

**The Partnership of the
East African Communities
Organisation for Management
of Lake Victoria Resources
(ECOVIC) and the Swedish
NGO Centre for Development
Cooperation (FORUM SYD)**

**Grace Lubaale
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Authors: Grace Lubaale, Alfred Omenya.

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	2
Acknowledgement	3
Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	11
Background.....	11
Objectives of the Evaluation	12
Approach and Methods	12
Organisation of the Report	12
2. The Partnership	13
Introduction	13
The Pilot Partnership and Bridging Period	13
Relevance of the Partnership.....	13
The Partnership Model.....	15
Capacity of Partners.....	15
General Achievements of the Partnership.....	16
Efficiency and Effectiveness	17
3. Strengthening ECOVIC	19
Introduction	19
Participation of the Partners in Defining Capacity Building Needs.....	20
Achievements of the Pilot Partnership’s Objectives	20
Areas of Weakness in the Partnership	21
Performance of ECOVIC as a Regional Network	22
Empowerment of Communities	24
4. Sustainability	25
Introduction: the Sustainability Framework	25
Institutional Sustainability	25
Financial Sustainability.....	26
5. Impact of the Partnership	27
Introduction	27
FORUM SYD Support to ECOVIC.....	27
Viability of ECOVIC as a Regional Network	28
ECOVIC Impact on Communities.....	28
ECOVIC, Policy Change and Advocacy in East Africa	29
6. Next Steps: Lessons, Input into the Next LVI Strategy and Recommendations	30
Introduction	30
Key Lessons.....	30
Some Inputs into the Lake Victoria Initiative Strategy 2008–2010	32
Recommendations: Ensuring Sustainability of ECOVIC.....	34
Bibliography	35
Annex 1 Terms of Reference	37
Annex 2 List of Persons Interviewed	42

Abbreviations

BDA	Buganda Development Agency
BMU	Beach Management Unit
CPA	Country Programme Assessment
ECOVIC	East Africa Communities Organisation for Management of Lake Victoria Resource
FIRI	Fisheries Research Institute
FORUM SYD	Swedish NGO Centre for Development Cooperation
LVEMP	Lake Victoria Environment Management Project
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation
LVI	Lake Victoria Initiative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEC	National Executive Committee
OSIENALA	Friends of Lake Victoria
RGC	Regional Governing Council
Sida	Swedish Development Cooperation Agency
WSSD	World Summit on Social Development

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Grace Nyonyintono Lubaale, Lead Consultant

Dr. Alfred Omenya, Consultant

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership started in July 2003 with a Sida grant of SEK 1.8 Million. The aim of this pilot was to ‘empower and build capacity of ECOVIC to achieve its’ mission and overall objectives at the regional and chapter level’. FORUM SYD had a capacity building, advisory, coordination as well as monitoring role to ECOVIC. An interim review of the pilot partnership was conducted at the end of the pilot partnership period in December 2004 by Centre for Basic Research, a consultancy based in Kampala, Uganda. A bridging period for the partnership was requested by ECOVIC and FORUM SYD and granted for a period of six months ending June 2005. This was subsequently extended to December 2005. The aim of the bridging period was ‘to follow up on the recommendations from the interim review and to allow time for designing the long term partnership based on strategic choices agreeable to ECOVIC and FORUM SYD’. The partnership was granted SEK 1.3 Million in December 2004 for this bridging period.

As the partnership draws to the close of the pilot stage, it is essential to reflect on its effectiveness and consider lessons it could provide to future related support in the region by the Swedish Government. The main purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of both the Sida support to and the partnership of ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. Moreover, the evaluation needed to consider ways to improve support to civil societies in the region, within the broader Lake Victoria Initiative framework. The evaluation was guided by four specific objectives (see Part 1 and the Terms of Reference for details). This evaluation was conducted by two independent consultants. Information for this evaluation was collected over a period of three weeks within the Lake Victoria region, and in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The study involved a careful review of literature on the partnership, a critical analysis of relevant policy, development assistance material and discussions with key informants from the academy, national authorities, the Swedish Embassy staff, some key international donors and other stakeholders.

The Partnership

The purpose of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD one year pilot partnership in 2003 was ‘strengthening ECOVIC and its member organizations. The support the partnership received from Sida was to meet operational and capacity building costs. Several areas were highlighted for more work in terms of capacity building support, e.g. relationship between the region and chapters; and relationship between the chapters and the grassroots. In this evaluation, the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is generally considered relevant. ECOVIC’s vision, mission and objectives are relevant to the communities living in the Lake Victoria basin. To a large extent, any relationships that were aimed at realising these ideals were not only relevant to ECOVIC but also to its members, communities and individuals residing in this region. In the course of the partnership, the relevance of the partnership faced much challenge. The ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership is considered relevant to local government, central government, local and international NGOs in the Lake Victoria region in two ways: the partnership’s work is to improve the conditions of the Lake Victoria and also to improve the lives of the people in this region. Further, the partnership contributes to much needed resource mobilisation that meets several development needs such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development and marketing. The communities acknowledge the effort of ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership in bringing them together as East Africans. However, they, like much of ECOVIC’s members remain sceptical of the relevance of this partnership. The experience of unfulfilled promises for financial support made by FORUM SYD during the early days of the preparations for the partnership, make the case for relevance of the partnership within communities rather untenable.

The model for this pilot partnership is not immediately clear to both the parties as well as the other stakeholders in the Lake Victoria region. We were concerned with both FORUM SYD's capacity to strengthen ECOVIC as expected by both Sida and ECOVIC; and change in ECOVIC's capacity to function and perform its role as an East African wide civil society organisation/network. This evaluation reveals that whilst there may be some changes in ECOVIC, its capacity remains generally weak. FORUM SYD also argues that poor leadership, lack of commitment, lack of transparency within ECOVIC coupled with inadequate funds for the partnership not only confirm ECOVIC's inherent weakness, but also explain why it is difficult to have strengthened ECOVIC's capacity in the pilot. Whilst the arguments advanced by FORUM SYD may be valid, they do not necessarily explain FORUM SYD's inability to appropriately address the capacity building issues during the bridging fund period. The achievements of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership are generally difficult to identify. This difficulty does not necessarily mean that the partnership was unproductive, but rather, that it was not as productive as it ought to have been. This evaluation finds that the level of achievement/success for the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is better understood in the context of the difficult relations, history of both ECOVIC and ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership, organisational structure and leadership. ECOVIC still faces credible threats from internal relations within the organisation and to some extent in the relations with FORUM SYD. The ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership has added some value, albeit, small and sometimes questionable, to ECOVIC.

Strengthening ECOVIC

While the proposal for funding for the partnership had a strategy of implementation of the pilot partnership, it seemed very unrealistic on the staffing level and quality needed. The current perception in ECOVIC is that FORUM SYD did not conduct itself as a partner; it mainly acted as a conduit for channelling of Sida funds. This is the same view from FORUM SYD; it expected a partner in ECOVIC, not a weak organisation that had to be literally led by hand. ECOVIC national chapters have not participated meaningfully in definition of their needs with regard to the pilot project. The partnership proposal focused on the general political economy issues and ECOVIC's status based on the chapter reports rather than a detailed situational analysis. At chapter level, grassroots organisations wrote some proposals which were sent to the national chapters. However, the former have not received any response. This has led to weak ownership of the partnership by ECOVIC members. The general perception of ECOVIC's members is that FORUM SYD has added very little value to the partnership. This is a harsh verdict, which is inaccurate. The issue seems to be that while in the partnership proposal FORUM SYD gave itself very clear roles and responsibilities, in practice these became rather vague.

ECOVIC chapters appreciate the development of the four secretariats, the development of some management mechanisms and policies in various chapters, and empowerment of policy making organs of ECOVIC, including clarification of roles between the Secretariats and the Boards, as some of the major achievements of FORUM SYD/ECOVIC partnership. The NECs of the three chapters have developed the capacity to lead the organization. However the leadership is not at par in terms of technical competence; main gaps were considered to be in the area of advocacy and international/regional issues around the lake.

There are various sources of weakness within ECOVIC. There does not seem to be any deliberate attempts to communicate within the ECOVIC structure. Information does not flow from top ECOVIC Region and FORUM SYD to the Chapters and Grassroots; or vice versa. There are concerns about this given that this was central in FORUM SYD's proposal for strengthening ECOVIC. The ECOVIC Regional Secretariat is not being felt; apart from the problems that it is associated with. ECOVIC members feel that it is weak and not viable in its current form. There is need for more harmonization and streamlining of the organization. Running of ECOVIC as a regional organisation is besieged with

petty nationalism and personal politics. Regional officials are protecting national interest at the expense of the regional organisation. Currently ECOVIC's Regional structure is not appropriate. The regional structure needs to be reorganised substantially for it to deliver. ECOVIC Region is weak in governance, constitution and policies. The structure currently envisages a top heavy organization that is neither desirable nor plausible, and which is already suffering a major legitimacy and accountability crisis. This is a matter that needs to be debated more to enable a more nuanced solution to the problem, as each of the suggestions above brings with it some challenges.

ECOVIC seems successful in mobilization of local communities. However this mobilisation was characterised by incorrect promises to the local communities. This has partly led to unrealistic expectations, which need to be corrected. Communities expected that they would be empowered to implement projects on behalf of ECOVIC. This still seems to be the expectation, even amongst top ECOVIC leadership at national level. It is unclear the extent to which communities expected that their capacity building would be linked more to the extent to which they would be able to handle their own projects, regardless of the projects' origins.

Sustainability

We focused on institutional sustainability needed for ECOVIC to be able to deliver on its other goals. In terms of LVI CSOs support, the ECOVIC pilot seems to fit mainly in the area of 'capacity building for sustainable development'; and 'empowering communities and individuals'. In one regard ECOVIC has been designed as an institution that can deliver on sustainability issues. ECOVIC through this partnership has developed some institutional and governance structures. But these are not running smoothly, especially at regional level. These institutional and governance structures seem to be maturing at chapter level. Some work still needs to be done both at the Secretariat and in refinement of policies, constitutions and programmes for ECOVIC to deliver.

In terms of organisational structure there is need to review the ways ECOVIC connects to its members. While in Kenya there is the District Chapter, which are not operational because of lack of funds, Ugandans abolished it because of lack of funds and also for practical reasons after implementing it for a short while. Tanzania has an even more elaborate four tier system. ECOVIC has not matured into a regional network of CSOs in the Lake Victoria region. The national chapters have made a lot of progress though, but the challenge remains on strengthening regionalism. Currently ECOVIC as an organisation is unable to deal with heterogeneity of its national chapters and member groups. There is a strong feeling that the organization should work as an international bureaucracy, hence the efforts to homogenize the constitutions and other structures. While this has to be done for practical reasons, developing a sustainable institution must take into consideration the richness brought by the unique differences of the national chapters. The focus should not be on superficial homogeneity instead of celebrating unity in diversity. The mid term review showed that ECOVIC staff needed to be better remunerated and facilitated to do their work. The danger with low remuneration is lack of commitment from the staff and inability to attract the calibre of staff that is likely to add value in managing ECOVIC as a regional organization. These together with political interests undermine the quality of the leaders that ECOVIC is able to attract and retain.

ECOVIC is still very weak financially. As an organization, apart from the Ugandan Chapter, it is totally dependent on Sida support. Financial policies and mechanisms had been put in place with the assistance of FORUM SYD. However, they do not seem to be adhered to.

Impact of the Partnership

The impact of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is much contested by both the partners and the communities in the Lake Victoria region. Whilst it is possible to dismiss the entire partnership as unproductive, close scrutiny reveals: areas of change; potential areas for impact and the aspects where a positive impact may not be easily forthcoming. Overall, although the capacity of ECOVIC has somewhat improved as a result of FORUM SYD's support, ECOVIC remains generally weak. Current areas of weakness include: funding; operationalising ECOVIC; its regionality and/or as an international organisation yet retaining a unique identity as a transborder community of local organisations. There is considerable agreement that the idea and ideals of ECOVIC remain noble and relevant to the communities in the Lake Victoria basin. Even when expressing doubts about its future, ECOVIC is no doubt considered useful if certain conditions were nurtured. This evaluation also finds that— translating the idea of ECOVIC into real and meaningful action has been complicated. The ambiguities of the role of ECOVIC, especially its Secretariat at the East Africa Region level notwithstanding, ECOVIC remains, at least in the nearest future, viable. However, the viability of ECOVIC as a Regional Network is currently stymied by six main issues. These include: petty nationalism; unwieldy organisational structure; weak leadership; uncritical capacity building; politically besieged secretariats; credible threats from members and partners.

The most obvious impact ECOVIC has had on the communities in the Lake Victoria region/basin is community mobilisation. The challenges ECOVIC continues to suffer invariably obscure this particular impact. The absence of strong, clear and credible voices of civil society on the sustainable development of the Lake Victoria basin remains a critical space that ECOVIC could productively occupy at the East Africa level. Capacity for evidence-based advocacy for policy change would supremely enhance ECOVIC's standing in performing this role. However, with the current challenges occupying ECOVIC psyche as an organisation, it is not possible to engage in policy change and advocacy concerns in East Africa.

Next Steps

ECOVIC remains weak and much vulnerable. Moreover, the challenges that have faced the pilot partnership, notwithstanding, there is a lot that can be improved on and a lot can be learnt from this pilot. No doubt, ECOVIC as an idea remains tenable. It is against this background that we both make recommendations for strengthening ECOVIC and envision, what in our view may form strategic inputs into the Sida Lake Victoria Initiative in 2007. Several lessons are availed from this pilot. First, ordinarily, the evaluation of capacity building is notoriously difficult. In the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership, evidently, there was insufficient preparation for the said capacity building. Second, donors should not expect that civil society organisations are ready-made implementation partners or that their claim for stakeholder participation is always valid. Third, support to the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership did not yield the outcomes that either party anticipated. Arguably, the level of support to ECOVIC was inadequate for a relatively young and unsophisticated organisation. Fourth, participation of stakeholders is critical to the effectiveness of pilot partnerships. A lack of participation in planning, management and monitoring and evaluation commonly afflicts a pilot partnership and implementation of its programmes. Fifth, the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership has seldom engaged directly in the advocacy agenda. In fact, most civil society organisations in the Lake Victoria region have scarcely done so. Sixth, there are also lessons that one learns in relation to the dynamics of running a regional network NGO. There is need to draw a clear line between governance and management issues in such structures. Finally, within ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership it is variously argued that FORUM SYD was a reluctant partner only persuaded by Sida to work with ECOVIC, thus to that extent the partnership was donor-driven.

There are key insights that can be drawn from the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD Partnership for the future LVI strategy development. They are in two broad categories: conceptual and operational. They fit into the following areas: partnerships/networks; process/product; regionalism; capacity building; empowering communities and individuals; sound environment; coordination; ownership and conflict resolution. The key message that comes through from this review is that capacity building for more complex regional organisations like ECOVIC needs to be more succinctly spelt out than general capacity building that could be applicable to smaller national NGOs. Another insight is that capacity building needs of the former organisations are complex and on going. For this reason any partnership based on capacity building should spell out clearly in which areas the capacity is going to be built. There are no clear strategies within the LVI of achievement of empowerment of individuals and communities. Regional organisations like ECOVIC need to have very well worked out communication strategies so that information can flow vertically from the regional structures to the grassroots and also horizontally to other stakeholders working in the region.

For ECOVIC to become such a strong and well-respected organisation, however, it will be important for the transition from the pilot partnership to done under stringent yet agreed performance conditions. Debate must be opened now to reconceptualise ECOVIC Region, so that all the Chapters have a regional organisation that they want, rather than the current one, which they have very little control over. Second, there is need for ECOVIC Region and Chapters to seek other partners so that they are not totally dependent on Sida for funding. Overt mechanisms to achieve this must be debated, developed and implemented. Third, ECOVIC does not have any conflict resolving mechanisms. The more complex the parameters an organisation has to deal with – programmatically, politically, regionally, etc. – the more likely are conflicts to arise. Finally, there is need for development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and development of indicators to measure outcomes.

1. Introduction

Background

This report is for end of phase evaluation of the partnership between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. The acronym ECOVIC refers to East African Communities' Organisation for the Management of the Lake Victoria Resources and FORUM SYD is the Swedish NGO Centre for Development Cooperation. The two organisations have been in a pilot partnership from 2003, which has now come to an end, hence this evaluation.

The idea to establish ECOVIC was mooted in 1995, with the support of UNDP to address problems of poverty, HIV/AIDS and natural resource depletion around Lake Victoria. This initiative was organised by a Kenyan NGO, OSIENALA. OSIENALA was already receiving support from MS Kenya and Sida departments through the Nairobi Embassy. This first attempt to form a regional organisation failed. In 1998, the Dutch development organisation, *Mellemfolkelig Samvirke* (MS) brought together NGOs in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and ECOVIC was formed. However ECOVIC remained weak, mainly due to limited institutional and financial capacity. Currently, ECOVIC is an international non-governmental organisation incorporated in Tanzania, where it has its headquarters in Mwanza. It operates in many districts within the Lake Victoria basin, in the three countries: Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Each Chapter is registered separately in each of the three countries. ECOVIC is run by regional and national chapters, through elected boards and secretariats. It is an umbrella membership organisation, with each of the chapters having CBOs, NGOs, and other umbrella organisations as members. They pay a once off membership fee of USD 500.00 and an annual subscription fee of USD 20.00. Uganda Chapter has 97 members, Tanzania Chapter has about 200 members and Kenya has about 50 members.

FORUM SYD is also an umbrella organisation representing about 160 autonomous Swedish organisations with an interest in development cooperation. It acts as a platform for cooperation between Swedish and local NGOs. Forum Syd has a presence both in East Africa and in the lake basin, with offices in Dar-es-Salam and Mwanza. It has worked with a variety of organisations in the region, posting development workers in Tanzania from the 1980's. It also placed a few development workers in Kenya and Uganda from 1995. In 2003, FORUM SYD embarked on two new programmes in the Lake Victoria Basin, namely: *the HIV/AIDS Programme* and *the FORUM SYD Lake Victoria Civil Society Programme*. By this time FORUM SYD had 80 supported programmes in East Africa. It is through FORUM SYD that Sida channelled its financial support to ECOVIC in 2003, given the former's experience with democratic development in Sweden and long standing presence in the Lake Victoria region.

Sida support for the pilot partnership between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD started in July 2003 and ended in December 2004 through a grant of SEK 1.8 Million. The aim of this pilot was to 'empower and build capacity of ECOVIC to achieve its' mission and overall objectives at the regional and chapter level'. FORUM SYD had a capacity building, advisory, coordination as well as monitoring role to ECOVIC. An interim review of the pilot partnership was done in December 2004 by Centre for Basic Research, a consultancy based in Kampala, Uganda.

A bridging period for the partnership was requested by ECOVIC and FORUM SYD and granted for a period of six months ending June 2005. This was subsequently extended to December 2005. The aim of the bridging period was 'to follow up on the recommendations from the interim review and to allow time for designing the long term partnership based on strategic choices agreeable to ECOVIC and FORUM SYD'. The partnership was granted SEK 1.3 Million in December 2004 for this bridging period.

As the partnership draws to the close of the pilot stage, it is necessary to reflect on its effectiveness and consider lessons it could provide to future related support in the region by the Swedish Government as well as related interventions. At the beginning of the partnership just like now, the need to actively involve civil society and especially the communities of the indigenes of the Lake Victoria basin has been considered critical in realising improved human and environmental conditions in this basin. For Sida and particularly the Lake Victoria Initiative, the lessons that would be learnt from the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership are important in strengthening not only future Swedish development cooperation in the basin but also provide invaluable ways of strengthening local organisations and communities. Whilst an evaluation of Sida support is an important aspect of the Swedish Development Cooperation, the issues identified in this review are important for effectiveness in the next stage of the support.

Objectives of the Evaluation

The main purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of both the Sida support to and the partnership of ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. Moreover, the evaluation needed to consider ways to improve support to civil societies in the region with the broader Lake Victoria Initiative framework. The specific objectives of this evaluation included:

- a) Evaluating the organisational capacities and performance of FORUM SYD, and its collaboration with regional capacity building programmes of ECOVIC;
- b) Evaluating the current organisational capacity of ECOVIC in relation to its role as a regional network;
- c) Defining ECOVIC's potential areas of improvement for future Sida support and possible changes towards more effective and efficient implementation of similar programmes; and
- d) Proposing strategic input to feed into the development of the new Lake Victoria Initiative strategy process in 2007.

Approach and Methods

This evaluation was conducted by two independent consultants. Information for this evaluation was collected over a period of three weeks within the Lake Victoria region, in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. This study involved a careful review of literature on the partnership, a critical analysis of relevant policy, development assistance material and involved some discussions with key informants from the academy, national authorities, the Swedish Embassy staff, some key international donors and other stakeholders. We used open-ended and guided interview, focus group discussions during discussions with community groups as well as during the de-brief session at the end of the interviews in each of the ECOVIC chapters. The debrief sessions were important in validating much of the information and analyses formed during the data collection sessions.

Organisation of the Report

This report presented in six parts including this introduction. The second part assesses the effectiveness of the partnership. The third part examines the strengthening of ECOVIC. The effectiveness or the partnership and its impact of the partnership are presented in the fourth and fifth parts respectively. The last part presents ways in which strategic inputs may be made to the new Lake Victoria Initiative Strategy process in 2007.

2. The Partnership

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership. Recognising that ECOVIC indeed had been in existence for about 6 years before this partnership, we take into consideration some of the reasons why this partnership was significant to the key actors. This Chapter focuses on six main aspects; namely: the outline and achievements of the 17-month pilot partnership and the 12-month bridging period (including extension of bridging period); the relevance of the pilot partnership; the model adopted for the partnership; capacity of the two main partners; its achievements and finally the efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership.

The Pilot Partnership and Bridging Period

The pilot partnership was based on the analysis of needs of ECOVIC as an organisation and was situated within FORUM SYD's work in the region. The partnership purpose as reflected in Application for a one year pilot partnership between FORUM SYD and ECOVIC in 2003 was 'strengthening ECOVIC and its member organisations, on organisation development and advocacy, for the purpose of strengthening: a) poor people to solve their own problems, improve their living conditions and basic needs; and b) ECOVIC's role as regional representative of civil society'. The partners expected results relating to 'internal and external capacity building' *viz*: development of democratic structures; gender balance; information gathering and sharing; communication capacity; 'organising activities'; awareness raising on sustainable development; problem solving and mobilisation for active grassroots participation. External capacity entailed acquiring knowledge on problems of the Lake Victoria Basin, organisational management, project planning, fund raising and lobby work. The support the partnership received from Sida was to support both operational and capacity building costs.

In terms of operational costs, ECOVIC and FORUM SYD needed to be supported on: administration (personnel and rent); office running costs; office furniture and equipment; and purchase of a vehicle. In terms of capacity building support was requested for: internal capacity building activities; external capacity building activities; organisational assessment; organisation development and training; and monitoring and evaluation. These activities were further elaborated in various Memoranda of Understanding and work plans. According to the 2004 partnership review a lot of ground had been achieved in terms of operation activities. However there were several areas, which were highlighted for more work relating to capacity building support.

Relevance of the Partnership

Whilst the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is generally considered relevant, for purposes of this evaluation, we consider relevance in terms of convergence with priority needs of not only ECOVIC and FORUM SYD but also those of Sida, members of ECOVIC, civil society organisations, local and central government as well as other international development agencies in the Lake Victoria region.

First, from ECOVIC's vision, mission and objectives, its relevance to the communities living in the Lake Victoria basin is not in doubt. To a large extent, any relationships that were aimed at realising these ideals were not only relevant to ECOVIC but also to its members, communities and individuals residing this region. As such, for ECOVIC, the relevance of the partnership with FORUM SYD is much appreciated within this context. However, to FORUM SYD, ECOVIC was for the greatest part of this partnership a great potential for realising their objectives in the Lake Victoria region. At the beginning

of the pilot partnership, FORUM SYD was initiating a new policy where regional and/or thematic programmes were described as an important development method. Since ECOVIC was both regional in outlook, that is, covering East Africa and focused in the view of FORUM SYD, on one thematic issue – developing the Lake Victoria region, its relevance was obvious in terms of being a possible programme partner. Considering that ECOVIC previously suffered serious financial difficulties, the partnership provided much needed financial resources necessary for strengthening the organisation as well as addressing the myriad development needs, which it was formed to tackle. Sida's (and more broadly, the Swedish government) interest to alleviate the degradation of the Lake Victoria and improve the lives of the communities in this region converged neatly with ECOVIC on one hand, and the Swedish civil society as represented by the FORUM SYD on the other hand. Thus, in the beginning, the pilot partnership was much relevant to ECOVIC, FORUM SYD and Sida.

Second, in the course of the partnership, the relevance of the partnership faced much challenge. It is clear that from the outset, several promises for generous grants and other financial promises were made to both the communities and different sections and Chapters of ECOVIC especially by FORUM SYD. It also appears that the Swedish government also made promises for substantial funding to ECOVIC. In many ways, particularly to ECOVIC, their partnership with FORUM SYD was an important bridge in realising the expectation of ECOVIC becoming a grant making and clearing house for requests for financial support from the communities. Although, this impression has been severally corrected, these promises greatly derailed the relevance of the partnership. Frustration by the key parties slowly emerged and inevitably placed additional demands on the partnership and further creating conditions where the relevance of the pilot partnership was increasingly questionable. Moreover, the objectives of this partnership were clear to all parties, that is, strengthening the capacity of ECOVIC and its members yet the feeling that the partnership may well not have been relevant especially to ECOVIC and its members was much evident throughout the period. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that much of ECOVIC's membership is cautiously optimistic of its overall relevance.

Third, to the local government, central government, local and international NGOs in the Lake Victoria region, the relevance of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is two-fold: The partnership's work to improve the conditions of the Lake Victoria and the lives of the people in this region. Further, the partnership contributes to much needed resource mobilisation that meets several development needs such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development and marketing. A much applauded area that highlights the relevance of the partnership is the on-going work to establish the Beach Management Units (BMUs). The growing community mobilisation and unification processes are another area where the State and other civil society appreciate the relevance of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership.

Finally, even when the communities acknowledge the effort of ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership in bringing them together as East Africans, they, like much of ECOVIC's members remain sceptical of the relevance of this partnership. In Kenya and Tanzania, there is much disquiet that the partnership may have been for the benefit of the ECOVIC leadership. The indelible experience of unfulfilled promises for financial support made by FORUM SYD during the early days of the preparations for the partnership, make the case for relevance of the partnership within communities rather untenable. Further, that members of ECOVIC have largely continued to successfully conduct their business without support from the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership also seem to suggest that the partnership may well not have been entirely relevant to most communities and their organisations. Another experience that seems to strengthen the communities' cynicism of the partnership is the apparent departure of OSIENALA an important founder member from ECOVIC that has attracted considerable funding for activities keenly similar to what ECOVIC had initially planned to implement.

The Partnership Model

The model for this pilot partnership is not immediately clear to both the parties as well as the other stakeholders in the Lake Victoria region. Moreover, the high and competing expectations by ECOVIC, its members and to some extent FORUM SYD and Sida seem to have obscured the need to carefully consider the appropriate model for the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership. ECOVIC mainly expected funding and broadly defined capacity building; FORUM SYD to transfer Sida funds as well as develop a robust civil society programme in the Lake Victoria region; and Sida support civil society work to improve both the Lake Victoria and the lives of the communities in the basin. In the remaining parts of this section we both outline this model as well as discuss its suitability for realising the objectives and expectations of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership. Although we discern at least two possible and broad models that may have been adopted, it is also possible that in practice, the model could have been a hybrid of the above, and perhaps some more. From ECOVIC, it is clear that a lot of the members, Chapters and officials of ECOVIC at the East Africa regional level expected a relationship between two generally equal partners with a view of building an organisation with a structure similar to the East Africa Community. FORUM SYD on the other hand, appears to have understood the model as being one where FORUM SYD received and transferred Sida funds to ECOVIC. The latter was generally expected, at least before the November 2004 review, to be a strong and fairly independent organisation which determined its own agenda for development.

The ambiguity about the model of partnership notwithstanding, the underlying assumption, at least from Sida's perspective was that a partnership that strengthened local civil society building on experiences of the Swedish civil society, was necessary if civil society in the Lake Victoria region was to realise the goal of improving the livelihood of the Lake Victoria basin communities through sustainable management of natural resources. Instructively, however, it is not clear from this evaluation that Sida's perspective and approach to intervening in the Lake Victoria basin was commonly understood and reflected in the expectations of ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. At a more rudimentary level, that a partnership agreement exists does not necessarily mean that a model was considered in the first place. Even in the course of implementing the activities formulated to realise objectives of the partnership, it appears a model would evolve incrementally. At an operational level, the partnership structure suggests that the model was not generally appropriate. Four partnership agreements and contracts with the three Chapters and the East Africa regional Secretariat of ECOVIC highlighted the difficulty of clearly identifying the most important actor – ECOVIC. Although FORUM SYD comprised over 150 members, it was much more clearly identified than ECOVIC which seems to comprise only three members, the National Chapters.

Capacity of Partners

From the partnership agreements, it is clear that a key objective of the partnership and mandate for FORUM SYD was to strengthen or build the capacity of ECOVIC. It was therefore assumed that ECOVIC was weak and FORUM SYD was much stronger in terms of organisational capacity and also had the requisite capacity to realise ECOVIC's strengthening. FORUM SYD, a membership organisation with a successful history especially of strengthening civil society and credible steward of public resources came to the partnership with the right credentials. In this evaluation, however, we were concerned with both FORUM SYD's capacity to strengthen ECOVIC as expected by both Sida and ECOVIC; and change in ECOVIC's capacity to function and perform its role as an East African wide civil society organisation/network. We begin with ECOVIC's capacity then consider the capacity of FORUM SYD.

This evaluation reveals that whilst there may be some changes in ECOVIC, its capacity remains generally weak. The November 2004 evaluation major finding was that the objectives of the pilot

partnership were broadly speaking never realised. The establishment of ECOVIC secretariat offices and functional boards in the three member Chapters, were the main achievements during the initial pilot period. The on-going changes in financial management and leadership in the Tanzania Chapter is the main area of capacity building that was achieved in the bridging period.

FORUM SYD whilst not disagreeing with the broad ECOVIC view about its capacity to build capacity of ECOVIC, present two main arguments for the capacity building outcome. First, FORUM SYD argues that they were persuaded by Sida to partner with ECOVIC. FORUM SYD considered the pilot partnership an important step in developing an elaborate civil society programme in East Africa. Moreover, FORUM SYD believed ECOVIC was an organisation of sufficient strength to qualify for core funding (based on established funding criteria) from Sida, thus required capacity building support such as advice, a watchdog and building relations between organisations based on sharing experiences as well as disbursing funds where FORUM SYD acted as a framework organisation. This position may be supported by the November 2004 evaluation. However, the practice of FORUM SYD especially in the bridging fund period does not reflect much change in FORUM SYD's capacity building work.

Second, FORUM SYD also argues that poor leadership, lack of commitment, lack of transparency within ECOVIC coupled with inadequate funds for the partnership not only confirm ECOVIC's inherent weakness, but also explain why it was difficult to have strengthened ECOVIC's capacity in the pilot. Whilst the arguments advanced by FORUM SYD may be valid, they do not necessarily explain FORUM SYD's inability to appropriately address the capacity building issues during the bridging fund period. It is noted though that FORUM SYD arranged a meeting to discuss review findings and future cooperation, a planning workshop and a retreat to discuss problems of ECOVIC Region. Further, the absence of a clear and commonly shared capacity building plan for the entire pilot partnership period call FORUM SYD's capacity to fulfil the objectives of the partnership into doubt. Even at the beginning of the partnership, although Sida may have persuaded FORUM SYD to partner with ECOVIC, for an organisation with the breadth of experience in assessing civil society capacity and working as a membership organisation is not evident in establishing the capacity of their partner – ECOVIC. It is in this context, that we find that although FORUM SYD is a membership organisation with successful experiencing in capacity building for organisations working at the community level, its capacity to strengthen ECOVIC remains doubtful. It is possible that when ECOVIC is strengthened in the future, FORUM SYD could be a suitable partner at that point.

General Achievements of the Partnership

As mentioned earlier, the achievements of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership are generally difficult to identify. This difficulty does not necessarily mean that the partnership was unproductive, but rather, that it was not as productive as it ought to have been. Besides, that ECOVIC is comprised of community and other organisations that have conducted successful activities on their own, it is more complicated to relate achievements directly to ECOVIC let alone to the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership. Nonetheless, the following achievements were identified and attributed to partnership:

- Mobilising and uniting community organisations working in the Lake Victoria basin;
- Increasing the profile of the degradation of the Lake Victoria and deteriorating living conditions of the communities in the basin;
- Increasing the visibility and respectability of ECOVIC as an international network of community and other organisations in the Lake Victoria region;
- The participation of ECOVIC in national and international forums like the District Development Committees, the Beach Management Units, the Environment Committees, and HIV/AIDS programmes;

- Linking some communities with institutions in Sweden, e.g. the exchange students from Fernabo FDC, who visited and lived in Tanzanian communities in the Shinyanga and Mwanza regions, and
- Collaboration with other organisations working in the Lake Victoria Region, like the Nile Basin Initiatives, hosted by the Tanzania Chapter.

This evaluation finds that the level of achievement/success for the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is better understood in the context of the difficult relations, history of both ECOVIC and ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership, Organisational structure and leadership. Evidence confirms that ECOVIC still faces credible threats from internal relations within the organisation and to some extent in the relations with FORUM SYD. At the Chapter level, the conflicts and difficult relations are at least two-fold: control and struggle for relevance and power between Secretariats and leadership; and members/communities and Chapter leadership at the national level. Several reasons are advanced for these complex relations, but a lot relate to integrity and stewardship. There have also been growing cases of financial impropriety and recklessness that have not been convincingly resolved.

The history of ECOVIC has been characterised by contained disagreements and impropriety. The pioneer leadership does not appear to have satisfactorily accounted for resources as well as established a viable organisation that would not suffer adversely from “petty nationalism” and individualism. Members feel that sometimes, Chapter interests have undermined the general development of the organisation. The ECOVIC/FORUM SYD relations seem to have been built on unfulfilled promises occasioned by demand for proposals from communities and members of ECOVIC. These have nurtured a muted air of suspicion. The organisational architecture as seen in the current structure, it is argued by both ECOVIC and FORUM SYD generally undermines the successful implementation of ECOVIC programs. Finally, although ECOVIC had reasonably charismatic and strong leadership in the first phase of the pilot partnership, with the departure of OSIENALA and other leaders, ECOVIC seems to have leaders who cannot devote much time to the organisation. On the contrary, this is not unusual since the current constitution allows for the current leadership where individual leaders concentrate on developing their careers, unlike previously where the leaders career and the organisation converged easily and the leadership performed executive functions.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

From the above, it is obvious that the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership has added some value, albeit, small and sometimes questionable, to ECOVIC. From the discussion of the achievements of the partnership, there are certainly questions on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Sida funding at a general level. Whilst it may still be difficult to confirm whether or not there was a value-for-money partnership between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD in general terms, there is scope to explore effectiveness and efficiency using other measures. First, whilst there has been much improvement in the use of finances throughout ECOVIC, this was one area where much inefficiency was noted. The delays in reporting, qualified audit reports and cases of financial misuse support the view that the partnership has been characterised by much inefficiency at this level.

Second, even if there have been some measures to ensure quality control, monitoring and evaluation instituted by FORUM SYD, these have generally been inadequate. At the Chapter level, the Kenya and Uganda Chapters are of the view that these quality control, monitoring and evaluation measures have been mainly implemented in Tanzania. More specifically, in the Tanzanian Chapter, these activities included development and operationalisation of the financial policies, employment of a financial advisor, restructuring of the Chapter leadership, including capacity building of the leaders, and linking the Chapter with other partners. This was specifically in response to the 2004 audit reports. This is partly expected because; the field office for FORUM SYD East Africa is based in Mwanza with offices in the same building as ECOVIC, in addition to the fact that Tanzania had the most problems during

the evaluation of 2004. At another level, where FORUM SYD has attempted to improve quality and/or ensure monitoring and evaluation, the Chapters have seen this as plain interfering and micro-management of Chapter affairs in all the three Chapters.

Third, with respect to building capacity of ECOVIC, this is generally viewed as being both ineffective and inefficient by both ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. Sida and ECOVIC shared the expectation that ECOVIC would actively participate in the identification of capacity building needs as well as formulation of plans to improve areas of weakness. FORUM SYD on the other hand, at least on the official level, perceiving and understanding ECOVIC as an independent organisation relied on ECOVIC to identify areas of strengthening. To some extent this happened even though with some questions. For instance, in developing the proposal for the pilot partnership and partnership agreement, FORUM SYD, in the view of ECOVIC, acted more like a donor than a partner. Operationally, FORUM SYD's approach in building capacity has generally been viewed by ECOVIC as intrusive and ineffective.

The fourth area for assessing efficiency and effectiveness was governance. This evaluation finds that virtually all the bridging fund period has been bedevilled by interminable conflicts within ECOVIC on one level and between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD at the other level. Without exception, there have been tensions between the Chapter National leadership and members at the grassroots. There are hostilities between the National Chapters and the ECOVIC East Africa Region Secretariat and Leadership. A lot of these conflicting relations within ECOVIC are blamed on an ineffective organisational structure and financial misuse and misappropriation by the ECOVIC leadership. Although there was considerable quiet during this evaluation, it was evident that these hostilities were not entirely resolved and pose the greatest danger to the effective implementation of ECOVIC's activities. The other conflicts are seen between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. Although ECOVIC openly acknowledges existence of these conflicts and disputes, FORUM SYD are of the view that the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot cooperation is free of conflict or disputes, the perceived conflicts being a result of realisation of their contractual obligations to ECOVIC. In ECOVIC's view, the contentions revolve around FORUM SYD's competence, partiality and abrasiveness in managing the partnership. In our view, with these conditions, it is unlikely that the partnership can be either efficient or effective.

Like ECOVIC, FORUM SYD and other stakeholders in the Lake Victoria region, we share the view that ECOVIC remains a viable idea despite its current problems. Its relevance remains indisputable, even though its operationalisations are besieged by unresolved conflicts, unfulfilled promises and expectations, an unsuitable organisational structure and unwieldy focus. All these challenges are surmountable and the ECOVIC dream of improving the Lake Victoria and lives of the people in basin is within reach.

3. Strengthening ECOVIC

Introduction

This chapter delves into the effectiveness of FORUM SYD's role in the pilot partnership, i.e. building the capacity of ECOVIC and its leadership. Building on the findings of the previous chapter, we carefully appraise the strategy for implementing the partnership. In determining the extent to which ECOVIC has been strengthened, we take into consideration several factors that indicate the context within which the partnership is implemented. Whilst capacity building may be notoriously difficult to evaluate, we appreciate that with carefully designed intervention, its measurement is less contentious and its effectiveness more objective. The rest of this chapter is organized in five main parts: the strategy for implementation; analysis of participation of partners in identifying capacity building needs; performance of ECOVIC as Regional Network and finally the extent to which communities have been empowered through this partnership.

Strategy for implementing the partnership

The intention of FORUM SYD in development of the pilot partnership was “raising awareness among (sic) ECOVIC to solve own problems and to change the (sic) own living conditions. It will also strengthening (sic) the ECOVIC Structure through organisational development and capacity building...”.¹ FORUM SYD was going to do the following so as to realise the objectives of the partnership²:

- Development of ECOVIC's democratic processes and structures, including gender balance; improvement of communication through the structure if ECOVIC, preparing and distributing information to members, organising activities, enabling leaders to deal with issues around Sustainable Development, solving problems, and mobilising active grassroots participation.
- Externally, members of ECOVIC were going to be enabled to acquire knowledge on problems of the Lake Victoria Basin, organisational management, project planning, fundraising, lobby work, etc.

While the proposal for funding for the partnership had a strategy of implementation of the pilot partnership, it seemed very unrealistic on the staffing level and quality needed. FORUM SYD was going to focus on the following key activities in the pilot: administration and personnel, and rent; office running costs; office furniture and equipment; a vehicle; internal capacity building; external capacity building; organisation assessment; organisation development training; monitoring and evaluation; coordination in Sweden; experience exchange; communication tools³. It is against these issues that FORUM SYD's role was reviewed.

Although the term 'partnership' has been used to describe the relationship that FORUM SYD had with ECOVIC, it is not clear why the relationship was referred to as a 'partnership' in the first place. Partnerships imply equitable participation of the two parties. The current perception in ECOVIC is that FORUM SYD did not conduct itself as a partner; it mainly acted as a conduit of channelling of Sida funds. This is the same view from FORUM SYD; it expected a partner in ECOVIC, not a weak organisation that had to be literally led by hand.

¹ Application for a one year pilot partnership between FORUM SYD and ECOVIC, dated 14 March 2003, page 4.

² Application for a one year pilot partnership between FORUM SYD and ECOVIC, dated 14 March 2003, page 17.

³ Application for a one year pilot partnership between FORUM SYD and ECOVIC, dated 14 March 2003, pages 22 and 23.

Participation of the Partners in Defining Capacity Building Needs

ECOVIC national chapters have not participated meaningfully in definition of their needs with regard to the pilot project. The partnership proposal focused on the general political economy issues and ECOVIC's status based on the chapter reports rather than a detailed situational analysis. In fact some chapters, in retrospect, feel that there should have been a needs analysis before capacity building mechanisms were designed and put in place by FORUM SYD. There were neither baseline surveys; nor situational analysis; nor needs assessment.

Some national chapter officials said they were unaware of the details of the agreements between FORUM SYD and Sida. But they chose to stay on because: "FORUM SYD gave us this impression that money would come. We need to call a spade a spade...we need to apologies to the grassroots". In fact a regional official said that: "if a committee is formed to run your life, it would only be fair if you are allowed to sit in it". This opinion is linked with another opinion dominant especially in Uganda, but equally present in Kenya and Tanzanian Chapters of ECOVIC, that FORUM SYD dealt with the organization unilaterally; leaving very little space for consultation.

At Chapter level, grassroots organisations wrote some proposals which were sent to the national chapters. However they have not received any response. This has led to weak ownership of the partnership by ECOVIC members. One interviewee asked: "You are someone who knows about ECOVIC better; what are its roles and objectives?". This has also led to mismatch between members expectations and the programme that was put in place to meet these expectations. An official said: "My expectations almost made me run mad with joy, when I heard that money will be coming through this partnership with FORUM SYD, I thought ECOVIC was going to be like a well where we were going to drink". One message that comes through clearly when talking to member organisation in all the three countries, is that they are only enduring because they know a time will come when they will get money directly into their organisations. Clear communication of what is possible and what is not needs to be done as soon as possible by ECOVIC officials. Actually the intention of the partnership about external capacity building targeting member organisation has barely taken off.

Achievements of the Pilot Partnership's Objectives

The general perception of ECOVIC's members is that FORUM SYD has added very little value to the partnership. This is a harsh verdict, which is inaccurate. The issue seems to be that while in the partnership proposal FORUM SYD gave itself very clear roles and responsibilities, in practice these became very vague. On the whole some improvement has been achieved; however the vagueness of the roles of FORUM SYD (in practice) makes it difficult to measure the actual outcomes of the expected capacity building activities in ECOVIC. Further it was suggested that the staffing level FORUM SYD had dedicated to ECOVIC, although this is what was reflected in the proposal, was largely inadequate and inappropriate for the tasks that had been identified for the pilot⁴. This created perceptions that FORUM SYD had no experience in mentoring, had dedicated but inexperienced staff, and were confused about their roles in capacity building. The last point reflects the fact that FORUM SYD actually found a much weaker organisation in ECOVIC than it had anticipated, a fact that might not have arisen were there to be some sort of situational analysis⁵.

ECOVIC chapters appreciate the development of the four secretariats, the development of some management mechanisms and policies in various chapters, and empowerment of policy making organs of ECOVIC, including clarification of roles between the Secretariats and the Boards, as some of the major achievements of FORUM SYD/ECOVIC partnership. The most developed of the secretariats is

⁴ Application for a one year pilot partnership between FORUM SYD and ECOVIC, dated 14 March 2003, pages 22 and 21.

⁵ Telephone interview with FORUM SYD regional Director on the 18th of August 2006.

the Ugandan one, owing to additional support from MS Uganda. It has several computers, laptop and digital camera; photocopier; three members of staff; and a number of volunteers. It has more developed policies than Kenya and Tanzania Chapters. It is implementing more projects than all other chapters of ECOVIC. On the whole the credit for development of the Ugandan secretariat goes largely to MS Uganda through which the chapter has been able to acquire more focused capacity building. However, even in the Uganda chapter the staff is still inadequate and largely underpaid, as reflected in the mid term review⁶.

The Uganda chapter has implemented the following successfully: building of ECOSAN toilets; development of various policies; development of a 5 year strategic plan; baseline survey of pollution of the lake; established functional secretariat with core staff; found a development partner, MS-Uganda; developed water projects; sensitisation of communities in Kisima islands; Rwanika Islands and Majanji; networking and empowerment of the NEC. These could not have been achieved without the establishment of the secretariat and initial capacity building within NEC, which was done through the partnership with FORUM SYD. However, unlike FORUM SYD, MS seems to have spelt out succinctly the areas where they are going to capacitate ECOVIC Uganda, and followed these through.

As reflected in the previous section this pilot has caused ECOVIC to be known and appreciated by various organisations that we had a chance to talk to, e.g. LVFO; LVBC; LVRAC; BDA; FIRI, etc. In fact the challenge seems to be that of management of expectations of these potential collaborators in terms of what ECOVIC can actually deliver. But they appreciate active participation of ECOVIC members in the formers' activities. They also appreciate ECOVIC's inviting them to various launches of the latter's activities, particularly in Uganda. ECOVIC Uganda has gone ahead and developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with some of these organisations. The Chapter has also taken part in statutory meetings, which was highly appreciated by other stakeholders.

It was suggested by many people interviewed of the need to bring back annual festivals, which were seen as very successful in popularising ECOVIC. The clean up in 2006 was very successful. The Uganda Chapter has developed national policies in: finance; human resource; gender; investments. Most are yet to be operationalised. The Kenyan and Tanzanian chapters have also developed some policies, e.g. a three year strategic plan by Kenya. However, Kenya and Tanzania are lagging behind in some areas because of their reliance on Sida funding for most of their activities.

The NEC of the three chapters have the capacity to lead the organization. However the leadership is not at par in terms of technical competence; main gaps were considered to be in the area of advocacy and international/regional issues around the lake. The latter was actually one of the objectives of the partnership as reflected in the application for the grant for the pilot.

Areas of Weakness in the Partnership

There does not seem to be any deliberate attempts to communicate within the ECOVIC structure. There are concerns about this given that this was central in FORUM SYD's proposal for strengthening ECOVIC⁷. Currently information from the top hardly reaches members. The bureaucratic structures that were identified by FORUM SYD as a bottleneck⁸ in communication within ECOVIC seem to be the cause of this ineffective communication. Linked with this, there is need for more tangible benefits for the grassroots, who are meant to be the real beneficiaries of ECOVIC. This communication strategy within ECOVIC could start addressing this weakness.

⁶ Muhereeza, *et al.* (2004) East African Community Organisation for Management of Lake Victoria Resources and FORUM SYD. Interim Review of the Pilot Partnership between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD. Unpublished Report, November, 29.

⁷ See proposal for funding p 14

⁸ See proposal for funding p 15

There is also need to have projects at the grassroots. ECOVIC Uganda has started responding to this, through MS-Uganda. However there are still complaints from the grassroots that member organisations have not been given the chance to implement these projects. Rather implementation is done through the thinly staffed National Chapter Secretariat.

In terms of broader communication it was recommended that ECOVIC region and country chapters need to have their website uploaded. Further, they also need to highlight activities of their members on that website. In the Ugandan Chapter, the NEC has discussed a possibility of development of a communication strategy. Currently there are no strong Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms within ECOVIC.

Capacity building should be on-going, in this regard there are useful lessons to be learnt from the way MS Uganda has gone about this issue of capacity building. The Uganda Chapter members see the role of ECOVIC more as a donor or grant manager rather than an implementer of projects. These they think members should be allowed to do on behalf of ECOVIC. However when members in the three countries were asked whether they think that ECOVIC can absorb more funds in its current state: some said 'yes', if you consider national chapters independently; others answered 'no' if you consider the problems of the region. This leads us to the next section where we discuss various aspects of ECOVIC performance as a regional organisation in relationship to the pilot funding.

Performance of ECOVIC as a Regional Network

'The region' is not being felt apart from the perspective of problems that it is associated with. ECOVIC members feel that it is weak and not viable in its current form. Members see these as some of the core issues that must be dealt with if ECOVIC were to be continue being an effective regional organisation: political problems in Mwanza; lack of work permit for the regional coordinator; a weak regional coordinator; personalizing organizations issues both by FORUM SYD and ECOVIC leaders; location of FORUM SYD, the ECOVIC Region and the Tanzanian National Chapter in one building; petty nationalism; lack of respect for governance structures; weaknesses of governance structures, etc. Some of these issues were captured in the Interim Review⁹. There is a rift between the secretariat and the RGC; and at the different level the Regional Chair and the Regional Coordinator and FORUM SYD Officials.

There is need for more harmonization and streamlining of the organization at the regional level¹⁰. This harmonisation was partly going to be responded to through the development of a regional constitution. The consultant who was given this work to do has not delivered any results. His position was that he could not develop a constitution "in the middle of a storm"¹¹. This was in reference to political gerrymandering which has been going on in ECOVIC, threatening to tear it apart. While this lateness from the consultant seems unacceptable from the perspective of efficiency, the position taken by the Regional Secretariat tends to give too much emphasis of the document rather than the process and in many ways the spirit of the constitution. It is our opinion that the consultant should put in place a meaningful constitutional process that will deal with the structural problems within ECOVIC, rather than indulging in an abstract process that may produce a nice document which is not implementable.

Running of ECOVIC as a regional organisation is besieged with petty nationalism and personal politics. Regional officials are protecting national interest at the expense of the regional organisation. For example, the Uganda Chapter sided with the Regional Chairperson, over her suspension, while Kenyans were protecting the Regional Coordinator even after two audits showed that financial misappropriation occurred under his watch. FORUM SYD was seen as being very partial in both cases.

⁹ See Muhereza, *et al.* 2004.

¹⁰ Similar finding by Muhereza *et al.* 2004, page xi.

¹¹ Interview with Frank Muhereza, on 10/08/06 at Speke Hotel, Kampala, Uganda.

Attempts to deal with these conflicts, including retreat in Jinja in April 2004 and another in Kampala in December 2005, did not get to the bottom of these problems. Actually some national chapters have taken the position that decisions made at the Regional Governing Council should never be attributed to a national Chapter, a position that ensures that these conflicts would not be identified at source. The Regional Coordinator takes the position that there are no national chapter positions, only ECOVIC positions, an argument that could be sustained at an abstract level, but the reality we found on the ground confirms otherwise.

During this review exercise a matter that seemed to have been expressed again and again was the academic qualification and actual capacities needed by both elected officials and the Secretariat staff to run ECOVIC as a regional organisation. While it was expressed in some quarters that the Regional Chairperson did not have the academic competence and personal attributes to head the organisation of the stature of ECOVIC; the Regional Coordinator was seen to have the necessary academic credentials to do the work, but very weak managerial and personal skills. Because of these inadequacies, he was seen to be unable to: mentor national leaders; rise above national politics and manage unity in diversity. The matter of academic qualification and personal attributes that would enable strengthening and management of an organisation of ECOVIC's stature need to be looked at and once agreed need to be entrenched in policy and practice.

Currently ECOVIC Regional structure is not appropriate. The regional structure needs to be reorganised substantially for it to deliver. ECOVIC Region is weak in governance, constitution and policies. The structure currently envisages a top heavy organization that is neither desirable nor plausible, and which is already suffering a major legitimacy and accountability crisis. This fact was noted by FORUM SYD right at the initial partnership proposal but it has not been addressed. Further, the regional structure has no mechanisms for accountability and problems solving. ECOVIC may want to consider incorporating an external board, or other relevant mechanisms to arbitrate in case of disputes or other crises and major decisions.

The Regional Secretariat is regarded as incompetent both technically and managerially. This again is a harsh verdict in light of lack of funds and lack of work permit for the regional coordinator. However, the issue of relationships within the region being personalised needs to be solved. It was felt that the Regional Coordinator and FORUM SYD Programme Officer personalised ECOVIC and made unilateral decisions not supported by any of the systems in place. This unilateralism is worsened by the fact that the Regional Coordinator has not yet gotten his work permit that he is technically operating informally or illegally for that matter. It was noted by the consultants that ECOVIC officials seemed to have been beholden to personal relationships rather than the organisation. While personal relationships would always develop amongst individuals in an organisation, the problem seemed more the use of these relationships to subvert the good of the organisation. We have earlier noted the complaints from ECOVIC regional officials that they felt that FORUM SYD officials were very protective of the Regional Coordinator, and more or less ignored the constitutional positions taken by the Regional Chair of ECOVIC.

Most interviewees when asked whether they thought ECOVIC could absorb increased sums of money in its current state; their answer was 'yes' and 'no'. It was felt that the chapters are more or less ready to get into substantial programmes, but the region needed substantial strengthening. Models for reviving the region included:

- Revolving secretariats: alignment of policy making with the secretariat;
- Temporary running of Regional Office by one of the chapters;
- Sida LVI could play a more direct role with the Chapters¹²;

¹² ECOVIC Uganda feel that Sida should fund ECOVIC (Uganda) directly, even as it explores other ways of funding the region.

- Putting only a secretariat at the region, with the RGC being replaced by the officials from the national chapters;
- Having national chapter secretariats renamed regional; thus having three regional secretariats; one in each country. These would double as national and regional secretariats.

We think that this is a matter that needs to be debated more to enable a more nuanced solution to the problem, as each of the suggestions above bring with it some challenges.

Empowerment of Communities

The key purpose of strengthening ECOVIC was to enable ‘poor people to solve their own problems, improve their living conditions and basic needs’¹³. This role seem to be very present in the minds of ECOVIC and FORUM SYD officials, and there is evidence, from the Ugandan Chapter that lack of funds is one of the major reasons why it is not being actively realised.

Connections to the grassroots must be worked carefully in light of insights from Uganda Chapter. In Uganda, the District Chapter removal has resulted in unfunded mandate of NGO Focus Points. There are transparency issues when members of a Focal Point are emasculation of the national secretariats to be more effective in reaching the grassroots. In Kenya, where they have the district structures, these should only be retained for loose coordination purposes. Even in Uganda, this is what was agreed, to retain the Districts as mobilisation centres, only, but this is yet to be reflected in policy and practice¹⁴. However, better facilitation and more programme officers should be deployed at the national secretariat. Basic means of transport, e.g. motor cycles would enable these programme officers to reach individual CSOs.

ECOVIC is successful in mobilization of local communities. However this mobilisation has been characterised by incorrect promises and sometimes lies to the local communities. This has partly led to unrealistic expectations, which need to be corrected. These promises by some officials also helped mystify ECOVIC to its members. In Kenya, for example, there seemed to be a lot of vagueness from members of local groups about what ECOVIC actually was and what it did. In fact many did not seem to appreciate that they were meant to be the ‘owners’ of ECOVIC.

Communities expected that they would be empowered to implement projects on behalf of ECOVIC. This still seems to be the expectation, even amongst top ECOVIC leadership at national level. It is unclear the extent to which communities expected that their capacity building would be linked more to the extent to which they would be able to handle their own projects, regardless of the projects’ origins. Now ECOVIC is both the umbrella organization and the implementing agency for all of its few projects. Linked with this is the expectation that funding would trickle down to member organisations and individuals. This is not happening as fast as member organisations would have wished.

Information does not flow from top ECOVIC Region and FORUM SYD to the Chapters and Grassroots; or vice versa. In Kenya and Tanzania, the unfunded local structures relying on voluntary leadership are not doing this adequately. In Uganda the Focal NGO approach is equally unfunded and there are complaints amongst both these Focal Points that they are inadequately capacitated, while the latter sometimes don’t receive information because of local differences amongst CSOs. Member organizations complain that when they forward proposals to ECOVIC but they don’t get responses.

¹³ Proposal page 16.

¹⁴ Muhereza, F., *et al.* (2006) MS Uganda Country Programme Assessment (CPA), 2006. Partner Assessment Report – East African Communities Organisation for Management of Lake Victoria Resources (ECOVIC), Jinja, p7.

On the whole members have taken part in general activities like tree planting. They have also directly taken part in the much appreciated programme together with the fisheries departments in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania; the establishment of the Beach Management Units, BMUs, as highlighted in the previous section. In Uganda they are involved in several water and sanitation projects.

4. Sustainability

Introduction: the Sustainability Framework

The Swedish LVI sustainability framework is based on the latest international protocol, WSSD, Johannesburg 2002, bridging green and the brown agendas (dealing simultaneously with environmental, socio-economic and political, governance and institutional issues). Sida recognizes the five areas suggested by the UN-Secretary General as demanding particular attention, namely: water and sanitation; health; agriculture and food security; energy; and biodiversity¹⁵. Support for ECOVIC on the basis of larger sustainability debates was suitable, as its member organizations have activities that span all these five priority areas. LVI has identified five areas of activity which relate to the sustainable development framework as prioritized in the WSSD, namely¹⁶:

- Capacity building for sustainable development;
- Empowering communities and individuals;
- Sound environment and sustainable use of natural resources;
- Combating HIV/AIDS; and
- Private sector development for economic growth.

In terms of LVI CSOs support, the ECOVIC pilot seems to fit mainly in the area of ‘capacity building for sustainable development’; and ‘empowering communities and individuals’. In fact one can argue that the two goals of the FORUM SYD – ECOVIC pilot were: empowering community and individuals; and institutional capacity building to engage with sustainable development (ECOVIC as regional representative of CSOs)¹⁷. This is why in our analysis we have focused on ‘institutional and financial sustainability’, needed for ECOVIC to be able to deliver on its other goals.

Institutional Sustainability

In one regard ECOVIC has been designed as an institution that can deliver on sustainability issues. The question is whether it has reached a level where it can do this with minimum support from Sida. As reflected earlier ECOVIC through this partnership has developed some institutional and governance structures. But these are not running smoothly, especially at regional level. These institutional and governance structures seem to be maturing at chapter level. Some work still needs to be done both at the Secretariat and in refinement of policies, constitutions and programmes.

¹⁵ Strategy for Swedish Support to the Lake Victoria Basin, September 2004–December 2006.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

¹⁷ Funding proposal, page 16.

In terms of organisational structure there is need to review the ways ECOVIC connects to its members. While in Kenya there is the District Chapter, which are not operational because of lack of funds, Ugandans abolished it because of lack of funds and also for practical reasons after implementing it for a short while. Tanzania has an even more complex four tier system. FORUM SYD feared that one of the problems of ECOVIC was the untenable and unsustainable bureaucracy that its structures enabled. This position is correct even now. It is the view of the consultants that adequately staffed, appropriately capacitated national secretariats are adequate to do the current work of ECOVIC through well trained programme officers. The bureaucracy of the districts should only be introduced later, when the organisation has the wherewithal and has streamlined their operations. Currently these local structures are untenable.

ECOVIC has not matured as a network¹⁸ of CSOs in the Lake Victoria region. The national chapters have made a lot of progress, but the challenge remains on strengthening regionalism. Currently, ECOVIC as an organisation is unable to deal with heterogeneity of its national chapters and member groups. There is a strong feeling that the organization should work as an international bureaucracy, hence the efforts to homogenize the constitutions and other structures. While this has to be done for practical reasons, developing a sustainable institution must take into consideration the richness brought by the unique differences of the national chapters. The focus should not be on superficial homogeneity; rather it should be on celebrating unity in diversity.

Another danger to the development of a sustainable institution is the mobility and commitment of ECOVIC staff. The mid-term review showed that ECOVIC staff needed to be better remunerated and facilitated to do their work. The danger with low remuneration is lack of commitment from the staff and inability to attract the calibre of staff that is likely to add value in managing ECOVIC as a regional organization. These together with political interests undermine the quality of the leaders that ECOVIC is able to attract and retain. Further it was felt that the practice of employing former policy makers within ECOVIC into the Secretariat has a potential of undermining the performance of the organization, where former officials would find it difficult taking instruction from their former colleagues.

Financial Sustainability

ECOVIC is still very weak financially. As an organization, apart from the Ugandan Chapter, it is totally dependent on Sida support. Financial policies and mechanisms had been put in place with the assistance of FORUM SYD. However, they do not seem to be adhered to. The auditors KPMG reported lack of cash counts, unsupported payments, unauthorized payments, and unauthorized loans to staff. It highlighted that the Tanzanian Chapter accounting did not and was not intended to comply with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice¹⁹. These same issues were also raised with regard to the Regional Office²⁰. There is need to tighten financial controls within ECOVIC.

ECOVIC Kenya is wholly dependent of Sida support. In fact its operations have stalled awaiting further Sida funding. ECOVIC Tanzania has started picking up, and has shown a greater potential towards financial sustainability. ECOVIC Region is also wholly dependent on Sida support. When we asked the question whether members of ECOVIC have been able to raise funds for ECOVIC, and not merely for their organizations, it became clear that there are no structures, policies and even practical

¹⁸ A network is a complex system, or a set-up, with sets of connections, arrangements, intercommunication, associations and contacts. The latter implies meeting, making of contacts, exchanges and interactions among persons. The purpose of such a 'system' or 'interaction' is for 'exchange of information, contacts, and experience for professional or social purposes' to foster relationships and to allow efficient use of resources (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002: 1910 in Omenya 2006).

¹⁹ KPMG, Statements of Receipts and Payments for the Seventeen Months Period ended 31 December 2004, Tanzania Chapter, pages 6 and 7.

²⁰ KPMG, Statements of Receipts and Payments for the Seventeen Months Period ended 31 December 2004, ECOVIC Regional Office, pages 6 and 7.

approaches of raising money for the organization. The only slight deviation from this worrying trend was the Ugandan Chapter, which through MS Uganda had established a fundraising strategy, and appointed a committee to help in fundraising. As of the time of the evaluation the committee had not started doing anything in this regard. MS has suggested yet another model to the Ugandan Chapter, where a qualified fundraiser could work with the Chapter to help them raise funds for their proposals. These efforts are laudable although they have not started yielding any results yet. There are lessons that this partnership can learn from MS Uganda's efforts. However, the issue of accountability in fundraising, which has been discussed in ECOVIC before, should also be adhered to.

5. Impact of the Partnership

Introduction

By now it is rather obvious that the impact of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership is much contested by both the partners and the communities in the Lake Victoria region. Whilst it is possible to completely dismiss the entire partnership as unproductive, close scrutiny reveals areas of change, in others potential areas for impact and the rest as aspects where a positive impact may not be easily forthcoming. In this section, we explore the question of the impact of the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD partnership in four broad areas, namely: FORUM SYD support to ECOVIC; the viability of ECOVIC as a Regional Network; ECOVIC's impact on the communities; and Policy Change and Advocacy.

FORUM SYD Support to ECOVIC

The preceding sections of this report have revealed that FORUM SYD's support, especially capacity building to ECOVIC during this period of the pilot partnership was generally unsatisfactory. This view (that the capacity building support was inadequate) then suggests that in favourable circumstances, such support would have radically transformed ECOVIC into a much formidable organisation bringing together and articulating civil society interests in the Lake Victoria region.

ECOVIC at the Chapters and East Africa Region level, acknowledge the receipt of training in leadership, financial management, planning and general management. At the community level, these training sessions even though exciting, were woefully inadequate. Several leaders of ECOVIC also benefited from a variety of training sessions and retreats. Although these were slightly longer, like the training sessions at the community level, training offered to ECOVIC leadership was equally too short to be effective. In this evaluation we are convinced, like the communities and much of ECOVIC leadership that with the very thin spread of training offered, it was highly unlikely that it would be efficient let alone be effective.

At the Chapter level, FORUM SYD was most effective in the Tanzania Chapter. Both FORUM SYD and the membership of the Tanzania Chapter acknowledge the positive changes, for example, accounting, financial management, conflict management and leadership development that have occurred especially in the last year of the pilot partnership. From a Chapter that was characterised by much conflict, confusion and dissatisfaction with the Chapter leadership, there was evidence of some change and potential for even greater transformation. Unsurprisingly, the other Chapters feel that FORUM SYD has too intimately involved in the growth the Tanzania Chapter to allow for evenly spread growth of the entire ECOVIC. At a broader level, although necessary, the FORUM SYD support to the Tanzania Chapter appears beyond the normal call of duty for the former.

Overall, although the capacity of ECOVIC has somewhat improved as a result of FORUM SYD's support, ECOVIC remains generally weak. Current areas of weakness include: funding, operationalising ECOVIC; its regionality and/or as an international organisation yet retaining a unique identity as a transborder community of local organisations. We now turn to consider the impact of FORUM SYD support to ECOVIC as a regional network.

Viability of ECOVIC as a Regional Network

In considering the viability of ECOVIC as a Regional Network, at least two issues are important. First is the soundness of the idea of ECOVIC or its justification; and second, the likelihood that the ideal of ECOVIC would after all be realised. On the first account, there is considerable agreement that the idea and ideals of ECOVIC remain noble and relevant to the communities in the Lake Victoria basin. Even when expressing doubts about its future, ECOVIC is no doubt considered useful if certain conditions were nurtured. In this evaluation, whilst we generally agree with the view that ECOVIC as idea/ideal is feasible, we sound some caution that this may not always be the case. That the ECOVIC idea has hitherto been viable does not mean that it naturally remain into both the close and distant future.

This evaluation also finds that operationalisation of ECOVIC – translating the idea into real and meaningful action has been complicated. In the preceding sections (see Performance of ECOVIC as a Regional Network) it is evident that whilst ECOVIC at the Chapters' level is generally relevant, its operation at both the East Africa Region level and as a whole organisation is at best indistinct. In some respects, some valid questions about the ownership of both the idea and the organisation – ECOVIC emerge and remain unresolved. Yet in other respects, it is justifiable to argue that the reason(s) for the formation of ECOVIC and the general environment in the Lake Victoria basin are so complicated that the challenges ECOVIC faces in its operationalisation are not entirely unexpected.

The ambiguities of the role of ECOVIC, especially its Secretariat at the East Africa Region level notwithstanding, ECOVIC remains, at least in the nearest future, viable. However, the viability of ECOVIC as a Regional Network is currently stymied by six main issues. These include: Petty Nationalism; Unwieldy organisational structure; Weak leadership; Uncritical capacity building; politically besieged secretariats; credible threats from members and partners.

ECOVIC Impact on Communities

The most obvious impact ECOVIC has had on the communities in the Lake Victoria region/basin is community mobilisation. The challenges ECOVIC continues to suffer invariably obscure this particular impact. The twin expectation of being benefactor to communities and clearing house for donors held by both ECOVIC and the communities has been a key source of frustration and discouragement to the communities and ECOVIC. Moreover, considering the resources that have been available to ECOVIC and their result in uniting and mobilising local communities living in the Lake Victoria basin, it is reasonable to argue that this is an important impact. Although the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership is just over three years, ECOVIC as an organisation is close to ten years. The communities, even with some difficulty, generally understand ECOVIC as their organisation and recognise promoting unity among the communities living in the Lake Victoria basin as a significant impact directly attributed to the mobilisation efforts of ECOVIC.

On the contrary, as ECOVIC grapples with operationalising the idea of ECOVIC and seeks to become more relevant to the communities, ownership and control of innovative community initiatives and other development processes shows signs of producing negative impacts in the communities. Hitherto, it is generally understood that since the communities (especially Community Based Organisations) and

ECOVIC have common goals – improving the lives of the communities in the Lake Victoria basin, then the communities activities and success are the same as ECOVIC's. Furthermore, there is an emerging trend where ECOVIC especially at the East Africa Region level and to some extent at the National Chapters' level exhibit tendencies to control and determine the direction of development at the community level. In some of the countries this tendency for control has been rejected by the communities. Nonetheless, the point here is that an uncritical tendency to restrict and control communities as seen in the current hierarchical structure of ECOVIC also presents serious threats to an otherwise successful impact of community mobilisation.

ECOVIC, Policy Change and Advocacy in East Africa

The absence of strong, clear and credible voices of civil society on the sustainable development of the Lake Victoria basin remains a critical space that ECOVIC could productively occupy at the East Africa level. During the pilot partnership, ECOVIC has, in a peripheral way participated in policy change. Although this was ECOVIC's hallmark in its early days – the dying Lake Victoria discourse, with time ECOVIC's presence and voice in key matters facing the residents of the Lake Victoria basin has been noticeably weak and in some cases uncertain. For instance, the current National debate on the documentary *Darwin's Nightmare* that among other things relates the importance of the Nile Perch in the exploitation of the people in the Lake Victoria basin raging on in Tanzania has continued with limited participation of ECOVIC.

Further, it is our view that ECOVIC's greatest asset unlike its membership is its unique form as an umbrella organisation for local organisations in the lake basin throughout the three East African nations. This places ECOVIC in both prestigious positions that its members on their own are unlikely to occupy like at the East African Community, the East Africa Legislative Assembly as well as in other important positions at the national level within any of the three countries. But occupying these prestigious positions also foists upon ECOVIC enormous responsibilities, especially with respect to advocacy and policy formulation/influencing. It is now clear that much of the reasons for the continued degradation of the Lake Victoria and deterioration of lives of people in this region lie in unfavourable policies including legal frameworks. Thus, we argue, that for the goal of improving the livelihoods of the Lake Victoria basin communities through sustainable management of natural resources a lot of change must occur at the policy level and the legal frameworks of the three countries. Capacity for evidence-based advocacy for policy change would supremely enhance ECOVIC standing in performing this role. However, with the current challenges occupying ECOVIC psyche as an organisation, it is not possible to engage in policy change and advocacy concerns in East Africa.

Erstwhile members of ECOVIC like OSIENALA have conducted useful research a topical issues in the Lake Victoria basin. But these efforts, in relation to the broad policy change agenda in the region, though useful are inadequate. ECOVIC's contribution in this respect, in addition to sharing real-life experiences from the communities would further strengthen the case for policy changing especially in cases where such policy conditions further disadvantage these communities. With its membership, its coverage and knowledge of the conditions in the Lake Victoria basin, ECOVIC would invariably bring a credible and legitimate voice of the disadvantaged to the broader policy discourses and policy changes in the region. It is noted that FORUM SYD has had a lobby advisor attached to ECOVIC from 2005.

6. Next Steps: Lessons, Input into the Next LVI Strategy and Recommendations

Introduction

As we draw to the end of this report, it is important to recast the main objectives of the evaluation. These were four-fold: evaluating the organizational capacity and performance of FORUM SYD and its collaboration with regional capacity building programmes of ECOVIC; establish the organisational capacity of ECOVIC, Identify potential areas of improvement and to propose strategic inputs to the LVI Strategy in 2007 (see Terms of Reference for details). Hitherto, we are of the view that whilst there may be some areas of success, in general, the pilot partnership did not realise its objective of strengthening ECOVIC; thus ECOVIC remains weak and much vulnerable. Moreover, the challenges that have faced the pilot partnership, notwithstanding, there is a lot that can be improved on and a lot can be learnt from this pilot. No doubt, ECOVIC as an idea remains tenable. It is against this background that we both make recommendations for strengthening ECOVIC and envision, what in our view may form strategic inputs into the Sida Lake Victoria Initiative in 2007.

We present the rest of this Chapter in three main parts. First, we reflect on the key lessons that the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnerships provides. This is followed by some thoughts on the strategic inputs to the Lake Victoria Initiative Strategy in 2007 and finally the recommendations for strengthening ECOVIC.

Key Lessons

This evaluation sought to establish lessons that could be learnt from the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership. We note there may well be several lessons that are availed from this pilot. However, our appreciation of these lessons is limited to the interaction during the evaluation and analyses of the material we collected during this process. It is, thus, not possible to capture the entire gamut of lessons that can be drawn from such a pilot partnership. This evaluation, nonetheless, yields the following lessons.

First, ordinarily, the evaluation of capacity building is difficult. In the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership, evidently, insufficient preparation for the said capacity building was done. Unsurprisingly, during the evaluation, establishing the quantity and quality of capacity building effort was not tenable. Moreover, even in the bridging fund period, there is no evidence of learning to carefully plan for capacity building. Thorough preparation for capacity building while does not make its evaluation less difficult, it certainly makes it manageable and verifiable. However capacity cannot be built solely on the basis of external interventions, both the processes and products must be owned.

Second, donors should not expect that civil society organisations are ready-made implementation partners or that their claim for stakeholder participation is always valid. Although community based organisations have a much better record and credibility in this regard, careful vetting, including reliable situational analyses and field visits is greatly needed. Moreover, donors must understand that their conditions will invariably affect the shape of the civil society sector in the region. Well negotiated, performance-based long term support that allows an organisation like ECOVIC to learn and develop rather than one-off project funding is more likely to yield results, at least in terms of a strengthened civil society. Further there is need to seek an intervention that would balance institutional strengthening and direct activities.

Third, support to the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership did not yield the outcomes that either party anticipated. Arguably, the level of support to ECOVIC was inadequate for a relatively young and unsophisticated organisation. Although stated in the agreements, the parties had not clarified with each other the quantity and quality of outcomes expected and interests did not converge to the degree anticipated. Inevitably, the form of support encouraged a rapid growth of the superstructure that ECOVIC is today. The current search for funds to sustain staff, offices and other recurrent costs risks driving ECOVIC into activities run by secretariat rather than enable its members to do so. The potential damage such a development can inflict on ECOVIC should be a reminder that interventions can cause as much harm as good if not well designed and managed. Further the tendency of ECOVIC board members to become employees of the organisation and also to implement programmes is an area that will cause conflicts.

Fourth, participation of stakeholders is critical to the effectiveness of pilot partnerships. A lack of participation in planning, management and monitoring and evaluation commonly afflicts a pilot partnership and implementation of its programmes. It is even much more significant in policy and advocacy work where legitimacy and evidence to support arguments and positions are required. Legitimacy and good governance are strengthened through regular communication with the membership.

Fifth, the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership has seldom engaged directly in the advocacy agenda. In fact, most civil society organisations in the Lake Victoria region have scarcely done so. Hitherto, policy work in the region remains the province of academics, international NGOs, consultants and some policy institutes, advocating to governments the work of specialist campaigners. Many civil society organisations continue to try to solve the problems directly rather than engaging with governments. In the case of ECOVIC this policy role must be understood in the context of its infancy and policy making processes in the region, which are hardly inclusive. This only means that CSOs, including ECOVIC must purposely influence policy.

Sixth, there are also lessons that one learns in relation to the dynamics of running a regional network NGO. There is need to draw a clear line between governance and management issues in such structures. Elected officials should strictly perform only policy issues, and leave management to the Secretariats. Mechanisms of accountability should be carefully built into the organisation. Regionalism requires inculcation of a culture of respect for unity in diversity and respectful interaction between different parts. This should be supported with robust communication mechanisms. Further, network organisations, which are also regional, are complex organisations that take time to build. This means that they must transform structurally, before they eventually mature. This transformation should be understood as a necessary good, not merely as a failure of previous efforts.

Finally, within ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership it is variously argued that FORUM SYD was a reluctant partner only persuaded by Sida to work with ECOVIC, thus to that extent the partnership was donor-driven. A reluctant FORUM SYD engaged in a pilot partnership with what eventually emerges as a much weaker ECOVIC. Different expectations coupled with different understanding of the roles of the partners undermined the conditions for a vibrant and productive partnership. In some instances it could then be reasonable to argue that the difficult relations were directly related to a weak ECOVIC. It is widely understood that ECOVIC suffered serious organizational weaknesses at the inception of the partnership. These ranged from leadership to governance; lack of staff to weak organizational structures and systems; lack of funds to volunteers with inadequate skills among many other weaknesses. Addressing organisation weaknesses in ECOVIC has not brought about immediate change.

The argument that if ECOVIC was strong, then relations among partners would not have been characterized by a frosty start and a lot more programme time would have been expended on implementation as opposed to managing and nurturing relationships seems plausible. It could be further argued that if more programme time was spent on capacity building, then there would have been increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Some Inputs into the Lake Victoria Initiative Strategy 2008–2010

The LVI strategy must be understood within the various layers of its context, from local to global. The main objective of the East African Community is: “prosperity for the population of the region in a healthy and sustainably managed environment that offers equal benefits for all”²¹. This also doubles as the regional vision for the Lake Victoria Basin. The overall objective of Swedish support is to: “contribute to poverty reduction within a sustainable development framework”²². The objective is premised on the tenets of sustainability based on *the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, Johannesburg, 2002; *the UN Millennium Development Goals*; and some inspiration from *the Baltic Sea Cooperation*²³. The common context of this support is the Lake Victoria basin, including its: geographical, socio-politico-economic, environmental and institutional aspects. Even the Swedish support for the Nile Basin, is currently focused on the Lake Victoria area. The bilateral development cooperation between Sweden and Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in various areas, is hinged on poverty reduction. These arenas of influence are synthesised into five areas of activity for purposes of operationalisation in the LVI strategy, namely: capacity building for sustainable urban development; empowering communities and individuals; sound environmental and sustainable use of natural resources; combating HIV/AIDS and private sector development for economic growth. The overall Swedish intervention in the region is hinged on three core concepts: “development”, “sustainability” and “equity”.

There are key insights that can be drawn from the ECOVIC/FORUM SYD Partnership for the future LVI strategy development. They are in two broad categories: conceptual and operational. They fit into the following areas: partnerships/networks; process/product; regionalism; capacity building; empowering communities and individuals; sound environment; coordination; ownership and conflict resolution.

Although the partnership model has been assumed to imply equality of participation, hence equality of strength of the partners, particularly when it comes to collaboration between Swedish CSOs and the CSOs along the Lake Victoria, this evaluation reveals that such assumptions are generally incorrect because of a number of weaknesses of the CSOs along the lake. As such then more models of partnership, including direct involvement in building of the local CSOs to deal adequately with their activities around the lake could be explored in future. Further, regarding the collaboration of various groups working around the Lake, there is needed to explore ‘functional networks approach’. This is because of the variety of development, capacities, strength and the sectors in which these groups are located. A strategy that assumes homogeneity, particularly with regard to CSOs is likely to run into a lot of problems, as either weaker CSOs are excluded, or stronger ones leave the network when they have funding from elsewhere. Besides, such strategy is not likely to benefit from cross capacitating by the various actors.

The LVI strategy has made an overt attempt to support process rather than direct programmes only. This is a good approach, particularly in light of the fact that many donors are supporting activities, rather than institutional development towards sustainability. In ECOVIC, support of process has translated into institutional development. At this stage there is no programme support. The communities around the lake however expect that once their institution/s has been supported, they will get

²¹ Strategy for Swedish support to the Lake Victoria Basin, September 2004–December 2006, p3.

²² *Ibid*, p15

²³ *Ibid*, p19.

financial support to run their programmes (what we have referred to as ‘product’). It is our opinion that even if LVI is emphasising support for processes, in some organisations there is need for direct programme support to test the outcome of these processes. This is in light of the fact that it takes sometime for organisations like ECOVIC to gain full confidence of other major donors whom they may have not worked with hitherto.

Although Sida’s overall policy and the LVI strategy has a major focus on regionalism, the insight from this study is that regionalism takes time to develop. This has been the experience of the East African Community and similarly it has been the experience of regional government bodies like Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation (LVFO). These institutions have taken more than a decade to develop, yet they are still not fully functional as regional organisations. We see the same challenges in organisations like ECOVIC. We have highlighted several details of these challenges in the report. While monolithic organisations confined within one political economy are likely to develop fast and smoothly with donor support, regional organisations take longer time to develop. There should be a clear differentiation in the framework for support for CSOs around the lake, on the basis of whether they are regional or national, and whether they are monolithic or umbrella organisations. The development challenges and outcome of activities of regional CSOs will have more bottlenecks than national CSOs. Yet the regional organisations are going to be very useful in the future, when contestation of natural resources will go beyond national boundaries.

The key message that comes through from this review is that capacity building for more complex regional organisations like ECOVIC needs to be more succinctly spelt out than general capacity building that could be applicable to smaller national NGOs. Another insight is that capacity building needs of the former organisations are complex and on going. For this reason any partnership based on capacity building should spell out clearly in which areas the capacity is going to be built. Further, capacity building need not be ‘completed’ before any projects can be supported by LVI. LVI can assess the varying capacities of the said organisations and see what sorts of activities can be done by the organisations. In the case of a regional network, an approach that considers unity in diversity is recommended. In ECOVIC for example, the various chapters have very different capacities to undertake different projects, yet in practice they are assumed to be monolithic.

Empowerment of individuals and communities is one area where there are no clear strategies within LVI of achievement of empowerment. While various organisations can achieve this through representation of the communities, the extent to which this happens in regional organisations is limited, particularly when they have been designed like bureaucracies. For example, members of ECOVIC hardly consider ECOVIC as an organisation that they own and control; rather they consider it as a different organisation, which can be beneficial to their own organisations. More direct linkages with the grassroots and communities need to be designed, beyond the simple mechanisms of representative democracy. Spaces for direct participation of communities in decision making processes, direct access of communities to technical support through programme officers in regional organisations, support for community programmes through umbrella organisations like ECOVIC should be actively explored. Additionally, outcomes of empowerment of individuals and communities may not be accurately measurable at the end of every funding period, particularly for the short term, pilot type support.

Finally, there are the areas of communication, coordination and conflict resolution. Regional organisations like ECOVIC need to have very well worked out communication strategies so that information can flow vertically from the regional structures to the grassroots and also horizontally to other stakeholders working in the region. Currently this seems to be happening only on a case by case basis rather than as a part of built in mechanism in the organisations supported through LVI. For example it appeared that one chapter of ECOVIC had made a lot more inroads into lateral communication, while the other two did not engage with this issue as vigorously. The same applies to other organisations supported by Sida in the region. While LVI has put some coordination mechanisms for the different

groups they support, this does not seem to be uniformly felt by the different actors. Either the strategy is weak, inappropriate or it could be that the dynamics of ECOVIC has not enabled leaders within the organisation to appreciate the impact of this coordination.

Recommendations: Ensuring Sustainability of ECOVIC

As we consider some recommendations for strengthening ECOVIC in a post ECOVIC/FORUM SYD pilot partnership environment, we appreciate that the relationship between ECOVIC and FORUM SYD was essentially for learning and strengthening. We also note that whilst ECOVIC may well continue in existence even after the partnership ends and perhaps even without FORUM SYD, it will clearly, as a much weakened and vulnerable organisation. Yet with clearly designed and managed support, there is no doubt that ECOVIC could be at the threshold of becoming a much stronger and well respected organisation in the Lake Victoria region. For ECOVIC to become such a strong and well-respected organisation, however, it will be important for the transition from the pilot partnership to further support to be done under stringent yet agreed performance conditions. This could involve a specific grant to ECOVIC to reorganise itself and then set in place conditions (these can be commonly identified by ECOVIC, FORUM SYD and Sida at the conclusion of this evaluation) for more long term recommendations we outline below.

First, the gains that have been made in the establishment of the Secretariats must be consolidated by filling up the posts that have been envisaged in the regional Secretariat and by engaging appropriate Programme Officers, who can both act as technical resource persons and also linkages to the grassroots. Debate must be opened now to reconceptualise ECOVIC Region, so that all the Chapters have a regional organisation that they want, rather than the current one, which they have very little control over.

Second, there is need for ECOVIC Region and Chapters to seek other partners so that they are not totally dependent on Sida for funding. Overt mechanisms to achieve this must be debated, developed and implemented. In this regard it is only the Uganda chapter which is guaranteed of MS Uganda's support; 'even if Sida were to stop supporting ECOVIC'. But the chapter is still not totally sustainable institutionally, and just like the Kenyan and Ugandan Chapters must also seek to diversify their support base.

Third, ECOVIC does not have any conflict resolving mechanisms. The more complex the parameters an organisation has to deal with, e.g. programmatically, politically, regionally, etc., the more likely are conflicts to arise. Regional bodies working around the lake need to have very clear and elaborate conflict resolution mechanisms. ECOVIC only relies on the legal instruments of their rather weak constitutions and the legal frameworks in the countries where 'the region' and 'the chapters' are registered. This is not good at all. ECOVIC does not even have a board where some of these issues can be referred. We recommend that the organisations working around the lake, particularly the ones working regionally develop proper conflict resolving mechanisms. There is need for ECOVIC to start exploring options for development of inbuilt problem solving mechanisms. The belligerent legal approach to solving problems will only help cripple the operations of the organisation. The envisaged mechanism could be in form of a Board of Trustees or a Board of Directors drawn from pre-eminent people from outside of the organization who could be relied on for reference. They can also arbitrate in case no agreement is being reached by the belligerent parties.

Finally, there is need for development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and development of indicators to measure outcomes. This was actually envisaged in the partnership proposal by FORUM SYD, but operationalising it needs to be tightened. This will help the organisation review its progress even before external audits and reviews are done by the donor. These would include:

- Formulation of agreements;
- A situational analysis and needs assessment;
- Reconceptualisation of the region from scratch;
- Refinement of ECOVIC's structure; region and focus organizations;
- Development of a communication strategy, both within ECOVIC and also in relation to the other stakeholders;
- Development of key Performance Indicators and also need for development of the projects Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms.

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Annex 1 Terms of Reference

1. Background

Sida recognises the role of civil society organisations in contributing to institutional, community and individual empowerment and sustainable development. Sida through Lake Victoria Initiative (LVI) is supporting such initiative through the partnership of East African Communities Organisation for management of Lake Victoria Resources (ECOVIC) and Forum Syd (Pilot Partnership).

ECOVIC is a regional forum/network for local NGOs and CBOs in Lake Victoria region founded in 1998 to address problems which directly affect communities in the Lake Basin. ECOVIC consists of the regional forum, country chapters (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and its members and lower levels. The forum was formed to *create a regional institutional arrangement that would promote meaningful participation of the riparian communities in the three East African countries* also known as chapters.

Forum Syd (Swedish NGO Centre for Development Cooperation) acts as a platform for cooperation between Swedish NGOs and the local NGOs. Forum Syd works with various local organisations within East Africa. It is a link through which Sida channelled its financial support to ECOVIC. It has a capacity building, advisory, coordination as well as a monitoring role to ECOVIC.

Sida has through Forum Syd supported ECOVIC capacity building pilot programmes since July 2003 which ended in December 2004, when the partnership came into effect. An interim review for the pilot partnership was carried out in 2004. A bridging period for this partnership was requested and approved for 6 months ending June 2005 and was subsequently extended to *December 2005 (period of activity implementation)*. The bridging period supported resulted from the recommendation of the Interim review of the Pilot Partnership of November 2004.

The aim of the pilot partnership was to empower and build the capacity of ECOVIC to achieve its mission and overall objectives at the regional and chapter level. The short term objectives of the partnership were:

- *To strengthen the capacity of leaders and officers to effectively manage ECOVIC's structure and activities (Institutional capacity building).*
- *To empower member organisations to effectively manage their organisations and their activities.*

The aim of the bridging period was to follow up on the recommendations from the interim review²⁴. It was to allow time for designing the long term partnership based on strategic choices agreeable by ECOVIC and Forum Syd. Specific objectives included:

- *To strengthen ECOVIC – to contribute to well functioning secretariats with enhanced governance structure, roles and responsibilities of the secretariats clearly defined and respected.*
- *To enable ECOVIC to respond to members' and community needs and concerns, inform and influence policy and decision making processes at all levels.*
- *To develop partnership and partnership concept*
- *To develop Forum Syd Lake Victoria programme*

The agreement period for support to this programme will come to an end in *May 2006 (end of agreement period – including reporting time)*. It is a Sida requirement, that at the end of any agreement period of any

²⁴ Interim review of the Pilot Partnership between ECOVIC and Forum Syd supported by Sida – November 2004

support, an evaluation should be undertaken to measure any achievements and document any lessons and experiences from this partnership. LVI considers it essential to have an evaluation of support to ECOVIC collaboration with Forum Syd to be taken into account in the next strategy development.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The aim of this exercise is three fold:

- Evaluate the Sida supported collaboration between Forum Syd and regional capacity building programmes of ECOVIC and its country chapters – including Forum Syd’s organisational capacities and performance (specific to this partnership) and partnership achievements – (effectiveness and relevance)
- Evaluate the current organisational capacity of ECOVIC in relation to its roles as a regional network.
- Define ECOVIC’s potential areas of improvement for future (Sida) support and possible changes towards more effective and efficient implementation of similar programmes in future – (provide suggestions and recommendations to support decision making by Sida, ECOVIC and Forum Syd in future programming and organisation development)
- Propose strategic input to feed into the development of the new LVI strategy process in 2007

The evaluation will also endeavour to highlight the experiences and lessons learnt from this partnership for future guidance on how to improve the support of civil societies in the region within the Lake Victoria Initiative strategy framework.

3. Scope of Work

The evaluation will cover the pilot partnership period as well as the extension “the bridging period” thus covering the period from July 2003 to May 2006 (end of agreement period). The evaluation will look of the relevance and effectiveness of Forum Syd support programmes with ECOVIC as recipients and Sida as a donor. However, it will also highlight Forum Syd’s contribution on sustainability and overall impact. The study will also assess the contribution of Forum Syd technical support, identify weaknesses, and make recommendations that will be useful for its similar support in its partnerships beyond ECOVIC.

In terms of *relevance (both to LVI strategy and objectives of the partnership)*, the evaluation will assess:

- To what extent the support of this partnership has contributed to the achievement of empowerment of communities and individuals objectives as stated in the Strategy for Swedish Support to Lake Victoria
- Assess the contribution of the partnership in Regional ECOVIC performance as a network for civil society in the in the Lake Victoria Region.
- To what extent the support has enhanced the capacity of ECOVIC regional and its respective country chapters according to the objectives set in the pilot partnership including the bridging period.
- The what extent to which ECOVIC and its chapters including its members have participated and been involved in defining the interventions and capacity needs identified in the objectives
- Assess the strategy used in implementing the partnership

Effectiveness and efficiency – in relation to the partnership:

- To what extent has the partnership added value to ECOVIC and to what extent has Forum Syd realised the objectives of the partnership with ECOVIC (Regional, its respective country chapters and members).
- Assess the achievements of this partnership including the bridging period as per the objectives.(on regional level, country chapters and member organizations)
- Assess the role and contribution of ECOVIC in achievement/(non-achievement) of the laid out objectives
- Assess the extent to which the impact or changes in ECOVIC is as a result of the partnership or other factors
- Identify reasons for achievement and non-achievement of objectives.
- Assess the efficient use of resources and measures taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
- Assess the extent to which quality control mechanisms, including the organisation’s monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been developed over the period.
- Are the relevant partner institutions (ECOVIC and Forum Syd) characterised by good governance including effective management and organisation?
- How are lessons learned and knowledge gained from this partnership been institutionalised?
- Gaps and niches – what opportunities are not being taken advantage of
- To assess the overall viability of continued support to the ECOVIC

Impact

- Identify the positive and negative impacts on the objectives of partnership and support to ECOVIC (at regional, country chapters and on members)
- Assess the current organizational capacity of ECOVIC in its relation as a regional network – Identify the strength, weaknesses and recommend ways of improvement’
- Assess the impact of ECOVIC Regional mandate in relation/ contribution to ECOVIC Chapters and vice versa.
- Assess ECOVIC’s impact on riparian community as per its main objective.
- Evaluate the strength of ECOVIC to influence policy and contribute to regional setting agenda as a result of this partnership.
- Assess the overall perception of the partnership in achieving the set out objectives.
- What are the lessons learnt for future reference
- What were the challenges of the partnership that may need to be addressed in future?
- Make relevant recommendations for corrective actions for future partnerships and support to regional civil society organisations.

Sustainability

- Has ECOVIC developed the capacity to sustain its roles as a regional network?
- Were the interventions consistent with partners' priorities and effective demand?
- Were the interventions supported by relevant institutions, stakeholders etc?
- Has ECOVIC been able to bring on board other partners and have the financial and institutional capacity to maintain intervention benefits after donor support has come to an end?
- Depending on the response, how best could this be improved in future?

Based on an analysis and assessment of the above, and any other aspects that are deemed relevant, the consultant(s) shall aim to offer recommendations on the prospect for continued and future cooperation with, and support to ECOVIC. Additionally, the consultants shall provide recommendations on the ways in which the organisations and projects/programmes can be improved as well as alternative ways of support to ECOVIC.

The findings will guide Sida on decisions regarding future support to project/programme and cooperation with ECOVIC, as well as those organisations – of a similar profile. The evaluation will contribute to defining how LVI regional support adds value to empowerment of civil societies and communities, and thus further assist in the formulation of the new strategy in the same regard. Specific recommendations to feed in the next strategy process are important.

4. Methodology and Timeframe

4.1 Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out by means of a study of project/programme proposals, progress reports, and other relevant documentation, discussions with the implementing organisations (Forum Syd and ECOVIC). Interim Review of the Pilot Partnership of ECOVIC and Forum Syd Report, Special Audits' Report for Ecovic Regional and Tanzania Chapter should too be presented to the consultant by Forum Syd. Holding discussions, interviews with members of ECOVIC management teams (old and new), and beneficiaries through field visits when necessary as well as analysis of the design and implementation of planned activities, performance analysis, etc, will also be carried out. Forum Syd and ECOVIC (regional and Chapters) will assist in setting up meetings, interviews and so forth. The consultants should have an information validation briefing meeting for each chapter or institution from whom data was collected before proceeding to next country/institution. The team of consultants will travel within the region to make this possible.

The consultants will be granted access to all relevant documents and records, from both Sida and the implementing organisations (ECOVIC and Forum Syd). The consultant should study any relevant background material and make a record of all data that is required for the evaluation. The review will seek inputs from other key stakeholders to ECOVIC including donors. Consultation with regional key stakeholders such as East African community – EAC, and Lake Victoria Basin Commission – LVBC, etc is very important.

4.2 Timeframe

It is expected that the evaluation will be carried out within a period of 5 weeks from award; with approximately 1.5 weeks dedicated to report writing and submission to Sida. An initial/inception briefing meeting will take place between Sida and the consultant(s) on award of the contract commencement of the assignment.

5. Reporting

A draft report based on these terms of reference shall be submitted to the Embassy of Sweden, no later than two weeks after the completion of the evaluation. The Embassy will provide comments no later than 2 week after receiving the draft report, and the consultants will in turn submit one soft copy of the final report (and 4 copies hard copies) after one week of receiving comments/debriefing. The report will contain an executive summary with major findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

A meeting will be arranged at the Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi for a presentation of, and discussion on, the findings before the final submission.

Dates and other details for the commencement, reporting, debriefing, and completion of the evaluation will be specified in the contract between Sida and the consultants and should be included in the consultants planning.

6. Criteria of Evaluating Consultants

The evaluation will be carried out by a team of two professional consultants, one of which shall be the team leader with regional experience in project/programme monitoring and evaluation.

The team must also have the following:

- Demonstrated/documented theoretical and practical experience in project/programme implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- Sound knowledge of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) and regional approach in development
- Clear understanding of civil society organisation's (CSOs) coordination and networking as well as institutional capacity building for sustainable development
- Sound knowledge of East Africa and the Lake Victoria region
- Understanding Strategy for Swedish support to Lake Victoria Basin.
- Both consultants must be proficient in English.

List of some basic relevant documents

1. Strategy for Swedish Support to Lake Victoria Basin Region (2004–2007)
2. Interim Review of the pilot partnership Ecovic and forum Syd
3. Special Audit reports for Ecovic Regional and ECOVIC Tanzanian Chapter
4. Fund proposal submitted to Sida for pilot partnership and the bridging period
5. Programme reports from ECOVIC to Forum Syd and from Forum Syd to Sida
6. Constitutions of ECOVIC (Regional and Chapters)
7. Partnership agreement between ECOVIC and Forum Syd (Including job specifications for Forum Syd Development Work attached to ECOVIC)

NB: Consultant to list other relevant documents, ECOVIC and Forum Syd to give the consultant any other relevant documents not listed

Annex 2 List of Persons Interviewed

Kenya

1. Councilor Benson Ouko Ong'ete, Ag. Chairman Kenyan Chapter
2. Mwalimu Osano
3. Mr. Erastus Orwa, Regional Coordinator, Mwanza
4. Mr. James Olonde, Coordinator, Kenyan Chapter
5. Mr. Michael Yusuf Osman, Health, Education and Life (Heal Mwanza Office)
6. Ms. Sarah Kitsolo, Uganda
7. Mrs. Perez Watenthoo Isumba Women Group, Mihuru Bay, Kenya
8. Mrs. Rosalina Oguda, Isumba Women's Group
9. Mrs. Juliana Wasonga, Isumba Women's Group
10. Mrs. Margaret Nganga Isumba Women's Group
11. Mrs. Joyce Orondo, Isumba Women's Group
12. Mrs. Stella Akoth Justus, Isumba Women's Group
13. Mr. Vincent Ogwang, District Fisheries Officer, Homa Bay District
14. Mr. Valentine Okoth Lala, District Environment Officer
15. Mr. Simon Orondo, District Coordinator, Member National Chapter ECOVIC and member Isumba Women Group
16. Mchwaco, Group, Mihuru Bay, Kenya
17. Migori District Committee: John Okeyo, Chwodho Women Group; Erastus, Mugabo Group; Karumanga, Kibiko Beach, Mihuru Bay;
18. Councillor Osunga, Budalangi, Busia
19. Mr. Keefa Kawesa, Ag National Coordinator, Uganda.
20. Ms. Charity Mogambi, Public Health Officer, Migori District
21. Mr. Benson Ouko, Nyado District Committee, ECOVIC
22. Mr. Pison Tindi, Regional Vice Chairman, ECOVIC.
23. Ms. Isabelle Asamba Consultant, Mid Term Review, ECOVIC Kenya Chapter.
24. Dr. George Onyango, Consultant, Mid Term Review, ECOVIC Kenya, Chapter.
25. Dr. Obiero Ong'ang'a, OSIENALA
26. Dr. Musombi Mahunya, TAKWA Health Care Center/ECOVIC Tanzania Chapter
27. Ms. Betty Obbo, NAPE, Kampala/ECOVIC Uganda Chapter
28. Mr. Hussein Karmanga, Secretary KIBRO
29. Mr. Rasto Ouko Matwanga KIBRO
30. Mr. Hassan Gombania KIBRO
31. Mr. John Okeyo Elisha Chudho Group

32. Mr. George Kibebe Migori Distric
33. Mr. John Warange KIBRO
34. Mr. Robert Odhiambo Osano, Institute for Rural Development, Kenya
35. Mrs. Rose Angiro
36. *Kusa Community Learning Center*

Debrief session in Homa Bay

1. Mr. Benson Ongete
2. Mr. Pisson Tindi
3. Mr. James Olonde
4. Mr. Erastus Orwa
5. Mr. Odhiambo Osano
6. Mr. Omwanda

Uganda

1. Mr. Frank Muramuzi, Vice Chair Ugandan Chapter, National Association for Professional Environmentalists, Kampala (ECOVIC Member)
2. Mr. Richard Kimbowa, Deputy Secretary General, ECOVIC Regional Chapter, and Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development, Kampala (Ecovic Member)
3. Ms. Joyce Kawooya, Concerned Women Farmers Organisation of Rakai, Ssembabule, Masaka and Kalangala.
4. Mr. Japhes Mukiibi, Programme Officer, MS Uganda (ECOVIC Ug, partner), Kampala
5. Mr. George Wasonga, Programme Officer, LAVRAC, Entebbe,
6. Ms. Joyce Ikwaput, National Fisheries Department, Entebbe,
7. Ms. Florence Kasule, Executive Director, Buganda Development Association, Kampala
8. Ms. Diana Lwanga, Buganda Kingdom
9. Ms. Vicentia Kalongo, BDA Programme Officer
10. Mr. Alule Christopher, Ag. National Treasurer, ECOVIC Uganda (Member), Mayuge.
11. Ms Nantale Anne, National Association for Social and Education Advancement, Iganga, General Secreatry, Uganda Chapter, Iganga.
12. Mr. Patrick Kenyatta, Busia District Market Fish Management Council (BDMMC), Focus Organisation, ECOVIC Uganda, Busia
13. Mr. Maurice Ogama – Busia District Farmers Organisation (BDFOA), ECOVIC Member, Busia.
14. Mr. Rashid Mukaire, Accounts Assistant, ECOVIC Uganda, Secretariat, Jinja.
15. Mr. Keefa Kawesa, Second Interview, Former official, Acting Coordinator, ECOVIC Uganda, Jinja
16. Mr. Nkalanzi Nkalanzi, Uganda Fishermen Development Association, UFDA, ECOVIC Member, former National Chairman, ECOVIC
17. Mr. Frank Muhereeza, Consultant, Mid Term Review and Constitution, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala.

18. Ms. Caroline Kirema, Senior Economist, Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation (LVFO)
19. Mr. Thomas Maembe, Executive Secretary, LVFO.
20. Dr. Lucas Ndaula, National Fisheries Research Institute (FIRRI)
21. Ms Tabitha Kakuze, Regional Chairperson, ECOVIC Region.
22. Mr. Okalebo, Trainer, Participatory Poverty Assessment, ECOVIC Uganda – MS Uganda Partnership.
23. Eunice, Volunteer, Secretariat, ECOVIC Uganda.
24. Barbara, Office Assistant, ECOVIC Uganda.

Debrief Session in Jinja

1. Mr. Frank Muramuzi
2. Ms. Joyce Kawooya
3. Mr. Japhes Mukiibi
4. Ms. Diana Lwanga
5. Mr. Alule Christopher
6. Ms Nantale Anne
7. Mr. Patrick Kenyatta
8. Mr. Rashid Mukaire
9. Mr. Keefa Kawesa
10. Ms Tabitha Kakuze
11. Mr. Okalebo
12. Eunice
13. Barbara, and others.

Tanzania

1. Mr. Stanely Mattowo, Ministry of Water, Dar es Salaam and founding member of ECOVIC
2. Augustine Mhappo, Chair ECOVIC Tanzania Chapter
3. Christine Tuhoye, MADILA Environmental Group
4. Michael Leackey, MADILA Environmental Group, Mwanza
5. God Kiangara, MADILA
6. Tobias Mapesa, MADILA
7. Bahati Charles, MADILA
8. Charles Suga, MADILA
9. Janeth Benedcito, MADILA
10. Veronica Nsinda, MADILA
11. Masanja Elias, MADILA
12. Grace Komba, MADILA

13. Victor Kamagenge, Nile Basin Institute
14. Charles Ng'atigwa, NAFRAC, Shinyanga
15. W.C. Mulenge, NAFRAC, Shinyanga
16. Emmanuel Minja, NAFRAC, Shinyanga
17. Ragasian Massawe, MUMASH, Shinyanga
18. James Kimayo, MUMASH
19. Eric Njau, MUMASH
20. Fr. Michael Kumalija, Shinyanga
21. Dotto Mugasssa, Shinyanga
22. Deodatusi Ndaji, Shinyanga
23. Suleman H. Mjangi, Shinyanga
24. Sackstus Mosha, Shinyanga
25. Mrs. Ndwande, Shinyanga
26. Abdul Adam, KIUSABU, Bunda
27. Berth Banka, KIUSABU
28. Mary James, KIUSABU
29. Baraka Sagale, KIUSABU
30. Derrick Kaora, KIUSABU
31. Betty Joseph, KIUSABU
32. Adamu Gamba, KIUSABU
33. M. Nashungwa, VISA NGO, Bunda
34. Theresia Epaphra, VISA
35. William Munyoga, Vijana Furniture Group, Bunda
36. Grace Kopakopa, Vijana
37. Joseph Kadilly, Vijana
38. Christina Muziigra, Green Aid, Musoma
39. Frank Abour, Maji Mara, Musoma
40. Donald Bahitwa, Musoma
41. Jackson Magambo, Green Aid, Musoma
42. Thomas Wambura, Green Aid
43. Said Nyamwasa, Green Aid
44. John Ryamera, Musoma Wood Works Enterprises
45. Paul Chiganga, Musoma
46. Deogratus Rwechunguba, Mara
47. Michael Atieno, Musoma
48. Shimba Mtalamu, Musoma

49. Haruni Ibrahim, Musoma
50. Anastazia Omollo, Batik Women's Group, Musoma
51. Liliani Masirori, Batik Women's Group
52. Jane Akuku, Batik Women's Group
53. Simon Ngodoki Chupa, Regional Coordinator Tanzania Red Cross, Mara
54. William Jongore, Hichabu
55. Wambura Mrusha, Hichabu
56. Christopher Ochila, Hichabu
57. Sarah Baja, Hichabu
58. Juma Bitu, Hichabu
59. Sospita Mwara Hichabu
60. Kassian Godfrey Kimela, Former Chair, ECOVIC Tanzania Chapter
61. Albert Cleophace, Former Secretary General, ECOVIC East Africa Region
62. Jackson Ndobeji, Acting Coordinator, ECOVIC Tanzania Chapter
63. Vitalis Mnyanga, Senior Scientist, Lake Victoria Environment Management Project
64. Abdallah Ramadhan, Bartz Theatre Practitioners Group
65. Mrs. Pauline Kilele, Tanzania Red Cross Society, Mwanza Branch

Debrief In Mwanza, Tanzania

1. Liisa Riihimaki
2. Jackson Ndobeji
3. Augustine Mhappo
4. Veronica Nsinda
5. Grace Komba
6. Abdallah Ramadhan
7. Frank Abour
8. Anastazia Omollo
9. Erastus Orwa
10. Abdul Nuru
11. Mrs. Monica Nkwande
12. Sackstus Moshu
13. Jovitha Juston
14. Hamza Mzingu
15. Mike Kidima
16. Lusato Mangwesi
17. Kamugisha Chrisant

18. Hussein Bashika
19. Augustine Alenonutus
20. Balthazary Thomas
21. Deogratias Rwechungura
22. Peter Bwanana
23. Jamu Salum
24. Juventine Dotto
25. Saeji Mwimula
26. Said Mandari
27. Max Yombo
28. Anita Tibasima
29. Jamson Peter

FORUM SYD

1. Lennart Andersson
2. Maria Kempe
3. Liisa Riihimaki
4. Ing-Britt Ostlund
5. Elisabeth Harleman
6. Erik Faxgard

Sida/Lake Victoria Initiative

1. Kikki Nordin
2. Constance Ouma

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>