

Mid-term Review of Pakistan National Conservation Strategy – What's Next

Background:

The Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS), at its approval in 1992, situated Pakistan's socio-economic development within the context of a national environmental plan. The five years of planning that led to the formulation of Pakistan NCS, made it both a process and a product i.e. a multi-sectoral consultative process of consensus building and mobilisation of a constituency; and a strategic framework. The implementation period for the strategy was envisaged to be from 1992 to 2002.

In order to take stock of the implementation of recommendations made by the NCS, a major review was mandated mid-way through its ten-year implementation. The NCS MTR was conducted between May 1999 to April 2000, in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of information collection that was completed over a period of twelve months. The phase 2 of NCS MTR was an external review conducted by an independent external review team. External review was a month long process primarily based on background studies and extensive consultations with NCS stakeholders.

The strategic significance of the NCS MTR was marked by the fact that its process and results provide direction for convergence of several strategic initiatives in the development scenario of Pakistan. The changing global scenario and its implications on Pakistan also emerged as an important aspect of MTR findings.

Significant Pointers:

The NCS MTR process brought to light a few very important lessons for Pakistan's planning processes:

- NCS could not influence key socio-economic issues such as poverty reduction and economic development – This is an emerging debate under the MTR results i.e. the macro level issues were not integrated into NCS implementation strategy and that NCS implementation was largely left to project identification around NCS core areas.
- NCS implementation processes could not characterise formulation processes hence leading to rapidly decreasing commitment for action – Consultative processes were the hallmark of NCS formulation, however, NCS implementation strategies did not emerge in as participatory a manner as was anticipated.
- Need for action on environment and SD has nevertheless been recognised by public sector even given the harsh political environment and capacities – The MTR reports that an intensive effort has been made towards awareness raising and institutional building. This however, with less than adequate political commitment and with prevailing level of capacities did not translate into adequate action for NCS implementation.
- The contextual shift from environmental conservation to SD over last ten years – Substantial changes in emerging context necessitated a flexible approach to implementation of NCS or any other SD plan for Pakistan, translation of which through a flexible and frequently revisable process is inevitable.

Progress on Follow Up to NCS MTR:

- Draft MTR report has been circulated to over 200 people for comments and feedback.
- A high level meeting was convened at the Ministry of Environment, Local Government and Rural Development (MoELG&RD), Government of Pakistan (GoP) which was chaired by the Secretary of the same Ministry to discuss the process of taking the MTR forward. The plan

highlighted in section on What's Next in this paper were identified during this meeting. Following were the key decisions of the meeting:

1. Establishment of NCS Steering Committee comprised of representatives from Ministry of Environment, Planning & Development Division, IUCN and SDPI.
 2. The concept paper capturing the identified next steps along with budgetary requirements for taking the MTR process forward would be developed by the said committee.
- In order to disseminate learning from Pakistan NCS MTR a regional dialogue was organised by OECD-DAC, IUCN Nepal and Pakistan Environment Programme of IUCN Pakistan in Kathmandu Nepal on July 25 –26, 2000. The dialogue was attended by representatives from Nepal, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Pakistan. Mr. Asad Sibtain Deputy Secretary NCS Unit represented Ministry of Environment, Government of Pakistan. During the dialogue, it was noted that Pakistan's experience provides a rich learning ground for not only those nations who are either in the process of review or formulation of NCS/NEAPs/BAP but can also contribute greatly to the currently ongoing OECD-DAC donor-developing countries dialogue on formulation of national strategies for sustainable development (nssds). This dialogue aims to inform donors on best practices in supporting developing countries to formulate/implement their nssds on the basis of learning from developing countries. The process would result into a) a guideline for external partners/donors, and b) a source book on formulation of nssds. The development of these two documents is being facilitated by IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development UK). It was therefore decided that, after the finalisation of MTR report, mechanism would be formalised to incorporate the Pakistan experience into the two outputs.
 - A mid term review of OECD-DAC Dialogue was held in Phuket Thailand from October 9 14, 2000. The dialogue was attended by representatives of DFID, OECD-DAC, European Union and GTZ from donor community. The developing countries taking part in the process are Burkina Faso, Bolivia, Nepal, Thailand, Tanzania, while Pakistan, Ghana and Namibia have been chosen as parallel countries where potential learning opportunities exist. During the course of the dialogue a meeting was facilitated by DFID between IUCN Pakistan and IIED and activities were firmed up for integrating Pakistan experience into the guideline for donors and source book on nssd.

What's Next:

Following activities have been identified to take the MTR process forward.

Preparation of a concise summary of NCS MTR report in collaboration with IIED.

In order to fully exploit the richness of learning from the Pakistan NCS MTR it is imperative that the findings and learning from MTR are widely understood and internalised. Only then, participatory and informed decision making towards NCS-2 can be ensured. In addition, during the regional workshop in Kathmandu it was widely expressed that Pakistan experience holds a wealth of learning for other countries in the region. This brought to light the need for a concise summary, a 20-25 pager, based on MTR report and other development initiatives currently being undertaken in Pakistan. Moreover, this paper would directly address the framework for OECD/DAC guidelines and will feed into the source book on nssd. The paper would therefore facilitate

- i. Participation in making decisions on NCS-2
- ii. Preparation of guidelines for donors and source book on nssd.
- iii. Dissemination of learning at regional level in Asia

It was agreed in a meeting with IIED and DFID that a total of two weeks would be allocated for the development of this paper. The first week would be spent on developing a framework synthesising various categories of findings and learning from MTR and other supporting documents. This would primarily be done in Pakistan by NCS Coordinator in consultation with Dr. Stephen Bass of IIED who is also a member of NCS MTR external review team. While in the second week it would be finalised jointly by Dr. Stephen Bass and NCS Coordinator at IIED. The paper would also be translated into Urdu.

Initiation of a Dialogue process

In Pakistan the NCS processes, both formulation and review, are characterised by extensive participation of and consultation with key actors from public, NGOs and private sectors that ensured the widespread ownership of NCS by all sectors. Now there is a need to build a broad-based consensus on taking the MTR forward. Also there is a need to initiate an informed public debate on future directions in the emerging political and economic context. Involvement of media would therefore be a key element. Dialogue is also necessary to bring an informed convergence of various sustainable development initiatives that are being deliberated in the country. Such as poverty reduction strategy (World Bank and IMF), National Sustainable Development Programme (UNDP), (OECD-DAC), Mainstreaming Environment to Fight Poverty (WB) and follow-up on NCS MTR (Ministry of Environment and Planning and Development Division of GoP, IUCN, SDPI) that is also linked with OECD-DAC nssd dialogue process. It is therefore envisaged that a national forum would be launched to deliberate upon the convergence of various initiatives. The advocacy through various political fora has been identified as a key to gauge high level political commitment and support for SD agenda in Pakistan.

The dialogue process would therefore be aimed at

- i. Wider stakeholder debate on MTR findings in conjunction with all other sustainable development initiatives currently being considered at the national level
- ii. Consensus building on a futuristic framework that converge all initiatives
- iii. Creation of ownership of and support for SD agenda in Pakistan

It is envisaged that this will be achieved through:

1. Stakeholder consultations will be held at national, provincial, administrative regions, and district levels
2. Launching a national level SD forum
3. Advocacy with the decision makers through Pakistan Environment Protection Council and NCS Cabinet Committee in order to have consensus and commitment towards the NCS-2 or Pakistan SD Plan
4. Initiation of public debate through print media, existing networks in the public, NGOs and private sector

Documentation

This would facilitate two objectives:

- i. Record keeping of learning from the processes
- ii. Preparation on nssd/NCS-2

The process of NCS MTR greatly benefited from the lessons learnt and recorded during the formulation process of NCS and other plans in Pakistan. Similar efforts are underway to record key lessons from the MTR process. Due to the contextual complexity of the current phase, the documentation of this future focused process would be a key resource not only for planning processes in Pakistan but also for other nations and for external development partners. In addition it is envisaged that the documentation on findings of dialogue process would lead to the development of a framework/proposal for nssd/NCS-2 in Pakistan.

Budget

S.#	Budget Items	DAC Contribution GB £	IUCN,s Contribution GB £
1.	<i>Preparation and Printing of Summary Document:</i>		
	i. IIED Staff Time (Steve Bass Consultancy fees)	2,000	
	ii. Airfare to UK for NCS Coordinator	1,100	
	iii. Boarding and Lodging in UK for 7 days (@ £110/day)	770	
	iv. Local Transportation in UK	200	
	v. Communication	500	
	vi. Urdu Translation and Printing of Summary Document	2,000	
2.	<i>Dialogue Process:</i>		
	A. Stakeholders Dialogues:		
	i. National Stakeholders Workshop (1x£1400)		1,400
	ii. Provincial Stakeholders Workshops (4x£800)	800	2,400
	iii. Administrative Regions Stakeholder Workshops		
	- Northern Areas		700
	- Azad Kashmir	700	
	iv. District Stakeholder Workshops (2x£700)	700	700
	B. Launch of National SD Forum	2000	
	C. Information Dissemination and Communication		1,500
3.	Documentation and Dissemination		2500
4.	Grand Total	10,770	9,200