

**Capacity Building and Institutional Support To  
The Nature Conservation Sector  
Of The Ministry Of State for Environmental Affairs And  
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency**

**Project Document Revalidation**

**February 2005**

Capacity Building and Institutional Support to Nature Conservation Sector of  
MSEA/EEAA

**Acronyms**

BioMAP	Monitoring and Assessing Biodiversity Project
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
DGCD	Directorate General of Cooperation for Development
EEAA	Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIECP	Egyptian Italian Environmental Cooperation Programme
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LIFP	Legal and Institutional Framework Project
MSEA	Minister of State for Environmental Affairs
NCSCB	Nature Conservation Sector Capacity Building Project
NCS	Nature Conservation Sector
PA	Protected Areas
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## **1. SUMMARY**

The present document is a review of the NCSCB project document in order to revalidate projected activities and priorities in the light of developments within the NCS since the project's elaboration in 2002. It is recommended that the principal outputs identified in the Project Document should be maintained, but that the scope of the project should be widened. The project could contribute more effectively to the process of transforming the NCS into a "parastatal authority" and with formulating an appropriate organisational structure. These additional activities could be accomplished with existing resources by rescheduling existing project inputs, and by exploiting synergies and reducing overlaps with related projects namely BioMAP and LIFP.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The Capacity Building and Institutional Support to the Nature Conservation Sector (NCSCB) Project proposes to enhance the institutional capacity of the Nature Conservation Sector (NCS) of the MSEA/EEAA for planning and implementing nature conservation activities on a sustainable basis. Specifically the project aims to assist the NCS properly establish and manage a modern, representative national system of protected areas by providing additional staff and technical assistance to create four technical units directly attached to the office of the NCS Director. The four technical units are for planning, environmental impact assessment, licensing of economic activities and monitoring and evaluating their impacts within the National Protected Areas. The project would also enhance NCS's efforts to coordinate marketing, resource development and public relations activities. In addition the project will initiate an Information, Education and Communication Unit to allow the NCS to effectively coordinate and standardize the various site-specific EIECP projects and act as a central clearing house for NCS related awareness raising and outreach products and activities.

Furthermore the project proposes to support activities in three protected areas (Siwa Oasis, Wadi Rayan Protected Area and Gabel Elba National Park) that will serve as demonstration sites for testing measures designed to effectively devolve the management of some NCS functions.

## **3. REVALIDATION OF THE PROJECT DOCUMENT**

The NCSCB is one of the nine components for Phase II of the Egyptian Italian Environmental Cooperation Program (EIECP). In 2000, a Task Force was assembled to produce a profile of the proposed programme components for EIECP Phase II. The NCSCB project was formulated following extensive discussions with the EEAA, Italian government and other stakeholders. The project formulation was eventually completed and submitted to the EEAA and Italian Cooperation in July 2001. Following comments by the implementing agencies and the main stakeholders, the Project Document was finally amended and submitted in October 2002. All parties formally approved the Project Document in March 2004. The NCSCB project document was finalized in October 2002 but the project's actual inception date was nominally the October 16<sup>th</sup> 2004 with the release of local funds through the Italian debt swap initiative. However, the full implementation of the project is considered to coincide with the release of Italian Cooperation funds through DGCD and the deployment of international consultants by IUCN.

The NCSCB project was designed to support the core function of the NCS, which is “the establishment and proper management of the national network of protected areas” by providing human, financial and physical resources

In the intervening period, between Project Document approval and project start up, there have been developments in Egypt, and within the NCS itself, that will certainly have an influence on the outcome of the project (NCS 2003). At the project’s outset, therefore, it is prudent to revalidate the original Project Document in terms of the project’s scope (problems to be addressed) and results framework, projected activities and inputs, and current NCS priorities, and synergies with related projects.

#### **4. PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED**

The problems to be addressed in the Project Document can be summarized as follows;

1. The management for the Protected Areas (PAs) varies in degree over a wide range, with some well-developed and others are little more than “paper parks”.
2. The better-developed PAs often are the results of individual donor-funded, site-specific Protected Areas projects and provide valuable models for developing PAs in Egypt. The missing link is the institutional capacity within the NCS for actually taking these assets and developing a true national network of Protected Areas.
3. The development of different PAs occurring independently on a project-wise basis can result in policies and procedures that are too narrowly defined and site specific.
4. The NCS needs to consolidate its planning strategy for the National Protected Area Network (NPAN) and to strengthen its ability to support management efforts in the individual PAs.
5. Key technical areas, for more effective PA support, include better environmental impact assessment, improved licensing and regulatory affairs for controlling the activities, schemes for monitoring biodiversity and appropriate socioeconomic indicators.
6. The NCS needs a marketing strategy and action plan for developing multiple streams of funds and for optimizing cost effective operations of the NPAN.
7. A “Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) is needed to help coordinate and standardize the many site-specific Information Education and Communication programs and activities developed at individual protected areas.

The proper management of individual protected areas and their total integration into the national system of protected areas remain major concerns for the NCS to address as stated in the recent review of protected areas (NCS 2003). This is largely a technical and managerial problem, and the solutions lie with the inputs proposed by the NCSCB project. However, other allied institutional issues will directly impinge on the project’s scope and certainly determine the success of its outcome. One major issue is how far the project should help shape the long term future of the NCS as an

institution, as this will require inputs directed at a different level within the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, and broaden the project's scope. The other significant issue is how the project can be embedded, conceptually and physically, into the NCS's organisational structure. the NCS's unique status in the EEAA

## **5. SCOPE OF PROJECT**

According to the approved Project Document the NCSCB Project 'is principally targeted at policy development and strengthening the national capacity to effectively administer a (decentralised national) network of Protected Areas' (page 6). Both intentions are of crucial importance for nature conservation and, though the project will undoubtedly strengthen technical capacity, it is unclear what, where and how any policy development is to be targeted.

By implication, the project will promote decentralisation within the NCS and the devolution of protectorate management functions. At present, however, the formal status of the NCS is undecided (officially, it is still a Central Department - see below) and furthermore it largely operates in a policy vacuum. However if the NCS is to become a modern, effective and decentralized institution for nature conservation in Egypt it must undertake a 'root and branch' reform process. Its mandate must be translated into policies, its future status has to be resolved and its organisational structure developed to fit its function (Child 2000, Fouda 2002). The present project presents an opportunity to contribute to the wider framework for the institutional reform and development of the NCS. The outcome of the project would then be more fundamental and far reaching, but at the same time retaining the original technical and financial outputs.

Therefore rather than intervening at the NCS Director's level the suggestion is to widen the project's scope and ambition and assist the EEAA, with a holistic institutional reform process that develops the vision, policy platforms and action agendas for the NCS. Such actions would prepare the ground for a timely decision regarding the NCS's future status and functions (possibly as some form of parastatal organization) and advance the emergence of an appropriate management structure.

The First Egyptian International Conference on Protected Areas and Sustainable Development in 2002 recommended that the NCS become an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Environmental Affairs (NCS 2003). The NCSCB project presents an opportunity for the NCS to realize this ambition. The marketing, revenue generation and business planning activities scheduled under Project Result B4 would then be take on greater significance, as these activities will demonstrate the institutional and financial viability of the NCS as a putative "parastatal" organisation.

Along with other recent developments in the NCS there have been previous studies and initiatives relating to policy development and institutional reform for the NCS so the groundwork has been laid and the current Government policy is conducive to such innovations (Pearson 1998, Child 2000, Fouda 2002). The Project would assist with the consolidation of the earlier initiatives and preparation of justifications and supporting documentation for the development of the NCS as a modern and effective institution for nature conservation in Egypt.

Whether or not the project's scope is expanded, the Specific Outcome Indicators shown in the Results Framework probably need to be revised. At present the Project Outcome Indicator is stated as the "Integration of environmental policies and strategies into national development plans". This is a rather broad and vague indicator and more specific alternatives are suggested as follows:

- Future status of NCS agreed along with timetable for implementation
- NCS Policy and regulatory framework in place

## **6. ORGANISATIONAL SETTING**

Irrespective of any wider reform process, the NCSCB project proposes the creation of Technical Units within the NCS's organisational framework, though the Project Document acknowledges that the structure of the NCS is still under formulation (p 3). However, the long-term success of this initiative will be conditional on having an appropriate and agreed structure in place in which the Technical Units can be effectively embedded. An operational concept for the TUs, along with preliminary terms of reference for these Units, has been formulated and this is attached as an Annexe to this document.

The "Nature Conservation Sector" was created in 1992, with the restructuring of the EEAA, but there is ambiguity regarding its official status and structure. Though widely referred to, as the "Nature Conservation Sector" the entity officially remains "Nature Protection" a Central Department of the EEAA. For clarity, the entity will be referred to as the "NCS" in this document.

The NCS has a unique status within the EEAA. Unlike the rest of the EEAA which is largely a coordination body, the NCS has an executive role, particularly in the implementation of the Law on Protectorates. The NCS is officially comprised of two sub-departments - Protected Areas and Biodiversity. The latter is intended to address all issues not related to Protected Areas management. A National Biodiversity Unit has been established at the NCS to collate and update knowledge on Egypt's biological resources. Two other sub departments exist in the NCS - Administration and EIA though these are not formally instituted.

The existing EEAA organization structure, including NCS, as the Nature Protection Central Department, was established, following a study by TEAM MISR in 1994/5, and approved by CAO in mid 1995. However, the approved EEAA structure has not been fully implemented due to lack of staff and has not been fully tested, but the structure of the NCS particularly has been generally considered as inappropriate (Organisation Support Programme, 1998). Subsequently, in 1997 an interim structure for the NCS was developed through the EU financed capacity building programme, but this structure was never formally adopted. The OSP conducted a review of the organizational structure of the EEAA in 1998 and put forward recommendations for revisions.

The main organizational issues are:

- It is highly centralised and does not adequately reflect the NCS executive role in the implementation of the Law on Protectorates
- The Departments and Sections within the Biodiversity General Department are largely meaningless.

- The structure does not have an arena for policy and strategy formulation.
- The structure has no entity with responsibility for responding to relevant international conventions and agreements, an increasing commitment.

In practice, the NCS's *de facto* organisational structure is an unofficial hybrid between that approved in 1995 and the later version developed under the EU programme. Though the performance of the NCS has improved immeasurably over the last few years, the present organisational structure inhibits its progress towards becoming an efficient and modern institution.

Whatever role the project plays in the wider reform process and subsequent to decisions regarding the NCS's future status, for the project to succeed it will have to engage with the development of an appropriate organizational structure for the NCS (see attached Concept Paper). The structure would need to reflect and fit the NCS's present functions, but it should acknowledge the likelihood of NCS's transformation into some form of parastatal agency under the Minister for Environmental Affairs (Child, 2000; Fouda, 2002). This partial separation from the main bureaucracy will provide flexibility in financial and personnel management but it will require the evolution of an efficient, lean and cost effective organisation.

## **7. PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES**

The NCSCB project was designed to support the central function of the NCS, which is the establishment and proper management of the national network of protected areas, and it is apparent that this will remain the main outcome. However, the input and emphasis of projected activities in support of this output need reconsideration in the light of subsequent developments within NCS and expanded priorities. This section outlines where and how project activities can be realigned or rescheduled to more closely accord with NCS's current priorities. Synergies and overlaps with other sister EIECP projects namely BioMAP and LIFP are identified that will allow the release of technical and financial resources and their more efficient deployment to project activities.

### **7.1. Rescheduling Activities and Technical Inputs**

Some of the activities proposed in the original project document, to some degree, have already been accomplished, namely:

1. A national system plan for protected areas was produced in 1998, though it now needs to be reviewed and revalidated (see Output 3).
2. A standard process and format for protected area management plans is in place along with standardized zone system and terminology.
3. There has been significant progress with developing standardised biodiversity monitoring procedures in protected areas in the form of a draft manual.
4. Some standardised management procedures for protected areas have been developed, though they remain to be properly instituted.

Further development will be required on all these activities and particularly for their promulgation throughout the protected area system, but in the main, this will require less input from the project, than presently scheduled.

As regards Project Personnel, a flexible approach needs to be adopted, so that the actual TA inputs are not tightly specified at the outset. The TA time and financial

allocations may be coalesced and better allocated as needed. For instance, the roles of the consultants for Institutional Support and Planning, to a large degree, could be effectively combined to free up consultancy inputs for other activities. Rescheduling Technical Assistance inputs, particularly in the light of BioMAP and LIFP activities, would allow the recruitment of international advisors for Marketing/Outreach, Business Planning and Training activities that are critical for the project's success, but are presently unsupported by TA inputs.

## **7.2. Synergies and Overlaps**

The NCSCB project has strong linkages with key components of other related projects in the Sector, particularly the sister EIECP projects of Monitoring and Assessing Biodiversity (BioMAP), the Legal and Institutional Framework Project (LIFP) and the specific Protected Area management efforts in Wadi Rayan, Siwa and Gebal Elba.

### **7.2.1 BioMAP synergies**

The BioMAP project's central purpose is to expand biodiversity monitoring and assessment capacity within the NCS. One main output (Output 2.1) will be the creation of a "Biodiversity Strategy Working Group" reporting directly to the NCS Director; logically this group will serve as the same function as the Biodiversity Technical Unit envisaged in the NCSCB project (see description of Technical Units below). The NCSCB project would contribute to the staffing of this Unit, but would concentrate on developing the standards for biodiversity monitoring in target protected areas, which would entail a reduced TA input for this activity.

Both the NCSCB and BioMAP projects foresee the establishment of some form of Information, Education and Communication clearing house mechanism (CHM) to enhance coordination and information exchange within and outside the NCS. Significant technical and financial resources have been allocated for the activity by both projects, but it is clear that the establishment of a single CHM by the two projects would be the most sensible and cost effective approach.

The fact that both projects are to be involved in developing "biodiversity monitoring and assessment procedures" and will operate in the Gebal Elba Protectorate, which is an EIECP demonstration site, offers further opportunities for the effective deployment of the projects' resources.

### **7.2.2. LIFP synergies**

The NCSCB project framework explicitly refers to collaboration with LIFP with respect to

1. "the provision of technical backstopping for court proceedings, litigation and national international arbitration procedures" (Activity B 2.6) and for;
2. "developing appropriate mechanisms to recover the long-term recurrent costs of the NCS and individual PAMUs ..."

However, the synergies between the two projects are much deeper. Planned activities under LIFP among others include, development of guidelines for the correct implementation of protected area laws and regulations, the reform of the existing license system and the elaboration of rules governing allowed activities including the use of natural resources within protected areas. These activities are closely aligned



## Capacity Building and Institutional Support to Nature Conservation Sector of MSEA/EEAA

with those for one of the NCSCB's output (B2), which is "to enhance staff capacity to effectively evaluate, license and monitor economic activities within PAs."

LIFP is also scheduled to be engaged with "the identification of different categories of protected areas, differentiated according to the objective to be achieved through protection and the degree of protection". This activity will be central to the development of site specific management plans under the NCSCB project.

Furthermore, LIFP will be "clarifying the relationship between central and local EEAA/NCS offices with a view to decentralizing responsibilities also with a view to the management of local funds coming from entrance fees and fines ..". Such activities echo activities to be conducted through the NCSCB particularly those relating to the "optimization of cost effectiveness and revenue generation" (Activity B. 4.1).

Taking advantage of the synergies and overlaps between NCSCB and LIFP, and to a lesser extent with the protected area management projects, would free-up TA and financial resources and increase the effectiveness of the project, but this will depend on the early implementation of LIFP.

### **References**

Child, G. (2000). Concepts for Modernising the Egyptian Nature Conservation Agency.

Fouda, M. (2002). Nature Conservation in Egypt: An Overview of history, achievements and future agenda

NCS (2003). A Status Report on the Protected Area Network of Egypt.

OSP (1998). Revision of the Organisational Structure of the EEAA

Pearson, M. (1997). Administrative and Operational Components of the Nature Conservation Section of the Ministry of Environmental Affairs and the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency.

## **ANNEXE**

### **CONCEPTUAL ORGANISATION OF THE NCSCB PROJECT AND FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTIONS OF TECHNICAL UNITS**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This Annexe outlines the conceptual framework for the NCSCB project in terms of how and where the project will operate within the envisioned structural and administrative arrangements for the NCS, as perceived by Dr. M. Fouda.

It is envisaged that the NCS should have three management environments viz:

1. Policy Setting (proposed Project Result)
2. Strategic and Technical Planning (immediate Project Result)
3. Administration and Operations (existing sub-departments)

A Clearing House mechanism for coordination and information dissemination will be established under the project to operate as a bridge between the Policy and Strategic Planning Environments. The conceptual arrangements are described and schematically illustrated below.

## **2. POLICY MAKING ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.1. Supreme Committee for Nature Conservation**

The Nature Conservation Sector will strive to eventually become an integrated semi-autonomous agency (parastatal) headed by an Administrative Director operating under the authority of the Minister for Environmental Affairs. The agency (to be renamed Nature Conservation Egypt or some such) will continue to have overall responsibility for the management of Egypt's natural resource base and conservation programmes and activities and guided by a high level Advisory Board (to include First Lady, various Ministers and prominent persons).

### **2.2. Conservation Policy Advisory Panel**

A Conservation Policy Advisory Panel will be constituted on an *ad hoc* basis to advise the NCS, with a core membership appointed by the Minister and the NCS Director. The central function of the Advisory Panel will be to assist the Director improve the proactive stance (i.e. move from reactive mode) of the NCS by;

- Helping the NCS Director better address/frame priority conservation issues, questions and solutions in terms of Egypt's legal, economic and social framework.
- Preparing for the evolution of the Sector to parastatal status.
- Formulating and instituting conservation policy initiatives
- Advising on priority setting and strategic planning to maximise efficiency
- Preparing proclamations for new protected areas
- Advising the Director on emerging conservation issues e.g. biosafety, climate change etc.

The Advisory Panel will be supported by a permanent coordinating secretariat, which will administer the panel's needs, follow up on issues and meetings and report to the Director and the Panel members.

The Advisory Panel is presently outside the scope of the support to be provided by the NCSCB project but its constitution will be facilitated by the activities proposed under the project.

### **2.3. Directors Follow-Up Office and Secretariat**

The Director is overburdened and has little time for thinking and effective decision taking. Currently too many departments and individuals are reporting directly to the Director and the present office management arrangements exacerbate the situation. A more rigorous management routine will be introduced to administer the office, manage the flow of information, oversee follow-up and control access.

## **3. STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL PLANNING ENVIRONMENT**

### **3.1. Technical Support Units**

A major output of the NCSCB project will be the creation of four Technical Units that are described below. These Units will be associated with the office of the NCS Director and are established in order to:

- Improve the efficiency, quality and integration of technical support to the NCS Director's office;
- Establish a cohesive and strategic planning environment that will service the administrative and operational departments of NCS, and;
- Service the technical needs of the Policy Advisory Panel as required.

Operational responsibilities for each of these four Technical Units are outlined below.

#### **3.1.1. EIA/Legal Affairs Unit**

The Unit shall have responsibility for the full application of relevant legislation and regulations for licensing and monitoring economic activities inside protected areas. The unit will review all EIA documents forwarded from the central EIA Department relating to developments or commercial activities inside or adjacent to protected areas. It will monitor the application and enforcement of regulations and licensing procedures, through close consultation with the Protectorates Management Department and the relevant PAMUs to ensure compliance. The Unit, in association with the Marketing/Outreach Unit, will review licensing procedures and fee/lease arrangements for all commercial activities inside protected areas, to ensure they reflect true opportunity costs and market value. The Unit will rely heavily on the Biodiversity Evaluation and Monitoring Unit to supply important information on sites, habitats and species.

The establishment and development of the institutional capacity for this Technical Unit are closely related to the activities to be conducted under the Legal and Institutional Framework Project (LIFP). The LIFP has been designed to address weaknesses and inconsistencies of some specific areas of environmental legislation. with regard to protected areas LIFP will specifically address reform of existing licensing system for socio-economic activities inside protected areas.

#### **3.1.2. Planning and Evaluation Unit**

The Unit will be responsible for those aspects of planning, programmes and projects that are aimed at securing and managing Egypt's protected area estate as an integrated national system. Conservation planning will involve a "bottom up approach" whereby all protectorates will be required to develop management plans, according to a standard format, and "top down initiatives" whereby these plans are subsequently integrated into general NCS planning procedures as a basis for prioritisation and

expenditure release etc. The Unit will ensure that five management units in Cairo, Red Sea, Sinai, Western Desert and Upper Egypt, receive full technical and administrative support; it will also develop and institute standardised management systems and procedures for all protectorates and PAMUs. The Unit will devise and conduct a system of management audits to determine the effectiveness of PAMU's towards protectorate management (generate league tables?).

The Unit will be charged with assessing, revalidating and implementing Egypt's national system plan for existing and potential protected areas in terms of priorities for proclamation, linkages and gaps in representation and administrative needs. The Unit will also liaise with IUCN and other international agencies concerned with protected areas and conservation planning. Is this a Clearing House Mechanism activity?

### **3.1.3. Marketing Resources and Outreach Unit**

This Unit will be responsible for the design, implementation and analysis of policies and activities relating to the economic evaluation of natural resources and protected areas. This will include determination of the added value (benefits) of protected areas and their services and the promotion of sustainable fee structures (willingness to pay), to ensure that each protectorate is managed to optimise income generation without prejudicing its natural values.

The Unit will also develop annual business plans for the NCS that optimises cost effectiveness, analyse overheads and operating costs, define budgetary requirements and potential sources of revenue. The plans should capitalise on opportunities for increasing revenue such as user fee systems, user and service charges, lease arrangements and other income sources.

The Unit will also develop a "marketing" strategy and action plan for leveraging additional funding for nature conservation in Egypt; the strategy will present opportunities for potential private sector (corporate) funding and identify other sources of funding, both national and international for NCS activities.

The Unit will also be responsible for the projection ("branding") of the NCS image and profile, and fostering a positive corporate culture (appearances, standardised nomenclature, uniforms, signs etc) within the Sector. This will serve to engender a positive work ethic and a sense of identity among staff and promote the NCS, nationally and internationally, as Egypt's leading institution for nature conservation.

### **3.1.4. Biodiversity Evaluation and Monitoring Unit**

The establishment and development of the institutional capacity for this Technical Unit will largely emerge as a product of the sister BioMAP project. The Unit will be largely responsible for the development of policies and strategic plans for conserving biodiversity and for emerging biodiversity issues such as biosafety and invasive species. It will also establish inter-ministerial and interagency protocols for sharing data and providing appropriate information on the status of biodiversity in Egypt as well as standardising biodiversity assessment, monitoring and reporting procedures.

The Unit, in association with the EIA/Legal affairs Unit, will develop licence procedures to regulate hunting and trade in wildlife and natural resources, maintain

## Capacity Building and Institutional Support to Nature Conservation Sector of MSEA/EEAA

data bases on hunting licences, traders and allocated quotas, compliance and standards.

The Unit will be primarily responsible for administering, and reporting to, those international agreements and initiatives relating to biodiversity specifically the Conventions on Biodiversity (CBD), CITES and GTI, (Bonn and Ramsar) and responding to ratifications of amendments to existing agreements etc.

### **3.1.5. Clearing House Mechanism (CHM)**

As conservation awareness increases, and EIA and licence procedures become more rigorous, private and public sector requirements for quality information on conservation and biodiversity issues will become more demanding and challenging. The CHM will be a joint creation of the NCSCB and BioMAP projects, and will serve to build awareness on conservation issues as well as promote cooperation, coordination and information exchange between the NCS and other Government and national agencies, as well as with international bodies and the general public.

The CHM will promote information exchange and coordination between the various NCS's administrative/operational Departments, as well as with the central and outlying EEAA sectors, line Ministries and other agencies and improve networking between these organisations. For instance the CHM will be used to increase the government agency and the public's access to the biodiversity data base, by disseminating monitoring methodologies, encourage sharing of biodiversity data participation in the development of the data base.

The CHM will also help standardise and promulgate successful outreach programmes, tools and activities that have been developed in individual protected areas and elsewhere.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR NCS OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE**

