

choices have been made sometimes due to local considerations other than technical and sometimes in the belief that they were wise adaptations better suited to the local context. The regional team is aware of the situation, but it is also conscious of its own maneuvering constraints.

Differences in context, resources and receptivity from one country to another are likely to lead to processes and results which will differ greatly in depth, coverage, quantity and quality. This is likely to happen even if country NLTPSs accept and follow the methodological guidelines. The mission considers that in the end this will be an important asset of the project. It represents a unique opportunity to learn about the possibilities and limits derived from the application of different combinations of tools in different contexts under the same guiding approach, principles and objectives. In this respect, the regional team has been quick to learn from each experience. Less advanced NLTPSs are already profiting from lessons learned from the more advanced exercises. The mission is convinced that this learning process will be very valuable for the regional and national teams, for the governments themselves, and ultimately for the societies of the African countries involved as a whole.

For each of the first three phases of the methodological framework developed by the regional team there is a great deal of accumulated international experience and a large body of specific methods and tools which may be used to obtain the objectives which have been stated. The same can be said for the concatenation of the processes linking each of these phases. Much is also available in the international literature on the formulation of strategies and strategic management. All this has been duly acknowledged in the methodological framework designed by the regional team, which rests on methods and tools already available. On the other hand, the process linking long-term scenarios to short and medium term strategies and decision making processes is, in general, less well understood and the state of the art is less developed, even in settings and situations which are more concrete and manageable and less complex than a country's development management. Much will have to be experimented and learned in this respect in a hands on process during the implementation of the NLTPS project.

## **Output 2. A regional information system.**

It is the mission's view that a regional information system suited to the needs of the NLTPS project has to include at least four different kinds of inputs/outputs:

- (a) Information on the field of prospective and strategic studies (the knowledge base of futures and strategic thinking and current developments and events in the field).
- (b) Information on trends and events of potential impact for Africa's futures (environmental scanning).
- (c) Regional, subregional and sectorial futures studies specifically referring to Africa (or regions of it) (the framework of reference for national studies).
- (d) Statistical data (for the continent, regions and countries, with data series as far back as possible).

This output is considered to be very relevant. It is likely that information related to (a) and (b) above will be more abundant than for (c) and (d), particularly (c), which could be of critical importance for the regional or subregional coherence of the national studies.

### **Output 3. Long-term perspective studies.**

There is no doubt that the countries' NLTPSs are the key product of the overall initiative. By the design of the project they are (as should be) mainly a responsibility of the national teams. The regional team can and should have a decisive influence on the process and technical issues during the development of the exercises, but can (and should) have only limited influence on the issues, topics, etc, contained in them.

### **Immediate objective 3.3.2.**

#### **Output 1. Introduction and dissemination of strategic planning techniques within the society and government.**

Although there is no doubt about the pertinence and relevance of this expected output, the mission feels the need to comment on it to put it in perspective. Much can be done by the project to **initiate a process of sensitization** for the introduction and usage of prospective studies and strategic planning techniques in the African countries involved. However, no matter how efficiently this is done, expected results should be modest. First, because there is very little experience and/or expertise in this field in the countries involved (in fact this is one of the main justifications of the project). Building a tradition of futures and strategic thinking will need many more sustained efforts than the NLTPS project. Second, because even in countries where this tradition exists and is well developed, there is still a limited and non systematic use of these studies (in many instances their application actually diminished during the

1970's and 1980's) and they are frequently misused and misinterpreted. Third, because, although hopefully many members of the governments and societies of the countries where NLTPSs are implemented will be exposed to the techniques, only a few will actually learn and use them, and will generally do so starting from scratch and under less than ideal conditions (lack of resources, scarce and low quality data, unstable environments, etc).

**Output 2.** National Plans of Action, to address long-term problems.

No comments are felt necessary.

### **Immediate objective 3.3.3.**

Original immediate objective 3.3.3 (establish a network of national experts and African research institutions specialized in perspective studies and development policy) has adequately been modified and substituted by revised objective 3.4.3: Help to develop African expertise in futures studies, policy analysis and strategic planning and management. The original expected output should therefore be modified correspondingly.

**Output 1.** Develop expertise in futures studies, policy analysis and strategic planning and management in African professionals and research institutions.

These individuals and institutions could become the constituting nodes of a future African network in these fields. The modification of this objective is considered appropriate. It must be recognized that local expertise in these fields in the countries involved was practically non-existent when the project was initiated.

### **Immediate objective 3.3.4.**

**Output 1.** Greater synergy between the regional and national levels, and coherence between the regional and subregional dimensions, and national projections.

**Output 2.** Preparation of a regional prospective image of Africa.

Output 1 is considered appropriate. Output 2 is considered unrealistic. The project is centered around the national exercises and provides for great flexibility among these. It seems highly unlikely that the results of the national exercises will be such that their integration to obtain regional images will be easy and straightforward. It is estimated that much additional work would have to be done in order to obtain the minimum uniformity and coherence to obtain useful regional images. The most that could be expected is the development of one regional scenario, obtained by putting together the national scenarios based in the guiding principle

of regional integration, which is being suggested to the national teams, and this only if the teams do develop these scenarios under common assumptions on the future evolution of the external environment and the modalities of regional integration. Further, to prepare a regional prospective image of Africa additional elements and analysis would be needed, which have not been included in the project design (eg, competition and cooperation forces between nations, areas of common interest and potential future areas of conflict, the role and evolution of regional bodies, etc).

## 2. Approach, methods, tools and global implementation strategy.

The global approach and general implementation strategy of the project developed by the regional team is considered to be **very adequate**. The range of methods and tools included in the methodological guidelines is ample and well suited to the objectives of the project.

The country coverage strategy followed by the regional team is considered appropriate (a more ample discussion follows below under section E.3, NLTPS implementation and results).

The evaluation mission believes that most of the difficulties found during the implementation of the project derive from the design and complexity of the project itself and **not** from the implementation strategy.

Some minor but important elements of the implementation strategy which the mission considers are weak should be pointed out:

- 2.1. Information flows, formal and informal, to all those involved in the project or potentially interested in its results have not been as intensive and frequent as they should be. Reasonably good communication has been maintained with the national teams, which have been the target of the regional team, but this has not been the case with other "clients" (real or potential) of the regional team. The needs and desire of the regional team to stay within the official channels of communication has also contributed to limiting the information flows. The exchange of information and experiences among national teams has up to now been essentially through the regional team. The strategy to promote direct communication among national teams and other local bodies of the national efforts needs to be strengthened.

Linked with the above, the dissemination strategy of partial products and results is weak. The regional team has more results than it has shown to all interested parties. This contributes to the image that little progress has been achieved so far, when this is not the case.

- 2.2. Locally available resources of the sponsoring agencies of the project (resident representatives, economists, program managers, etc) have not been as fully

used for the profit of the project as what the mission considers could be possible.

- 2.3. The implementation strategy for each of the phases of the methodological guidelines is clear. That for helping the teams in the transition from one phase to another is less well defined and needs refinement.
- 2.4. The strategy for the implementation of phase IV (and V) of the methodological guidelines should be further developed.
- 2.5. The strategy to provide national teams with futures images of the global and regional contexts could also benefit from further analysis to strengthen it.
- 2.6. A strategy should be devised by the regional team to ensure that the futures visions produced by the national teams are as precise as possible and contain an appropriate dose of quantitative images. A strategy to promote the use of a balanced combination of quantitative and qualitative tools by the national teams during the elaboration of the scenarios would facilitate the implementation of later stages.
- 2.7. The mission considers that a strategy by regional team to further induce national teams to obtain and use more intensively inputs from other projects and efforts which also have long or medium term characteristics (such as national environmental plans, capacity building projects, etc) would be very beneficial for the NLTPSs.

#### E.2.c. Recommendations.

After reviewing the NLTPS project design, the evaluation mission considers the following recommendations as appropriate:

- (1) The project design is sound and amply justified, and it could certainly have an important impact in the long-term future of Africa. No further major changes seem to be needed neither in its objectives nor in the general approach and global implementation strategies, but **a more modest and realistic claim on some of its outputs is recommended**. This is suggested not from the strategy followed nor by any deficiencies in the implementation process, but from the design of the project itself.
- (2) The project design, although appropriate, has some intrinsic limitations derived from some of its features which, at the same time, are considered among its important assets. It would be profitable for the project if this was clearly recognized and kept in mind at all times. More specifically:
  - (a) Its participatory nature in a context where this characteristic is recognized as very much needed and innovative; participatory processes are more complex and time consuming and require more resources;

- (b) The need for the regional project not to substitute for national efforts and a dual funding structure at the regional and national levels, both of which limit the type of intervention and the degree of control that the regional team has over the exercise; and
  - (c) The desirability of contributing to African expertise and institutional structures capable of carrying long-term prospective studies, together with the recognition that these were almost non-existing at the start of the project, both of which increase the weight of sensitization and training efforts to be done during the project and suggest that the project will be a major learning process. Thus, it is recommended that the project be seen both through its specific products and as a process.
- (3) The efforts needed by the preparatory process of NLTPSs were grossly underestimated during the design of the project, both in time and resources. The mission recommends that the difficulties found in setting up the appropriate NLTPS structures to carry out the country efforts in the best possible conditions and propitiate their successful implementation, do not be taken as a sign of lack of interest to pursue the exercises.
- (4) Regarding the approach and global implementation strategy, the following recommendations seem appropriate:
- (a) Find appropriate means and settings to strengthen the support given to the country efforts by the local offices of the sponsoring agencies. This could include, but is not limited to, finding ways for them to contribute to the reinforcement of the synergy between NLTPS and other projects with long-term implications being done in the respective countries or on a regional basis.
  - (b) Review and strengthen the regional team's strategy to develop a regional information system on prospective studies and strategic planning and to further promote its use. Information gathering on Africa's long-terms views and statistical data should be reinforced (the regional team informed the mission on some steps it has already taken in this direction). An strategy for the dissemination of the information already available should also be put into place.
  - (c) Strengthen the regional team's strategy to expand and reinforce its information exchanges with all those involved in the project or potentially interested in it. Both formal and informal channels should be explored. Information and documentation better targeted to the national teams, the consultation committees set up to help these teams, the sponsoring agencies officials, government officials, and other social

bodies involved in the exercises, would benefit the project. Provisions should be included for the promotion of direct exchanges of information and experiences among national teams and other local bodies involved in the exercises, without the necessary intervention of the regional team.

- (d) Strengthen the NLTPSs methodological guidelines in relation to the transition processes between the implementation phases defined by the regional team.
- (e) Develop (or compile and adapt, as appropriate) and provide to the national teams more detailed documentation on the specific tools and methods included in the methodological guide. This documentation should include selection criteria, discussions on the relative advantages and disadvantages of the methods and tools, and more detailed descriptions of each of them, together with practical implementation procedures and examples. Some steps in this direction have already been taken by the regional team, but should be strengthened.
- (f) Reinforce the necessary mechanisms to ensure a balanced use of both qualitative and quantitative tools by the national teams, and take the necessary measures to induce them to introduce as many quantitative elements as possible in their long-term prospective images.
- (g) Strengthen actions directed to develop African and regional long-term prospective frameworks of reference for the national teams. Some steps in this direction already taken by the regional team should be reinforced.

### **E.3. NLTPS Management.**

#### **E.3.a. Background.**

The NLTPS' regional team was established in 1992, when the team leader, the first two team members and some support staff were enrolled in the project. The team was later enlarged to its present composition of seven members, including the team leader (plus a small administrative support staff). The selection criteria for the members of the team were: (1) A multidisciplinary team, including at least the following disciplines: Information systems management, anthropology and/or sociology (social dynamics); human resources' development; and science and technology development; (2) Members of the team should represent countries of different African regions (East, Central and West Africa); (3) The team should have a linguistic balance (francophones, anglophones and lusophones); (4) Women and youth should be represented; (5) Each member of the team should have some knowledge of at least two knowledge fields; (6) Team members should have some African-International experience; (7) Team members should be available for traveling; and (8) Team members should have some training or teaching experience or capacity, and be able to exert some leadership.

When evaluating the NLTPS management, the evaluation mission considers it important to have in mind that the regional team's role is one of catalyst and technical assistance to the national efforts and of coordination of these efforts. The Project Document stresses that the regional team should not attempt to substitute for the national efforts. The evaluation mission also considers convenient to bear in mind that the regional team's only means to exert guidance of the national efforts and to control the quality, depth and usefulness of the national products is through its technical leadership, by means of comments, suggestions and training efforts. It has no direct control means at its disposal to manage the national teams' efforts. Further, the evaluation mission considers the training and experience of the regional team in prospective studies and strategic planning as part of the project's efforts to enhance Africa's capabilities to plan for the long-term future and have a broad vision of national priorities. It should be taken into account that at present there are very limited African human resources with expertise in these fields and that the project was designed to be based mainly on local expertise.

### E.3.b. Assessment

#### 1. Regional team's internal structure and effectiveness.

The evaluation mission considers the regional team's structure very suitable. Three members of the team have postgraduate studies in economics (one specialized on information and technology), one in social anthropology, one in geography (and environment), one in mass media and communications, and one in engineering and technology (the team leader). The team has a good mix of youth and experience, of gender and of geographical origin. All team members have had some direct experience in planning, either in general or in specific areas. They are all **technically speaking very capable**. They are all convinced of the importance of the project and extremely enthusiastic about their efforts, each of them being **true "champions" of the project**. They do use to the team's advantage their multidisciplinary, **complementing each other**. The mission found a truly **remarkable team spirit**. Each member of the team works towards the success of the project, seeking assistance from and giving support to other members of the team, as the implementation circumstances dictate it. They have a strong common view of the project, and share a common understanding of the approach and the objectives and their role in achieving them.

On reading the team members output from their earlier to their latest products, a **remarkable progress can be easily detected**. Their understanding of prospective studies (the philosophical standing, tools and methods, and possibilities and limits) has rapidly grown in width and depth. The evaluation mission found **all team members** to be **eager to learn and open** to new ideas and constructive criticism, but sure of their knowledge and the ground they can cover. In general terms the team members are now well versed in prospective studies.