

**OECD/DAC Country Dialogue on NSSDs
Final Workshop: Santa Cruise, Bolivia
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PAKISTAN COUNTRY REPORT

Background

The National Conservation Strategy of Pakistan was prepared with the assistance of a secretariat established in 1988 over a 3-year period under the supervision of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. Over 3000 people in government, civil society and the private sector were involved in preparing analyses, workshops and other consultations. The Pakistan NCS is one of the best-known national conservation strategies, both nationally and internationally admired for its vision and potential at the time it was adopted. The NCS emerged after a decade of discussion and analysis, and was adopted within the highest level by the government of Pakistan.

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 MTR adopted 3 sets of evaluation criteria: (i) a simple sustainable development framework against which to assess achievement of the stated objectives of NCS (annex 1), (ii) a qualitative assessment of the 60 outcome groups of NCS, and (iii) a review of the processes/systems intended to communicate and implement the NCS, which would reveal potentials for its refinement.

Learning from Pakistan NCS MTR

the MTR identified strong attributes of the NCS which can explain its successful impacts over the past decade, and also certain weak attributes which have constrained success. This learning can now be put together in the form of a draft set of guiding principles for future deliberations on Pakistan nssd.

1. *Extensive participation of stakeholders* should drive all the strategy processes, requiring objective stakeholder identification, awareness-building and information exchange amongst stakeholders, adequate rights and resources to participate, and a clear understanding of benefits accruing to participants.
2. *Transparency and active communications* form the 'life-blood' of any strategic transition to sustainable development, and information should be accessible by all stakeholders, using languages and media that enable 'bottom-up' understanding and challenges.
3. *Regular and objective research, policy analysis and monitoring which focuses on sustainability* should be central to strategy processes, so that stakeholders understand changing contexts, future prospects, needs and responses, and develop a 'learning' approach.
4. *A shared vision of sustainable development* is essential for maintaining the concerted effort and commitment of individuals, civil society, government, and the development community, and strategy processes should aim to achieve this and keep it under frequent review.

5. *Innovation and experiment* should be encouraged for identifying and testing solutions that make sense in local or sectoral contexts, especially by creating enabling conditions for the private sector and amongst communities.
6. *Timeliness and demonstration activities*, that take account of political dynamics and stakeholder demands, are important strategy tactics, as they can produce highly tangible results over short periods, maintaining relevance and improving stakeholder understanding and interest.
7. *'Ownership' and leadership*: NCS-2/nssd must be driven and 'owned' by many people at all levels in Pakistan, and must actively seek out and support leadership for sustainable development at many levels; but is especially dependent on strengthening senior-level government ownership.
8. *Decentralisation and empowerment processes* are central to sustainable development; the strategy needs to be consistent with, and support, the devolution of power for the genuine empowerment of citizens; the decentralization of administrative authority; the de-concentration of professional functions; the diffusion of power for checks and balances to preclude autocracy; and the distribution of resources to the provincial and local level.
9. *Coordination, facilitation and partnerships* are critical for managing the broad scope of sustainable development, and the many stakeholders, especially at the government level; there is a need for developing partnerships between federal and provincial governments, NGOs and the private sector; utilising independent groups such as IUCN as facilitators where necessary; special care in coordinating all major strategies and programmes that aim to improve the policy and institutional conditions for sustainable development e.g. FSMP, BAP, PRSP.
10. *Stakeholder-driven priority-setting mechanisms* are essential for managing the broad scope; this also requires attention to only a few programme areas at any one time, with an emphasis on cross-cutting goals to assist many sectors.
11. *Gender integration* should receive special priority at two levels: the procedures and staffing of sustainable development institutions, and programmatic work which should include both focused and integrated gender activities.
12. *Mainstreaming of environmental and social concerns into development initiatives and government procedures* is essential for improving the sustainability of ongoing investment, production and consumption patterns; and 'projectisation' of NCS-2 activities *additional to* mainstream activities should be a lower priority
13. *Financial flows* are central to the sustainability of development, and the NCS-2 needs both to influence mainstream mechanisms and to increase the number of special mechanisms available to invest in environmental and social priorities.
14. *Capacity strengthening* is central to a sustainable development strategy, especially in government management and monitoring, and should be developed through stakeholder involvement in strategy activities.
15. *The many principles for sustainable development that have become established in international law* and, increasingly, in Pakistan law or practice, should be employed, notably "cost recovery" and the "polluter pays" principle.
16. *A continuous improvement approach* can be achieved through adherence to the above principles, but is a useful principle in its own right – building on what has worked (notably NCS successes), tackling a few priority targets which people care most about, learning

step-by-step, and gradually addressing ever-more ambitious goals; it implies that monitoring should always show some progress, even though the base may be low. A fixed 'ten-year agenda' should be avoided.

Impacts of NCS MTR

- Revitalisation of dialogue/debate processes on national issues – The MTR exercise recalled the consultative processes of NCS formulation days where wider stakeholder involvement was ensured through exchange of moot point debates and discussions. Several actors who were active during NCS formulation process found MTR platform to undertake self-assessment and NCS achievements anew.
- Expansion of stakeholder base – Several new actors such as the Ministry of Finance, were identified for their critical role in SD initiatives in Pakistan.
- Convergence of broad development initiatives under one umbrella – In the aftermath of MTR there is a growing realisation in all sectors to bring together initiatives that are happening in isolation onto one platform where these could not only learn from each other's approach but also realise the inevitability of convergence.
- Emergence of clear directions towards Pakistan's SD plan – The MTR process provided space to renew directions for SD initiatives in Pakistan. This time with clear converging points and a holistic vision towards SD in Pakistan.
- Emergence of guidelines for donor investment – For the first time the donor community as presented with clear guidelines for investment in SD in Pakistan, with higher level of commitment for coordinated efforts rather than piecemeal and sectoral investments.

What Happened after the MTR

Following developments have taken place in follow-up to NCS MTR:

- 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. During the regional workshop in Kathmandu it was widely expressed that Pakistan experience holds a wealth of learning for other countries in the region. Moreover, the ongoing development of donors' guideline and nssd source book can also benefit from the Pakistan experience through incorporating key lessons from NCS MTR. This brought to light the need for a concise summary on Pakistan NCS MTR, which would serve the following three objectives:
 - i. Dissemination of learning to wider stakeholders in Pakistan
 - ii. Dissemination of learning at regional level in Asia
 - iii. Contribution to the guidelines for donors and source book on nssd.

This summary was developed in two steps. The first step was to develop a framework synthesising various categories of findings and learning from MTR. While second step was to compile the summary in the form of a prospectus.

- The findings of NCS MTR have significantly contributed to the following strategic initiatives:
 - i. Mainstreaming Environment to Fight Poverty – A framework for WB's support to the environmental sector in Pakistan
 - ii. National Environmental Action Plan – An initiative of Ministry of Environment which primarily focuses on identification of: pressing environmental issues and immediate remedial actions to ameliorate those issues.
 - iii. National Sustainable Development Programme – A programme to streamline UNDP's support to environment sector in Pakistan.

- Dialogue has been initiated with the Poverty Alleviation Section of Planning Commission in order to integrate environmental considerations into the PRSP and the ongoing Participatory Poverty Assessment.

Next Steps

Following activities have been identified to steer the process towards an nssd:

- Nation wide dialogue that should facilitate
 1. Wider stakeholder debate on MTR findings in conjunction with all other environmental/sustainable development initiatives (PRSP, NSDP, Environmental Action Plan, WB's Environmental Strategy) currently being considered at the national level
 2. Consensus building on a futuristic framework that converge all initiatives
 3. Creation of ownership of and support for SD agenda in Pakistan
- Mobilization of print and electronic media to reach out to the general public so that a public debate could be initiated on issues related to SD and convergence of various frameworks
- The results of the dialogue process will be shared with key stakeholders (public, private, NGOs sectors and donors) in a national workshop. This workshop could be the starting point for a *national "forum" to examine how the NCS should be "owned, housed and operated" in the future.*
- A meeting of donors will be convened to discuss the findings of the dialogue process to set out the pathway for NCS-2, and develop a plan for improved collaboration among donors and between government and donors.