatory research and planning processes inform the integrated sustainable development agenda of MERECP.

4. METHOD/IMPLEMENTATION

The appraisal shall be based on information contained in the revised programme document, Inception Phase reports and documents and reports from the earlier planning stages. The consultant is also expected to discuss the project with relevant institutions and stakeholders in Kampala/Uganda, in particular the Uganda Wildlife Authority. This will be carried out in week 9/10.

Team composition and leadership:
   - Professor Pål Vedeld, Noragric (team leader)
   - Frode Sundnes, trainee, Noragric
   - Ivar Jørgensen, NORAD
   - Astrid van Rooij, Consultant, Kampala, Uganda

At the end of the fieldwork, the team shall give the embassy a verbal debriefing. A draft report shall be submitted for comments. A final report shall be forwarded in softcopy and 7 hardcopies.

5. REPORTING

The report shall be in written in English and not exceed 20 pages plus annexes and an executive summary not exceeding four pages.
Kampala, 18.02.05

Tore Gjøs
Ambassador

Appendix 2 – Itinerary with meetings

2nd of March 2005	Briefing at the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kampala Geir Y. Hermansen, Secretary of Embassy/Development Affairs
4th of March 2005	Meeting with Tom Okurut, Representative of the East African Community Meeting at Uganda Wildlife Authority with Damian B Akankwasa, Director of Tourism, Business Development & Planning, Mr. Aggrey Rwebsiba, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit Ms. Edigold Monday, Finance and Accounting. Meeting with Bernard R. Twinomugisha, Principal Wildlife Officer, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry Meeting with Eliphaz Bazira, Commissioner for Environment Affairs, Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment Meeting at World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) with Jean-Marc Boffa, Country Programme Director Willy Kakuru, Programme Officer
5th of March 2005	Meeting with Alex Muhwezi, MERECP Coordinator/IUCN
7th of March 2005	Debriefing at the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Kampala, with Tore Gjøs, Ambassador Geir Y. Hermansen, Secretary of Embassy/Development Affairs

Appendix 3 – List of acronyms

AD	Appraisal Document
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCT	Community Conservation Team
DEAP	District Environment Action Plan
EAC	East African Community
EARO	Eastern Africa Regional Office (IUCN)
EU	European Union
FACE	Forests Absorbing Carbon Emissions
FD	Forest Department
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGG	Inspector General of Government
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
KRA	Key Result Area
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
LC	Local Council
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LVEMP	Lake Victoria Environmental and Management Project
MECDP	Mount Elgon Conservation and Development Project
MEICDP	Mount Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project
MENP	Mount Elgon National Park
MENR	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
MERECP	Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTTI	Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry
MWLE	Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NEAP	National Environment Action Plan
NELSAP	Nile Equatorial Lake Subsidiary Action Programme
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PD	Programme Document
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
TOR	Terms of Reference
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority

Appendix 4 - Checklist

Checklist for comparing AD 2002 with action taken in PD 2005

Addressed in chapter	Item considered in appraisal 2002	Action taken in PD 2005
2	Clarify regional and national ambitions of the programme, describing a more detailed workplan for activities, monitoring and reporting mechanisms	This issue has improved a lot, but is still unclear on; - institutional degree of transboundary ambitions; - what do different national partners want? - ambition of the Mount Elgon development strategy (MEECDS) (output 3.2) - what is the relevance of EAC? - what is the relevance of MERECP for Uganda and Kenya Better on monitoring than in the previous project document.
	Relevance - Transboundary - Local livelihoods - Biodiversity resource - On Norwegian donors - Recipient responsibilities	 - Ok - More emphasis on true livelihood activities; proper agriculture; rural economic activities and opportunities - Is there in principle - No reference to Norwegian policies - Little mentioned on local levels
3.2	A strategy for combined social science and natural science research activities should be developed in the inception period; through a regional workshop with interested parties.	A workshop have been carried out and a report on research agenda is written, and forms a base for starting; - baseline studies and information gathering for the project and for information sharing both nationally and regionally - a more general and interdisciplinary research effort for the area, including livelihood analyses, valuation studies,
	One should form strategies to develop low cost replication models of the "Mt Elgon experience". The programme should have pilot and demonstration qualities?	This is not discussed at all in the PD.
3.3	Plan for a more detailed harmonisation strategy between the two countries; including how to handle different legal provisions for local participation in National Park areas.	Basically OK on activities; still not a clear strategy, and in particular unclear on: - what areas and levels are relevant for harmonization - possibilities for legal harmonization
	A need for improved local level coordination between National park and local governance structures	This is much improved through suggesting coordination of local development plans, the District environmental plans and Mount Elgon strategies (MEECDS), but it is important to also work at lower levels of governance (ie LC2)
	Clarify authority lines, tasks duties and responsibilities of EAC, Project Steering Committee (PSC), Project Management Unit (PMU), IUCN, and local stakeholders	The project is complex. The PD is now more focussed on clarifying this, but still has some unclarities in text and organogrammes, especially on relations between PSC/PMU. - Need for a discussion of organisation relative to "exit plans". - Clarify difference between core team and essential team - What is the actual role of Local Goverance? - How are local, civil organisations represented? - What is the role of national focal desks?

	Simplify the organisational structure, the number of stakeholders and the number of decision-making levels	This is not done; but is probably acceptable in the short run; within 2 years an exit plan must be developed and approved; Is this model also to be used in other transboundary programmes (replicability)?
	Clarify the role and composition of PMU; with particular consideration for local stakeholders	This is partly clarified in that IUCN/PMU will work through national desks towards local stakeholders. Will it still be IUCN staff or should it be directly employed UWA staff to finalize the resource use agreement plans? Staff job descriptions are attached.
	The geographical location of PMU headquarters should be further discussed	This is not raised in the document, but it seems that there will be no fixed office. This means that PMU will be found in IUCN office in Kamapala and in EARO Nairobi.
	The local level co-operation and management structures should be clarified, and the programme activities must reflect the needs and priorities also of the local people; including the links between environment and development needs of local people	A model where there is a national desk and with different involved ministries and institutions at central level may be problematic for coordination at local level - a classical governance challenge.
	A unified and integrated management plan for the two countries must be put in place, and where also an a coordination and harmonization with the District Environmental Action Plans and also Local Development Plans is found	This seems to be planned for in the PD. We are a bit uncertain about the Mt Elgon strategy (MEECDS) and what it would contain.
	Kenya's lack of experience on CRM	One should describe and analyse this better for Kenya and in particular for KWS.
	Establishment of harmonising initiatives regionally on improved management and monitoring of the ecosystem, as to sustainable use of biodiversity resources on Mt. Elgon	Some found in output 1., but not much
3.5	The budget items must be discussed with the stakeholders directly	Has IUCN this time discussed budget allocations with all involved actors?
	Information should be passed to local levels authorities (five financial district officers) of budgets and expenditures to secure transparency and openness	This is not addressed much, but some is done on transparency page 52.
	The priority of funds and activity level for various programme activities should be explicitly discussed as it will have bearings on stakeholders and organisational structure; and especially look at distribution between different stakeholders, including EAC, IUCN and activities involving funds to local people.	Our assumptions while looking at the new budget: - Less for EAC as suggested in Appraisal Report - More for IUCN and to project implementation as not suggested in Appraisal Report - Less to livelihood activities as not at all suggested in Appraisal Report It looks like a very aggregated budget; what happened to participatory budgets?
	The following activities should be assessed for less emphasis; • General support to IUCN's national offices, IUCN East African Regional Office (EARO) headquarter and project staff being hired and paid for through IUCN • Capacity building to the EAC • PMU expenses, rather use staff on secondment from collaborating partners; less specially appointed staff.	- Not addressed; on the contrary, there seems to be an expansion in budget - This seems to be addressed; taken 50% down? - PMU is not well addressed in PD- difficult to assess real costs to PMU

|		
3.6	Human rights and gender issues must be addressed; in particular;	- This is well covered and supported, even if no legal rights for local people to access
	Rights to access resources	- statements on Benet problem?
	HIV/AIDS component	- This is well covered and supported
	Corruption issues	- not mentioned at all, apart from some kind of project transparency; not looking at local stakeholder
	Make all budgets and accounts available for all public for transparency and accountability	- This is mentioned to some extent (Programme administration)
3.4	An organisational structure should be put in place for a participatory monitoring of activities	This is done; at least a suggestion for a participatory monitoring system
	It should be included a plan for baseline assessment and continuous monitoring of the biodiversity- natural resource base - as part of the management plan.	This workshop report on research is still not finalized.
	Norad must make a decision regarding taking a controlling versus a participatory role for itself	The role of the donor is somewhat diffuse still; how much is reasonable to expect; through annual meetings; through general dialogue? In the organogramme Norad only holds a role as funder? No dialogue, advise, inputs, controls etc.
4	Secure mechanisms for co-ordination with related regional projects and programmes in the Lake Victoria area For Nelsap: consider joint regular steering committee meetings.	This is suggested not only for Nelsap, but also for the Lake Victoria Development Programme. The Mt Elgon Ecosystem Vision is consistent with the Lake Victoria Basin Vision. One plans to integrate the NELSAP programme on Malaba-Malakisi and Sio rivers that drain from Mt Elgon. (Output 3.1)
	How does the project confer with International Environmental agreements?	MERECP will support Kenya and Uganda to address relevant obligations to the MDGs, WSSD Plan of Action, NEPAD and Poverty Reduction Strategies and Action Plans.(Output 3.1) Uganda and Kenya are signatories to several international agreements (Conventions) relevant to Mt Elgon ecosystem. Notable among these are the three Rio Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, CCD), CITES and Bonn convention. MERECP will support Kenya and Uganda in implementing provisions of these conventions relevant to Mt Elgon ecosystem. Could be more active cooperation?
	Capacity building at local administrative levels and relevant, local NGOs and CBOs.	Not much mentioned What CBOs/NGOs to use? Most likel only NGOs?
5	One should develop strategies to maintain the transboundary programme upon withdrawal/exit plans?	Nothing is there; except provision in the budget for an end review and "exit plan". This must be improved.
	IUCN should plan for a process of withdrawal from the PMU and a phasing-out of the external support within the programme's 4.5 years period. And secure measures for a long term sustainability of the programme;	This is not in place. Sustainability is mentioned in the project document
	This should include also practical suggestions for how to generate funds locally (tourism, park and forest plantations) to secure both institutional sustainability and local legitimacy	This is discussed in the PD.

	Benefit sharing systems?	This is not mentioned in PD
	More awareness raising and sensitisation among primary, secondary and tertiary pupils, teachers, farmer's associations, and relevant NGOs and CBOs	- This is partly mentioned and supported (output 2.4), including an awareness raising among students, pupils, but also local people both on environmental quality, on ecotourism, define target groups better
	Local level infrastructure initiatives relating to transport, education and health	- This is partly mentioned and supported
	More emphasis on people dependent on natural forest resources; as women, youth not attending school, landless peasants	- This is partly mentioned and supported; but target groups are lacking; more detailed on these that depend most
	Local level poverty-alleviating activities, including better agricultural and agroforestry extension, and even stronger focus on collaborative forest management	- This is mentioned and supported;
	Establishment of local level sustainable income-generating activities including improvement of forest plantations management	- This is mentioned and supported, except forest plantations.
	Reforestation and landscape restoration within agreed reserved boundaries	- This is mentioned (Activity 1.1.6) in particular for NFA/FDK

Appendix 5 - Logframe for project

(Source PD 2005)

Vision: A secure and productive Ecosystem														
Goal: *Integrated ecosystem conservation and management for sustainable development and enhanced well-being to people and environment*														
Purpose: *To enhance the conservation status and benefits of Mt. Elgon ecosystem to environment quality and livelihoods*														
Objective: 1 Conservation and Management of Natural Resources in and outside of the Protected Areas promoted						**Objective 2:** Enhance sustainable development in Mt. Elgon Ecosystem					**Objective 3:** Integrate conservation and management needs of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem into national, regional and international development framework			**Objective 4:** MERECP effectively implemented as a regional trans-boundary programme
Output 1.1: Mechanisms to maintain the size and integrity of the ecosystem developed and implemented	**Output 1.2:** Conflicts over resource use reduced through the development and implementation of sustainable natural resource access schemes that meet conservation and livelihood needs	**Output 1.3:** Strategies for regulating use of natural resources in Protected Areas developed	**Output 1.4:** Capacity to manage Protected Areas enhanced	**Output 1.5:** Knowledge base on well being & functioning of ecosystem & livelihoods established	**Output 2.1:** Agricultural and natural resources based income generating activities developed and improved	**Output 2.2:** Integrated land use plans and policies strengthened & implemented	**Output 2.3:** Enhanced investment in Natural Resources development and management		**Output 2.4** Enhanced awareness of Conservation benefits	**Output 3.1:** Mt. Elgon ecosystem water catchment values and benefits integrated into regional development frameworks	**Output 3.2:** Development of MEECDS	**Output 3.3:** Cross cutting sustainable development issues integrated in MERECP	**Output 4.1:** MERECP implementation progress & performance effectively monitored and evaluated	**Output 4.2:** Cost effective MERECP implementation systems and procedures established
Activities	**Activities**	**Activities**	**Activities**	**Activities**	**Activities**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**	**Activities:**
1.1.1: Support managing authorities to survey, mark and publicize protected area boundaries where appropriate	1.1.5: Support integration of monitoring information into management strategies and actions.	1.2.1: Undertake assessments on the nature and dynamics of resource-use related conflicts and their impact on people's livelihoods and protected resources	1.3.1: Support the development of pro-poor/pro-conservation policies and operational procedures at the field and national levels.	1.4.1: Strengthening field level management systems and procedures for enabling institutional collaboration.	Activity: 1.5.1 Understanding the status and functioning of Mt. Elgon ecosystem	2.1.1: Support the development of entrepreneur skills for investments in Natural Resources based Income generating activities and value adding to agricultural produce.	2.2.1: Strengthening of land and natural resource use plans & policies	2.3.1: Develop and support strategies that provide incentives for Private Sector and NGOs/Community investment in the development and management of Forestry resources in districts.	2.3.5: Increase Forestry resources endowment	2.4.1: Promote awareness on the relationship between natural resources management, population and quality of life	3.1.1: Develop and support mechanisms for the integration of MERECP with the LVDP	3.2.1: Facilitate development of MEECDS	3.3.1: Integrate cross-cutting issues into MERECP supported activities.	4.1.1: Facilitate the development of a participatory M&E strategy	4.2.1: Develop and implement sound financial and MERECP management systems
1.1.2: Support managing authorities to effectively engage political processes to diffuse the mounting pressure for excision of land	1.1.6: Support the Forest Department (KE) and NFA to restore degraded areas in forest reserves	1.2.2: Support negotiations for access regimes.	1.3.2: Support the establishment and functioning of field based institutions for fostering collaboration between community and protected areas.	1.4.2: Support the implementation of regional level mechanisms for enhancing institutional collaboration	1.5.2: Create and implement information sharing mechanisms	2.1.2: Promote the use of appropriate technologies that improve land management and agricultural productivity.	2.2.2: Support environmental planning	2.3.2: Support the development of a trans-boundary tourism development plan		2.4.2: Develop and implement a conservation & development awareness strategy for the ecosystem	Activity 3.1.2: Review conservation & development policies related to Mt. Elgon Ecosystem and make proposals for policy reforms		Activity 3.3.2: Establish mechanisms to enhance collaboration between natural resource management and social services institutions.	Activity 4.1.2: Undertake regular internal reviews & coordination and planning processes	Activity 4.2.2: Strengthen capcity for MERECP implementation
1.1.3: Support managing authorities to effectively meet their obligations relating to the on-going or planed resettlement exercises		1.2.3: Support managing authorities to effectively manage and monitor access regimes	1.3.3: Promote incentives for stakeholder participation in management of protected areas.	1.4.3: Develop capacity for trans-boundary resources planning, monitoring and law enforcement.		Activity 2.1.3: Introduce high value and diversify crops and livestock for food and money.		2.3.3.: Train communities in eco-tourism activities		2.4.3: Conduct valuation studies of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem and selected resources therein	Activity 3.1.3: Support mechanisms for information acquisition, storage and dissemination			Activity 4.1.3: Undertake reviews, evaluations and audits	4.2.3: Facilitate forums for joint planning and coordination on trans-boundary issues.
1.1.4: Conduct an assessment of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem dynamics and support the development and application of ecological monitoring tools.		1.2.4: Support the development and implementation of a Resource Use Conflict Management Strategy (RCMS) for the ecosystem				Activity 2.1.4: Strengthen tenure and access to land and natural resources		2.3.4: Promote alternatives or substitutes to forest resources			Activity 3.1.4: Integrate relevant national obligations to Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in MERECP supported activities				4.2.4: Develop and implement MERECP Communications Strategy.

Appendix 6 -
Proposed MERECP implementation arrangements
(Source PD 2005)
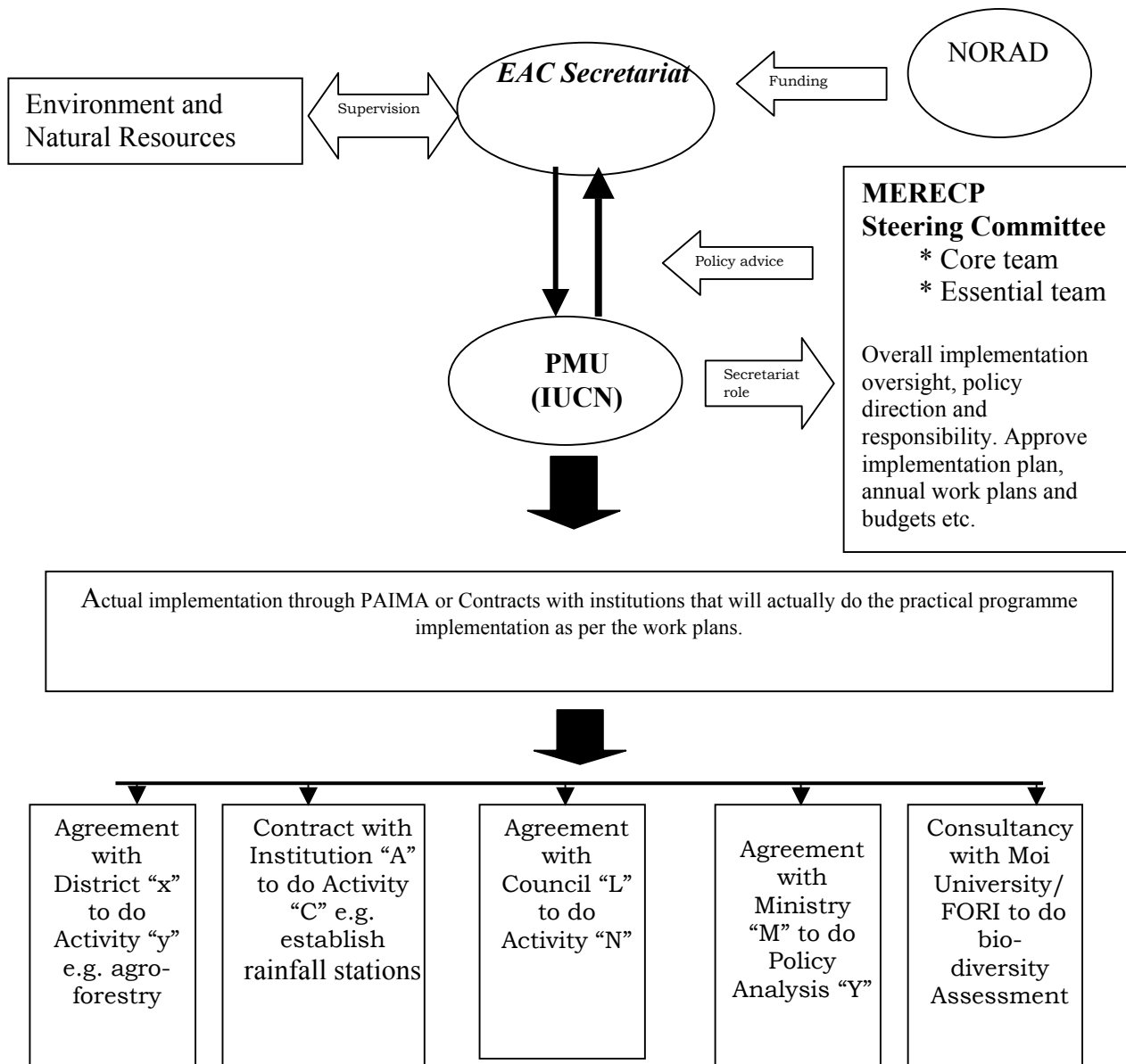
Appendix 7 –
Comments from IUCN on MERECP Appraisal Report

Submitted: 4th April 2004.

SECTION: Executive Summary

1. Risk factors – legal reform in Kenya to permit collaborative resources management (CRM). MERECP design takes this factor into consideration. The approach towards implementing CRM will be to pilot the activity at field level and based on field experiences inform or influence policy. At field level, the FD and KWS officials are keen to pilot meanwhile continuing to work through their institutions to formally recognize the approach.

2. Integration of crosscutting issues – gender, disease etc. The MERCEP proposal document addresses these issues from the NRM angle and in recognition of on-going programmes by government and non-government institutions in the MERECP operational areas. Under output 3.3, Activity 3.3.1, the approach envisaged is that one that integrates all these cross cutting issues rather than implement them as stand alone activities hence the proposed assessment on impact and relationship between ENRM and HIV/AIDs, Malaria, TB. Secondly, it is envisaged that role of MERECP in addressing the identified crosscutting issues will be in form of support to relevant government agencies and non-government institutions which have more direct mandate over such issues.

3. Corruption and other issues of good governance: MERECP PD 2005 is an EAC document and as such may not be appropriate to include explicit statements on the matter. However, these concerns should be emphasized in the funding agreement that commits EAC, partner states and all implementing institutions.

4. Implication of designating Mt. Elgon a Man and Biosphere reserve. The principles of MAB are supportive of the conservation and development aspirations of the "protected" components of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem. One such important aspect is the recognition of the Exitence and rights of legal settlers in the protected components of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem. Designating Mt Elgon MAB will render support to output 1.2 (activity 1.2.4), output 1.3 (activity 1.3.1) In addition, designating the area as MAB does not in anyway interfere with the current conservation and management objectives of these protected areas.

5. IUCN Exit strategy/plan. Whilst there is no section in the PD that explicitly refers to this matter, the following strategies that address future role of IUCN (or any other technical agency) in MERECP have been entrenched in the PD.

    a) Development of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem Conservation and Development Strategy –MEECDS (Output 3.2). This MEECDS will define institutions and their respective roles during its implementation.
    b) Involvement of other technical agencies, NGOs, Research/Academic is deliberately included in order to enrich the technical input into the MERECP and spread the responsibility.

c) Working through host institutions (and disbanding the earlier proposal for PMU) aims at strengthening the integration of MERECP supported activities into host institutions.
d) Integration into EAC programmes under LVDP.
e) MERECP Budget caters for a specific activity to develop a phase out strategy.

However, it is also planned that the mid-term review will look into this aspect and make appropriate recommendations. Therefore, the assertion that IUCN is unwilling to prepare its Exit is not justified!

6. IUCN Costs. The basis for this comment in the report seems to be contradictory. The Appraisal report confirms IUCN's competence to deliver on such programme. To be able to realize this, IUCN needs adequate resources to do deliver. Secondly, reference is made to IUCN NORAD Framework Agreement. These Framework Agreements are independent of project funding by NORAD. Lastly, IUCN management fees is a global policy that is applicable to all programmes/project worldwide and therefore it is not necessary to peg one project to effect change in IUCN policy. However, the comments can be taken up at contract negotiation stage.

Section 2: Issues of Programme relevance

1. Subsection 2.1- Preamble: The correct position regarding approach by EAC and partner states is as follows:
   a) In 2002, EAC Council of Ministers approved the then Project Document and therefore MERECP is an approved project of EAC (Section 2.7.1 of PD)
   b) The Feb 2005 project documents has been endorsed at various levels but not yet approved by EAC. Endorsement has been secured at the Terrestrial Sub-committee of the ENR Technical Sub-committee of the EAC (Section 2.7.2 of PD)
   c) The EAC approval of the 2005 PD will involve the ENR Technical Committee (April 2005) and the EAC Council of Ministers (May 2005). In between, the EAC will seek formal approval by KE & UG.

   2. Subsection 2.3 – the geographical spread of MERECP operational area: Section 4.2 of the PD provides information on this matter. It has been found irrelevant to use distances to define the operational areas since project activities differ, hence the description of administrative units (districts) and the logic of the activity.

Section 3: Programme Structure and design

1. Subsection 3.1: Transboundary programme. The 2005 PD also includes development of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem conservation and Development Strategy (MEECDS- output 3.2) and the Tourism Strategy (activity 2.3.2) as essential ingredients for a Transboundary programme.

2. Subsection 3.2.1. Under outstanding participatory processes/events involved in developing the 2005 PD the following should be included:

   a) The Terrestrial Subcommittee meeting (Jan 2005)
   b) M& E workshop (October 2004)

Regarding the distribution of PD 2005, this document is still under review (Including the Appraisal Process) and will be distributed when formal review and negotiations have been completed (May 2005)

3. Subsection 3.2.2: the logic/link between problems, context and logframe is explained in section 2.5 of the 2005 PD. This comment on link between problems and logframes contradicts comments/observations under section 3.2.2. (Objective 4 Pg 8) of the Appraisal report.

4. Subsection 3.2.2 – comment on indicators will be considered at the on-set of implementation by the M&E Team.

5. Subsection 3.2.4- Research: A meeting planned for Research Institutions together with the beneficiaries (UWA. FD, NFA, KWS, and Districts) at onset of implementation will address the matter.

6. Section 3.2.5. Comment to integrate the M&E into the PD as Appendix. We propose that this should be incorporated in the funding agreement instead of the PD,

7. Section 3.3.1. – Meetings of the MERECP focal desks – Section 4.8.2 of the 2005 PD provides for semi-annual meetings.

8. Section 3.3.1. – Proposes role of Norwegian Embassy in Kampala. The 2005 PD describes the role of RNE under section 4.3.3, 4.3.5, 4.3.6 and 4.3.9 with intention not to involve the Norwegian Embassy in the Project Implementation. We suggest that the role of the Embassy be negotiated between EAC and Embassy and integrated in the funding agreement.

9. Section 3.3.2- Comments on role/participation by local governments and institutions. The MERECP design considers local governments to be represented by Districts and also Mt. Elgon County Council. Below these levels, activities will be implemented through these institutions and will certainly involve local institutions. (Section 4.3.1, 4.3.6, 4.3.10)

10. Section 3.3.2 – The role of EAC/IUCN envisage that EAC will subcontract IUCN to provide technical and managerial service to the MERECP. This will therefore include facilitation, financial management, among others. IUCN will provide technical input in objective 1 & 2. IUCN will take lead implementing object 3 & 4.

11. Section 3.3.2. a) The role of IUCN in PSC. The envisaged role is that of providing of secretariat to the PSC.

The role of Key public Institutions- on the matter of policy development/strengthening. MERECP will pilot initiatives on the ground to test approaches, learn lessons and influence policy reforms. At central level, MERECP will provide resources (technical, logistical) to influence actions on policy reforms. Through the involvement of technical agencies (IUCN, ICRAF etc) MERECP will lobby central government agencies and politicians for policy reforms.

12. Section 3.4. Subsection 3.4.1. In addition to observations made, the MERECP activities will be supported by the Institutional Development Advisor at field level and by an elaborate M&E system. MERECP implementation procedures (MERECP Implementation Manual – Section 4.3.5 of 2005 PD) will be developed and approved by Steering Committee. IUCN will undertake regular monitoring and audits. Annual Audits will also be conducted by Governments systems (Auditor General). Budget allocation will be effected in a participatory manner at workplanning stage by the MERECP Coordination Committee

13. Subsection 3.4.2- Budget to EAC. The MERECP budget is laid out according to objectives and outputs, and as such it would appear that budget for EAC is inadequate whereas not. For example, EAC implements a big proportion of budget under output 4.2. (PSC, MCC, Audits, Reviews, Evaluations etc). What is provided for as EAC coordination (line item 5.5) is for routine administration costs expected to occur at EAC Secretariat in Arusha.

Likewise, we find the analysis presented in table under subsection 3.4.2. misleading because the description of programme items (1st column to left) does not correspond with the PD 2005 whose budget is according to objectives.

14. Section 3.6. - Risk factor – Insecurity. This matter is comprehensively addressed under activities 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 1.4.3, and 4.2.3. However, these are actions that are most appropriate for a project and not what must be done since some actions cannot be handled by a project.

15. Section 4.2. Comment on UWA/Face. Whereas, this activity began in 1994 as a project, it has since 2000 been incorporated within UWA/MENP and now forest restoration activities are part of the routine management work of the MENP. In addition Mt. Elgon has been earmarked by other Global programmes as suitable sites for forest restoration activities geared towards addressing Climate Change Challenges.

16. Section 5. – Sustainability

Subsection 5.1: Section 4.3 of 2005 PD provides additional information on various implementation strategies that collectively contribute towards achieving sustainability of MERECP. These are strategies for sustainability (Section 4.3.1), Capacity building (Section 4.3.2), coordination and supervision (Section 4.3.3, 4.3.6, 4.3.9, 4,3,12) role of other actors (Section 4.3.7, 4.3.8, 4.3.10)

17. Section 5.1.1 – Programme features. Comment on IUCN stepping down and identifying national implementing institutions does not take into account the fact that:

> a) MERECP is a regional initiative that should be coordinated by a Regional body. Presently, EAC Secretariat cannot because it has no implementation mandate. In future, Lake Victoria Commission might be suitable.
> b) MERECP supported activities are multi-sectoral and hence require a "neutral" institution to coordinate and bring into action the various institutions
> c) Various mechanisms for ensuring full integration of MERECP into host institutions thereby phasing out role of technical agencies in managing the project have been described in the PD 2005. We argue that these mechanisms be given chance to proceed unbiased.

18. Section 5.1.1- Comment on Inception phase has not addressed the issue of donor and IUCN tuning down their role as implementing Agency. The comment is unclear. However, in its present form, the Appraisal report contradicts other statements made in report in support of the proposed implementation structure and institutional roles. In addition, the report seems not appreciating the fact that that the proposed institutional roles have been proposed and agreed upon by institutional partners!

19. Section 5.1.1 – Role of PMU. Report contradicts itself with information provided under section 3.3.1. However, it is expected that the mid-term review would look into this matter when reviewing implementation effectiveness.

20. Section 5.3. Comment on Benefit sharing: The statements made in reference to Taungya/Shamba system need to be clarified as follows:

> In Uganda, the Forest & Tree Planting Act (2004) provides for private sector involvement in tree planting in reserved land (Forest Reserves). In addition, it created a Tree Planting Fund to provide subsidy/incentives to tree planting. This is geared towards timber production

> With respect to the soft wood plantations in MENP – Uganda, the policy is different. UWA manages these plantations for income to the park and for extending conservation benefit to the local people. Hence it involves local people in tree planting in the two plantation sites (Kapkwata & Suam) in form of taungya system. The challenge faced by UWA is the administration of Taungya system to ensure it succeeds.

> In Kenya, the matter of shamba system is at national level across all forest reserves. Statements attributed to GOK indicate that shamba system is suspended for the time being because GOK is reviewing how best to administer the system.

21. Section 5.3 – role of finance officers: The PD 2005 vests financial management of district-led activities with the District Administration (section 4.3.3. 4.3.5 &

4.3.6). Moreso, the MERECP will support activities that have been identified, prioritized and integrated – District workplans.

22. Section 5.4- Human Rights: The 2005 PD proposes to address the issue of settlers in the following activities: Activity 1.5.1, 2.1.4, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.1.3

    Secondly, MERECP responds to issue of settlers as a "facilitator" towards the solution and hence its support to developing a strategy (conflict resolution strategy), provision of forums for dialogue, etc.,

23. Section 5.4 – Corruption: refer to earlier comment.

24. Section 5.6. Social- Cultural, gender etc, In addition to response on page 1, MERECP addresses issues of gender through the following activities: 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 1.3.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.13, 2,14, 2.3.1, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.35, 2.4.1 among others.

25. Section 5.7: Comment on M & E. The 2005 PD proposes establishment of M&E Team that will further elaborate on M & E based on annual workplan activities. Secondly, the MERECP M & E will as far as possible integrate into Exiting M & E rather than develop a parallel system.

26. Section 5.8: Impact of HIV/AIDS – refer to response on page 1.

27. Section 6.2 – Financial & Technical Requirements:

    a) The role PSC is to approve annual workplan and budget. NORAD and EAC will approve over-all MERECP budget at time of signing funding agreement.

    b) Financing transboundary activities after donor funding: this is expected to be addressed when preparing MEECDS.

    c) Support to IUCN offices: MERECP budget does not provide for general support to any of IUCN offices. What is budgeted for is recovery costs (staff, & servicing implementation) all related to MERECP

28. Section 6.3. Comment on disputes arising out of Resource use
Agreements. We clarify that each Agreement has adequate provisions for addressing conflicts that might arise during implementation. Therefore, there is no opportunity for unilateral decisions by any of the partners to the agreement.

29. Section 6.5. Gender, HR and HIV/AIDs etc. The 2005 PD provides for Human Rights to all concerned cases in Uganda (Benet) and Kenya (Cheptais area). Further Human Rights are addressed through activities under output 1.2,1.3, 1.5 among others.