

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

Project Operation Plan

March 2005

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Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
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
ICM	International Co-Manager
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LIFE	Livelihoods From The Environment
LIFP	Legal and Institutional Framework Project
MSEA	Minister of State for Environmental Affairs
NCM	National Co-Manager
NCS	Nature Conservation Sector
NCSCB	Nature Conservation Sector Capacity Building Project
PA	Protected Area
POP	Project Operation Plan
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

The Capacity Building and Institutional Support to the Nature Conservation Sector (NCSCB) project has been 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. Following the revalidation of the project document (Grainger 2005) it has been agreed, by the Project Executive Committee, that the principal outputs identified in the Project Document should be maintained, but that the scope of the project should be widened to respond to the Director’s vision for the future of the NCS. The vision involves the development of the NCS as a properly resourced institution, with staff, funds and policies, able to manage a large protected area estate and be responsive to its international obligations and emerging national biodiversity issues

The project is to contribute more effectively to this process of transforming the NCS into a “parastatal authority” and with formulating an appropriate organisational structure. These additional activities are to be accomplished within the existing project resources by rescheduling existing project inputs, and by exploiting synergies and reducing overlaps with related EIECP and Debt Swap funded projects particularly BioMAP, LIFP and the Protected Area management projects.

This Project Operation Plan (POP) for NCSCB, presented here, has been formulated to reflect this wider project framework. The schematic POP is attached, and this document briefly describes and explains the proposed plan.

2. PRINCIPLES TO MAXIMISE AND SUSTAIN PROJECT IMPACT

In formulating the Operation Plan and subsequent Annual Work Plans, the following principles have been adopted to maximise and sustain the project’s impact.

- The project’s wider impact can be sustained only if it is constructively engaged with the realization of the NCS’s vision.
- There will be close collaboration and functional linkages maintained with sister LIFP and BioMAP as well as with other NCS based conservation projects (LIFE, Medicinal Plants etc.) to take advantage of synergies and reduce overlapping activities.
- In the interest of institutional sustainability existing NCS and PAMU staff will fill project positions, with emphasis on younger people, and post project, the NCS will seek to retain contracted individuals wherever possible.
- The project will aim to be inclusive at all levels; for instance all protected area PAMUs are to be involved in the development of standardized management practices and the revision and implementation of the national system plan.
- The input by national consultants will be maximised, particularly for the leadership of the Technical Units, to enhance institutional capacity and facilitate the transition of leadership.

- For the sake of economy and service efficiency, the NCSCB project will share PMU resources and logistics with BioMAP as far as possible..

3. POP FRAMEWORK FOR THE NCSCB PROJECT

3.1. Project Outcome

The outcome of the NCSCB project remains as the “Enhanced institutional and technical capacity of the NCS to manage a decentralized national network of protected areas”. However, the Outcome Indicator in the Project Document is the “Integration of environmental policies and strategies into national development plans”. Though worthy, this is a very broad and rather vague indicator for the Project outcome and indicators that are more specific have been substituted in the POP.

The project outcome can be best achieved through a number of interrelated initiatives that will lead to the emergence of a suitable status and organizational structure for the NCS. Essentially the project will help the NCS institute reforms and prepare the groundwork that allows the NCS to realize its ambition, which is to evolve into some form of decentralized parastatal agency with an enabling policy platform that would effectively fulfill its national mandate. Therefore, both an agreement on the NCS’s future status and the development of an enabling policy and regulatory platform have been substituted as the project outcome indicators.

It would be ambitious, however, to believe that the evolution of the NCS from an EEAA Central Department into some form of parastatal could be fully accomplished within the project period, even though the prevailing Egyptian Government policy may be supportive of such an initiative. The Project Outcome is largely conditional on the understanding and support of the senior decision makers within the MSEA and other tiers of Government. To this end the project, over the three years, shall be closely involved with the preparation of documents and policies that can be used to justify and support the NCS’s progress towards achieving this vision.

3.2. Project Outcome And Outputs

The evolution of NCS into some form of parastatal is an *anticipated higher-level outcome* of the project, but outside its immediate control, as it will require the support of senior decision makers to succeed. However four project outputs are described in the approved Project Document, that are readily achievable, and these are described here.

3.2.1 Output 1 requires the creation of four Technical Units for Planning, EIA and Licensing, Biodiversity Evaluation, and Outreach and Marketing. These Units should be functionally and physically integrated into the respective NCS administrative departments, in order to maximise the benefits of project inputs. The Technical Units will be models for the promotion of a corporate culture within NCS and the demonstrate professionalism and work ethics. The success of this Output will be dependent on Ministerial commitment to change.

3.2.2. Output 2, which strengthens NCS staff to evaluate and monitor economic activities inside PA, stems directly from the creation of the NCS Technical Units; it will also benefit considerably from its synergies with the Legal and Institutional Framework Project (LIFP) as described in the revalidation paper.

3.2.3. Output 3, which centres on management and system planning for protected areas, is a crucial element for the decentralization of decision-making and for developing the institutional capacity within the NCS for establishing and maintaining a true national network of Protected Areas. The PA management planning output will help standardize approaches to park management throughout the system, and to strengthen its ability to support management efforts in the individual PAs, even though they will continue to be shaped by the individual park's character. This Output will be conditioned however, not only by the successful implementation of the sister EIECP projects in Siwa, Wadi Rayan and Gabal Elba, but by close collaboration with related conservation projects such as USAID funded LIFE project (Wadi El Gamal), the MedWet programme in the Mediterranean Wetland Pas, and the Medicinal Plant Project's activities in the St. Katherine Protectorate and elsewhere.

This revised system plan should provide NCS with a strategic planning tool for establishing new PAs, and for integrating and standardizing the management of existing parks, as well as a mechanism for evaluating management effectiveness.

3.2.4. Output 4 is widely targeted at effective resources development, marketing and public relations, and so will diverse inputs and activities. Central to the Output will be the development of legal and administrative arrangements to secure fund raising activities to support individual PA management and achieve financial independence for the NCS. PR activities will be directed at demonstrating the long-term economic value of protected areas and biodiversity conservation in comparison with competing land and resource uses as well as gaining enhanced recognition for protected areas and biodiversity as part of national heritage and NCS as leading conservation institution. As with Output 1, the success of this Output will be dependent on a sustained Ministerial commitment to change.

The Clearing House Mechanism for technical support and outreach will be established in collaboration with the BioMAP project.

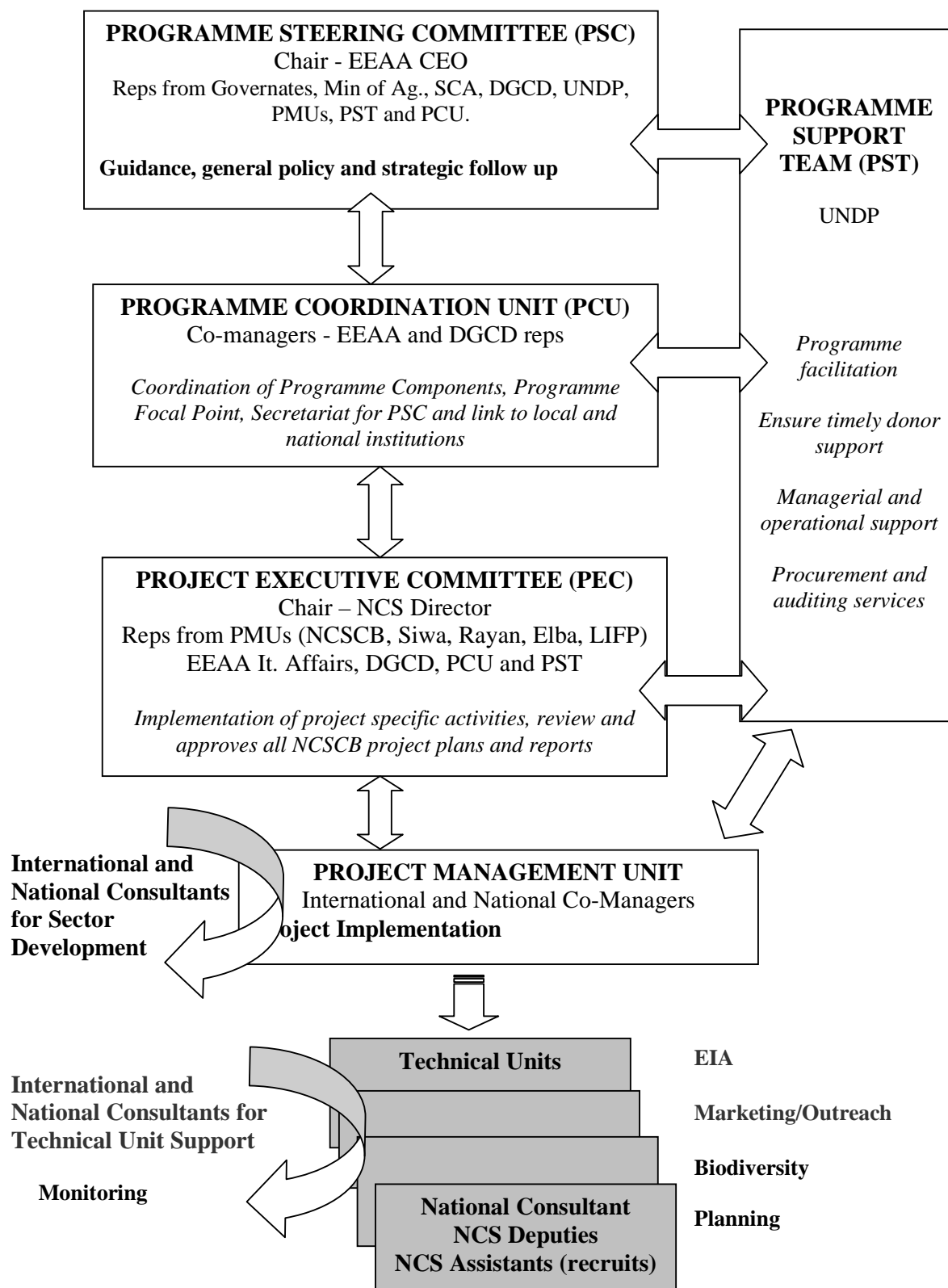
4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The project management arrangements are described in the Project document and the organizational structure for the project is schematically summarised in Diagram 1 below. The EEAA will serve as the central coordinating body for project implementation and will be responsible for assessing and evaluating the impact of the project. Specifically the EEAA will help ensure that the PMU receives the essential support of line ministries and other relevant institutions.

5. RESCHEDULING PROJECT PERSONNEL INPUTS

The wider scope of the NCSCB Project could be accomplished within the existing project resources, mainly by taking advantage of synergies with other projects that enable the reallocation of inputs by international and national Technical Assistants (TA). The TA inputs given in the Project Document will be modified and rescheduled. At the project's outset, it is premature to precisely schedule specific TA inputs and man months, especially in view of the synergies with related projects and the profiles of the personnel involved. TA inputs and time budgets have been provisionally scheduled, as shown in Tables 1 and 2. However a pragmatic approach will be adopted whereby TA inputs, particularly by national consultants, are to be allocated as needs emerge.

Diagram 1: NCSCB PROJECT - ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS



5.1. International Consultants

With regard to the input from International Consultants (Table 1), it is proposed that the roles of the consultants for Institutional Support and Planning are combined into the position of International Co-Manager (ICM), to be filled by John Grainger who will also be the IUCN Team Leader. Further rescheduling of TA can be achieved through collaboration with, and support of, the BioMAP and LIFP projects. This would free up consultancy inputs for other activities and allow the recruitment of international advisors for Marketing/Outreach, Business Planning and Training activities that are critical for the project's success, but were unsupported by TA inputs in the Project Document. In the light of the expanded scope of the project, which envisages a re-engineering of the NCS, additional inputs are proposed for senior specialist advisors on Institutional Reform/Development and the Management Effectiveness for protected areas. These inputs will be shadowed by inputs from Egyptian national consultants.

Table 1. International Consultants Input

Project Document	Quantity	Proposed	Quantity
Role	M/m	Role	m/m
Institutional support	16	ICM and IUCN Team leader (Institutional support/Planning)	24
Planning	11	Planning	0
EIA/Legal Affairs	3.6	EIA/Legal Affairs *	1
Information/Communication	4	Information/Communication **	2
Monitoring/Evaluation	4	Monitoring/Evaluation **	2
		Institutional Reform/Development	2
		Training Needs	2
		Marketing/Outreach	2
		Business Planning	2
		PA Management Effectiveness	1
		Other	0.6
Total man months	38.6		38.6

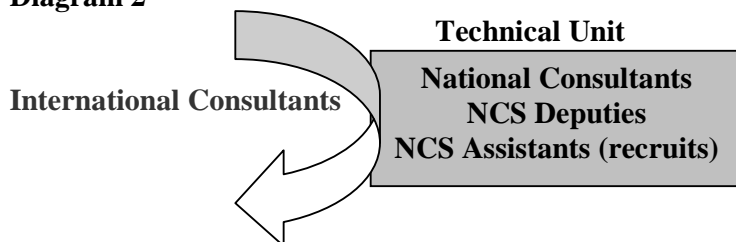
* Additional Technical input and support from LIFP project

** Additional Technical input and support from BioMAP project

5.2. National Consultants

With regard to Egyptian National Consultants the major modifications to the inputs scheduled in the Project Document relate to increasing the quantity of man months inputs and recruiting consultants to service Marketing/Outreach, Training and Institutional Development needs. An increase in man months for TA is especially important for the establishment and functioning of the four Technical Units. National consultants will be recruited to lead these Units and NCS staff will be appointed as deputies, and who will eventually assume the management of the Units, with new recruits appointed as assistants. International Consultants will serve as advisors to the Units (see Diagram 2)

As the NCS deputies are likely to be relatively young, it will be important to retain the leadership of the national consultants for as long as possible. This will help build capacity and should facilitate the transition of leadership of the Units and mitigate sensitivities among older NCS staff – sort of “grand fathering” the process.

Diagram 2

It is proposed that the NCS Deputies should assume leadership of the TUs within 27 months from the start of the project. This will necessitate a more sustained input by national consultants than allowed by the 81 man months (mm) envisaged in the project document. Essentially the 45 man months scheduled for the Technical Unit Consultants, would have to be tripled allowing 135 mm to be provisionally allocated as shown in Table 2. The tripling of will be attained through a concomitant reduction in the consultants' fee (i.e. from the budgeted LE 15,000/month to an average of LE 5,000/month), and it is assumed that this remuneration would be sufficiently competitive to attract well-qualified individuals; however there is sufficient flexibility in the time budget to adjust fees if and where necessary.

BioMAP international and national consultants will provide the leadership for the Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Unit though the deputy and assistant will be contracted through the NCSCB project. This will free up additional man months for other needs.

Table 2. National Consultants Input

Project Document	Quantity	Proposed	Quantity
Role	m/m	Role (provisional)	m/m
Senior Technical Adviser/Co-manager	36	National Co-manager (planner) (S. Baha El Din)	36
TU Planning	9	TU Planning (see above)	0
TU EIA/Legal Affairs	9	TU EIA/Legal Affairs*	27
TU IEC and Marketing	9	TU Marketing/Outreach	27
TUMonitoring/Evaluation	9	TU Biodiversity Monitoring/Evaluation **	15
Other National	9	Other National	3
		IEC Clearing House	12
		Training	15
		EIA specialist advisors*	3
		Government legislator/advisor	3
		Financial mechanisms/BP	9
		Institution Development (advisors - 6: consultant - 12)	18
		Marketing/branding	3
Total man months	81		171

* Additional Technical support from LIFP project

** Additional Technical support to BioMAP project

Dr. Sharif Baha Eldin has been appointed as the National Co-manager (NCM) and he will combine this position with that of the National Planner. As the NCM, Baha Eldin, will contribute substantially to the process of transforming the NCS into a "parastatal

authority” and formulating an appropriate organisational structure and he will take the leading role for presenting the project, and lobbying for its outcomes, to Ministers and other senior Government figures. He will also provide national leadership to the Technical Unit for Protected Area Planning, and give technical advice and support to the Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Unit as needed.

Significant additional inputs will be required to support the institutional reform process for the NCS so consultancies have been scheduled for Institutional Development, Financial Mechanisms/Business Planning and Government Legislation. The additional national consultant inputs reflect the requirements for the other priorities of this project i.e. Marketing/Outreach and Training.

Provisionally 3 months have been allocated for specialist EIA advisors to work with the Technical Unit though this may be rescheduled depending on the technical support available through LIFP. The actual TA inputs will be determined in the Annual Work Plan (AWP), which is to be reviewed every 6 months. The initial AWP with the scheduled TA is attached herewith.

6. SEMESTER SCHEDULE.

The project’s actual inception date was nominally the October 16th 2004 with the release of local funds through the Italian Debt Swap initiative. However the actual project implementation date will coincide with the deployment of national and international personnel, particularly the NCM and ICM. To reconcile the project semesters with the work plan and reporting cycle, it is proposed that the first semester should extend from mid October 2004 to June 2005; however all subsequent Semesters would be of 6 months duration.

7. FINANCING THE OPERATIONAL PLAN

An Annual Work Plan (AWP) and Budget has been prepared in line with this POP document. The AWP is presented both in accordance with the project document project framework and budget allocation, and also in accordance with the ATLAS budget format. Under the ATLAS system the original four Expected Outputs had been previously combined by UNDP into two Expected Outputs and coded accordingly, in order to simplify the allocation of Italian Cooperation Funds. As the first tranche of funds has been received and allocated according to this arrangement, this ATLAS arrangement has been retained. However the “two” ATLAS Expected Outputs in the Annual Work Plan have been derived from different combinations of the original project Outputs; project Outputs 1 and 3 now constitute ATLAS Output 1, while project Outputs 2 and 4 are combined into ATLAS Output 2. However the ATLAS Output IDs are retained.

The total budget for the initial AWP is € 349,036.00 made up of € 198,495 from It DGCD funds and € 150,541.00 from It DS funding, and represents 42% and 40% respectively of the total funds available from each source. With UNDP and IUCN overheads the AWP budget is increased to € 376,459.00.

The AWP budget is largely self-explanatory but some points do need to be explained with regard to proposed budgetary re-allocations.

7.1. Office Equipment Reallocations

It is important to establish and equip the PMU and TU offices early in the project. This has been made difficult by the fact that the Debt Swap funds are not front loaded for this, with disbursement scheduled over four semesters. To counter this, the DGCD funds scheduled under Field Equipment and Communications have been provisionally reallocated in the AWP to Office Equipment. Furthermore the shortfall of Debt Swap funds in the Budget lines for Field and Communications in Semester 1 will be offset by reduced commitments in Semester 2.

7.2 NCS Staff Allowances

A critical element of the NCSCB project will be to deploy suitable NCS staff as deputies within the new Technical Units. Once appointed to these Units the staff will assume major responsibilities and it is important that this should be acknowledged. Furthermore some candidates for these positions do not reside in Cairo and would therefore have to find accommodation. In view of this it is proposed that the NCS staff are paid a differential allowance, which would reflect their increased responsibilities and cover any additional living costs. The funds for this would be found in Budget Items 13 (Administrative Support) and Item 17.06 (new Professional Staff). It is proposed that the total amount available for “allowances” is paid as a project incentive to NCS staff deployed in the Technical Units. Furthermore, it is proposed that only 2 (two) new NCS staff will be required – for the EIA and Outreach/Marketing TUs – as the Biodiversity and Planning TUs have sufficient existing staff. This would realize a saving of LE 2,000/month. Together these budget lines would release enough funds to pay NCS staff a differential allowance of up to LE 1000/month.

An alternative approach would be to use project funds to rent accommodation in Cairo for out of town TU staff – possibly sharing the apartment proposed for IUCN staff and reduce the allowance payments.

7.3 Rental of PMU office

Under the terms of the Project Document (p.7) the EEAA, as the implementing agency, is required to provide office space along with other logistical support. It is apparent however that space is at a premium within the NCS premises and, though space has been made available for the TUs to operate, the PMU will need to locate outside the NCS. Suitable premises have been located in a building next-door to the EEAA/NCS for a rental of LE 4,000/month. It is likely that the LIFP PMU will share the premises along with the rental costs. This is an unforeseen expense but it is proposed that the “Miscellaneous” line item - Office Equipment & Scientific expenses (51.02) - is used for this purpose.

7.4. Refurbishment Of NCS Offices.

There is no expenditure line in the project budget for the refurbishment of offices to be used by the project i.e. alterations, painting and electrical and Internet wiring. As such refurbishment will be essential for the efficient implementation of the project, specifically the space to be used for the Technical Units, it is proposed that a portion (circa 15%) of the “Miscellaneous” line item - Office Equipment & Scientific expenses (51.02) - is used for this purpose.

8. PROJECT CONCERNS.

8.1. Contingency Budget.

There is no allowance for contingencies in the original budget allocation. This could be problematic since there are three different currencies involved in the budgeting system (US \$, Euro and Egyptian Pound) all of which have experienced volatile exchange rate movements recently. The exchange rates used in the AWP costs estimates are those prevailing in April 2005 i.e. Euro = \$1.25; \$ = LE 5.80. In the absence of a contingency fund, there is no mechanism to adjust for currency transaction losses.