

PNABN-328

80904

**ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY:
MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PREPARATION
OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANS
IN AFRICA**

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June 1991

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PREFACE: The Purpose of This Paper

This paper takes a serious look at the developing National Environmental Action Plans (NEAP) in Africa and raises issues and questions about the need for monitoring and evaluating this process. There is much more written about monitoring and evaluating agricultural and forestry projects, for example, than about measuring progress in the planning of a national action plan. Hard data, measurable indicators and completely objective criteria are difficult to apply to a planning process. To provide a measure of accountability, however, an effective monitoring and evaluation system needs to be devised for NEAPs' preparation as well as its future implementation.

The paper provides some suggestions to help meet the complex set of challenges facing NEAP managers as they embark on the difficult task of building a participatory, inter-sectoral, long-range NEAP. It will present critical issues and suggest some indicators and criteria related to measuring, monitoring and evaluating the stated objectives of the NEAP process. It is hoped that this initial effort will lead to a number of activities to test and refine monitoring tools and evaluation mechanisms for NEAP preparation and eventually their implementation, thereby considerably strengthening the NEAP process in the long run.

This paper has been written to provide initial ideas and options on how to build and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure accountability in NEAP preparation. It has been supported by the USAID Africa Bureau as part of its ongoing collaboration with the World Resources Institute to work with the World Bank and other donors in strengthening the NEAP process in Africa. However, the views and interpretations in this document are those of the authors and should not be attributed in any way to the World Resources Institute, the World Bank, or USAID.

I. Introduction: NEAPs in Africa – A Need to Ensure Accountability

There is widespread international recognition that the plethora of environmental reports, sectoral studies, assessments, strategies, etc., generated by donors and others have not made an appreciable difference in addressing the "root causes" of environmental problems. It is widely believed that many previous development/environment initiatives have contributed little, if anything, to solving the daunting, interwoven network of ecological breakdowns visible throughout Africa today.

Proceeding with national development efforts along the lines of "business as usual" is no longer tenable given the harsh realities of environmental degradation and concomitant human impoverishment. There is an urgent need for effective and integrated action, across all sectors - that involves donors, governments, parastatals, academics, businesses, marginalized resource user groups, and farmers -- within a coherent national-level policy framework.¹ In theory, a NEAP could help provide this framework.

A NEAP has been defined as *a national government, demand-driven, participatory process which provides a comprehensive, institutional framework for integrating environmental considerations into a nation's economic and social development (see Appendix for more detailed discussion).*²

While the World Bank, in collaboration with other donor agencies such as USAID and UNDP, have provided initial impetus and technical and financial support for NEAPs, they are in theory and practice **in-country processes** -- the government and its people take over early ownership of the action plans and are ultimately responsible for their implementation.

The number of African countries that have initiated NEAPs has grown dramatically over the last three years -- from seven in 1987-88 to approximately 20 countries that will have initiated Action Plans by the end of this year. While this momentum is exciting, it also gives rise to concern. Leif Christoffersen, Division Chief of the World Bank's Environmental Division for Africa, recognizes that there is "the risk that the process will degrade because of the relatively large number of countries involved and the limited experience which has been accumulated so far."³

Concern is well warranted. The record of large-scale, donor-initiated, action plans to date is not encouraging. While some initiatives such as the National Conservation Strategy in Zambia have realized some significant successes, others have been characterized as failures.

International consensus on the FAO-led Tropical Forestry Action Plans (TFAPs), for example, has indicated that the whole process must be entirely revamped in order to fulfill its original objectives.⁴

NEAPs are experiencing considerable problems in fully meeting their original goals and objectives. All the participants of this workshop who have been involved in initiating NEAPs can attest to specific constraints and problems that have already arisen in every NEAP process.

These problems are understandable considering the ambitious aims of the Action Plans, the complexity of the undertaking, and the limited resources available. This paper proposes that monitoring and evaluation is essential to strengthening ongoing NEAPs, and to applying the lessons learned to date to the many Action Plans that are slated to begin soon. It suggests that those involved in building NEAPs in Africa launch a monitoring and evaluation strategy immediately – both regionally and in each NEAP country.

The emphasis of this paper is **not** on monitoring or evaluating changes in the natural resource base as a result of NEAP implementation – that will need to be developed fully at later stages involving NEAP implementation. Before devising standard guidelines for monitoring and evaluating the impacts and results at the project/implementation level, a monitoring and evaluating system for the NEAP preparation phases is important; successful implementation depends on the effective preparation of the Plan.

This paper will make a first attempt at providing ideas and options for what specific kinds of methodological tools and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can be devised and used for tracking NEAP preparation and development. It aims to put the issue of accountability squarely on the table here at Mauritius – that the NEAP institutional process itself must be monitored, regularly and systematically. By doing so, those institutions supporting NEAPs can work together to avoid the many serious shortcomings associated with similar initiatives.

II. Exploring Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms for NEAP Preparation

A. Definitions: Monitoring vs. Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation procedures are considered to be critical project management tools and should therefore be designed with the needs of management in mind. Under most circumstances, supervising departments, participating government agencies, donors, NGOs, academics and others will also benefit from the results of monitoring and evaluation. While there

are important relationships between monitoring and evaluation functions, they have different objectives, audience and timing. Their functions should be kept separate.

Monitoring aims to provide the project managers with feedback on the progress achieved in implementing their components, as compared with what was initially planned. Evaluation seeks to explain and, if possible, measure the level of program efficiency, particularly in regards to costs and accrued benefits, thereby reassessing the relevance of both objectives and approaches.⁵

The following section offers further clarification of the objectives of monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring is a management tool designed to provide managers with an ongoing tracking mechanism. It provides managers with feedback on the nature and extent of progress achieved to date in implementing preparation activities. Monitoring is a continuous assessment of the progress of agreed upon objectives, work programs, implementation schedules, physical inputs and expenditures. This assessment is based on a set of objective indicators carefully selected by the NEAP staff. Monitoring is primarily an internal project activity. It should be considered an essential part of good management practice and therefore an integral part of day-to-day management. In practice, monitoring can and should largely be carried out by the NEAP project team. Each specific task of the NEAP preparation needs to be monitored to make sure that key elements of preparation are not overlooked.

Example: A critical element in NEAP preparation is drafting a series of technical analyses of environmental conditions and trends relating to country-specific, priority areas. These studies need to be carefully monitored by an appropriate body, whether the NEAP secretariat or the steering committee. The monitoring activity includes the periodic (and frequent) overseeing of technical consultant schedules, while making sure that the drafts are completed according to an established work program. The content of the draft analyses must be reviewed to make sure key sectors are covered and that TORs for consultants and staff are being met. This monitoring requires internal NEAP management activity and does not require external technical support. It relies primarily on objective indicators such as deadlines, subject headings, and page lengths.

Evaluation, another important management tool, involves an assessment of the quality of a given activity in relation to its objectives. It is very difficult to develop objective indicators for evaluation of a flexible institutional process such as the planning of a NEAP. While some measurable indicators and standard criteria for gauging the progress of NEAP preparation can be devised, NEAP planning evaluation will always remain to some extent subjective.

Management must endeavor to ensure high standards of performance and quality through prudent recruiting and contracting, and must be prepared to take corrective action if agreed

standards are not met. This aspect of evaluation could be an internal project activity, and should be assisted by a technical back-up committee or a peer review group.

Compared with what had been planned, an evaluation of a particular program will seek to explain and, if possible, measure the level of efficiency of its implementation in relation to costs and accrued benefits, reassess the relevance of the objectives, and eventually measure its contribution to overall development.

Evaluation also involves systematic, objective analysis of NEAP performance that in most cases, is best done externally. Through critical assessment by people outside of daily NEAP project management, but who have a stake in the eventual outcome of the NEAP, invaluable perspectives and identification of bottlenecks and other constraints can be gained. This information and the lessons learned can then be re-applied to the NEAP preparation process to strengthen it on a regular basis. This external review process can also contribute to the overall participatory approach of conducting NEAP preparation, thereby broadening the national sense of ownership of the Action Plan.

Example: At some point(s) the technical analyses need to be evaluated by a team of experts. The process and product is enhanced if people outside the NEAP consultant and management team are brought in to contribute to the evaluation process. If land use planning is one of the key areas of study, experts from the university and private sector (profit and non-profit) with years of field experience in the subject should be enlisted to evaluate the quality of the draft analyses. If the person charged with writing the study on land use trends, for example, is primarily an academic, the analysis will benefit from the evaluative perspectives and practical experience of people outside academia involved in urban and regional planning, transportation, etc.

The evaluation process itself needs to be monitored to ensure that standard criteria are applied to the draft documents. This careful management of evaluating the written work will strengthen the analytic foundation of the NEAP preparation.

The Madagascar NEAP, the first to begin implementation, provides useful definitions of the purposes of monitoring and evaluation for the post-preparation phases. The Madagascar NEAP can help guide NEAP managers interested in devising instruments to measure progress in NEAP preparation, for in many ways, the NEAP preparation process will be reflected in the implementation.

ILLUSTRATIVE Example: Early Preparation of the National Environmental Action Plan: Management and Monitoring Model

January	February	March	April	May
#1-3	#4-8	#9-12	#13-15	#16-18

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	completion date	OBSERVATIONS/ REQUIRED RESPONSE
1. Establish interdisciplinary ad hoc environment committee (govt, NGOs, industry, academics)	1. Agency in charge of Environment, Ministry of Planning or Executive Office	1	
2. Define environmental priorities (issue paper) & NEAP prep. process; circulate widely	2. Ad hoc environmental committee (EC)	2	
3. Commission National Needs Assessment: desk study & field survey re. on issue paper	3. EC	3	
4. Prepare Terms of Reference (TOR) for NEAP Preparation & devise initial monitoring & evaluation schedule	4. EC	4	
5. Prepare NEAP briefing paper (summary of issue paper) for govt & donor approval of NEAP process & TOR; & public discussion; brief all interested parties	5. Chair of EC	5	
6. Prepare TOR for NEAP Nat'l Coordinator (NC); Select & nominate NC	6. EC & Government	6	
7. Prepare detailed NEAP budget; Nominate person who will have financial responsibility; establish auditing system	7. NEAP Coordinator & Ministry of Finance	7	
8. Select & prepare offices; order vehicles, equipment; select & contract office staff	8. NC	8	
9. Prepare TOR, select & contract Technical Advisor (TA) w/ govt & donor agreement	9. NC, EC, govt & donors	9	
10. Establish NEAP Coordinating Unit (NCU) by Ministerial decree	10. Ministry in charge	10	
11. Establish interdisciplinary high-level Steering Committee - SC (membership = govt & NGOs; draft TOR for SC's approval; present results of needs assessment studies	11. EC, Ministry in charge & donors	11	
12. Establish Advisory Committee (donors, NGOs, industry) to SC; form evaluation group w/in Advisory Committee	12. Donors & Min. in charge	12	
13. Create interdisciplinary technical studies advisory groups (one per study) [experts drawn from govt & non-govt] & draft general scope of work for studies	13. SC (NCU to coordinate circulate results of needs assessment to public	13	
14. Tech. (diagnostic) Studies Advisory Groups prepare TOR & workplan for consultants based on issue paper and completed needs assessment; recruit & contract consultants	14. Studies Advisory Groups (based on TOR from SC) (NCU to assist recruitment)	14	
15. Training for NEAP prep. team (consultants to Tech. Studies Advisory Groups)	15. Donor & NCU	15	
16. Prep. workplan of Phase II	16. NCU in consultation with Advisory Group chairs approved by SC	16	
17. Phase I Monitoring Report - synthesis of monthly monitoring reports	17. NC	17	
18. Conduct Phase I evaluation	18. Advisory Committee	18	

B. Developing Indicators for Monitoring NEAPs

In the context of a NEAP preparation, monitoring is a constant process that will allow NEAP managers to track the progress of specific preparatory components. It should be used regularly to provide feedback into the NEAP-building process.

For purposes of monitoring a complex planning process such as an NEAP, a basic (but detailed) monitoring matrix needs to be devised to track progress of the preparatory activities. A generic model of a monitoring matrix for the initiation stage of NEAP preparation is presented above with completion date boxes representing the key "indicator" for a component that needs to be tracked. This tracking device provides an essential tool for NEAP managers to make sure that important NEAP preparation components are being completed within an established timeline and framework.

In the example shown, start-up of the NEAP preparation assumes that high-level commitment and support has been assured and that adequate financing has been secured to carry through with the NEAP. The crucial task for the NEAP managers carrying out the monitoring is to make sure that each of the steps are completed on the target date and that observations about their progress are recorded carefully.

C. Evaluation Criteria

As discussed above, evaluation serves some purposes which, while complementary to monitoring, also has additional objectives. As opposed to monitoring, which is primarily an internal project activity, evaluation often requires substantial external support.

Evaluation involves a periodic, analysis of the performance, efficiency and impact of the NEAP development process in relation to its objectives. It is important to draw lessons from experience in order to either adjust the process or improve its design. This would involve a critical reexamination, in light of experience, of the process rationale as originally conceived; it would compare the actual attainments with the targets set and identify the reasons for shortfalls. It would assess the efficiency of administrative procedures and it would present lessons learned and recommendations for action. In order to ensure the greatest degree of objectivity, this type of evaluation would best be done by a body independent of the execution of the planning process. The type of people that make up this evaluation group needs to be broadly representative of various stakeholders (i.e. NGOs, resource user groups, industry).

The table on the following page provides some initial ideas on performance criteria and how they can be applied to evaluate NEAP components during the various phases of NEAP preparation. The NEAP phases, activities and criteria are offered only as illustrative examples.

Activities and Criteria: Illustrative Model

Key Activities

<u>Phase I: Initiation</u>	<u>Phase II: Needs Assessment & Planning Structure Establishment</u>	<u>Phase III: Early Planning Process</u>	<u>Phase IV: Synthesis of Strategy & Action Plan</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure govt commitment 2. Informal consultation with experts outside govt: NGOs, industry, etc. 3. Agreement on Environmental Priorities (Issues Paper) and TOR (reviewed by ad hoc experts, ie. NGOs, etc.) 4. Institutional framework defined 5. Administrative & Financial Procedures defined 6. Preliminary monitoring & evaluation system designed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of Steering Committee 2. Establishment of NEAP Secretariat; advisory committee to secretariat; task forces 3. Desk Study by interdisciplinary experts 4. Field Study: Sample of resource users perspectives from each provincial unit in country 5. Institutionalize monitoring & evaluation system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preliminary National Consultation convened to verify Environmental Issues Paper and studies (incl. NGOs) 2. Task Forces convened; carry out diagnostic based on issues paper, needs assessment studies consultations & field work 3. Review & evaluation of diagnostic by experts & peers 4. National seminar to review diagnostic results & build approach for strategy (participation of NGOs, resource users groups, industry, Universities, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secretariat synthesizes results of seminar 2. Strategy document circulated widely for comment (<u>govt and NGOs</u>) 3. National seminar on strategy & field consultations with local communities 4. Finalize diagnostic and strategy 5. Draft Action Plan, verify at Internat'l seminar held in country 6. Finalize Action Plan; prepare implementation of pilot activities
6. Evaluation of Phase I	5. Evaluation	3. Evaluation	7. Evaluation
Month 2	Month 6	Month 10	Month 18

Evaluation Criteria

<u>Phase I</u>	<u>Phase II</u>	<u>Phase III</u>	<u>Phase IV</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Source of original idea for NEAP: external or internal * Level of govt which expressed interest in NEAP process * Expertise, understanding of local conditions of those determining environmental priorities * Institutional framework defines authority & responsibility of parties: key govt offices, donors, NGOs, Universities & private industry * Staff and resource allocation to process; large cross-section of agencies involved * Pledge to make NEAP priority in national social and economic plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Experts who carried out studies applied interdisciplinary rather than sectoral methods & analysis * Information gaps in desk study are identified and actions proposed to close gaps; Field study provides new information and helps direct development of the issues paper themes * Steering Committee is interdisciplinary and draws on wide variety of sectors, including local govt & NGOs; has high level of authority * NEAP Secretariat also interdisciplinary and adequately staffed and funded * Advisory Committee and Task Forces represent number of donors, government agencies, internat'l NGOs, local NGOs & resource users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * National consultation broadly representative of country (includes local NGOs) and guides Task Force studies; results of consultation distributed widely in local language * Task Forces composed of govt & non-govt experts (ie. NGOs); carry out studies that provide new information, identify major conflicts & propose solutions; broadly representative consultations convened to verify info. & analysis; adequate resources provided for consultations * Adequate oversight by Steering Committee and Advisory Committee, e.g. review of documents, participation in main meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Quality diagnosis, strategy & NEAP, identify key conflicts, problems; policy changes & reallocation of existing resources * Broad circulation of draft documents; range of respondents; degree comments incorporated; steering committee, advisory committee adequately involved * Action Plan consistent with diagnosis & strategy; widely reviewed * Commitment from govt, donors, NGOs, industry & grassroots groups to Action Plan * Investment program closely coordinated under NEAP Secretariat
International Review		International Review	International Review
Month 2	Month 6	Month 10	Month 18

D. Feedback Mechanisms

During the preparation phase especially, the monitoring process should lead directly into evaluation, particularly when a monitoring requirement is not being met. Proper monitoring shows NEAP managers that various activities or products deemed important, are not occurring or being delivered. Evaluation tells why. Both monitoring and evaluation, therefore, play a crucial feedback role, giving NEAP managers the tools to identify what is going wrong and why something has or has not occurred.

For example, as broad public participation throughout the planning process is a stated priority, monitoring will act as a tool to track the relative success of this participation component. Evaluation will provide an explanation of what is missing in terms of building participatory mechanisms in the planning exercises. This situation can then be rectified by adjusting the planning process to accommodate a more concerted and targeted approach that includes the active participation of local resource user representatives, community leaders, NGOs, extension workers, etc., in various, planning stages of the NEAP preparation.

III. Devising a NEAP Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

A. The Heart of the Matter: Ownership of NEAPs

The questions involved in developing a monitoring and evaluation system for the preparation process of NEAPs are central to the definition and eventual success of the Action Plans. In raising these points, one must expect that sensitive and, in some cases, contentious issues will emerge. At the heart of the matter is **ownership** of the NEAPs - who is accountable and exactly where is authority and responsibility vested.

National governments and the citizens that they represent are the "owners" of the NEAPs. Management of the complex and lengthy process of NEAP preparation, of course, demands that temporary bodies such as Steering Committees and Secretariats are established to carry out and oversee the preparation process. In the following section, "Management Options", ideas for how monitoring and evaluation sub-units can be structured, managed, and coordinated are presented. This section raises key issues concerning the interplay of NEAP authority and government commitment in directing the process, institutionalizing monitoring management responsibility, and ensuring accountability -- both financial and in terms of "products".

Authority is control over a process with the right to make key decisions. In its fold rests the pivotal power of policy-making and setting the ultimate direction of NEAP preparation and implementation. The authority for NEAPs is vested within the appropriate high-level governmental

body that is charged with setting the country's development agenda. In some cases this power rests with the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Plan, Finance or Environment.

Donor involvement in NEAP oversight is limited to supervision and ongoing review of progress and coordination of investment programs. The donor community also provides critical financial and, in some cases, substantial technical support for conducting the NEAP preparation and implementation. Bilateral and multilateral organizations are themselves accountable for the resources they provide. The donor organizations, therefore, can not relinquish all authority in every aspect of the NEAPs. They must insist on financial integrity throughout the process and a good faith effort by all national and international participants.

Responsibility is integrally connected to authority. The institutional bodies endowed with authority over projects or initiatives have a concomitant responsibility to manage and oversee all related activities. Monitoring and evaluation activities are the vehicles by which the responsible institutions can manage and ensure quality control of the NEAP process and its products. Responsibility depends on good management, broad and effective participation, and appropriate levels of institutional support.

Accountability is a central concern for all involved in NEAPs. The NEAP Secretariat is accountable to the ministry or department in charge which, in turn, is accountable to the national government at large. Participating donors and other institutions are accountable to both their funding sources and the recipients of their assistance. But in the final analysis, the NEAP process must be accountable to the people of the countries: the farmers, herders, urban dwellers, and all others undertaking the effort. It is they who ultimately depend on the NEAP process and its results. On a practical level, the participation of local NGOs at all stages of the NEAP process will help assure accountability on behalf of its ultimate constituents.

Financial accountability is a critical component of the overall success of NEAPs. It must be addressed forthrightly and from the earliest stages of the process. Donor organizations have a legitimate stake in ensuring financial integrity and have some level of authority and responsibility in ensuring that funds are spent for their intended purposes. Donor representatives do not need to carry out a regular monitoring activity, but they do need to be confident that a detailed and accurate accounting system is in place.

Broad and representative **participation** in evaluation of NEAP progress is essential to the overall NEAP process. Systematic evaluation of NEAPs provides a critical mechanism for building broad participation into the overall NEAP process. As discussed at length at the Dublin Workshop, for participation to be effective, it must be encouraged at the earliest possible stage in the preparation of the NEAP.⁶ Broad participation should be monitored by the secretariat. The secretariat's effectiveness in carrying out its duties in a broadly participatory way will be assessed by the evaluation group, which should have representation of non-governmental/non-

donor interests. Non-governmental representatives and individuals with extensive experience working with rural resource users should be members of the evaluation group, the advisory committee, the task forces, and the steering committee. For political and historical reasons, some African countries have few active development/environment non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However all African nations have hundreds if not thousands of community based groups which need representation in a national-level planning exercise. Therefore, an effective strategy for including appropriate representatives of the often disenfranchised resource users needs to be devised for NEAP preparation. Successful NEAP implementation rests on their active participation.

B. Management Issues for NEAP Monitoring and Evaluation

As stated in the introduction, this paper does not presume to define for NEAP managers what system of monitoring and evaluation should be put in place. That task should be performed by the individual country and its NEAP managers based on the conditions and available resources. The following, however, are some initial ideas for building a monitoring and evaluation strategy. Governments and NEAP management units have limited financial capacities to conduct extensive monitoring and evaluation activities; therefore, it is also important to design a system which is both functional and realistic.

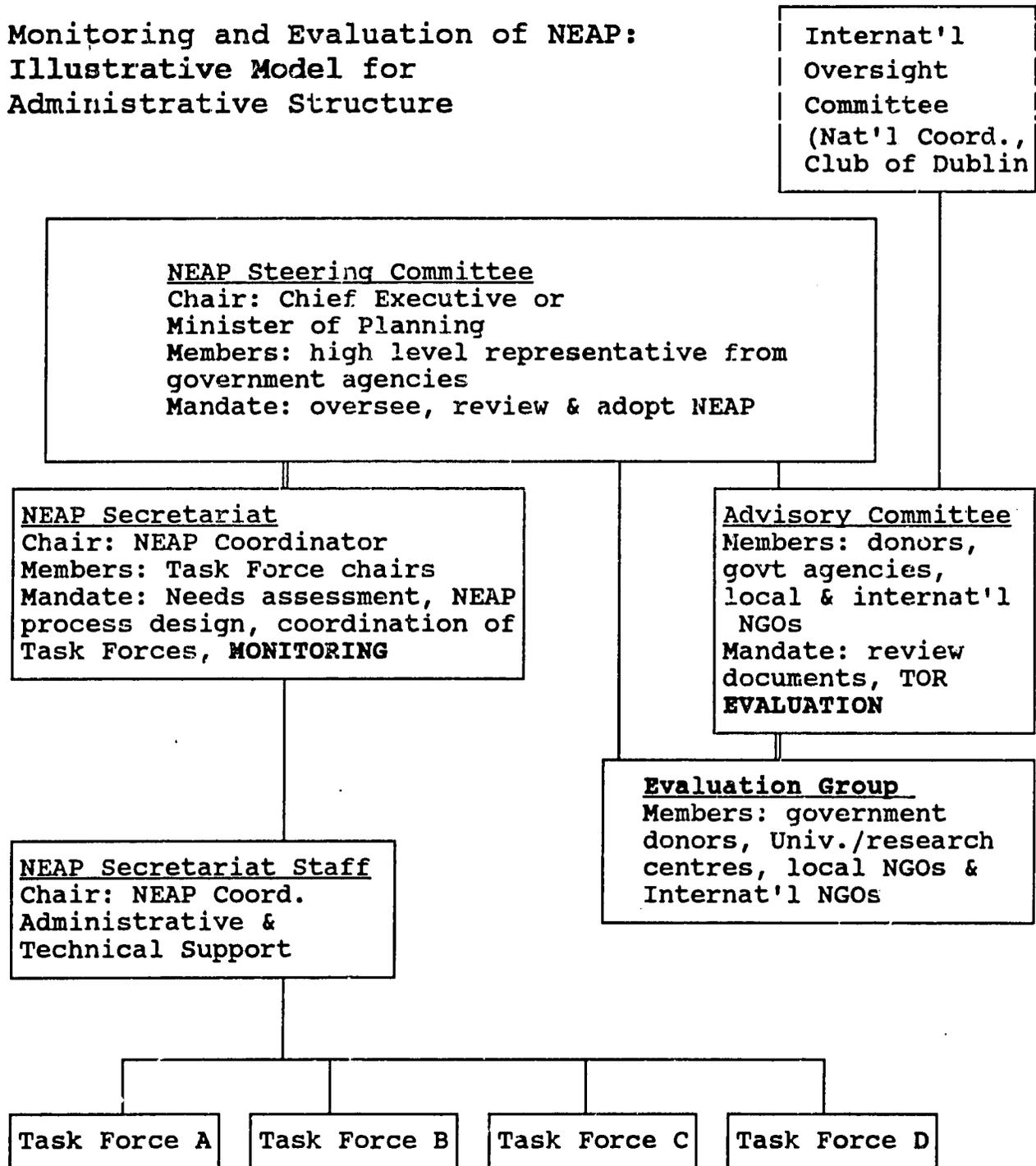
A clearly defined, carefully constructed monitoring and evaluation system based on a coherent strategy will insure an efficient and cost-effective approach.

o **Timing** is critical to the NEAP process. It is important that monitoring take place at the early stages of the planning process. It is also important to ensure that the NEAP is on solid footing from the beginning through some sort of evaluative process. Perhaps the NEAP secretariat could be assisted by external support. The results of this first set of tasks will lay the foundation for all ensuing activities.

o **Feedback** is a priority for the entire process and a primary objective of both monitoring and evaluation. Any strategy must plan for feedback and must be flexible enough to incorporate any changes that result. There needs to be a clearly defined system for ensuring that identified changes as necessary by the feedback process are appropriately incorporated through management practices.

o **Monitoring activities** should be a primary responsibility of a NEAP secretariat officer who is responsible for making sure that all timelines and deliverables/indicators are met on schedule. Since this task is relatively time consuming, s/he could be assisted by a peer review committee to monitor progress of the draft studies.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of NEAP:
Illustrative Model for
Administrative Structure**



Monitoring: Periodic Operational Reports by NEAP Coordinator to Steering Committee and Secretariat members re. tasks accomplished

Evaluation: Periodic assessment after *each* phase completed (I: Initiation, II: Needs Assessment & Planning Structure Establishment, III: Early Planning Process, IV: Synthesis of Strategy & Action Plan). Adjustments in process made re. recommendations from periodic evaluation. Evaluation group represents both external institutions and government agencies to ensure both independence and ownership.

- o An **Evaluation Group** should be devised early in the NEAP preparation. One alternative is to form a unit responsible to the Advisory Committee. It needs to be balanced with governmental, donor, and NGO participants to insure that objectivity and outside perspective are part of the evaluation process. Its functions, level of authority, and lines of responsibility need to be clearly established.

- o An international or **regional Evaluation Body** could be established to assist each NEAP effort. Whether formally connected to the World Bank, part of the "Club of Dublin", or some other option could be an issue for discussion of this workshop. The role of this group, particularly in the NEAP initiation phase, could be extremely important in providing guidance to countries embarking on NEAPs and in helping make sure that the basic principles, goals and objectives of the NEAPs are established from the beginning. This kind of external assistance will help newly initiated NEAPs to maintain the most basic NEAP standards.

- o The organogram on the previous page is for illustrative purposes only. It provides an example of how **monitoring and evaluation functions can be institutionalized** within the overall management framework of a NEAP preparation.

C. Conclusions and Suggested Next Steps

This workshop provides a timely forum to raise the issue of how everyone involved in the NEAP process can strengthen the Action Plans to ensure they meet their stated objectives and goals. Ensuring NEAP accountability, depends on effective management of the preparation process which in turn hinges on the proper delegation and sharing of authority and responsibility. A carefully developed monitoring and evaluation strategy for all important aspects and stages of NEAP preparation provides NEAP managers with the means to ensure accountability.

Next steps might include the following:

- o Use this Workshop (and thereafter following it) to share experiences on individual NEAP monitoring and evaluation processes; in particular, specific examples of constraints and obstacles to effective strategies could be examined and promising options could be explored.

- o Over the next several months, develop guidelines for monitoring and evaluation in NEAP preparation. Conformity is not the issue; by definition NEAPs are flexible and developed according to local conditions and constraints. However, if there is to be any accountability in the NEAP process gaining momentum across Africa, basic principles need to be articulated and adhered to. A strategic monitoring and evaluation system can provide NEAPs with the necessary tools for ensuring both accountability and integrity. The following provide specific examples of what needs to be addressed as soon as possible:

- a. Indicators for monitoring process management; in particular, work programs, schedules and products as well as the active participation of a representative cross-section of the national society.
 - b. Criteria for evaluating the quality of the analytic work and the effectiveness of the studies in addressing environmental conflicts, proposing solutions and redirecting policies. The NEAP preparation itself must also be evaluated – the quality of the consultation process, dissemination and sharing of results at various stages, and effectiveness of addressing NEAP preparation problems identified by the monitoring activities.
 - c. Specific options for managing the process, establishing the necessary institutional mechanisms, and setting parameters for authority, responsibilities, and problem/response mechanisms.
 - d. Options for institutionalizing participatory mechanisms at sub-national levels (district, prefecture, etc.) for ensuring local participation in NEAP planning as well as implementation.
- o Conduct regional intensive workshops in Africa to share experiences to date and develop monitoring and evaluation strategies.

Appendix.

Background: The NEAP Process in Africa

Definitions: The Stated Goals and Objectives of NEAPs

By definition, National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs) need to be **flexible in organization, timing and funding**. And perhaps most importantly, the preparation, analysis, documentation, and entire process needs to be **action-oriented**.⁷ NEAPs should lead to verifiable results reflected in policies, programs, and a wide range of development activities. Expected NEAP results include the internalization of environment into government, sensitizing decision-makers and the public to environmental conditions and trends, improved environmental assessment, legislation and policy-making, as well as enhanced donor coordination and development policy and investment guidance.⁸

NEAP goals differ according to the level of institutional players involved. At the international (donor and international NGO) level, organizations are insisting on accountability and verifiable results for the initiatives they support. There have been too many negative experiences in the recent history of "new" environmental studies and action plans. A priority for national governments is for action plans to provide a mechanism to maximize efficiency of effort given the limited resources (human and other) available to many African governments. The critical issue for the true clients of NEAPs, the people of the country in question, is whether there are effective safeguards built into the NEAPs to ensure that local peoples and the resources on which their livelihoods depend benefit directly from the process.

An Innovative Beginning?

Since 1987, NEAPs have emerged as a potentially effective and comprehensive institutional mechanism for dealing with the complex set of environmental crises besetting Africa. Africa, perhaps more than any other continental region in the world, suffers from:

1. Demographic pressure:

The highest population growth rate in the world - at least 3 percent per annum with a doubling of population within 22 years across Africa;

2. Declining natural resource base:

The most arid of all the continents, many countries in Africa are experiencing a dramatic reduction of critical resource "capital" such as soil, vegetative cover (including reserves of tropical forest), water sources, and wildlife;

3. Increasing measure of political/social/equity-related stress:

Marginalized resource users are experiencing unprecedented hardships from the two factors mentioned above. Civil wars, political strife, poverty, and an increasing, uncontrolled flow of environmental refugees and other impoverished rural peoples to urban centers are the all-too-frequent pattern in much of Africa.⁹

In spite of these facts, Africa is also endowed with enormous and, in many cases, unique resources and potential. Its people and cultures are as rich and vibrant as they are diverse. Its political landscape holds much potential as Africa's family of nations are among the youngest in the world. In spite of the difficulty of overcoming the more oppressive legacies of recent colonialism, populations and inspired leaders in government and the private sector are rallying around new and bold developments in political and economic arenas across the continent. Several emerging National Environmental Action Plans might become significant vehicles for sustainable development in Africa. Their success largely depends on effective monitoring and evaluation.

Status of National Environmental Action Plan Process: 18 African Countries

Beginning	Early Preparation	Advanced	Begin Implementation
Benin Burundi Congo Cote d'Ivoire Gabon The Gambia Guinea Bissau Uganda	Guinea Nigeria [†] Togo	Burkina Faso Ghana Rwanda [†] Seyshelles [*]	Lesotho Madagascar Mauritius

[†] Federal & State EAP preparation

^{*} NEAP approved by government

In Madagascar, a NEAP was initiated by the Ministry of Economy and Planning in 1987 and approved by the National Parliament in 1990. Implementation of the Plan has begun this year. The Governments of Mauritius, Lesotho and the Seychelles have all formally approved their NEAPs and are engaged in the beginning stages of implementing them. In Rwanda, the Government's Ministry of Plan conducted extensive studies of the country's environmental problems that led to a NEAP that is in the process of being approved this year as part of the GOR's Five Year national planning/development process.

A NEAP in Ghana is nearly completed and ready for implementation. More than fifty local experts drawn from government, academic and research institutions were divided into eight working groups that have conducted extensive analysis of environmental conditions, trends and needed actions. The resulting four-volume Action Plan includes a compendium of draft legislation and a substantial economic assessment of the NEAP. Guinea, Togo, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Benin are among the other African countries that have initiated NEAPs. More countries are embarking on the process.

NOTES:

1. For comparative experience see, Robert Winterbottom, Taking Stock: The Tropical Forestry Action Plan After Five Years, World Resources Institute, 1990; and Cheryl Cort Voices from the Margin: Nongovernmental Organization Participation in the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, World Resources Institute Working Paper, January 1991.
2. Francois Falloux, Lee Talbot, and Leif Christoffersen, "Early Lessons and Future Directions" Annex I in National Environmental Action Plans in Africa: Proceedings from a workshop organized by the Government of Ireland, the Environmental Institute, University College, Dublin, and the World Bank (EDIAR and AFTEN). Dublin, Ireland, December 12-14, 1990. p. 63.
[Hereafter: Dublin, 1990]
3. Leif Christoffersen, "Introduction to the Workshop", in Dublin, 1990, p. 7.
4. See: Winterbottom, 1990; and Eugene Linden, "Good Intention, Woeful Results" in Time April 1, 1991.
5. For more background on project monitoring and evaluation, see: Dennis Casely & Krishna Kumar, Project Monitoring and Evaluation in Agriculture, World Bank, 1987; Josette Murphy and Tim Marchant, Monitoring and Evaluation in Extension Agencies, World Bank, 1988; USAID, Preliminary Indicators for Monitoring Changes in the Natural Resource Base, AID Program Design and Evaluation Methodology Report No. 14, Feb. 1990.
6. See Talbott, "Public Participation in African Environmental Action Plans," in Dublin, pp. 37-47.
7. Falloux, Talbot and Christoffersen, "Early Lessons and Future Directions" in Dublin, pp. 67-69.
8. *ibid.*, pp. 70-71
9. See Winterbottom: "Environment Action Plans for the Greening of Africa" in People, Volume 18 Number 1, 1991.