



Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus

**Support to
Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus
Documentation and proposal for further support**

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Working Papers – 47/2012

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Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CENN	Caucasus Environmental NGO Network
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KfW	Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau
NGO	Non governmental organisation
RCB	Regional Coordinating Body
RECC	Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus
WWF	World Wild Fund for Nature

1 Introduction: Context and Objectives

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with international character, based in Tbilisi, Georgia. It was established by the governments of the three South Caucasus countries and the European Union (EU) in 2000 to assist in solving regional environmental problems as well as in strengthening the civil society in the countries of the South Caucasus. Through implementation of projects, organization of regional conferences and other measures RECC contributes to national and local policy development, capacity building, facilitation of dialogue and networking and supporting civil society in the environmental sector in the region. A Troika manages RECC's operation, with the function of executing director rotating among the Troika each year. A board of directors supervises RECC's operations, gathering up to four times a year. Apart from contributions of the three founder countries for the functioning of the three offices, RECC's operations depend largely on external funding by donors.

An increasing number of donors view Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as one region in which development-policy objectives can be better achieved via regional approaches than by bilateral measures. Donors expect that the existence of a suitable regional lead executing agency should improve the quality of project/programme implementation in the South Caucasus. RECC wants to assume this role in future. Therefore, RECC re-examines its current activities and searches for a new focus in its work.

At current, RECC is developing a new strategy for the period until 2015. A draft strategy has already been established and shall be further developed. The GIZ operated project on sustainable management of the biodiversity in protected areas and forests, South Caucasus, supports the development of the new strategy. The project aims at building RECC's capacity, especially with regard to political dialogue in the sectorial coordination of its partner countries Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as in the involvement of various donors and the implementation of environment-oriented development measures. The project's support for RECC intends to strengthen capacity and organisational development and thus contributes to create the conditions needed for sustainable biodiversity management in the Southern Caucasus countries.

The objective of the assignment was to clarify strategic options for RECC with its three directors as well as to initiate a change process towards an effective and efficient executive agency.

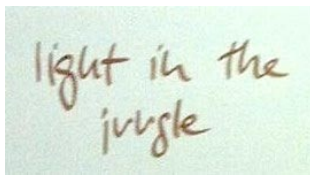
The objectives of the support mission were:

- To clarify strategies between the three directors, to identify common interests and objectives and to make them aware of conflicting interests during a workshop.
- To develop an action plan for implementing the strategy.
- To work out an outline for teambuilding measures including concrete proposals for a team building workshops with staff members.

This report documents the result of the analysis phase, the synthesised workshop proceedings and presents recommendations and an outline for the follow-up of the support process.

2 Expectations and Fears towards the support mission

In a first meeting before the workshop, the Troika as well as the German advisor discussed their expectations towards the mission and the workshop (see mission schedule in annex 1).



The main expectations towards the workshop were to identify a common vision for RECC and very concrete, “very down to earth” and clear solutions for RECC’s objectives and outputs for the next years. Expectations towards the capacity building support for RECC were broader and included solutions for management problems as well as a plan for capacity strengthening (List of expectations in

annex 2).

Participants wanted to avoid a too general discussion on strategies or a “showcase strategy” which would not help to focus on important issues. Two participants feared that there could be “fuzzy, non optimistic options” or “depressive views of the future” coming up during the workshop. Besides these fears, they did not want to go too much into historical analysis, which they did not consider as helpful. However, the Troika came back to important aspects of the organisation’s history during the mission, as they emphasized the founding history and the important role of RECC’s founders for the organisation’s future.

Discussions of the expectations revealed that during a two-day workshop participants could not discuss all mentioned aspects. Participants agreed that management solutions as well as detailed discussions on the strategy would be necessary after the workshop. The workshop was thus considered a starting point for an organisational change process for RECC and its three directors.

3 RECC’s Current Situation

The following short description of RECC’s current status is based on the study of relevant documents (see annex 3) and an analysis of RECC’s current state by individual interviews with RECC’s Troika as well as with external actors and a questionnaire for staff members (cf. annex 4). Furthermore, statements on the current situation of the organisation, made by participants during the Kick-off Workshop have been included.

RECC has been founded in 2000 by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the European Union and operates currently as a non-governmental organisation under Georgian law. RECC is reported to be the only organisation representing the three countries of South Caucasus and able to work at regional level. Multilateral and bilateral donor organisations find this position important and are interested in strengthening RECC’s position as a regional coordinating organisation. In order to support RECC in this function, GIZ provides support for RECC’s organisational development.

Having been provided by the European Union with core funding for its activities until the end of 2006, RECC now depends entirely on funding of projects and programmes by various donor agencies. The governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia bear the costs for RECC’s office running costs, but RECC’s other costs (i.e. salaries) have to be covered by funded projects. Currently, RECC receives funding for projects and programmes from the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and Liechtenstein.

As RECC covers its overall running costs through administrative fees of projects and programmes, the organisation moves more and more away from its original mission. Instead of concentrating on facilitating dialogue and cooperation between governments, civil society, business and other environmental stakeholders, RECC competes with civil society organisations for funding of projects and programmes. Main competitors are being perceived to be Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF).

Since salaries are to be covered by projects and programmes, Troika members have to act as project managers. This causes parallel tasks for the Troika as managing directors and programme managers at the same time, which in turn creates overwork and thus partial loss of quality of products and services. This in turn results in declining competitiveness for funding by donors.

Consequently, RECC is captured in a kind of a vicious circle. The only possibility to escape is to clarify its vision and mission and to become more professional in fundraising. The strategic options have to be explored during the strategy identifying process.

4 Synthesis of the Kick-off Workshop

Based on relevant documents, the individual interviews carried out with RECC's directors, an analysis of the perception of external stakeholders as well as staff members' opinions, a two-day kick-off-workshop has been conducted on 16th and 17th May 2012 in the Bazaleti Lake Hotel near Dusheti. The workshop programme and list of workshop participants is attached in annex 5. As expectations had been clarified before the workshop, the work could start immediately after arrival in the hotel.

4.1 Why a new strategy for RECC?

In a first session, participants clarified what they understand by 'strategy' and why they needed a new strategy for RECC. The three executive directors found it important to have a clear vision and clear targets, a logical construction of future priorities and their implementation. Nevertheless, due to a constantly changing environment for the organisation, they found it important that the strategy can be adapted at any time.

The Troika agreed that RECC's current strategy is not clear enough, neither to RECC's staff nor to the outside ("It is hard to find a black cat in a dark room, ..."). It should therefore be improved in order to improve RECC's efficiency and competitiveness. Participants wanted the strategy also to be the basis for assessing achieved progress and therefore asked for benchmarks and milestones within the strategy.

Asked for elements/components within the strategy, the three directors found it very important to discuss RECC's role and the broader vision of the organisation, considering the needs for regional cooperation. They considered it also important that the interests of the founders (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and EU) should be reflected. Additionally, the Troika wanted to include donor's interests, regional interests and priorities, especially EU approximation. The three directors considered it very helpful to have a plan for at least five years including financial and policy directions and clear responsibilities.

It became clear that developing a strategy would not be done in a two-day workshop, but it needs time. The workshop provided an opportunity to create first ideas on what to change and how to change it and thus achieve more strategic clarity also at the operational level.

4.2 A Vision for RECC

An old saying states, "How will you know when you get there if you don't know where you are going?" Successful organisations need a clear vision and objectives. Therefore, participants draw and discussed their vision of RECC in 10 to 15 years during the second session of the workshop. The questions were: Where do you see RECC in 10-15 years? What will the organisation accomplish? How would RECC's products look like?

The directors' reflections and drawings of RECC as a house helped to identify common interests and to formulate a vision for RECC.



The discussion revealed a clear focus on environmental issues. From the point of view of the Troika, those are closely linked to sustainable development in the region. As the environment provides essential material assets and an economic base for livelihoods, it contributes significantly to or – if not well managed – can threaten human well-being and development. Sustainable development should therefore be based on a reasonable management of natural resources that rely on effective policy responses and an effective work at local level. RECC would therefore promote forestry, landscape planning and better management of water resources in the region and work at regional, national and local level. Further challenges mentioned were the implementation of UN conventions, the impact of climate change, disaster risk reduction, sustainable agricultural practices and sustainable waste management, most of them being transboundary issues in the South Caucasus.

The Troika saw RECC not only as a facilitator in necessary processes for the implementation of above mentioned fields, but also as a good example for a green concept, attracting tourists, visitors and partners to come to the region and to acknowledge RECC's leading role in the environmental sector.

The finally agreed vision for RECC in 10-15 years is:

The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus is an international organisation, well known for promoting a sustainable development in the Caucasus, based on regional cooperation.

The governments of the three countries and the EU as the founders, a wide range of international donors as well as business partners recognize RECC as a regional platform, demand RECC's services and contribute to RECC's funding.

National and international NGOS/CBOs cooperate with RECC and acknowledge it as their most important partner in the region.

RECC's own building will be based on a green concept and provide sufficient space to accommodate representatives of the three founder countries. It provides individual offices for the Troika and provides enough space for permanent and project staff as well as for hosting large international conferences.

The question "How can we achieve this vision?" revealed one important driver for progress and change. The Troika saw a link between assuming RECC's role and a sustainable funding. The latter would allow RECC to better concentrate on its original and important functions as a regional organisation with coordinating, lobbying and advocacy tasks. Currently, there are no funds for e.g. supporting the work of smaller NGOs or to facilitate policy dialogue. As RECC is currently funding its activities through the implementation of projects and programmes, too much efforts of the Troika are bound by these implementation activities. For the three directors it was therefore evident that the organisation needs more funds for their advocacy and coordination tasks and that it has to search for new partners. Conditional funding for projects and programmes was therefore considered one of the threats for RECC.

4.3 Objectives and Outputs for the Next Five Years

Based on the strong demand by the Troika for specific steps and benchmarks to be tackled during the next five years, the next session was determined to the question of outputs for the next five years, especially with regard to the regional coordinating role of RECC and funding issues. The discussion included expectations from external stakeholders, especially the European Union's point of view, as EU is one of the RECC's founders. Questions were: What will be different in five years, what needs to be changed?

The Troika emphasized RECC's future role and formulated as objective:

Acting as a regional organisation, RECC will contribute to strengthen regional approaches in the environmental sector. The organisation will facilitate high-level regional co-operation between the three countries in South Caucasus and thus contribute to confidence building in the region and a sustainable development.

This objective is in line with RECC's mission, that is "to assist in solving of environmental problems in the Caucasus region through the promotion of co-operation at national and regional level among NGOs, governments, business, local communities, and all other environmental stakeholders, in order to develop a free exchange of information, in line with the principles of the Aarhus Convention; offer assistance to all environmental NGOs and other stakeholders; and increase public participation in the decision-making process, thereby assisting the states of the Caucasus in the further development of a democratic civil society".

In order to reach this objective and taking the difficult funding situation into account, the Troika formulated the following outputs and identified respective benchmarks:

Outputs	Benchmarks
1. RECC has obtained international (inter-governmental) status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2014, RECC is registered as international (inter-governmental) organisation
2. A Sectoral Regional Coordination Body is established and meets on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of the year 2014, the RCB, established according to Troika's proposal, has met at least once per year
3. RECC is more actively engaged in EU harmonization process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on proposal by Troika, RECC's Board of Directors agrees on active engagement of RECC in EU harmonization process regarding environmental sector (AA), going on at national levels • RECC is involved in at least 3 focal areas within EU Association Agreements until 2014
4. RECC's updated role is clear for stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Directors agrees on RECC's role based on proposal by Troika
5. RECC obtains sustainable funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RECC does not have to compete with local NGOs for funding • At least 3 agreements for long-term partnership are signed • RECC is implementing at least 3 regional projects • RECC is the executive agency for the implementation of at least 1 multilateral agreement

The Troika considered the five outputs as the most important steps towards facilitating RECC's change into a real inter-governmental organisation. The achievement of these five outputs should facilitate that RECC can fully take its role as a regional organisation. Behind each output, the three directors have different hypotheses and expectations.

- 1) It is being assumed that obtaining an international status for RECC would allow having access to additional funding sources that are not related to the implementation of projects and programmes. According to the Troika, such a funding would allow leaving the dead end of acquisition of funds for project and programmes. A prerequisite has already been done: The RECC founders already agreed in October 2011 that it could be beneficial to convert the RECC into an inter-governmental regional organisation.

However, the managing directors are aware that after having obtained the desired inter-governmental status, funding problems are not yet solved, but an international status would just facilitate the acquisition of funds (on condition that RECC proves to be a professional partner). The Troika is also aware that the transformation process will be difficult and will take time, as this change has to be agreed upon by the three governments and the EU, based on a proposal by a 'Working Committee on RECC's Status' that has still to be established. The Troika intends to intensify their lobbying at

national level as well as with European Union during the next months in order to obtain support for their ideas.

- 2) The Troika has already started preparing a concept for a Regional Coordinating Body (RCB) that they want to submit for approval to the Governments of South Caucasus, which shall be finished as soon as possible. According to the ideas of the directors, the regional coordinating body should facilitate the dialogue between governments and civil society organisations and provide a platform for sharing experiences lessons learnt. However, it is not yet clear how this body would look like (Should it eventually be national platforms?) and who would be its members. At present, the Troika thinks to invite a lot of members, but there are hints that the focus should be rather on countries as members. The advantages and disadvantages of a big number of members have to be analysed. The Troika will also clarify the role of RECC within this body. This point needs intensive strategic discussions until the end of this year.
- 3) Engaging RECC in the EU harmonization process in the environmental sector is considered as a clear advantage for RECC. In order to reach this output, the Troika wants to clarify the possibility to play a role within the EU harmonization process and to apply and to get political support from governments and EU for playing an important role within these processes. One advantage is that RECC's potential enhanced role for the harmonization process within the environmental sector is already mentioned in the EU progress report 2011 on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy.
- 4) Clarifying RECC's role and clearly communicating this role to all stakeholders is one of the core tasks for the next months. It includes inter alia discussions on questions like: "What would the role of a facilitator in a regional context mean exactly?" or defining result chains for its products and services as well as to clarify the target groups and RECC's stakeholders. The Troika will also clarify the question on how to intensify lobbying for RECC's regional role at the national levels and how to make sure that this lobbying will be successful.

During the workshop, the Troika did not yet consider this output as one of the most important ones, but it became more and more clear that clarifying and communicating the role of RECC is closely linked to the other outputs and would support a successful implementation of the other outputs. **Therefore, the Troika should as soon as possible develop a preliminary position paper regarding RECC's role and function, including the role of the founders and submit it to the Board of Directors for discussion.**

- 5) Until the end of 2015, the Troika wants to ensure a sustainable funding for RECC. Based on an international status and a clearer role of the organisation, they want to diversify their donors and search for trust funds. Even though the three directors are aware that the implementation of projects and programmes cannot be the basis for funding RECC in the long run, they still want to maintain this option for the time being. However, DG Development Cooperation of the European Union as well as GIZ recommend strongly to move away from project implementation and to concentrate on other topics as RECC is not sufficiently competitive in this field and loses a lot of energy that would be better needed for inter-governmental policy dialogue.

The Troika decided on specific activities in order to achieve the planned outputs. As the time during the workshop was too short, the managing directors agreed on continuing the work at a later time. The draft regarding the activities is documented in annex 6.

4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses Influencing the Achievement of Objectives

In order to analyse internal influencing factors for achieving the objectives and the long term vision and in order to identify further support within the capacity development for RECC, the three directors roughly identified strengths and weaknesses of RECC. The following result is to be considered work in progress, but provided already a first idea of what could be supporting and hindering the achievement of the intended outputs. However, in order to successfully achieve the intended outputs, it was briefly discussed that RECC should intensify its networking and lobbying activities. Furthermore, clear and immediate measures have to be taken to improve RECC’s weaknesses in order to generate convincing products and services and to fully accomplish its future roles.

Strengths/Successes/Advantages	Weaknesses/Limitations/Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying towards the national ministries/ governments • Providing a platform for policy dialogue via regional conferences, engaging all stakeholders • Facilitation of confidence building in South Caucasus • Network: access to experts, contacts with government institutions, NGOs, donors, international organisations • RECC charter (unique format and regional mandate) • High-level political support from founders • RECC is participating in all processes at national, regional and international level • RECC has long-term agreements with GIZ and KfW • Real cooperation within the Troika leads to confidence building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff performance should be improved • Staff management should be improved • Lack of negotiating techniques • Keeping deadlines • Focussing on most important issues for RECC is often not done

Especially the mentioned weaknesses require a structured internal assessment that should be done this year.

A deeper analysis of the political, economic, social, technological and legal environment as well as a profound analysis of RECC’s competitors could not been done because of time constraints.

4.5 Evaluation of the Workshop

The short workshop evaluation by the Troika was overall positive. They appreciated the workshop and expressed, that it was good to have the time to discuss important aspects in detail in a quiet environment out of the office. The three directors considered the discussed topics to be appropriate and informative and being focused on RECC’s actual needs. However, important and urgent issues that had to be discussed frequently took the Troika out of the process and made it difficult to stick to the central themes and to maintain smooth common discussion during the workshops.

It came out clearly that the workshop was short and not a “once in a year event”, but the starting point for further discussions with or without facilitation. Finally, participants thanked the facilitator who managed the discussion without controlling it and who summarized and asked for feedback by the participants.

5 Conclusion

The mission as a whole and especially the workshop focused on launching a strategy debate process. While the first days of the mission helped to analyse the current situation, the workshop allowed identifying first important steps towards an organisational change process. Throughout the whole mission, the needs and perspectives of the Troika have been given priority. The three directors concentrated their discussion on RECC as an organisation. The results are synthesized in this report.

During the workshop the Troika established a common understanding of the vision for RECC as an organisation and a commonly agreed draft work plan, which is a basis for further discussions. The workshop contributed to increase the Troika's commitment for RECC's future role and progress and generated energy to implement the defined working steps. The whole week also contributed to establish trust between me as an outsider/facilitator and the three directors, allowing me to gradually ask some provocative questions which help to challenge habitual positions and focus on creative solutions for existing difficulties. The workshop was therefore a successful start of a longer process. However, remaining key challenges and further tasks are outlined in the following.

Unfortunately, time was too short to address all important aspects for a strategy debate. Taking a closer look on the outputs agreed upon by the Troika, it is apparent that a lot of work is yet to come.

The outputs and activities established in the draft operational plan are work in progress and need further refinement as well as a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities for each output and the related activities. Besides this general refinement, additional questions must be answered in order to come to a clear strategy and a realistic implementation plan for the road map until 2015.

There is a particular need for further discussion of strategic options. Although the Troika discussed issues of status and funding, the core strategic areas for RECC have not yet been defined. Though the question of being a regional organisation was raised during the workshop and briefly discussed, it still is very abstract and needs concretisation. The core strategic areas of RECC's future work have been briefly addressed in the vision, but a clear definition of RECC's strategic areas for achieving sustainable development through improving the environmental sector has yet to be developed. The identification of these strategic areas needs intense discussion, which would contribute to drafting the necessary position paper on RECC's role and tasks specified under output 4 of the preliminary operational plan.

In order to reach a concise strategy, the following aspects need to be discussed:

- As a starting point: Clarification of the term "regional approach", its added value for the three countries, the DG Environment and the donors as well as RECC's role regarding this regional focus in order to have a good basis for writing a position paper and to obtain a role within the EU harmonization process.
- A structured and profound assessment of RECC's stakeholders and target groups in order to establish clear results chains regarding the improvement of environmental issues in the South Caucasus;
- A thorough analysis of legal and political factors affecting RECC's role and the Troika's possible influence on the national ministries and governments in order to identify realistic further options and objectives for RECC;
- A clear assessment of RECC's products and services and their quality in order to decide which activities should be intensified, have to be improved or should be dropped in order to achieve objectives;
- An open and systematic assessment of RECC's competitors for funding of projects and programmes and other fields of work in order to identify fields of intervention;

- A systematic internal assessment of RECC's structure and working processes (including clarification of roles within Troika, planning and monitoring, information, marketing, team building and team management, time management, staff performance management and reward etc.) in order to see whether they are still adapted to the requirements, how they should be changed and how the structure and working processes could support the change process to improve RECC's effectiveness and efficiency;
- Clarification of RECC's philosophy ("Leitbild"), of the organisation's values and the question 'how' people will work together, not just what they will work on (values and rules).

The above points are very important and should be included into the draft operational plan.

It is clear that such a complex change process will need some time and will not be finished within some months. The external facilitation and support should therefore continue in order to bring out RECC's full potential as a regional inter-governmental organisation and help to overcome upcoming uncertainties.

6 The Way Forward – Next Steps

The following steps are suggested in order to come to a road map for RECC. The list should be seen as a proposal of most important steps, clarifying RECC's role being the important starting point for all other discussions.

Steps	Facilitating questions/activities	Necessary support	When
Clarifying RECC's role as an inter-governmental organisation at regional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is a regional approach for the Caucasus necessary? • What do national ministries/governments expect from a regional approach? How could RECC lobby for a regional approach? • What does DG Environment understand by a regional approach? What does DG Environment expect from a regional approach? • What do donors understand by a regional approach? • What does EU expect from RECC as an intergovernmental organisation in the EU harmonization process? • What do civil society organisations and actors understand by a regional approach? Where do they see advantages and disadvantages? • What does the Troika understand by a regional approach and by "facilitating" the regional approach in the South Caucasus? • What would be RECC's core values/ RECC's philosophy as a regional organisation? • What would be the responsibilities of a regional inter-governmental organisation? • What would be the role of EU in an international/intergovernmental organisation? • How would a successful regional approach look like? • How would communication between all actors at regional level look like? • How could cooperation with other REC be improved? (how to position RECC on the international scene?) • How could RECC successfully communicate its regional approach? 	<p>Facilitation during a two-day workshop</p> <p>Preliminary proposals of Troika need be discussed at high political level in the ministries and the EU to ensure that the regional approach has strong political backing.</p>	08/2012 – 10/2012

Steps	Facilitating questions/activities	Necessary support	When
Clarification of strategic areas regarding the environmental sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are our most important target groups and what do we want to achieve for them until 2015? What do these target groups expect from RECC? What are the five most important changes that RECC concretely wants to achieve until the end of 2015 taking target groups' needs into account? What are the specific objectives and their indicators for a successful change for each of the strategic areas? (Establish results chains) 	Facilitation during a two- or three-day workshop Preliminary proposals of Troika need to be discussed at high political level in the ministries and the EU to ensure that the proposals have strong political backing.	08/2012 – 10/12
Clarifying the external environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are RECC's actual and future competitors? What products and services do they provide? What is /what would be RECC's unique position as compared to its competitors? 		
Define unique products and services in order to achieve the intended objectives within the strategic areas (Define RECC's "value chains") and refine operational plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will be RECC's unique products or services in the future in order to fulfil its newly defined role? What quality does RECC want to achieve for these products or services? What are the outputs and core activities to be produced in order to achieve the intended objectives for each strategic area? What would be funding mechanisms for these products? Establish clear road map including all above areas until the end of 2015 Refine the operational plan taking the above areas into account and decide upon a clear labour division		
Check RECC's structure in order to adapt it to the road map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How should human and financial resources be organized to exploit fully opportunities and strengths and fight off threats from competitors? What are current obstacles? What should be changed? What are critical organisation design issues regarding structure, processes, roles, performance management, reporting etc.? How to improve current team management? How to improve priority setting and time management 	Capacity assessment during a workshop/meeting with Troika (1-2 days) Team-management workshop/training (3-4 days)	10/2012-01/2013 evtl. for improving existing management challenges training already in August

All the suggested steps will demand a lot of commitment and time resources, as the work will not be finished with attending some workshops. Most of the work has to be done on a day-to-day basis, supported by RECC's advisor in Tbilisi. This means for the Troika that during the whole change process, project management tasks have to be very well distributed within the Troika or delegated to staff members in order to make the necessary time available for answering the above questions and work on preliminary proposals to be discussed at political level.

Annex 1: Mission Schedule

Date	Persons met	Activity
12th May 2012		Flight Berlin-Tbilisi, Arrival 13th May
13th May 2012	Malak Shukurova, Executive Director RECC and Nune G. Harutyunyan, RECC director	Introductory meeting
	Marion Hohn, advisor for RECC	Discussion of mission schedule
14th May 2012	Frank Flasche, team leader GIZ Sustainable management of the biodiversity in protected areas and forests, South Caucasus and Marion Hohn, advisor RECC	Discussion of the mission's objectives and activities
	Nune G. Harutyunyan	Individual interview
	Malak Shukurova, Executive Director RECC Sophiko Akhobadze, Director RECC Nune G. Harutyunyan, Director RECC Marion Hohn, advisor	Meeting to clarify objectives, expectations and fears towards the mission and the workshop
	Andreas Weitzel, KfW	KfW's perception of RECC, intended projects with RECC for the next years
15th May 2012	Meeting with RECC's staff	Questions towards RECC's strategy and performance
	Sophiko Akhobadze, Director RECC	Individual interview
	Michel Jambou, project manager, Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the European commission and Marion Hohn, advisor RECC	EC's perception of RECC's performance, ideas for RECC's future
	Malak Shukurova, Executive Director RECC	Individual interview
16th May 2012	Malak Shukurova, Executive Director RECC	Discussion of vision, objectives and activities for RECC
17th May 2012	Sophiko Akhobadze, Director RECC Nune G. Harutyunyan, Director RECC Marion Hohn, advisor	Discussion of capacity development needs
18th May 2012	Malak Shukurova, Executive Director RECC Sophiko Akhobadze, Director RECC Nune G. Harutyunyan, Director RECC Marion Hohn, advisor Frank Flasche, team leader GIZ Michel Jambou, EC	Summary and discussion of workshop results
19th May 2012		Flight Tbilisi-Berlin, arrival Berlin: 11:00

Annex 2: Expectations and Fears

Expectations	Fears
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify very concrete goals of RECC by 2013? 2014? • Identify the most possible way for status/country's expectations • Very down-to-earth clear solutions on directions, goals and ways to sustainability • Countries'/donor's expectation on strategy • Common vision for the organisation • Better understand founders' attitude towards RECC • Rather answers than questions • Light in the jungle • Plan for capacity strengthening • Management solutions (improvement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discussion • Too much historical analysis and fuzzy, non optimistic options • Depressive view of the future! • "Show-case" strategy

Annex 3: List of Relevant Documents

European Commission, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: Joint Staff Working Document - Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Georgia. Progress in 2011 and recommendations for action, downloaded on 17th May 2012;
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/eu_georgia/political_relations/political_framework/enp_georgia_news/index_en.htm

RECC's charter

RECC: Company Profile -The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (2011?)

RECC: REC Caucasus Draft Strategy. Document No. 6, Add. 1 (without year)

RECC-Website on: <http://www.rec-caucasus.org/> including organisational chart, structure etc., (10/05/2012)

Spergel, Barry: Legal advice to RECC in the context of organizational reform. October 2011

Annex 4: Results from Staff Questioning

- 1) **Clarity of RECC's strategy:**
RECC's strategy is not really clear to staff. It is not documented on the web site and staff has no access to the document. Therefore, staff members cannot really judge whether the strategy is adapted to external needs and they cannot really contribute to implement a strategy nor do they have proposals for changing the strategy.
- 2) **Competitiveness with other organisations:**
The opinions differ a lot: Whereas 20% of the answers tend to say that RECC cannot compete, the majority sees it as competitive with other organisations.
- 3) **Strengths of RECC are:**
Regional organisation, Regional Offices, RECC is well known and respected, RECC is competitive
- 4) **Weaknesses of RECC are:**
Ineffective fund raising, structure, dependence on government, organisational management, communication problems, inexperienced members, lack of modern, innovative approaches to internal management, such as developed team work, Directors are frequently out of the team
- 5) **Effectiveness of RECC's team:**
Staff members rate team performance rather as effective. More than 60% of the staff members rate it with 5 on a scale from 1-7 (7 being very effective). Some staff members think that their effectiveness could still be improved if miscommunication would be reduced.
- 6) **Appreciation of work:**
Staff members feel that their individual work is appreciated, if not highly appreciated. They rate it in general higher than 5 on a scale from 1-7 (7: work is highly appreciated).

The results show that staff members see rather needs for improvement of internal management. This could be addressed in a workshop with all team members.

Annex 5: Workshop Programme

Day 1

When?	What?
10:30 h	Welcome & Introduction: Clarification of reasons for a new strategy for RECC
13:30	Lunch Break
14:30	RECC's vision
16:30	Coffee/ Tea Break
17:00	RECC's objectives and outputs until 2015
19:00	End of the day

Day 2

When ?	What?
09:30	Recap Day 1 and Daily Programme
09:40	RECC's outputs and benchmarks until 2015
11:00	Coffee/ Tea Break
11:15	RECC's Strengths and weaknesses, perceptions of other stakeholders and their influence on planned outputs Necessary activities to achieve the outputs
13:30	Lunch Break
14:45	RECC's activities ctd.
16:30	Coffee Break
17:00	Evaluation of workshop
17:30	Departure to Tbilisi

Annex 6: Work in Progress – Draft Operational Plan

Outputs	Benchmarks	Necessary activities	2012	2013	2014	2015
1. RECC has obtained international status	By the end of 2014, RECC is registered as international organisation	<p>Prepare decision on composition of Working committee on RECC's status by Board of Directors</p> <p><i>Milestone: RECC's Board of Directors takes a decision on composition of Working Committee on RECC's status</i></p> <p>Prepare nomination of members by the Ministries –</p> <p><i>Milestone: Ministries and EU nominate members</i></p> <p>Sending invitation letter to nominated members (including Mr. Spergel's report) (immediately after decision of Ministries)</p> <p>Lobbying ministries and nominated members to approve international status</p> <p><i>Milestone: First meeting of working committee</i></p>	<p>Until 05/2012</p> <p>End of mai 2012</p> <p>(unclear)</p>			
2. Sectoral Regional Coordination Body is established and meets on a regular basis	By the end of the year 2014, the RCB, established according to Troika's proposal, has met at least once per year	<p>Prepare the concept of the RCB and submit it for approval to the Governments of South Caucasus</p> <p>With support of GIZ capacity Building project start drafting the institutional setup</p> <p>Form subcommittees, section criteria for other stakeholders</p> <p>Organize the meeting of governmental representatives by September 2013</p> <p>First meeting of RCB</p>	<p>10/2012</p> <p>10/2012</p>	<p>06/2013</p> <p>09/2013</p> <p>12/2013</p>		

Outputs	Benchmarks	Necessary activities	2012	2013	2014	2015
3. RECC is more actively engaged in EU harmonization process	<p>Based on proposal by Troika, RECC's Board of Directors agrees on active engagement of RECC in EU harmonization process regarding environmental sector (AA), going on at national levels</p> <p>RECC is involved at least in 3 focal areas within EU Association Agreements until 2014</p>	<p>Research/clarify the involvement of (current) entities in the field of EU approximation in environmental sector</p> <p>Apply and get political support from Governments and EU on fulfilling RECC's mandate on EU approximation</p> <p>Obtain agreement stipulating decision about allocation of funds (RECC + Govts + EU)</p> <p>Identify areas of involvement based on approval</p> <p>Start activities on implementation of EU Association Agreement</p>	<p>06/2012</p> <p>12/2012</p>	<p>12/2013</p> <p>12/2013</p>	<p>01/2014</p>	
4. RECC's role is clear for stakeholders	The Board of Directors agrees on RECC's role based on proposal by Troika	<p>Increase the understanding, the awareness/role/mission of RECC through various bilateral meetings (interviews) and multilateral (focus group) meetings and surveys</p> <p>Troika prepares a position paper on clear role of RECC</p>	<p>10/2012</p> <p>Until 12/2012</p>			
5. RECC obtains sustainable funding and does not have to compete with local NGOs for funding	At least 3 agreements for long-term partnership are signed	Continue diversification of donors (USAID and others)				
	<p>RECC is implementing at least 3 regional projects</p> <p>RECC is the executive agency for the implementation of at least 1 multilateral agreement</p>	<p>Try to obtain funds from GEF (<i>Risk: will we be going away from our mandate? It will be difficult to be lobbied at government level; Is this a sustainable option with regard to competition with UNDP and other organisations?</i>)</p> <p>Looking for trust funds from international governments</p> <p>Set up partnerships with business sector</p>				



**Sustainable Management of Biodiversity
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