



US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*FRAME Program Assessment*

Final Report

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**Prepared by: BDA Global**



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Appendix 1 FRAME Study Methodology Table

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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*The following section outlines the background of the project and scope of work performed.*

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### 1.1 Background

**F**RAME is a program developed by the US Agency for International Development's Bureau of Economic Growth Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) and administered by the International Resources Group (IRG). Originally intended to engage and support the Natural Resource Management (NRM) community in Africa, FRAME is now expanding its focus to include other regions of the world. The program provides support, information, and analytics for the betterment of the NRM industry by employing an array of tools and techniques, many which grew organically, as the program evolved since its inception in 1999. Those tools and techniques comprise FRAME's operating structure and include 7 distinct components, as follows:

- Steering Committee: Group of 11 NRM professionals, originally serving as advisors to USAID
- Contact Group: 100 plus geographically dispersed experts, intended to advise USAID and other FRAME stakeholders
- Communities of Practice: Group of NRM professionals working together to share ideas and knowledge
- Institutional Partners: Partnerships with key institutions across Africa to identify and address cutting edge themes
- FRAME Fellows: Local NRM students tasked with supporting Institutional Partners
- FRAMEgram: Monthly newsletter about NRM issues
- FRAME Website: Program website

Herein lies the impetus for this project. As the program continues to grow and with the rollout of a broader geographic program scope, that includes the Americas and Asia in the last year, FRAME's success requires the coordinated efforts of the program's owners and administrators in performing the above activities and a range of executive, driver, and support functions in executing the program's goals and objectives. It is important to note that while our report examines key functionality of FRAME's components, our analysis included a holistic view of the program in developing recommendations to improve outcomes.

## 1.2 Goals and Objectives

The FRAME program assessment sought to answer whether the FRAME premise is still sound given the strategies and priorities of the organization, whether the intended users are actively engaged and if they use FRAME as a resource, whether there are program strengths that can be replicated or weaknesses that must be addressed, and if there are opportunities to improve performance and outcome of the FRAME program. Specific targets included:

- Examining the overarching mandate and determining whether it is still relevant and appropriate
- Assessing program components to determine where there might be opportunities to more effectively meet stakeholder needs
- Examining emerging opportunities and addressing how FRAME might elevate its position as a resource to the NRM community

## 1.3 Program Accomplishments

BDA Global's analysis found that while there is opportunity to streamline the program going forward, FRAME has a rich history with several accomplishments over the years. Per the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO), the program has been making substantial progress toward a number of the Land Resources Management Team's objectives including the following:

- Increased peoples' awareness of the role of NRM in reducing poverty, increasing revenues, strengthening local governance, and reducing environmental degradation.
- Developed impact assessment tools that Missions and others have used to design programs and make other strategic decisions aimed at scaling up impact.
- Helped Missions and others better appreciate how value-chains can be assessed to increase their efficiencies and increase the proportion that goes to producers.
- Brought together members of otherwise disparate groups (across countries, across disciplines, across languages) to find ways to work together more effectively in order to achieve common NRM goals.
- Provided a website that helps people to more easily access topical NRM information.
- Provided local specialists with opportunities to lead NRM assessments and to help them become stronger champions of NRM progress in their countries.
- Provided a means for people to contribute actively (versus being passive recipients) in a knowledge management community.
- Supported the transfer of resource rights to rural populations by supporting Impact Assessments by NRM champions that show the positive linkages between the transfer of these rights and improved management, improved biodiversity, and increased revenues.
- Helped operationalize the Nature, Wealth and Power framework by using it to help people organize findings from NRM Impacts Assessments and Value-Chain Assessments.

## 1.4 Findings and Recommendations (Macro View)

Our analysis of FRAME showed that the program is still relevant and appropriate, but requires modifications for long-term viability. Our analysis of FRAME yielded over 70 findings and multiple related recommendations to streamline the overarching organization across each of the operating components. Section 4 of the report highlights our key findings and recommendations across the following areas:

Analytic Area	Macro View	Findings Reference	Recommendations Reference
Overarching Program	FRAME would benefit from taking a strategic approach to running the program. We recommend the development of mission and vision statements, a strategic plan, and related actions plans to guide the organization's operations.	9 findings; 4.1.1 page 13	18 recs; 4.1.2 page 13
Steering Committee (SC) /Contact Group (CG)	The current SC configuration is not effectively used to guide USAID or assist the program's development. Eliminate SC or reconfigure to more substantively engage stakeholders. If SC is kept, create a senior advisory panel comprised of SC members and use it for advisory and sounding board functions.	12 findings; 4.2.1 page 19	8 recs; 4.2.2 page 20
Communities of Practice	Build a more engaged and formal CoP. A formalized CoP structure would likely increase the level of member engagement and ownership.	8 findings; 4.3.1 page 22	4 recs; 4.3.2 page 22
Institutional Partners (IPs)	IPs are an underutilized resource to FRAME and can be used to more broadly market the program. Engage IPs in marketing FRAME and supporting efforts to build the FRAME community.	8 findings; 4.4.1 page 25	7 recs; 4.4.2 page 25

Analytic Area	Macro View	Findings Reference	Recommendations Reference
FRAME Fellows	The FRAME Fellows program has great potential to assist the development of future members of the NRM community. Work with IPs and other stakeholders to build the FRAME Fellows program and engage future NRM practitioners.	4 findings; 4.5.1 page 26	6 recs; 4.5.2 page 27
Stocktaking	Stocktaking activities are critical to analyzing impacts, solutions, and opportunities around specific NRM issues. It is important that these exercises utilize effective standards to ensure that outcomes are measured accurately and consistently. Develop standardized stocktaking approaches and build more robust reporting and communications mechanisms.	9 findings; 4.6.1 page 27	7 recs; 4.6.2 page 28
FRAMEgram	FRAMEgram is a useful tool to share news and ideas in the NRM community and to promote FRAME and its services. Aggressively pursue opportunities to build readership and consider opportunities to leverage FRAMEgram for revenue raising.	10 findings; 4.7.1 page 29	7 recs; 4.7.2 page 30
FRAME Website	The website is the main face of FRAME and has the potential to be utilized more effectively as a community center, knowledge management tool, and feedback portal, interfacing with the NRM community. Improve visibility and take innovative steps to attract NRM professionals to the website.	14 findings; 4.8.1 page 32	10 recs; 4.8.2 page 34

Analytic Area	Macro View	Findings Reference	Recommendations Reference
Emerging Opportunities	There are opportunities for FRAME to use parts of its existing structure and new recommended refinements to more effectively identify and analyze emerging opportunities and their potential impacts on the NRM community. Adopt new techniques for identifying, vetting, and drawing attention to emerging opportunities.	5 findings; 4.9.1 page 35	4 recs; 4.8.2 page 36
Program Management	There are logistical concerns in coordinating the schedules of FRAME’s key principals. This issue is unavoidable given the significant travel schedules of these members of the international development community. With this inherent drawback, it would be beneficial to consider alternate operational models to ensure continuity of management. Examine need for additional management support and consider a co-management structure.	2 findings; 4.10.1 page 37	5 recs; 4.10.2 page 38

## SECTION 2: PROJECT APPROACH

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*This section describes the analytic methodology used in the project.*

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### 2.1 General Approach

In assessing FRAME, BDA Global examined the program's operational documentation and communication tools, and solicited feedback from several key FRAME stakeholders including USAID personnel, IRG, Institutional Partners, Contact Group Members, and Steering Committee members.

### 2.2 Tools and Techniques

In conducting the analysis several tools were employed, including face-to-face and telephone interviews, focus group sessions, survey, and research of documents supplied by FRAME's program management in addition to FRAME's website.

#### *Meetings*

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted to garner information on program management, overarching program, technology, and various components of FRAME's program. In addition, extensive research of FRAME's program as described throughout its program website ([www.frameweb.org](http://www.frameweb.org)) and research of its FRAME management supplied documents were conducted.

#### *Focus Groups*

Focus group sessions were held on two different dates in November 2005 and February 2006. The first focus group session included representation from FRAME's steering committee, management, institutional partners, and USAID. The session focused on reviewing the up-to-date findings and discussing the program's strengths and weaknesses of its various components, including Overarching Program, Steering Committee and Contact Group, Communities of Practice, Institutional Partners, FRAME Fellows, Stocktaking, FRAMEgram, FRAME website, and Emerging Opportunities. A comprehensive summary and synthesis of the focus group's outcomes were compiled and disseminated. The second focus group provided a forum in which BDA Global presented its findings and recommendations for comments and feedback.

#### *Survey*

A survey was developed and sent to recipients as selected by FRAME's CTO, Mike McGahuey of USAID. BDA Global created the survey with significant input from IRG's team and Mike McGahuey. The survey was comprised of questions seeking both quantitative and qualitative responses regarding FRAME's overall program and its specific components as named above. The recipient had a choice to complete it by one of three ways: downloadable file that could be completed and returned by e-mail, downloadable file

that could be returned by fax, and on-line survey with information stored in a central repository viewable by designated FRAME and BDA Global members. There were 19 responses that were returned by e-mail or completed on-line. For those that were returned by e-mail, the results were uploaded into the centralized on-line survey database. Therefore, all results are viewable by each individual's survey or can be cross-referenced by question to achieve an overview of responses to each individual question.

### *Analysis*

BDA Global synthesized collected data and examined FRAME structural and operational characteristics to develop options for potential improvement. Based on the results and feedback from the face-to-face and telephone interviews, focus group sessions, on-line research and survey results, a comprehensive set of findings and recommendations were developed.

## 2.3 Methodology

Using a collaborative approach, BDA Global designed a consulting strategy to encourage FRAME stakeholder participation and obtain broad feedback in developing findings and recommendations. BDA Global's goal was to work with FRAME personnel to develop solutions that effectively identify opportunities for program improvement and to the extent practicable create roadmaps to facilitate the implementation of adopted recommendations. BDA Global worked closely with appropriate personnel and management related to FRAME operations to ensure maximization of results.

To be successful BDA Global employed an 8-step assessment approach tailored to meet FRAME's needs, including Project Initiation, Program Structural Analysis Facilitation, Program Operational Assessment Facilitation, Preliminary Half-Day Focus Group Session, Draft Assessment Report on Findings and Recommendations Development, Subsequent Focus Group Session Facilitation for presenting Findings and Recommendations, Finalization of Assessment Report on Findings and Recommendations and Updates.

## SECTION 3: PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

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*This section outlines FRAME'S program achievements as identified through dialogue with FRAME management and outside consultants previously and currently engaged with the program.*

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The importance of documenting some of FRAME's program achievements became apparent after speaking with FRAME and USAID management so that those outside of the FRAME team would better understand the contributions the program has made and in addition support our recommendation for its continuation. The following are a list of key FRAME achievements in recent years, as summarized by the CTO, Mike McGahuey, based on FRAME reports and other sources of information:

- *There were multiple participants in the three-day Gender and NRM discussion forum that was hosted on the FRAME website in November and December 2005. In addition, the discussion postings were viewed by many more visitors to the site. Gender and NRM discussion participants came from Asia (Nepal/India), Africa (Cameroon), the America's (US, Jamaica), and Europe (UK/Netherlands) and represented non-profit organizations, private sector, and academia. At the end of the three-day forum, participants expressed an interest in a continued dialogue. Similar discussions were held on Local NRM Conventions, the crisis in Niger, and governance (CAPRI, sponsored by IFPRI). In each case, people who shared common interests and passions were able to interact with each other as they would not otherwise have been able to do.*
- *Increasing peoples' awareness of the impact of NRM in poverty reduction, economic growth, empowerment, and degradation reduction. A major challenge is helping people discover the impacts of NRM. This was particularly the case amongst the Secretariat of the UN's Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) where the discourse focused on funding issues rather than working together to scale up the considerable impacts that had been produced by past investments. To help reverse this harmful trend, FRAME and CILSS set out to conduct NRM Impact Assessments to identify and publicize impacts and capture lessons that could be used to scale up the impacts. FRAME conducted pilot assessments in two countries and was joined by two other donors, each of whom contributed. The preliminary results were presented and discussed at two conventions. These studies have helped change the discourse about NRM both in the West African subregion and amongst the delegates at the UNCCD. Another result of the Impact Assessments created an interest amongst the international media, usually an entity that gives much press to Africa's disasters. It appears that BBC will be filming the findings of the Niger study to compare the successes with the steady diet of negative news that has been coming out of West Africa.*

- *FRAME's Impact Assessment approach, as discussed above, is different from most other assessment tool used by AID. Many impacts and lessons of most NRM programs are produced after the end-of-project and are not discovered or used by AID. This failure by AID to bring to light impacts from past investments not only cripples the Agency in telling the taxpayer what its investments have achieved, but also from capitalizing on the lessons produced by the programs in order to scale up impacts. FRAME's Impact Assessment is one of few tools that identifies impacts-including unexpected impacts-after programs are over. In addition to being used by CILSS and other partners in the context of the UNCCD, USAID Missions in Madagascar, Namibia, Tanzania, Senegal, and Uganda have used them to design programs and strategies.*
- *The Nature, Wealth and Power Framework was first presented and discussed as a formal concept at a FRAME Contact Group workshop. FRAME was a major supporter of its subsequent development and roll-out to the NRM community. And, as noted above, FRAME supports its operationalizing each time it uses the NWP Framework in conducting and discussing the findings of NRM Impact Assessments and the Value Chain Assessments.*
- *Natural products harvested from the land are a major source of income to the rural poor but are often neglected by countries in their national growth strategies. This neglect reduces opportunities for the rural poor to fully benefit from a multitude of changes that could be made to increase the benefits they accrue from these natural products. Over the last six months, FRAME has supported value-chain analyses and workshops in Senegal, Philippines, Nepal, and Guatemala. A team is scheduled to go to Madagascar in 2006 and two other countries, Ecuador, and Paraguay, have requested assessments. In addition, AMAP, a microenterprise project funded by the Microenterprise Office, has joined FRAME to co-fund future assessments. Among other results, these assessments and workshops bring together members of the value chain that typically do not interact, and in some cases have never interacted. These fora have led to discussions that otherwise would never have taken place.*
- *The FRAME website offers a unique package of information and services. People who use the site can find information by topic, region, and activity (e.g., FRAME discussions). FRAME provides "democratized" knowledge management by permitting members of the NRM community to be active, rather than passive, participants in growing the knowledge base. In addition, the Simplify platform allows other partners to host pages from anywhere in the world. Amongst those having active sites are the International Programs of the US Forest Service and a consortium of Conservation NGOs that host a biodiversity site.*
- *As noted above, FRAME has actively supported local consultants and NGOs in using the NRM Impact Assessment Approach to identify and make sense of impacts from past NRM investments. Currently, FRAME is working with IUCN to support consultants in southern Africa to take stock of Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programs. The concern amongst many is that the positive impacts on biodiversity, rural revenues, and empowerment of rural populations are in danger of being diminished as governments in the subregion start to pull back resource management rights that they had given over the last 15 years. The Impact Assessments will allow local consultants to look at the relationships between the transfer of these rights and the*

*increases in biodiversity and revenues. In Mali, FRAME supported GDRN5, a local NGO, to assess impacts from several NRM investments. In addition to presenting these findings at several fora, including a subregional meeting, GDRN5 used them in at least two national-level policy fora.*

Furthermore, the following achievements were cited in the mini-assessment led by Tom Fox in 2005:

### ***Principal Findings of the Mini-Assessment***

*It is certainly clear that a number of NRM policymakers and practitioners, including USAID officials, have benefited from FRAME. For example:*

*Contributions to Nature Wealth and Power: NWP got its start from Stocktaking Assessments, the NRM Tracker and online database of case studies, and Contact Group meetings that included discussions of lessons learned and implications of these analytical efforts. As best bets, principles, and recommended actions emerged from these efforts and related surveys and focused efforts guided by Jon Anderson and Mike McGahuey, the FRAME CG served as a sounding board for the early presentation of NWP ideas and drafts of the NWP discussion papers and contributed to the process of validating NWP.*

*USAID/Tanzania, USAID/Senegal, USAID/Madagascar, USAID/Uganda used stocktaking / Tracker and FRAME Contact Group members / meetings to help with the review and rethinking of their program interventions and investment strategies. A number of SO teams included FRAME CG members. Given their enhanced relevance to D/G, poverty alleviation, conflict management as well as biodiversity conservation and other Agency priorities, E/NR program investments have been continued, expanded or renewed in a number of missions.*

*FRAME has helped NRM practitioners and E/NR program investments become more relevant to the agenda of poverty alleviation, and to more effectively integrate activities related to enterprise development, income generation, conflict management, improved governance, gender, HIV/AIDS and a host of related strategic concerns and issues.*

*FRAME has helped to nurture more ownership of emerging opportunities among NRM practitioners in Africa, and facilitated greater advocacy for more effective E/NR and related rural development program investment strategies by decision makers in Africa.*

*USAID/Madagascar adopted FRAME's stocktaking approach to help it define its five-year environment strategy. The mission engaged local partners to ensure that they capitalized on their past experiences in thinking strategically about the future. The resulting strategy focuses on the linkages between NRM, governance and economic development.*

*As another example, FRAME recently supported a local NGO in Mali to examine the barriers to the transfer of NRM powers to communities. The study results were then*

*presented at a FRAME-supported workshop for decision makers, ultimately helping to influence decisions regarding the decentralization of NRM rights.*

*As these examples demonstrate, the capturing of local experiences to allow policy makers and practitioners to make more informed decisions is what FRAME is all about.*

## SECTION 4: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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*This section describes findings and recommendations for FRAME continuity and build-out*

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### 4.1 Overarching Program

In 1999, the FRAME program was created to assist bureau practitioners and decision makers in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) community capitalize on the knowledge, experience and ideas on NRM and increase communication within the NRM community. FRAME was the response to the premise that more effective use and promotion of the extensive body of NRM knowledge could reduce the time to illustrate effective technologies and systems in the NRM world because at the time it was felt that much of the information was fragmented, less organized and inaccessible to those it would benefit. In addition, it responded to the idea at the time that champions of change worked in isolation of one another and that linking them would enhance information flow as well as help to fortify the determination of change implementers to move forward and support information, tools and techniques necessary to promote improved natural resource management.

Throughout the evolution of the program, various components have been woven together to create the integral program of FRAME. As FRAME moves from the present into the future, it is important that its effective parts of the program maintain and grow while areas that have proven to be less than effective be transformed and transmuted into more productive components. These components should aim to improve the program going forward and grow FRAME into a more active, interactive and participatory framework that offers easy access to information while contributing to overall policy making. It is through examining these findings that recommendations to create a more practical program follow.

***NOTE: Recommendations were developed iteratively with the input of multiple FRAME stakeholders and shared through meetings and focus groups. We are pleased to acknowledge that some of the recommendations indicated within are currently being adopted and implemented.***

To strengthen the overarching program and its more specific components, recommendations follow:

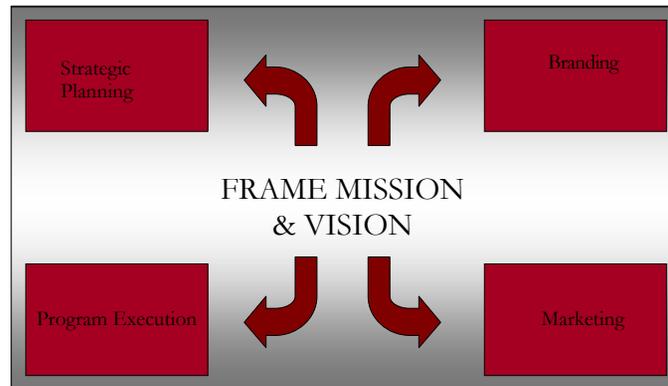
#### ***4.1.1 Overarching Program Findings***

1. It has been noted that the FRAME website is regarded as a helpful tool for accessing information in the NRM community and environmental policy. It is commonly agreed that it can better maximize its opportunity to situate itself as a *go-to* resource within the NRM community.
2. Originally FRAME was developed as a tool for USAID's missions in the field. As FRAME's program further expands and diversifies, there is discussion as to whether it would remain a USAID fully-funded program. Survey and focus group session results indicate that there is a desire to explore and determine alternative ways for FRAME to be able to evolve and become self-sustaining.
3. Human and financial resource limitations have been identified as reasons for program constraints, minimizing the opportunity for FRAME to grow optimally. Resources need to be used more strategically to achieve desired growth.
4. FRAME provides a large body of data. To achieve its mission and goals, FRAME would benefit from ameliorating its knowledge mining and management.
5. It is not evident who the primary and target end-users of FRAME are.
6. FRAME does not always measure impacts.
7. There is a desire to see broader geographic coverage that increasingly extends beyond Africa.
8. There is a desire to increase coordination and linkages with USAID programs and staff as well as coordination and collaboration with mission programs. There is a desire to focus on USAID presence countries.
9. There is a need to increase the synthesis of FRAME information.

#### ***4.1.2 Overarching Recommendations***

The overarching program can be divided into multiple umbrella areas or building blocks that set the stage for a strategically viable organization. The program's mission provides the basis for its operations and there are several driver functions (Strategic Planning, Branding, Marketing and Program Execution) that should be performed to maximize the program's opportunity for success. The following diagram illustrates how these key functions are directly linked to the FRAME mission and vision, and the subsequent narrative provides explanations of how/why these processes are critical.

### Exhibit 1 Organizational Building Blocks



Within each of these umbrella areas, there are a number of actions that would be effective in meeting FRAME's business objectives. It is recommended that FRAME perform the following steps:

#### Organizational Mission and Vision

There are major positive outcomes that can be linked to having an effective mission and vision statement. It creates a directive goal towards which an organization or entity aspires. In addition, it creates a goal around which the entity's offerings and activities can be strategically oriented. To effectively create a cohesive and coherent direction, it is recommended that FRAME create a formal mission statement and vision statement.

1. *Create Mission Statement:* During the course of the assessment, it was determined that no formal mission statement existed for FRAME and that in order to centralize the focus of the program both internally as well as externally, it is important to develop one. It is critical that FRAME develop a targeted mission statement that captures its overarching purpose, the breadth of its operations, and the scope of its reach. Through the assessment, it was discovered that FRAME can better seize the opportunity to further nurture the creation of community and position itself as a leading resource to the NRM industry. This can be conveyed in the mission and vision statement.

To foster discussion at the first focus group held in October 2005, a mission statement was developed:

*To foster discussion on emerging trends in environmental and natural resource management across disciplinary and geographic boundaries; and provide timely and relevant information on innovations and strategic options to address these issues.*

During the session, the group decided the mission statement should include the recipient, reason, timing, method and impact of the provision of information as well as the concepts of effectuating change, empowering and communicating.

To foster discussion for the second focus group held in February 2006, a second mission statement was developed:

*To serve as the premiere Natural Resource Management (NRM) resource for practitioners, the public sector, and private sector stakeholders, using technological tools, analytic techniques, and facilitation to gather and share information on current NRM issues, emerging trends, and strategic options, across disciplinary and geographic boundaries.*

FRAME should consider adopting the above mission statement or developing a mission statement that captures its core basis for operating and its overarching priorities.

2. *Develop Vision Statement:* FRAME should adopt a formal Vision Statement that highlights the direction of the program. A suggested vision statement follows:

*To be recognized as the preeminent information hub within the NRM community, known for efficiently and effectively aggregating, synergizing, and disseminating NRM data to practitioners, the public sector, nonprofits, and private sector stakeholders.*

As a result of the focus group session held in February 2006, the following should be considered in developing the vision statement:

- The vision statement should be written in the present tense.
- Answer the question “empowering people to do what?” Is it better informed decision or investment making?
- Does USAID want to pursue this type of service? If so, how more effectively?
- Virtual and face-to-face meetings sets environment for otherwise unlikely meetings to happen and include agents in discussions to fuel empowerment and impact change.

### **Strategic Planning**

A strategic plan can drive an entity’s long-term plan and help it to ascertain the direction in which it wants to go. The following diagram highlights the key steps in effective strategic planning:

## Exhibit 2 Strategic Planning Components



3. Following the actions highlighted in Exhibit 2 above, FRAME program personnel should develop and implement a strategic approach, tying the mission and vision to operational goals and objectives. While the remainder of the contract with present management is 1.5 years, FRAME should undertake the development of long-term strategic plan, capturing its mission statement and vision for the future.
4. In defining goals, objectives, and strategies, ensure that performance measures are outcome or results focused and not output focused. In meeting with management and at the focus group sessions, challenges were voiced over having to focus on results for the sake of statistics at various integrals in the program versus results based on quality of productivity. Implement benchmarks that measure for quality and outcomes rather than current measures such as “charge time” and “level of effort.”
5. Through discussions, focus group sessions, and surveys, different programs were mentioned as being alternative information sources offering similar information to that available through the FRAME website. These sources include INFO RECOFT, GDN, CAPRI program (CGIAR), Conservation International, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, IUCN, UNEP, FAO, CBNRM NET, and IIED. Consider benchmarking FRAME against these other programs and implementing some of the more favorable communication tools utilized by them.

### Program Execution

It is important to develop and maintain standard guidelines and procedures and a systematic approach to anything FRAME undertakes.

6. Develop standardized tools and techniques for field studies (stocktaking). Document approaches that can be used for various types of analytic activities, and guidance to ensure consistency across studies. It seems that recently FRAME has increased its focus on stocktaking activities. Going forward, stocktaking is becoming a tool for which it is recommended to have a systematic approach that can be applied across the board to other stocktaking activities, especially as FRAME expands globally and standard approaches will be important worldwide.
7. Create and employ a set of standards in how to request FRAME services whether it is requesting a particular stocktaking study or requesting a FRAME Fellow. Centralize a list of standard approaches and create a link on FRAME's homepage so that the information is easily accessible to the end-user.
8. With an eye toward making FRAME self-sustaining, consider potential revenue-driving activities that could be evolved through building FRAME's membership and leveraging communication tools to attract advertisers and sponsors. Members of the FRAME NRM community and other corporate entities could be engaged to provide financial support for the program. Furthermore, FRAME could be evolved into a government sponsored non-profit organization that will have more flexibility to pursue innovative revenue raising strategies.

### **Branding**

As FRAME seeks to establish itself as a *go-to* NRM information source, FRAME needs to re-brand itself. A brand enables an entity to create a positive image that differentiates itself from rivals offering similar products and services. A brand becomes a conduit of conveying an entity's image and creating the perception held by the end-user. It is a communication of an entity's values and traits, preferably ones shared by the end-user. Branding enables an entity to strengthen relationships with the end-user by cultivating repeat business. It also offers the environment where, once established, additional services can be launched. A brand appeals to the emotional side of an end-user, where brand loyalty drives them back because they are satisfied with the prior experience.

9. In the focus group sessions, it was determined that the prime audience would include NRM community entities, practitioners, policymakers, and private and public sector stakeholders including USAID. Determine the primary and target end-user of the FRAME program. This will help FRAME to determine how to brand itself and what products to offer. Also, in knowing who the target audience is, FRAME will have the information to better assist it to further develop content, meetings, virtual meetings, and on-line discussions catering to the selected target audience so that it is an effective service for the customer FRAME desires. It will also enable FRAME to know how to better organize data and access to information in particular on the website.
10. Develop the FRAME brand including a logo, motto/tag line, and develop plans to officially launch FRAME. There was discussion in the first focus group

session about possibly changing the name of either the FRAME program or its website to avoid confusion by the end-user on the difference between the overall program and the website. Determine the names, deciding whether to retain the current ones or change them, and have a re-launch of the program under any circumstance. Select the image and the logo, choose the colors and “packaging,” and ensure consistency is maintained throughout correspondence, reports, digital signatures, FRAMEgram headers, FRAME website headers and footers, and anywhere else the logo might appear. The relaunch can be done simply through using FRAMEgram, the FRAME website, and e-mails to FRAME’s database of e-mail addresses as media through which to announce the new product launch.

### **Marketing**

Once a brand is agreed upon and executed, it is important that FRAME market it. Components to consider include the following:

11. Develop a roll-out marketing strategy identifying the methods by which FRAME intends to get its product and service offering out to the market.
12. Use media to promote FRAME more effectively. FRAME could mobilize press around its success stories in the field. Consider the use of press conferences and press releases to highlight major milestones, success stories, program tools, natural resource management concerns, emerging opportunities, and to promote FRAME resources to local practitioners. These strategies can be used to promote and present FRAME in a positive light and drive end-users to use its program, thus building a following and influencing its evolution into a go-to natural resource management resource.
13. Consider hosting an exhibit booth at strategically selected trade shows, depending on the product and service being offered. For example, if natural products are being highlighted, then consider renting a booth at a natural products tradeshow. There are several websites that offer information on trade shows in various types of industry. The tradeshow booth itself can be styled in the logo and colors of FRAME, another opportunity for branding. Pamphlets on FRAME’s products and service offerings can be distributed and its website can be highlighted on marketing materials and display backdrop. At these tradeshows, industry oriented press corps often attend and highlight vendors and trends that arise. FRAME could use this opportunity to court the press there as well. This will contribute to FRAME’s being perceived as an expert in the field.
14. Use USAID missions to promote the FRAME program and serve as regional points of contact for best practices. Identify contacts within the field missions to promote FRAME’s services, information and resource offerings. Incorporating these contacts, create FRAME Centers of Excellence within USAID missions to help local practitioners identify best practices and identify resources in their NRM efforts. Use FRAMEgram and the FRAME website to promote the program.

15. Consider developing a “Vendor of the Month Program” where selected vendors of natural products are featured on the website and FRAMEgram. In the featured story, products, best practices and market approaches can be discussed and conveyed to the public.
16. Use the website to more effectively market FRAME. Include links to the FRAME website on the digital signatures of USAID, EGAT and bureau environment staff in addition to the Institutional Partners' webpages and digital signatures on their e-mail as well as FRAMEgram and any other correspondence that is generated by those involved with FRAME. Cross-links could be included between the FRAME website and websites of USAID specific publications (CDIE, NRIC, etc.), the Small Business Administration (natural products), etc.
17. Create a database of FRAME field practitioners, such as in natural products, wanting to develop an export market. Contact organizations such as the Small Business Administration and Department of Commerce who offer services to companies wanting to source products and services overseas apprising them of FRAME’s resource. Use FRAME as a business development tool for the practitioners in the field as well as an asset to these U.S. companies.
18. Coordinate with Institutional Partners to market FRAME’s program and resources to their contacts. In exchange for FRAME’s web-hosting of Partner sites, mandate that these partners host a FRAME link on their site.

## 4.2 Steering Committee and Contact Group

The Steering Committee (SC) is comprised of 11 NRM professionals. The Contact Group (CG) is comprised of 100+ geographically dispersed NRM experts. Through discussions and the focus group sessions, it appears that the original purpose of SC and CG was to advise USAID while the current primary goal is to guide FRAME’s thematic organization and to animate FRAME activities through working together to foster discussion on emerging trends and to provide innovative and strategic leadership.

### 4.2.1 *Steering Committee Findings*

The following is based on feedback from discussions, focus group sessions and surveys:

1. There appears to be insufficient face time for SC and CG members.
2. SC and CG are not being used to advise USAID, as initially intended.
3. SC is not visibly influencing FRAME’s strategic direction, goals, objectives, or activities.
4. Both the SC and CG appear to be functionally inactive.

5. SC and CG should be used to draw attention to emerging opportunities.
6. Need for more guidance on CG roles, responsibilities, and avenues for participation.
7. Need to make CG more conspicuous on website.
8. Need for more direct individual communication to engage CG members.
9. Face-to-face meetings on technical topics integrated with demonstrations and use of web resources are essential to advancing interest, participation, and the future of FRAME.
10. Stronger inclination to participate if CG were comprised of smaller, more technically focused groups.
11. Create regional CG cells and link them with existing bodies.
12. Recently FRAME has not been proactive in engaging the CG.

#### ***4.2.2 Steering Committee Recommendations***

While one option is to reengage the SC and CG in their current formats, building them into a more substantive resource for FRAME, it is recommended that FRAME reconfigure SC and CG using new strategies to engage members. Recommended actions include the following:

1. Determine whether there is a real need for a steering committee or senior advisory panel. It is recommended that the SC be eliminated. If FRAME chooses to keep the SC, then reconfigure it by creating a senior advisory panel comprised of SC members and either retain the name “steering committee” or re-name it to reflect a re-launch or change. Use the SC for all advisory and sounding board functions. Consider rotational SC.
2. In reconfiguring the CG, rename the “Contact Group” and make it a comprehensive database of experts, practitioners and anyone who has signed up for membership on the site or signed up to receive FRAMEgram. Have a membership drive. It does not have to be costly. Should some people have signed up for FRAMEgram but not signed up to be a member, send them an e-mail saying “FRAME sees they receive FRAMEgram, would they like to join FRAME’s program for access to helpful information and opportunities for participating in the NRM community?” Target key relevant NRM policy decision makers and send them an invitation to join; this will give them ownership in an organization as well as market FRAME as a tool for them to use. The database will serve as a directory of key contacts listing each individual member’s vocation, foreign language capabilities, area of expertise, area of interest, region, membership affiliation, and authored publications. Include a question at membership sign-up asking if they would be interested in serving on a committee around thematic ideas in the future? Make this

database FRAME's central repository including for experts. If there is a question of privacy in publishing this list, make the list available to FRAME on the back-end and members can contact FRAME to locate experts in a particular area. FRAME can serve as the middle man. In the sign-up ask "Would you like your contact information and background to be made available to...?" Even if they say 'no' in the sign-up, FRAME can contact them directly to ascertain their level of interest in serving in a specific issue.

3. Use the CG database as the primary resource for Communities of Practice (CoP) expertise and for selecting committee participants. (For more information on this, please see Communities of Practice section below).
4. Develop Standard Operating Procedures for CG activities. Processes should outline requirements to join, operating protocol, and link standard actions with CG goals and objectives, and define support mechanisms available to CG members. Post these processes on FRAME's website and in FRAMEgram in a section that appears in every monthly issue.
5. It appears that face-to-face meetings have been very helpful. Host regional face-to-face NRM events at strategic points, based on geographic spread of CG members. Using the CG database, FRAME can identify the geographic location of its members. If FRAME does not want to incur the costs associated with hosting regional face-to-face meetings then an option would be to engage CG individuals based on their geographic location, and possibly initiate meetings hosted by the CG members themselves.
6. Solicit CG regarding specific tasks. Request written reviews of policy analyses, documented experiences, etc. Use findings as themes around which to orient on-line discussions or create committees under CoP for further research. Supply information to key decision makers.
7. Develop a "Resource Request and Referral" capability. Enable CG members to tap into the resources of FRAME and request a resource in the field (e.g. a practitioner may need assistance on how to grow a certain variation of crop). Establish a process by which resources can be requested. Apprise relevant policymakers of FRAME's resources and market FRAME's information to them offering them background information or field studies information as part of a service-offering FRAME can provide.
8. Once the brand of FRAME has been determined, identify and engage a public figure to serve as the FRAME Ambassador. Many not for profits and effective social and environmental causes join forces with a noted spokesperson who shares a common viewpoint that espouses the mission, values and vision of the particular program. In FRAME's case, choosing someone who is proactively aligned with the natural resource community is suggested. It could be someone prominent in the business community or entertainment world that shares similar values looking to cross-market with a cause.

### 4.3 Communities of Practice (CoP)

**C**ommunities of Practice (CoP) are groups of NRM professionals with a shared interest working together to share knowledge and expertise. During the time of the assessment, CoP was comprised of Conservation in Governance, Contact Group, Local Conventions, FRAME Fellows, Gender and Sustainable NRM, TAVY Group, Land Tenure for Dryland Development E-conference, Natural Products and Nature Wealth and Power.

#### 4.3.1 *CoP Findings*

From discussions, focus group sessions, reading material, survey results and research on FRAME's website, the following findings were made:

1. Although CoP was created by FRAME to weave together groups of individuals with common interests in the NRM community, the CoP community currently is an informal group that does not appear to be actively engaged in FRAME.
2. There is an opportunity for more effective communication between CoP members and the NRM community.
3. There is an opportunity to better engage CoP members on what is working well and what can be improved.
4. The CoP section of the FRAME website is helpful both for uploading documents and referencing.
5. The CoP e-conference facilitates effective sharing of ideas.
6. The CoP provides an effective forum for networking.
7. There is a need for more proactive engagement of CoP.
8. There is a desire to broaden CoP circle, to include non-NRM community members (e.g. journalists, community leaders, etc.).

#### 4.3.2 *CoP Recommendations*

It appears that the CoP is a loosely woven group created by FRAME and centralized around themes around which documents and information are offered. CoP has the potential to be an effective tool of FRAME. The following is recommended:

1. Change the name of "Communities of Practice" to reflect a new service offering bearing in mind a name that will reflect the nature of the service.

2. Build an active CoP that is tasked with serving as a knowledge sharing resource for the NRM community. To do this, establish a membership program inviting relevant members from the CG to join specific communities. Select a champion for each community. This ownership will encourage more proactive participation. Develop and nurture institutional partners for knowledge mining, broadcasting issues, and participation in the CoP community. Develop cross-functional committees with various skill sets represented.
3. Formalize the CoP structure, including a membership program to increase the engagement and ownership of members. Attributes of the program include:
  - a. Formal Membership Program – Membership can be formed on voluntary and invitation basis. In order to join a CoP, the individual must join FRAME. Part of the sign-up procedure for membership on the website would include the option to serve as a member of an advisory group. Engage existing CoP in the conservation community as a springboard for more organized CoP. Drive membership through marketing CoP in FRAMEgram and on FRAME’s website and send an e-mail to relevant e-mail addresses FRAME has, inviting the recipient to join. Consider posting membership information on the Institutional Partners’ websites as well as USAID’s relevant internal websites. In addition, consider “advertising” membership in the digital signature (e.g. Would you like to join FRAME’s CoP, learn more or find out how).
  - b. Industry Advisory Group(s) – Establish industry advisory groups comprised of members of the CG. In determining the make-up of the industry advisory group, use the information from the time of membership sign-up to help determine who possesses what expertise or membership affiliation.
  - c. Facilitated discussions on key issues of concern – As FRAME determines what the emerging trends are, where it would like to influence policy or issues or cases in which practitioners in the field need the most assistance, FRAME can facilitate discussions on these topics. The discussions can continue on the FRAME website as it has in the past and FRAME can also host or encourage discussions within the particular industry advisory groups as well. It is recommended that there be a link on the homepage of FRAME’s website publishing the schedule of all upcoming on-line discussions as well as offering a button (“Suggest A Topic”) where one can suggest a topic around which they would like to see an on-line discussion occur.
  - d. Standard Operating Procedures – Develop a standard process and guidelines on how to create a committee around an issue, join a committee, initiate the transfer of information to influence policy decision makers, etc. For example, who decides when to create a committee? What are the criteria? What is the time period? Tap into ideas at every level from practitioners and USAID field missions to policy

makers to USAID home office to the FRAME community. Create a systematic approach to introducing these ideas and subsequently forming the committees and their protocol for executing. Create a process for delivering the results to the practitioner community as well as policy making level.

4. Use FRAME to serve as a conduit between CoP and practitioners. Use CoP as a sounding board and resource for NRM issues. Form targeted committees comprised of members of the CG as appropriate to study or address specific issues. The group can be formed when an issue arises around which FRAME wants to generate thought papers, influence policy or assist practitioners on particular cases in the field. A committee can be comprised of anywhere from a local group of people to internationally geographically dispersed individuals for a broader community. USAID field missions could contact FRAME to request assistance on particular cases in the field, and the group can be standing and/or arranged on a case-by-case basis. It could also be a resource into which the USAID home office taps as well to gather research regarding policy or subject matter for which it requires background. These committees can become champions of causes in the policy area as well. Consider including USAID field mission contacts, institutional partners, policy makers, and other members of the NRM community as members of the committee. A committee can be formed by FRAME or anyone wanting to initiate. Ask preliminary questions such as “For how long do you think the committee will stay together? Who will use it? Who are the champions? Who are the community leaders?” The committee can be a vehicle for research and discussions whose findings and results get back to the local practitioner level in the field as well as are conveyed to policy making decision makers at more of a macro level. Perhaps a required result that comes out of each committee could be a thought paper on the particular issue. The champion of the committee could be tasked with ensuring the paper is written, sent to FRAME and then passed along to the appropriate policy making level body. In addition, any “best practices” findings could be passed along to the practitioner level and anyone else who might benefit. This service tool can be highlighted in FRAMEgram and the FRAME website as well as in e-mail about FRAME’s relaunch and its program offerings.

#### 4.4 Institutional Partners (IPs)

**I**nstitutional partnerships are partnerships with key institutions across Africa to identify and address cutting edge themes based on the preoccupations and priorities of the field NRM practitioners. These partnerships attempt to help strengthen CoP and build relationships while facilitating debate around cutting edge issues. As FRAME program expands globally, they will most probably include key institutional partnerships with institutions around the world. FRAME provides IPs with web hosting services and facilitates internships/apprenticeships for FRAME fellows to work with these partners.

#### **4.4.1 IP Findings**

1. The Institutional Partner (IP) program appears to be working well and feedback provided suggests that IPs receiving web hosting services from FRAME are engaged and happy with FRAME's services.
2. There are no clear requirements from IPs in exchange for FRAME services, including that of hosting IPs websites.
3. Program has been successful at providing web-presence for partners who could not otherwise afford it.
4. Program has been successful at building capacity to use the Internet for development purposes.
5. Program has facilitated the development of relationships, organization of debates, and development of joint programs.
6. It appears that the documents and links provided to IPs are easy to access and use. Some users have been deterred from using the site by having to sign-in.
7. It appears that IP page is not updated on website.
8. It seems that the main focus of the IP program is to offer webhosting services while the other elements such as offering FRAME Fellows to the IPs and other programmatic offerings are not as promoted.

#### **4.4.2 IP Recommendations**

While a major part of the IP program is offering web hosting services to the IPs, it seems that there are other programmatic aspects that are either underdeveloped or under marketed. Consider incorporating value-added components into the IP program for the benefit of partners and of FRAME. It is recommended that the following elements be incorporated:

1. Develop standard requirements and protocol for IPs.
2. Develop and market the entire IP program, disseminating information on the entire program including webhosting and FRAME Fellows, as well as the other service offerings.
3. Require individuals of IPs to register as members of FRAME, thereby making them a part of the CG database.
4. Require IPs to have representation serving on committees as part of the CoP and act as advisors as needed to practitioners in the field in a related subject matter as determined by FRAME.

5. For those IPs receiving webhosting services, require them to submit a certain number of documents per month to FRAME for loading on to the FRAME website and incorporating into the FRAME library of documents. Require them to update their webpages every two months at minimum.
6. Market FRAME's program and tools to IP contacts. Look to each IP to provide contacts that could be integrated into the FRAME network. Work with IPs to more effectively market FRAMEgram and other FRAME products and services directly to the contacts of each IP.
  - a. In exchange for webhosting and other privileges, the IP should be required to include links to FRAME on their websites and include a "FRAME Partner" link to FRAME in their e-mail signatures.
  - b. Mandate that the IPs send the monthly issue of FRAMEgram to their contacts whether through the on-line link and/or as a PDF file attachment.
7. Host an annual feedback session with the IPs to learn what has been effective in their institutional capacity building. This will also provide information that can be used to show the effectiveness of the FRAME program as it seeks to grow and secure alternative sources of funding.

## 4.5 FRAME Fellows

**F**FRAME Fellows are local NRM graduate students who support the efforts of Institutional Partners. The Fellows Program allows students to gain practical experience, assisting Institutional Partners, supporting the work of FRAME and supporting Stocktaking activities.

### 4.5.1 *FRAME Fellows Findings*

1. The FRAME Fellows program has the potential to effectively engage all FRAME stakeholders by providing resources to hosts, opportunities for growth and development to future members of the NRM community as well as potential resources to USAID missions. The program has the potential to build capacity and nurture future expertise.
2. The FRAME Fellows program is underutilized and has not been expanded to include a significant number of students/future practitioners. Information on program is not readily available to potential fellowship candidates.
3. Information on the FRAME Fellows program is not readily available to members and potential hosts. Program could be better publicized and marketed.
4. There is a need to better identify specific NRM issues and potential FRAME Fellow hosts.

#### **4.5.2 *FRAME Fellows Recommendations***

While there has been much discussion about whether or not to continue this component, there are numerous compelling reasons for it to be continued. First and foremost, the FRAME Fellows program can help cultivate the NRM community of the future through offering these students opportunities to gain practical knowledge. It is recommended that the following be done:

1. Use the FRAME Fellows program to more effectively engage and nurture future members of the NRM community. Take steps to further formalize and grow the program. Market the results as contributing to the practical experience and knowledge base of the international NRM community. Benevolence warrants good press. Convey it as a result to the press.
2. Survey IP and member organizations in the new contact group to identify internship and trade apprenticeship opportunities for Fellows. Use website as a cost effective tool to publish Fellowship opportunities and bring potential Fellows and IPs together. Consider asking IPs to fund these efforts.
3. It is understood that with particular IPs, the option of whether to host a FRAME Fellow stands. Facilitate the effective matching of hosts' needs with fellowship candidates' vocational interests and skill sets.
4. Develop outreach program with educational institutions to identify potential Fellowship candidates. Simultaneously market FRAME's services to the educational institution apprising them of the resource that FRAME offers for case study and best practice research and policy making.
5. Develop formal marketing plan to publicize and promote the program.
6. Once the FRAME Fellows program is complete, facilitate the Fellow's transition to full time employment, as practicable, also considering referral to the local USAID field mission, where appropriate.

## 4.6 Stocktaking

**T**hese are field and desk studies of NRM initiatives that examine the biophysical and socioeconomic impacts of changes beginning with the impacts and working backwards.

### **4.6.1 *Stocktaking Findings***

1. A significant amount of FRAME's resources have been focused upon stocktaking activities.

2. It appears that stocktaking activities are at times undertaken without a clear rationale.
3. There is a need to develop a standardized performance measurement approach for stocktaking activities to ensure that outcomes and results are effectively captured.
4. Stocktaking results are not clearly used to effect change around the studied issue.
5. There is no apparent centralized archive of historical stocktaking studies.
6. There is a feeling that stocktaking studies are helpful to practitioners. It provides outcomes and technologies, tools, interventions, and conditions that were responsible for results applicable to similar situations.
7. There is a feeling that there is an opportunity to have greater impact on NRM policy through integrating participatory action research in studies and exercises, analyzing overlaps and contradictions in existing NRM policies, and supporting policy forums.
8. These activities provide an increased understanding of what works and what does not in the field.
9. The website does not include the most current stocktaking activities.

#### ***4.6.2 Stocktaking Recommendations***

These stocktaking exercises have been beneficial and had positive outcomes for practitioners on a practical level as well as on a policy level. For example, in the study on local conventions (conventions are agreements between communities and local government that provide the context for the management of NRM) in Mali, FRAME's funded research and workshops as well as resulting lessons and report coincided with the FAO-funded draft legislation over transfer of power over NRM to local government. It was FRAME's report that influenced this policy.

It is recommended that FRAME continue with these studies and become more formalized in the approach and results, per the outlined points below:

1. Rename "Stocktaking." A suggestion is "NRM Field Studies" or "NRM Field Case Studies." Re-launch this tool introducing it to all e-mail contacts in the CG as well as policy makers and USAID missions. This will enable FRAME to explain this tool and the benefits.
2. Consider refining stocktaking approach by:
  - Taking a systematic approach to determining what studies to perform.
  - Developing standardized stocktaking methodology.
  - Formalizing performance measurement and reporting.
  - Using priorities and lessons learned to identify emerging opportunities.

- Developing standards for reporting results and disseminating to stakeholders.
3. Create a standard process to determine what studies to perform. Conduct periodic survey of CG members, IPs, local practitioners, and USAID missions to identify desired field studies, develop priorities, and developing rolling study schedule. In addition, host a button on FRAME's website to enable users to suggest a study ("Suggest a Study"). Have an on-line discussion about it. Create the online discussions around emerging trends. Have a form to complete with information about suggested topic, suggested locale, champion of cause, reason why study is needed, etc.
  4. Develop standardized approach for defining stocktaking performance indicators and incorporating outcomes.
  5. Add an index page to the website that lists and links all field case studies to enable easy and immediate access, effectively creating a library of field case studies. Enable search by theme, category or activity.
  6. In gathering data during the study, best and ineffective practices will emerge. Formalize them in a report. Post the report in the centralized library of case studies and findings. Submit these findings to USAID missions, practitioners, and policy makers to effect policy. Highlight how well these studies have supported biodiversity, etc. Convey what works well and what does not.
  7. Use the study survey data to help identify emerging trends around which to create more on-line discussions and possible CoPs.

## 4.7 FRAMEgram

**F**RAMEgram is a monthly newsletter about the NRM community and issues. Since the inception of the study, due to new software, it is now a web-enabled newsletter posted for the benefit of NRM experts and practitioners. Initially it was a file attachment posted on the website and e-mailed to recipients. Newly formatted issues began in January 2006 with three issues since its inception including January, February/March, and April/May.

### 4.7.1 *FRAMEgram Findings*

The below findings are a result of research, meetings, focus group discussions and survey results:

1. FRAMEgram is not distributed to everyone in the FRAME community for which e-mail addresses exist.
2. FRAMEgram readership base is not profiled and analyzed to target future articles.
3. Patterns not tracked to determine readership growth and potential expansion.

4. The publication is sent consistently and in a timely manner.
5. The publications are easy to access.
6. The publication might target more NRM issues pertinent to Southern Africa.
7. More comprehensive analysis would be desirable.
8. It would be desirable for readers to be able to contact the authors of articles.
9. USAID staff could be added to FRAMEgram mailing list.
10. The most updated statistics for FRAMEgram include the following (as gathered from the Knowledge Systems Coordinator at IRG):
  - a. Using a new FRAMEgram format, implemented in the January 2006 issue, FRAMEgram is sent out in an e-mail with links back to the website where the issue is posted. For the April/May 2006 issue, FRAMEgram's subscription for its English version was 1,165 subscribers, FRAMEgram's subscription for its French version was 1,071 subscribers and FRAMEgram's subscription for its Spanish version was 4 subscribers. It was noted that the group of people who are sent the English version also receive the French version and have a choice to view both versions or opt out of either. In addition, the Spanish group is new and will be offered to FRAME's contacts in Latin America through the FRAME natural product studies. For the April/May 2006 issue, for the English version recipients, 25.4% opened their e-mail and 20.3% clicked through to the website. For the French version, 14.8% opened the e-mail and 8.9% clicked through to the website. According to FRAME Knowledge Systems Coordinator at IRG, the percentage that actually clicked through was above average for this type of publication.
  - b. Originating from FRAME's website itself, the number of times the English version of the FRAMEgram newsletter has been viewed using the website as the point of access was 577 times for the January 2006 issue, 389 times for the February/March 2006 issue, and 247 times for the April/May 2006 issue. Please note this does not include unique visitors but rather the total amount of time upon which the newsletter was visited.

#### **4.7.2 *FRAMEgram Recommendations***

1. Make FRAMEgram available in the new web-based format as well as a downloadable file format for those with limited Internet access. Have the downloadable file available on the FRAME website as well as e-mail it out to the entire CG database of members for whom e-mail is available.
2. Take proactive steps to increase readership:

- a. Send FRAMEgram to USAID missions worldwide where NRM is a relevant concern.
  - b. Invite USAID staff to subscribe to FRAMEgram.
  - c. Although it currently is not, FRAMEgram should be sent to everyone in the FRAME community. Readers should be offered the option to unsubscribe.
  - d. Add the option to receive FRAMEgram to the membership registration process. By signing up as members, individuals are already expressing interest in becoming engaged in the FRAME community and accessing FRAME's resources. Capitalize on it.
  - e. Target additional readership by requesting that IPs forward FRAMEgram to their constituents and host a link to the FRAMEgram portal on their websites (possibly a prerequisite for partnership?) and in digital e-mail signatures.
3. Analyze readership patterns to determine the characteristics of the reader audience and thereby target articles for future issues. Determine whether FRAMEgram technology includes capability for FRAME personnel to track reader patterns.
  4. Periodically survey CG members for potential topics and articles. With global roll-out, consider having geographic-oriented articles or articles on common themes found throughout all targeted geographic areas. In FRAMEgram, ask for future contributors for FRAMEgram articles. Consider asking USAID missions dealing with NRM issues in the field for articles around particular topics.
  5. In each issue, consider having a message from the Ambassador of FRAME or head of the FRAME program.
  6. Use FRAMEgram to market FRAME. Each month have a standard "corner" populated with FRAME contact information, information on FRAME's tools, resources, and libraries of information as well as instructions on how to sign up for FRAME's website program (e.g. "If you like what you see here and you are not a member of FRAME's on-line community where there is even greater access to current and popular information on NRM, go to [www.frameweb.org](http://www.frameweb.org) to sign up"). In the active web-enabled issue, have links to FRAME's website, on-library library, etc. (Note: Be sure to enable it where one can easily electronically return to FRAMEgram rather than be forced to stay in the new clickthrough locale.)
  7. With the stated goal of FRAME becoming self-sustaining in the future, consider the potential FRAMEgram offers to become a future revenue source through advertising. Track reader demographics with the goal of incorporating advertising in the future.

## 4.8 FRAME Website

The FRAME website ([www.frameweb.org](http://www.frameweb.org)) is a web portal that is used to share information with FRAME members and participants. It serves as a data repository and a vehicle for ongoing communication.

### 4.8.1 Website Findings

Overall FRAME's website is an extremely useful tool offering information to the NRM community as well as an effective communications vehicle for on-line discussions and information on entire FRAME program. From the start of the engagement to date, several statistics showing user patterns have been gathered on the FRAME website. The comparative statistics for the FRAME website between September 2005 and April 2006 are as follows:

FRAME Website Statistic Category	September 2005	April 2006
New Website Accounts (Individuals with user names and passwords)	24	145
Portal account logins	411	326
New "Topics" added to the website (Topics are pages with content, such as regional and country pages, thematic pages, partner pages, and any pages in those sections.)	39	152
New "Knowledge Objects" (Include documents, website links, events, and other types of information added to the site)	273	349
New Discussions started this month	5	4
Total number of website accounts	795	1,125
Total number of "Topics"	1,429	1,707
Total number of "Knowledge Objects"	6,617	9,792
Total number of documents	1,947	2,737
Total number of web links	2,040	1,889

Total numbers of “Communities of Practice” (Dedicated workspaces for communities to share information)	12	23
Total number of hits	153,112	570,010
Total visits (Visits by separate users – one visit can result in multiple “hits”)	15,546	3,268

From focus group discussions, on-line research, meeting discussions and survey results, the following findings were made:

1. The website includes useful data.
2. “FRAME” is used synonymously to refer to the overarching program and website which, some think, lends to confusion.
3. The website is not easily found from major web search engines.
4. The website could be made more user-friendly. User training would be useful.
5. It is difficult to find contacts and contact information on the site. Users would like direct access to authors of FRAME documents.
6. Slow load time for web pages.
7. Inconsistency in links on horizontal and vertical navigation bars.
8. Some links on the website are inactive.
9. It is not clear what the benefits are to FRAME membership.
10. The member sign-in process deters users.
11. Documents are sometimes difficult to find.
12. Links could be included from FRAME website to USAID specific publications. (CDIE, NRIC etc.).
13. FRAME website links could be included on EGAT and other Bureau websites. Consider adding links to FRAME website to EGAT and bureau environment staff email signatures.
14. FRAME should gather and post publications from members.

#### **4.8.2 Website Recommendations**

With an eye toward meeting USAID's Knowledge for Development goals, consider the use of the website as a technological tool that could be implemented toward achieving greater and more effective knowledge sharing and management. Specific recommendations include:

1. Consider changing the name to eliminate ambiguity and potential confusion between FRAME's overall program and website.
2. Take steps to make the site more accessible. Increase the number of meta tags for key word search via the Internet browser. This will facilitate higher Internet search ranking and increase access and drive traffic to FRAME's website.
3. Continue to maintain an on-line membership program in order to track the demographics of the end-user and use this knowledge to identify target audience. Create more exclusive membership privileges and include a description of membership benefits as a direct link on homepage (e.g. "Sign up to be a Member" -- "Click here to read about Membership privileges"). In the membership registration process, add check boxes for updates to request email updates on a wider variety of FRAME topics. Send applicable stocktaking study results, policy information, practitioner field project information, on-line discussion information, etc.
4. More effectively promote website as a knowledge sharing and online discussion capability and clearly delineate between the two. On the website, develop an online discussion portal that is accessible from the homepage and that is dedicated to on-line discussions. This page should include a schedule of upcoming on-line discussions and archives of results from past on-line discussions as well as the capability to suggest a topic for upcoming discussions. On-line discussions could be included in CoP, further formalizing it as an on-line community.
5. Develop a resource section on the FRAME website including:
  - a. Contact Group (privacy issues permitting) – for end-users to research people they can contact regarding particular subject areas as defined by CG members at their time of registering.
  - b. Document Library
  - c. Field Study Library (Stocktaking)
  - d. On-line Discussion library
  - e. Glossary of Key Terms – explaining what each heading is (e.g. Stocktaking, CG, etc.)

6. Refine site to facilitate easier document management through search and retrieval functions. Establish an on-line library system. Create repository of centralized documents, case studies and stocktaking study reports of best and least favorable practices, thread results from on-line discussions, etc. There should be a link to a searchable document library from the homepage of the site.
7. Establish a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) page on the website including:
  - a. How do I contact FRAME by phone, e-mail, etc.?
  - b. How do I suggest a topic for on-line discussions?
  - c. What do I get for signing up to be a member of FRAME?
  - d. How do I join a CoP and a committee to advise local practitioners on issues?
  - e. How do I join in the effort to effect policy?
  - f. How do I form a committee around an issue?
  - g. Etcetera
8. Consider the plausibility of including advertisers on the FRAME website, as a revenue raising option, with the goal of self-sustainability.
9. The website should include reciprocal weblinks to and from notable web-based NRM community resources, USAID and its relevant bureaus including EGAT, IPs, etc. Add FRAME web link to e-mail signatures of EGAT and Bureau environment staff, as well as IP’s.
10. Consider including telephone support to FRAME members.

## 4.9 Emerging Opportunities

The broad criteria for selecting emerging opportunities on which to focus FRAME resources would include (1) a good fit with FRAME’s overall objectives (e.g. policy impact) and (2) a sense that FRAME and other resources exist to have a real impact on NRM practitioners, policy and practice, including Contact Group interest and commitment.

### *4.9.1 Emerging Opportunities Findings*

It is evident that FRAME’s focus on emerging opportunities has helped impact policy making as well as field practitioners. Multiple assessment participants credited FRAME with bringing local level experiences to light, in addition to effectively disseminating information to the appropriate people to effectuate change at the policy level by fostering dialogue (e.g. UNCCD and FRAME’s

policy review to combat desertification). In addition, FRAME's work with natural products was cited as an achievement. FRAME has supported research and coalition processes which have culminated in workshops that have been held in Senegal, Guatemala, Philippines and Nepal with an upcoming international workshop scheduled for October 2006. Through this, FRAME has effectively been able to bring together people from the government, private sector, and civil society to discuss how to expand.

Through focus group sessions, discussions and survey feedback, findings include:

1. Identify emerging opportunities through:
  - a. Building partnership with organizations working in natural resources.
  - b. Maintaining regular dialogue with key FRAME members.
  - c. Tracking policy changes in the donor community as well as at the African Union level and regional organization level.
  - d. Supporting or organizing as well as making use of policy forums and networks.
  - e. Undertaking short-term studies and field visits.
  - f. Informal dialogues with natural resource communities including grassroots stakeholders, government and non-government organizations, and other market actors.
  - g. Taking part in the relevant forums and workshops organized by similar organizations.
  - h. Soliciting emerging opportunity topics from key sources outside the NRM sector. For example, look toward "DG" practitioners have been doing that relates to local empowerment of NRM. Also, consider looking for best practices outside of Africa.
2. Use SC and CG to draw attention to critical emerging opportunities.
3. Website, FRAMEgram, and policy briefs should be used to highlight emerging opportunities.
4. Given resource limitations, consider focusing efforts on promoting local empowerment.
5. Collaborate with other initiatives, e.g. UNCCD/Convention to Combat Desertification.

#### ***4.9.2 Emerging Opportunities Recommendations***

1. It was suggested that three broad principles for identifying potential opportunities be incorporated into FRAME:
  - a. A focus on the nexus of natural resources, livelihoods, and governance
  - b. An approach that mobilizes local experience around this nexus to facilitate enabling conditions, including policy, to promote local empowerment in natural resource management matters

- c. A good fit with the USAID agenda (either mission or home office). The current focus on the UNCCD process would be an example of this sort of focus and use of all of the FRAME assets in its “toolkit.” Capture and discuss emerging opportunities around upcoming meetings, policy decisions, and planned stocktaking (field studies).
2. Conduct annual forum with SC, FRAME personnel, and USAID staff around identifying emerging opportunities, and discussing priorities for future stocktaking analysis.
  3. Integrate key community members, including non-NRM contacts into emerging opportunity discussions, with a particular emphasis on broader community impacts.
  4. Create an emerging opportunity webpage (linking it on the FRAME homepage) that highlights the opportunities being analyzed today such as natural products and anti-desertification. Identify an issue that is topical and host an on-line discussion around it. Allow members to post comments and feedback on this page and consider including an interactive chat capability to facilitate real time on-line discussion around such opportunities.

## 4.10 Program Management

**T**hrough discussions with program management, the following findings and suggestions were made as ways to improve management.

### *4.10.1 Program Management Findings*

In general, the interaction between FRAME program personnel and USAID’s Cognizant Technical Officer, Mike McGahuey, referred to hereafter as “The CTO,” appears engaging and productive. With the CTO’s long history of working with the NRM community and as FRAME’s manager, his institutional knowledge is invaluable and he serves as an effective steward of the program. Similarly, IRG’s program team includes professionals with years of applicable NRM experience. The combined USAID/IRG team brings a great deal of enthusiasm and dedication to the core objectives of FRAME and works collaboratively toward achieving favorable outcomes for the program.

There are, however, several issues relating to coordination and logistics that became apparent during the assessment. Findings for aspects that could be improved include:

1. Since the CTO also functions as a field operative for USAID, there are times when scheduling and planning activities is challenging. There is a need to develop a support infrastructure that would facilitate continuous oversight and support in the event that the primary overseer is unavailable.

2. There is a need for more streamlined project reporting. As FRAME becomes more strategic in its operations, it will become more critical that performance metrics are reported both to measure success and to inform decision making to guide the direction of the program.

#### 4.10.2 Program Management Recommendations

1. *Management/Representation*

Consider developing co-management or alternate CTO function to support USAID program management and ensure continuity of communication. This would have the additional benefits of reducing the pressure on the existing CTO as the program grows and engaging others within USAID who could bring new ideas on tools, techniques and approaches to manage the program. The selection of a co-manager would have to be determined strategically, considering who would be effective, and how well they would work with the existing team as well as who might complement plans for the global roll-out of FRAME.

2. *Communication*

IRG/FRAME has staff meetings every Tuesday to review the status of the program's various activities. FRAME creates reports summarizing the meetings and outlining action items. Meeting notes are shared with the CTO. IRG generally meets with the CTO at some point during the week when schedules allow. In order to better utilize meeting times, we recommend that the CTO review the Tuesday meeting notes in advance of meeting with IRG and facilitate the development of an action plan at the end of the meetings. We recommend a meeting notes template that includes:

- Meeting Highlights
- Issues and Concerns
- Action Items

3. *Events*

As suggested by IRG members, we feel there is an opportunity to host more events for the Washington, DC audience (colleagues, decision makers, etc.) to promote engagement in FRAME. Suggested forums include Brown Bags, Summary Presentations of New Findings, and Speakers. Such events could be used not only to continue refining FRAME's strategic goals and objectives but might also be staged to raise awareness of important NRM initiatives, to solicit support of members of the business community, and to engage NRM stakeholders.

4. *Quarterly Meetings*

FRAME should consider adopting quarterly meetings to address accomplishments, ongoing activities, outstanding items, barriers, and resource issues. These meetings can be used to engage a broader USAID audience (for example, include forestry team, land resources management team, and any other relevant people at USAID relevant to the topic of discussion) and to promote FRAME more widely.

5. *Program Promotion*

The CTO should examine ways to promote FRAME within USAID. Suggestions include adding messages from the CTO in FRAMEgram, adding a link to FRAME's website on the CTO's e-mail signature, and inviting other USAID program personnel to participate in key FRAME events.

## CONCLUSION

The FRAME program provides a valuable service to members of the NRM community. The program has evolved over the years, broadening its services, engaging stakeholders, and refining its use of technology striving to meet the needs of the community. There is, however, a significant opportunity for FRAME to more effectively meet its stakeholders and clients needs. In that vein we feel that it is important that FRAME focus and adopt a more strategic approach for its operations, starting with a clear mission and specifying short-term and long-term goals and objectives for the program, with a focus on making the program outcomes more useful to the practitioner in the field as well as at the policy level. Detailed strategies and programs should continue to be evolved to meet these goals and facilitate ongoing success in fulfilling the mission of the organization. Furthermore, we feel that performance metrics could be more effectively used to track performance and guide the program. That said, FRAME appears to be well positioned to become a leading resource for members of the NRM community.

## APPENDIX 1

The following table provides a snapshot of Frame's 8-step assessment approach, detailed in the *Methodology* section of this report:

Task	Consulting Activities	Outputs/Deliverables
1. Project Initiation	Met with FRAME representatives, contract monitor, and other project owners; Developed reporting schedule; Defined communications protocol.	Clearly defined operating <b>ground-rules</b> ; Effective <b>project management and communications</b> system; <b>Project work plan</b>
2. General Program Review	<p>Obtained documentation on the program's structures, management systems, and resources, including process documentation, policies and procedures, and organizational charts</p> <p>Reviewed documentation on FRAME premise and structure, including breadth of service area, management functions, and customer service mechanisms. Detailed consulting activities included documentation analysis, key personnel interviews, and focus group(s).</p>	<p><b>Request for information</b></p> <p><b>Preliminary findings</b></p>
3. Design and Facilitate Half-day Retreat	<p>Evaluated management practices: personnel, strategic planning, performance management and policies and procedures. Discussed target customer usage and satisfaction data;</p> <p>Developed draft organizational analysis findings: Outlined operational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; Developed suggested actions</p>	<b>Draft Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats</b>

Task	Consulting Activities	Outputs/Deliverables
4. Follow-on interviews	Scheduled and conducted interviews with key FRAME stakeholders.	<b>FRAME Improvement Suggestions</b>
5. Survey Analysis	Conducted web-enabled survey gathering data	<b>Data reports on FRAME Components (for analysis)</b>
6. Data Analysis and Reporting	Reviewed findings from first focus group session; Reviewed survey results; extrapolated findings; Developed suggested actions.	<b>Draft, Findings, Options, and Suggested Actions</b>
7. Design and Facilitate full day retreat	Presented findings, options, and suggested actions; Obtained management and stakeholder feedback; facilitate discussion of findings, options, and suggested actions.	<b>Feedback on Findings, Options, and Suggested Actions</b> (to feed into final recommendations)
8. Finalize “Assessment Report on Findings and Recommendations.” Present draft report to Management finalize	Finalized report based on stakeholder feedback	<b>Final assessment report</b>