

Sida's Support to the Centre for Science and Environment, CSE, India

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**Department for Natural
Resources and the
Environment**

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**Sida Evaluation 97/11
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Report from an external evaluation of CSE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. *Since 1980 when the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) was established in New Delhi, India, as a Non-Governmental Society, it has developed into one of the most renowned environmental institutions in India, and has also gained international reputation. Until 1992, CSE was best known for its State of India's Environment Series, which pioneered effective mechanisms for mobilizing broad-based scientific and technical assessments of key national issues. Since 1992 CSE has devoted major attention to the publication of the Down to Earth magazine (DTE). SIDA has been providing financial support to CSE for a total of SEK 13 mill. since 1989, mostly in the form of core budget support.*
- ii. *A 1993 evaluation of CSE appraised SIDA's support over the period 1989-1992 and commented favorably on its general achievements, but it also noted an urgent need for CSE to have more financial independence by establishing a substantial degree of self-financing and for addressing several organizational and managerial issues. The 1993-96 program agreement between SIDA and CSE, specified that particular attention should be paid to those issues. Using these as starting points for its own field work and analysis, the 1996 external evaluation agreed that CSE has established a high national relevance in India. Its special niche is highly valued by people in government, academia, and in the private sector. Its international respect is evident from the many global meetings on environmental issues where CSE has been providing eloquent and articulate Southern perspectives.*
- iii. *Over the last three years CSE has weathered very difficult circumstances - with considerable staff turmoil and turnovers in 1993 - and with the Director seriously sick and absent for much of 1994 and also 1995-96. Despite these problems the CSE has been able to complete a major building program at its new headquarters in New Delhi. It has also successfully implemented a major investment program in modern information technology, which puts it in a favorable position to face future needs and increase its institutional effectiveness. Moreover, throughout this somewhat turbulent period DTE has continued to come out regularly and with continuing high quality. The external evaluation arrived at the judgment that the editorial team has achieved a remarkable feat. DTE is a professional product, has a clear mission, and has attracted a dedicated readership of scientists, environmentalists, students and officials.*
- iv. *The evaluation has put emphasis on management and financial issues and the organizational strategy, perceiving these to be areas which merit special attention. CSE outputs are considered to be high quality, though the effectiveness of their dissemination remains a cause of concern.*
- v. *The first of the three major recommendations formulated by the external evaluation team concerns the need to formulate a clearer vision about CSE's future direction. A short mission statement and a longer term strategy document should be prepared through consultation processes with its Board and staff. These should form the framework for annual work programs and budgets for each program activity, with associated estimates for income, including sales.*
- vi. *While the broad participatory processes which produced the widely acclaimed State of India's Environment Reports have lost some momentum in recent years, the November 1996 publication 'Slow Murder: The deadly story of vehicular pollution' in 'The State of the Environment Series' is an example of strong advocacy work. It has combined book, exhibition, DTE and national press coverage to great effect. Such reporting should be prominent in the CSE work program, since they include broad and highly desirable collaboration with academic institutions, science establishments, other NGOs and with government agencies in India. They also provide good scope for follow-up work and for more continuing monitoring of*

on-going developments related to key environmental issues raised by CSE. This is a niche of work which seems especially well suited for CSE.

vii. *The second major recommendation focuses on the need to secure a sizable volume of domestically generated financial resources for CSE and SEC activities. There is good scope for an expansion of self-financing from far more vigorous marketing efforts of DTE and CSE products - and from advertising revenues. Over the last three years CSE has had success in getting foreign grants from various aid agencies, and the outlook is good for securing more foreign aid in the future. Yet, serious weaknesses have appeared in its financial structure. Despite SIDA's urgings in 1993 that CSE should increase its self-financing capacity, there has been no such development. Instead, it has become highly and increasingly dependent on foreign aid. All increases in annual expenditures since 1992 have been funded entirely from foreign aid sources. A substantial part of the growth in budget expenditures in CSE and its sister organization, the Society for Environmental Communications (SEC), has been associated with the publication of DTE. While SEC's main function is to publish DTE, it has so far relied very heavily on staff and resources in CSE to do so. Unless very determined efforts are taken soon, SEC will have no chance to escape this heavy reliance on CSE in the foreseeable future.*

viii. *The 1992 prospectus of DTE stated "the purpose of the magazine is to increase global awareness of the issues faced by developing countries in their efforts to manage their natural resources in a sustainable and equitable manner". This was qualified by a recognition that the magazine would focus up to 60% on Indian issues. In fact, DTE has a small international subscription and 91% of its readership is Indian. It increases Indian awareness of largely Indian environmental issues, while giving due space to global and regional science and environment stories. This balance seems appropriate. DTE was to be highly readable and popular magazine. The initial target was to reach at least 50,000 readers on payment of a subscription fee. A minimum level of 7,000 paid-up subscribers was considered to be the break-even point, although that estimate was based on a much higher subscription price than what was actually achieved. An earlier hope to publish DTE in some of the main regional languages in India has not yet materialized. Institutional subscribers remain a key market prospect. Less than 2 % of India's 30,000 or more educational libraries subscribe to DTE. Overall, it should be feasible in the near future to reach at least three or four times its current sales and readership.*

ix. *Over the last three years the actual achievements have been far below the earlier projections. The present list of subscribers stands at 4124, but many of these have lapsed. The net effect is that DTE has about 3000 paying subscribers. At an annual subscription price of 264 rupees there is little evidence to suggest price resistance. This level is less than one third of the original institutional subscription price, and this price reduction partly explains why sales revenues for DTE have dropped substantially from the Rs. 6.2 mill. in 1994 to Rs. 2.3 mill. in 1996. Over the last three years a substantial part of these sales revenues came from bulk purchases from various foreign aid sources for free distribution inside India, but this type of sales is no longer significant. Advertising income and local grants have so far had very marginal significance. Overall, the revenue from all CSE products showed a clear negative trend over the period - from Rs. 7.5 mill. in 1993 to Rs. 3.9 mill in 1996. Despite these disappointing operating results, the CSE Group was able to maintain and even boost its activities by the substantial flows of foreign grants made available to it. Such foreign grants expanded rapidly from Rs. 10.5 mill. in 1994 to Rs. 28.4 mill. in 1996.*

x. *Since there is no management information system in place for determining the true costs of producing each CSE product, it will be important to set up a simple cost accounting system which can cover both CSE and SEC. Such a system should provide management with a better overview of production costs relative to the prices set for each product, for an understanding of the substantial cross-subsidies being provided by CSE to SEC and for determining the most appropriate price levels for subscriptions and other sales. An institutional strategy, with special emphasis on a financial plan, should be prepared for SEC. At this stage it is difficult to predict whether DTE can be made fully financially sustainable in the longer run. Cross-subsidies by way of staff contribution from CSE may be required for some time to come.*

At the very least, DTE should be able to cover its direct costs in the near future - including the total costs of the two designated DTE units in CSE which have full time responsible for editing and producing it.

xi. The third recommendation relates to organizational and management issues. With a past history of considerable organizational flux and management capacity problems, CSE would benefit from more organizational stability. The CSE organizational structure has been generating confusion. The number and designations of various units in CSE have been changing frequently over several years. Some of these units have no real management functions. As a relatively small organization CSE does not require a large hierarchy of different units. There is considerable scope for making it more simplified and thereby also strengthen its management capacities.

xii. For several years it has been it was recognized that management was a major area of weakness in CSE, and that good middle-level management is critical for its sustainability and growth. The highly centralized management system built around the Director and the Deputy Director, can be modified by obtaining customized management training, by broadening the top management team to include one or more senior level managers, and by delegating management authority to first line managers with responsibilities for budget responsibilities of each management unit and for work programs of individual staff. Since the financial issues are now of such critical importance, an experienced financial manager should be included in the top management team.

xiii. The organization needs to have at least two Deputy Directors - one for Programs and one for Finance. The Deputy Director for Finance should handle fund-raising activities and budgets, and should also help to set up a cost-accounting management system for CSE and SEC. These changes will become even more important as CSE is moving from a media-focused organization to one centered on policy research and on advocacy and campaign programs. Many NGOs have difficulties in offering career paths, especially for younger people and journalists, but still CSE must increase efforts to reduce a high turnover of staff. Presently 80% of the professional staff have been with CSE for less than two years. The professional staffing level of about 50 has a large majority with between two and six years of work experience. The present staff seem to the evaluation team to be competent and highly motivated.

xiv. SIDA's core budget support to CSE has been effective in providing valuable flexibility for encouraging creativity and for stimulating intellectual and technical leadership in an Indian NGO playing an important role to in India and also internationally. In this regard SIDA's judgment and accompanying financing decision were soundly based. The flexibility and safety associated with the core budget support to CSE was without doubt very valuable to the creative energies of its talented founder and his associates. It provided the means to overcome some turbulent changes in the organization and its working environment. It also provided a considerable safety margin for the qualitatively successful launching of its major flagship product in 1992 - the Down to Earth magazine. Furthermore the organizational support which SIDA has provided to CSE has been appropriate, although it could have been provided at a much earlier point in time, with a much stronger sense of urgency, and with better attention to the institutional linkages between CSE and SEC.

xv. However, in the opinion of the external evaluation team, the flexibility provided by SIDA has been associated with a lack in clarity and consistency in its dialogue with CSE. Having flagged and reached consensus with CSE on four strategically important issues at the time of the signing of the Program Agreement in 1993, SIDA has not been able to monitor effectively the broader policy and institutional implications of the developments which took place during implementation. Progress was expected on each of these four issues. SIDA seems to have ignored some key internal institutional development factors which have led to a weakening rather than a strengthening of its self-financing capacity. Now CSE is heavily dependent on international development assistance, particularly from SIDA, for its program activities and for its institutional viability. CSE deserves continuing support from SIDA, but in ways that can move it more decisively towards mutually agreed goals of strong institutional sustainability.

xvi. *While the lack of adequate funding can often be a very serious problem for non-governmental institutions, it is less well understood that a situation of generous funding can create problems and inadvertently cause bottlenecks for the desired path towards sound institutional development and growth. SIDA should be encouraged to explore this specific issue at a broader policy level, based on its diverse experiences with core program support to many different non-governmental institutions in developing countries. Specifically it should examine how it may best structure its own core budget support to recipients which also receive significant support from other donors. NGOs of such high quality and creativity as CSE, deserve continued SIDA support. Funding of this kind must have clearly articulated agreed objectives, which should be regularly monitored and form the basis for a consistent and active partnership dialogue throughout implementation.*

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Report from an External Evaluation of CSE.

October/November 1996

1. PROGRAMME CONTEXT

1.1 The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) was established in 1980 in New Delhi, India, as a Non-Governmental Society. Its main objectives were:

- to study the social and economic impact of science and technology;
- to promote and conduct research on science and technology appropriate for developing countries;
- to collect, document and disseminate information about science and technology through various forms of publications; and
- to create public awareness, particularly through the mass media, of science, technology, environment and development related issues.

1.2 CSE has since developed into one of the most renowned environmental institutions in India, and has also gained an international reputation. Since its founding, the main activities of CSE have included:

- a) environmental publications and information such as the State of India's Environment Series, CSE Occasional Series, Catalogue and Directory Series, the India Green Files, the South Asia Green Files, videos and films, as well as major publications, mainly the fortnightly international magazine, Down to Earth;
- b) fellowships for environmentally interested journalists;
- c) networking and interaction with NGO engaged in environmental activities;
- d) education and training;
- e) policy research;
- f) and public campaigns related to advocacy and lobbying of environmental issues.

1.3 During its first decade, CSE was best known for its State of India's Environment Series, which pioneered very effective mechanisms for mobilizing broad-based scientific and technical assessments of key national issues. The findings and results of these participatory processes gained attention at the highest levels of government in India, and became well-known internationally. Since 1992 CSE has devoted major its attention and most of its resources to the publication of the Down to Earth magazine.

1.4 Since 1989 SIDA has been providing financial support to CSE for a total of SEK 13 mill., mostly in the form of core budget support. Under a three-year program agreement with CSE, dated November 10, 1993, SIDA provided SEK 7 mill. to cover the period from April 1, 1993 to March 31, 1996. In early 1996 an additional allocation of SEK 2 mill. was approved in order to extend SIDA support until March 31, 1997. This extended time period would facilitate the completion and full consideration of the results of an external evaluation which, according to the 1993 SIDA agreement, would be conducted in 1996.

1.5 CSE has also received support, mostly in the form of project support or local grants, from a large number of other donor agencies, such as NORAD, DANIDA, the Dutch Government, UNDP, UNEP and UNIFEM.

1.6 SIDA decided that the evaluation should be carried out by a team of three individually appointed experts. The team consisted of Dr. Nigel Cross, a UK national who is Director of PANOS in London; Mr. Rajeshwar Dyal, an Indian national who serves as Advisor at the New Delhi office of the F. Ebert Stiftung, and Mr. Leif E. Christoffersen, a Norwegian national who was the team leader and who heads an

international consulting firm, Christoffersen Associates. The team's field work in India was conducted over a four week period in late October and early November 1996. Annex 1 is a Technical Note on the Down to Earth Magazine. Annex 2 shows a list of the main CSE book publications during 1993-96. Annex 3 lists the main documents used as reference for the evaluation and persons interviewed during field work in India. Annex 4 presents the team's Terms of Reference.

2. THE EVALUATION: METHODOLOGY

2.1 According to its terms of reference, the "primary motive for the evaluation was to ascertain the relevance and effectiveness of CSE and thus to provide guidance to CSE and its members with regard to the further development of the organization. Secondly, the evaluation will provide an important basis for SIDA's considerations of a possible continued support to the organization, including volume, form and content."

2.2 The evaluation team took as a starting point the report from a previous evaluation conducted by a Swedish consultant, Stig Abelin, completed in January 1993. It reviewed CSE and appraised SIDA's support to CSE over the period 1989-1992. CSE was very favorably commended for its general achievements, for its "singularly gifted and committed" leadership in the form of its founder and Director, Anil Agarwal, for its environmental publication program, and for its reputation as a center of excellence with high national and international recognition. It noted an urgent need for CSE to have more financial independence by establishing a substantial degree of self-financing. It brought out several organizational and managerial issues which needed attention. The report found that "CSE's successful track-record in the field of environmental publishing is not matched by a corresponding development of its managerial routines and organizational pattern", that its "organizational pattern often seems to have been in a flux", that its staff turn-over has been high, and that organizational development would call for "decentralization and delegation of responsibilities and decision-making powers within CSE, more frequent use of internal consultations and other participatory approaches, and establishment of a clearer and more stable organizational structure".

2.3 When the three-year program agreement between SIDA and CSE was signed on November 10, 1993, it included a section specifying that particular attention should be paid to:

- management issues and organizational and institutional development;
- human resources (manpower) development;
- efforts to increase CSE's self financing capacity;
- measures aiming at creating a well-balanced, adequate and sustainable publication program.

2.4 A major recommendation in the Abelin Report advised CSE to draw up a financial plan which would specify a rate of self-financing considered adequate for safeguarding CSE's long-term independence. Another recommended "that a highly qualified and well-experienced short term management consultant be placed at CSE's disposal by SIDA, charged with undertaking a participatory management/organizational study of CSE no later than June 1993." It took some time before CSE and SIDA activated this consulting task. One part was conducted by an Indian consulting firm, Symatec Associates, New Delhi, which produced its report in March 1995. Another part was completed by a Swedish management consultant, Gabor Bruszt of ISO Swedish Management Group, in January 1996.

2.5 The main approaches adopted by the external evaluation team were:

- to review progress on the four major points of special attention set forth in the November 1993 Programme Agreement (para. 2.3 above); and
- to examine the main program results over the three year period 1993-1996 and to consider these in light of the longer-term achievements since its establishment in 1980, through documents produced by SIDA and by CSE (including Annual Work Programs, Program Reviews, minutes

from the annual consultations meetings between SIDA and CSE, the annual financial accounts, and CSE publications)

2.6 It was anticipated that the evaluation would be structured in two steps. First, a preparatory desk study was to be conducted and completed by a local consultant in India prior to the arrival of the other two members of the team. The second step would then be the field work, analysis, and preparation of the final report by the whole team, in part based on such a preparatory report. Due to delays in recruiting and appointing the local consultant, and subsequent communications difficulties, the actual first step was limited to producing a survey on the distribution patterns of the Down to Earth magazine and the Green File.

2.7 Interviews and discussions were held with members of CSE staff and most CSE teams gave presentations of their work. However, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis which was scheduled for completion before the team arrived, had only been partially carried out, and was not a participatory exercise involving all staff and the board.

2.8 The team conducted interviews with a sample of knowledgeable individuals in India, and with several foreign donor agencies represented in New Delhi. While most of the field work was conducted in New Delhi, some field visits were made to Bombay, Bangalore, Dehradun, Maharashtra and Madras in order to meet with users of, and contributors to, CSE publications; and a small sample of interviews were conducted with relevant individuals in Europe, North America and Nepal.

2.9. The work focused mainly on examining various products and services of CSE against the stated program plans and strategy goals as articulated by CSE in its main documents. The interviews conducted by the team included readers and contributors, people in the government and the private sectors, in local and international NGOs, and, individuals in international organizations and programs relevant to CSE activities.

2.10 As noted by the Abelin report, "no generally accepted or reliable way of quantifying impact seems to exist". We have attempted to measure output, and it would be helpful if CSE prepared for future evaluations a custom-made fact-file with authoritative figures on production, sale and subscription lists etc. This time the team had to piece this together from often conflicting sources.

2.11 The team decided against the use of questionnaires and readership surveys given the time constraints. Yet despite the fact such tools are important in helping to organize the priorities and responses of CSE, they have been rarely used by the organization.

2.12 In the end we opted for in-depth interviews with regular CSE 'users', including readers of Down to Earth (DTE), its main publication. The weakness of this approach was that while it gave us a very good sense of CSE's impact on its user group, it did not demonstrate the value of CSE products at the regional or national level.. For CSE, and DTE, to maximize its effectiveness, the solid management virtues of measurement, forward planning, developing disciplined, though flexible, systems, are essential. We are convinced that the educational and advocacy role of CSE is unique, and that it can and should play a valuable part in a fast changing social and political environment

3. The Relevance of CSE.

3.1 The Rio Earth Summit of 1992 marks a turning point for the institutional development of CSE - as for many other environmental organizations. In the decade before Rio, CSE won itself an unrivaled reputation for its authoritative, unambiguous coverage of India's environmental policies - or lack of them. The CSE reports on the State of India's Environment were very influential and led to a major 'advocacy' role for CSE and its director, Anil Agarwal, during the government of Rajiv Gandhi at both non-

governmental and governmental levels. CSE's and Anil Agarwal's contribution was critical to defining the official India position at Rio.

3.2 This innovative, daring and demonstrably competent research and advocacy NGO recognized that, post-Rio, the steam in the environment movement was likely to dissipate. The solution, in the context of India's needs, was to launch a fortnightly mainstream magazine on science and the environment, *Down to Earth* (DTE), accompanied by a feature service.

3.3 Since CSE had a special tax status as a non-profit institution in India, a new sister institution - the Society for Environmental Communications (SEC) - was created for the purpose of publishing DTE. The financial accounts of SEC were kept separate from those of CSE since the commercial income from DTE sales would be subjected to a different taxation status in India. According to its prospectus, SEC intended to raise funds through advance subscriptions, membership of SEC, donations and grants from philanthropic trusts, and, advertising revenues. Optimistically it was anticipated that subscriptions and advertisements would bring in a total of Rs. 9.6 million in its first year. This short term goal proved to be unattainable. During the subsequent years the annual budgets of CSE have had to include an increasingly larger share of DTE costs.

3.4 CSE has clearly established national relevance in India. Its special niche is valued highly by people in government, academia, and in the private sector. It has also gained broad international respect. It has "name recognition" in many international forums, and its director is considered an eloquent and articulate spokesperson on important Southern perspectives in global discussions about environmental problems.

3.5 Over the last three years CSE has weathered very difficult circumstances - with considerable staff turmoil and turnovers in 1993 - and with the Director seriously sick and absent for much of 1994 and also 1995-96. Despite these problems the CSE has been able to complete a major building program at its new headquarters in New Delhi. It has also successfully implemented a major investment program in modern information technology, which now puts it in a favorable position to face future needs and increase its institutional effectiveness. Moreover, throughout this somewhat turbulent period DTE has continued to come out regularly and with continuing high quality. These are highly commendable achievements.

3.6 Under these conditions the program support provided by SIDA, as CSE's largest source of funding, has been of crucial importance. With the completion of its building program and its investments in information technology, CSE is now well poised to strengthen its policy research and advocacy campaigns, and, to focus more attention on a longer-term monitoring of critical environmental issues and on follow-up to its many innovative initiatives. However, in order for such progress to materialize, CSE must examine very carefully its products and its longer-term financial and institutional sustainability.

4. The products of the CSE Group

Down to Earth

4.1 The first issue of DTE was timed to coincide with Rio. Since then it has appeared every fortnight and has absorbed the major part of staff time, institutional resources and donor funds. CSE is very closely associated with DTE, although SEC, its separate sister institution, has been set up mainly to serve as its publisher.

4.2 The prospectus of DTE (1992) stated "the purpose of the magazine is to increase global awareness of the issues faced by developing countries in their efforts to manage their natural resources in a sustainable and equitable manner". This was qualified by a recognition that the magazine would focus up to 60% on Indian issues. In fact, although DTE has a small international subscription, its main readership is Indian. It increases Indian awareness of largely Indian environmental issues, while giving due space to global and regional science and environment stories. This, in the evaluators view, is how it should be.

4.3 The editorial policy aimed to link micro-experiences based on grassroots activities with (or to) national and international policy-making. If this sounds like a small-circulation, part academic, part activist journal, this was not the intention. DTE was “to be highly readable, popular newsmagazine”. The target was to reach “at least 50,000 readers on payment of a subscription fee”. This is nicely ambiguous, as a subscribers list of 10,000 might well reach 50,000 readers. A level of 7,000 paid-up subscribers was considered to be the break-even point, although at a much higher subscription price than what was actually achieved. There was an intention, or a hope, to publish DTE in some of the main regional languages in India, at least in a Hindi language edition.

4.4 It was clear from the interviews conducted by the evaluation team that there is considerable reader loyalty and appreciation. Indeed there seems to be a high level of consensus around DTE’s strengths and weaknesses, with the positive comments far outweighing the negative:

- DTE is unique in its commitment to linking science and environment topics with social and political issues.
- DTE renders complex issues intelligible to the lay reader.
- Its analysis is of a consistently high standard.
- Is on the ‘cutting edge’.
- It serves the environment movement well.
- It is the only serious but accessible science magazine in India, since the closure of Science Today twenty years ago.
- It is not news-breaking enough; as a fortnightly it has difficulties in being the first with the news - so it has to be more ‘views and analysis’ than news.
- It is sometimes inaccurate.
- It fails to follow-through or follow-up issues of current concern.
- It needs to be more interactive with its readers (through debate, competition pages etc.).
- It should attempt to achieve more consistent coverage of environment stories in India’s regions.

4.5 DTE’s editorial policy has shown flair and responsiveness, and has maintained a cutting-edge. The present editorial and production teams appear to be more than competent to monitor and help set changing environmental agendas. A constant dialogue with readers, through surveys and discussions, should help ensure a consistent relevance and quality. We interviewed some 40 individual subscribers and contributors. About half were selected by CSE, and half by the evaluators. We also attended a CSE organized event at which some 50 DTE subscribers were able to inform and question the DTE editorial team. It was clear from both the interviews and the meeting that there is considerable reader loyalty and appreciation. There was a high level of consensus around DTE’s strengths and weaknesses, and the positive comments far outweigh the negative.

4.6 DTE is a balancing act: between science and environment; news and views; information and analysis; reportage and advocacy; the lay person and the specialist. There are as many ideas about recalibrating the balance as there are readers of the magazine. In our judgment the editorial team has achieved a remarkable feat. DTE is a professional product, has a clear mission, and has attracted a dedicated readership of scientists, environmentalists, students and officials. For many it is required reading. It is able to draw on the expertise within CSE and, in return, provide a regular medium for dissemination. This is a very effective strategy for a research and policy oriented NGO. The relationship between DTE and CSE seems right. On the evidence of our subjective study DTE is much better known in India than its parent, CSE, and even more than its founder Anil Agarwal. This, in itself, indicates that DTE has achieved reader trust in its independence and objectivity.

4.7 If all that is required is a first class product capable of unceasingly reviewing its performance and improving its coverage then DTE is well on track and still a pioneer in its field. But has it a viable future? Is the human and material investment worth it? We would say ‘yes’, providing this exciting and valuable magazine can reach minimum readership levels and sales and advertising revenue

targets. Some important strategic elements are in place. Much stronger positive results will have to be achieved before its longer term viability can be considered to be safeguarded.

4.8 In 1992 it was estimated that at least 7000 subscribers would be required to enable DTE to cover its costs. Much more modest achievements have been the result so far. The list of subscribers of Down to Earth stands at 4124, though many of these have lapsed. However, the list provides a helpful starting point for analyzing its readership. Out of 4124 subscribers, 3752 are from within India and the remaining (9%) are from outside.

4.9 While inside India the individual subscribers account for the highest proportion (58.9%), educational institutions (12.3%) came second. Other significant categories include government institutions (7.8%), voluntary organizations (6.2%) and industries (5.9%). Prominent subscribers outside India include international organizations (19.1%), voluntary organizations (17.7%) and media/service industry (12.6%). Individuals account for the highest proportion outside India (38.2%).

4.10 Without inactive subscribers the net subscribers list to DTE stands at about 3,000. In fact, during its four year history, subscriptions have not taken off (1993: 1757; 1994: 3501; 1995: 2891; 1996: 2999). DTE has been heavily subsidized by aid donors. This subsidy, which was vital for achieving quality and depth, was intended to lead to a growing list of subscribers and to increasing levels of advertising revenue. However, subscriptions have been stuck at some 3000, whereas nearly all our respondents believed the level to be between 15,000-20,000, (perceived to be in line with the editorial and production quality at a cover price of twenty rupees).

4.12 There have been some fluctuating news stand sales in 1996. While necessary and worthwhile, these sales are unlikely to provide a significant income, as competition from more popular magazines is fierce. Also 40% of the cover price is paid to the vendor who pays CSE four months in arrears. Equally, all our respondents, including experienced media people, agreed that DTE has a much greater potential for subscription sales, ranging from 10,000 to 50,000, particularly among colleges and institutional libraries. It would appear that DTE is financially unsustainable without either open ended donor support or donor/CSE investment in professional marketing that can conduct a very intensive and vigorous subscription drive.

4.13 Financial sustainability is not an end in itself. DTE, which originally intended to be a mass circulation magazine, now stresses its educational and advocacy role. The key challenge for DTE is to broaden its readership (which inevitably also brings financial returns), and its influence. DTE's core readership is well educated (usually in the private school system), graduate, professional, English speaking and writing, and more often than not, supportive of DTE's explicit linkage of social with environmental and science issues. DTE undoubtedly reaches the articulate, activist class - in the words of one reader 'it catalyzes the catalyzers'. This is an important role not filled by any other organization or product.

4.14 But in a country which measures its higher educational establishments, its NGOs, its grassroots groups, its political classes in hundreds of thousands (in lakhs), the fact that it is only reaching 3000 English speaking subscribers remains a modest and a not very impressive achievement, especially in the context of a vibrant national, regional and local language media which cover environment issues (often reported by ex-CSE staff and contributors) and whose circulation starts at 100,000.

4.15 DTE will never be a wide circulation magazine. Because it appears to work best as a niche publication, attempts to use Readers Digest marketing strategies may be unsuccessful. There is little evidence to suggest price resistance; an annual subscription of 264 rupees represents good value for a fortnightly, quality, specialist magazine. It is our view that DTE has the potential in the near future to reach at least three or four times its current sales and readership.

The Feature Service

4.16 Shortly after the launch of DTE, a CSE/DTE features service was initiated. This aimed to supply the local, national and international press with a marketed features package partly drawn from contributions to DTE and partly separately commissioned.

4.17 To succeed in such a service was always going to be difficult. There are many national and international competitors, some of whom offer free features. The features package goes to 109 Indian and 209 international outlets (mainly in South Asia). There is little take-up in Europe or America. Cost recovery is low, as many newspapers print without reference or payment. There is anecdotal evidence that there is good take-up by local language newspapers though this is hard to verify as cuttings are rarely available.

4.18 Another key problem is copy quality. A feature service is only as good as its correspondents. DTE acknowledges that the level of its local correspondence is weak in some states. Finding a half-way decent correspondent is an immense challenge. These constraints noted, the CSE/DTE features service provides good copy and gets good coverage; although again, it is a subsidized service.

4.19 While it is appropriate to write and commission stories on global issues with an Indian and South Asian dimension, there is little evidence that the Western media will pick-up stories generated by CSE/DTE features. The exceptions would be direct commissions from the north or press release/link-stories around CSE's own campaigning efforts. The need to increase local reporting/news gathering capacity is evident for both the features service and DTE. As well as instigating regional/local workshops (or even locally based media fellowships), CSE might wish to consider strengthening the Grassroots Team and give them a wider brief in the identification of, and support for, local environmental stories.

4.20 CSE/DTE features should be marketed more aggressively. They have an important role to play, especially, in our view, in reaching local language newspapers. This would be enhanced if they were simultaneously published in Hindi, Tamil etc., and targeted at local language media and the quite numerous school-level science magazines.

The Green Files

4.21 While DTE has been the major product of the period under review, there have been many other CSE outputs. As a part of the activities of its Environmental Resource Unit, CSE brings out a monthly compilation of press clippings called the Green File. This has 393 subscribers within India and 20 subscribers outside India. In India, Delhi leads with 70 subscribers, followed by Maharashtra (66), Karnataka (30), Tamil Nadu (29), Gujarat (28), U.P (27), West Bengal (25), Orissa (20), Andhra Pradesh (19), Kerala (18) and M.P (17). States like Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and North Eastern region, have relatively lesser number of subscribers. However, these states have potential for increasing the subscribers of Green File. Green File is a well compiled monthly and a very useful source of news, information and analysis for researchers, policy/decision makers, writers and journalists.

4.22 Green File South Asia was launched in September 1995. It is less clear that this will be of such importance as Green File India. CSE have found it difficult to target a regional audience, in part because of continuing difficulties in exchanging information between India and Pakistan.

Other publications

4.23 While the modest revenues from CSE publications (other than DTE) have grown (Rs.400,000 in 1994; Rs.337,000 in 1995; and Rs.1,017,000 in 1996), there is no indication that this is a profitable activity. (Annex 1 lists publications released during 1993-96) While the quality is high, and the range of topics is impressive, the CSE publication strategies seem unclear and to a considerable degree

determined by ad-hoc planning. Perhaps this is inevitable, but a clearer focus on priorities would seem beneficial.

4.24 However, the series related to campaigning themes 'The State of the Environment Series' is a model of its kind. Its latest publication 'Slow Murder: The deadly story of vehicular pollution' (in November 1996) has combined book, exhibition, DTE and national press coverage to great effect. Since CSE started its early successes with SOE (State of the Environment) reports on India in the early 1980s and now has followed up with another major achievement in this kind of reporting, it would seem useful to consider maintaining these as a prominent plank in the CSE work program. Many of those interviewed favored such an emphasis. SOE reports have many important attractions, including broad and highly desirable collaboration with academic institutions, science establishments, other NGOs and with government agencies in India. SOE reports also seem to provide good scope for follow-up work and for the continuing monitoring of on-going developments related to key environmental issues raised by CSE. Linking these to science and technology is a niche of work for which CSE seems especially well suited.

4.25 Book publishing in any country, even in India, is fraught with difficulties, and, again, the lack of a clearly formulated CSE business plan and a convincing strategy for its publications are hindrances to achieving a wider impact.

The Celluloid Cell of CSE

4.26 CSE had earlier collaborated with film makers from India and abroad but never made films on its own. The Celluloid Cell has produced three video films so far:

- Harvest of Rain (1995) - Traditional knowledge systems in environmental management;
- Thaar - Secrets of the Desert (1995) - Traditional nomadic systems of water management in Rajasthan; and
- The Village Republic (1995-1996) - People participation in natural resource management.

4.27 The quality of content and production is high, but the market for 50 minute films is unclear, and there appears to be no broadcast potential. Since February 1996, when these video cassettes were offered for sale, CSE has sold just 61 cassettes, primarily to NGOs. There appears to be no recorded feedback from the users..

4.28 The future plan of the Celluloid Cell of CSE includes creating a series of weekly analytical programs called 'Down to Earth'. Each program will be less than 30 minutes, featuring one subject. These programs will focus on issues in governance and equitable resource management. This weekly program will be sold to a TV channel. Should this venture prove successful (a measure of success would be commercial sponsorship) the program will not only become self financing but should also generate revenue for CSE.

4.29 The ambition to achieve multi-media outputs is commendable. But the unit is very much in its infancy and it is not clear that there has been sufficient exploration of possible linkages and partnerships with existing experienced production companies.

Workshops and Seminars

4.30 CSE provided a list of workshops and seminars conducted during 1993-96. There were no assessments or appraisals of these events as far as we are aware.

Serial No.	Name of Workshop	Output
1	National seminar on Environment and Economics held on January 27-29, 1994	Proceedings of the seminar being published - Challenge of the Ecological Balance
2.	Meeting organized to highlight problems of small island nations in March 1994 for a select group of eminent persons. The President of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom delivered a talk.	CSE has taken up a project to study eco-tourism.
3.	Journalists Fellowship Scheme in 1993 on grassroots experiences.	Reports published in various newspapers.
4.	National fisherwomen's workshop on the problems and environmental damages from prawn farming in the Chilika lake at Pathara village at Chilika on May 18, 1993	Book on Chilika in the final stages of production.
5.	Seminar on Towards Green Villages organized in Orissa in October 1993.	Recommendation to conduct orientation camps for government officials and NGOs on decentralized people's management of resources.
6.	South Asia regional meeting on behalf of the International NGO Forum in January 1995, in New Delhi.	Articulation of a South position on ecological sustainability and justice and decentralization of global governance of natural resources.
7.	South Asian regional workshop on Science and Climate Change in November 1995 in New Delhi.	Compilation of Proceedings underway.
8.	Debate on the grant of forest lands to industry for captive plantation in July 1995	Book on the proceedings of the debate published and used for campaign to halt the grant of forest lands. The campaign was successful in bringing about a stay of this move.
9.	Debate on the eco-development project initiated by the government in October 1995	Statement released and sent to the Prime minister and other officials as a part of the campaign to halt this project. Campaign continuing.

4.31 So far CSE and SEC have been very effective in reaching a small highly educated readership which seem to value very much its quality and unique coverage. Among this group CSE has been effective in gaining a very high standing and respect. Readers are loyal to DTE and want to be more involved in the magazine. Some perceive it as a more valuable brand name than CSE. Hence consideration might be given to have CSE campaigns launched by DTE rather than CSE. This would seem to ensure a high profile for a marketable product. However, since the circulation of all products are quite modest and considerably below the 1992 expectations, CSE has not yet been able to reach its larger educational objectives.

5. Financial sustainability

5.1 As mentioned, two different legal entities, CSE and its subsidiary SEC, are involved in the publication of DTE. Each of these entities have separate financial accounts. We shall refer to them jointly as the CSE Group.

5.2 At first sight, it may seem as if the CSE Group has no immediate financial difficulties. Over the last three years it has been very successful in getting foreign grants from various aid agencies, and CSE management is optimistic about the availability of more foreign aid in the future. Both CSE and SEC have been able to close its annual financial accounts with minor surpluses. Furthermore, CSE has been able to set aside annual contributions to an institutional 'Corpus Fund', which is producing a modest investment income.

5.3 However, an examination of the annual accounts over the last few years shows serious weaknesses in its financial structure. The Abelin report had emphasized the need to increase CSE's self-financing capacity. Since 1993 there has been no such development. Instead, the CSE Group has become highly dependent on foreign aid. In fact, during the period from 1993 to 1996 all increases in annual expenditure levels have been funded entirely from foreign aid sources. A substantial contributing factor to the growth in the expenditures of the CSE Group has been the production and publication of DTE.

5.4 In 1992, when it was established, one had anticipated that DTE would become largely self-financing within foreseeable future. Initially it was expected that it would be able to pay at least its own production costs and the full time editorial team which was set up as two separate DTE organizational units in CSE.

5.5 Results over the last three years have been disappointing in this regard. Sales revenues for DTE, as reported in the financial accounts, have dropped substantially from the Rs. 6.2 mill. in 1994 to Rs. 2.3 mill. in 1996. The institutional subscription price for DTE was reduced from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 264 in order to increase its market visibility, especially through newsstand sales. Revenues from other publications have been modest - totaling about Rs. 2 million for the three-year period 1994-96. So far advertising income has only had marginal significance - starting off at Rs. 313,000 in 1993 - dropping to Rs. 95,275 in 1995 and improving slightly to Rs. 133,700 in 1996. Likewise, local grants have had little financial significance so far, since it has only totaled Rs. 65,000 over the three year period.

5.6 Total reported revenue from all the CSE Group publications showed an overall negative trend over the period - from Rs. 7.5 mill. in 1993 to Rs. 3.9 mill in 1996. Despite these disappointing operating results, the CSE Group was able to maintain and even boost its activities by the substantial flows of foreign grants made available to it. These expanded rapidly from Rs. 10.5 mill. in 1994 to Rs. 28.4 mill. in 1996.

5.7 A further examination of the financial situation in the CSE Group shows that a substantial part of the subscription income was paid by bulk purchases from various foreign aid sources. Several donors paid for bulk subscriptions of DTE issues for free distribution inside India. These amounted to Rs. 2.9 mill. in 1993 and Rs. 3.4 mill in 1994 and dropped to Rs 1.5 mill. in 1995 and 0.3 mill. in 1996. Foreign aid funding for bulk subscriptions is no longer solicited and is not expected to be significant in the future.

5.8 What would be a useful indicator for that part of total income which is *not* associated with foreign aid? Subtracting the foreign aid funded DTE subscriptions, one is left with a net revenue figure of Rs 4.6 mill. in 1993, Rs. 3.4 mill. in 1994, Rs 1.4 mill. in 1995, and with an increase to Rs. 4.0 mill. in 1996. Hence, while there has been an improvement during the last financial year, the overall trend since 1993 has not been impressive. In fact, overall income from other than foreign aid sources, largely revenues mobilized domestically, have not yet been brought back fully to the level achieved in 1993.

5.9 Under these circumstances the financial accounts of the two entities in the CSE Group have been adjusted to accommodate changes in their cost structures to avoid showing large annual deficits in SEC. There has been a gradual transfer of the direct DTE-related salary costs from the SEC financial accounts to those of CSE. In fact, in 1996 SEC was not able to cover any such salary costs, but instead had to settle for more limited budget objectives - to cover only DTE printing costs. Had this shift in DTE salary costs from SEC to CSE *not* taken place in 1996, then SEC's financial accounts would have had to show a large financial deficit.

5.10 Thus the CSE Group continues to be highly dependent on foreign aid - without visible signs that it is able to generate any growth in revenues from its own products - nor from local grants or any other domestic source of financial support in India. A question of critical strategic importance for the future of the CSE Group is this: - When will it become largely self-financed from income generated in India? Beyond senior management, this is also an issue to be addressed by its Board, which so far seems to have been remarkably passive in that respect.

5.11 During the team's field work there seemed to be broad general agreement among those interviewed that considerable stronger marketing efforts should be able to boost revenues from sales of CSE products. Optimism was also expressed that there was good potential for increasing advertising income and grants from local sources to enable CSE to build a broader financial base - and one that is far less foreign aid-dependent..

5.12 The 1993 Abelin report makes the recommendation that CSE draw up a financial plan - "specifying a rate of self-financing considered adequate for safeguarding CSE's long-term independence, and indicating when this rate should be attained and whether it should apply to all CSE's projects/programmes/units." It also recommends that such a financial plan should indicate the maximum amount (in percentage terms) which would be acceptable from any one sponsor. Such a financial plan has not yet been developed. It is long overdue. In fact such a plan is presently even more important than when the recommendation was first made in 1993.

6. Human resources

6.1 An institution such as CSE is very dependent on high quality staff. The Abelin report pointed out that the institution has had a history of high turn-over of staff. One explanation was that this might be inevitable in a unique organization like CSE. It was also suggested that perhaps its salary levels are not adequate for higher level staff interested in longer term service. However, while this point may have had some validity, it does not seem to be the only main reason for the high staff turn-over in 1992 and 1993. There are indications that some of the staff, who left then, perceived the management style of the top management to be unable to foster the kind of participatory management methods which would encourage staff to stay on in their jobs and hence that it was not conducive to providing career prospects in the institution.

6.2 It is always difficult within an NGO structure to offer exciting career moves, especially for younger people and journalists. However, more can be done to achieve lower rates of attrition. We suggest that a review be made of the format used for the appointment letters to new staff in order to assure that there is a clear statement of staff terms and conditions and that transparent grievance procedures are spelled out.

6.3 The relatively high turnover of staff has remained. Presently 80% of the professional staff have been with CSE for less than two years. The professional staffing level of about 50 has a large majority with between two and six years of work experience. The CSE management seems to concur that more attention should be given to recruiting and retaining good staff. The present staff seem to the evaluation team to be competent and highly motivated. It has a good gender balance. Overall, there is optimism among present staff and management that CSE can now build up more stability in its staffing.

6.4 Success in stabilizing staffing is a very high priority, and tangible progress in that regard should be achieved before further staff expansion is considered. While some small organizations can cope with high turn-over of staff without jeopardizing the quality of its work, this is much less likely as organizations grow larger. For an institution that is now 16 years old, a very high priority must be to reduce high rates of turn-over in staff.

7. Institutional sustainability and management issues.

7.1 With a financial base so highly dependent on foreign donors, and with a past history of a large turn-over of staff, CSE needs to strengthen its longer-term institutional viability.

7.2 The institutional growth of CSE will depend to a large extent on whether it will have a strong management capability, a wise and experienced Board that can focus on the larger institutional issues, and on whether the CSE Group will bring out products with good prospects for cost recovery.

7.3 The various reports by CSE management to SIDA make frequent references to new initiatives being associated with new organizational units. Organizational charts are produced showing present and proposed organizational structures. The 1993 Abelin report also noted some confusion in this regard. It found that "the organizational pattern often seems to have been in a flux." One sign of the lack of organizational stability "is the fact that the number and designations of CSE's various units have changed frequently over the last few years."

7.4 The present organization - with different organizational terms - such as *units, sections, cells, and teams* - is not easy to comprehend. The real meaning of these organizational units seemed to generate some confusion and inconsistencies in the course of our interviews with staff. At least some of these units had no real management functions. The training and workshops unit has disappeared, the environmental economics unit was closed down after rather short duration, the ecology history unit appeared in the organizational chart for a brief period, the environmental education unit started recently, the planned cell for legislators have been merged with the advocacy unit, and new units, such as the proposed cell for organic agriculture, seem under on-going consideration. In many CSE presentations the unit called a "cell" seems to have special focus. Rather than having full managers responsible for each cell, CSE has attempted a decentralized system of "team leaders" and "coordinators" without clear management responsibilities. According to recent reports from CSE management, it has now been concluded that this system has not worked well.

7.5 The preoccupation with creating new units is seem, as least in part, to be motivated by ensuring that CSE remains creative and responsive to new challenges. The Director has recently recruited an Executive Assistant for the exclusive purpose of "planning for new activities and creating appropriate teams to carry them out." While this may serve some purpose, there is a real need for some consistency and stability in the organizational structure. This will be particularly important as CSE moves towards more long-term program activities, such as policy research.

7.6 A relatively small organization like CSE does not require a large hierarchy of different organizational units. A more professional approach would be to simplify the terminology used for the various organizational units and prescribe in clear terms how each will be managed.

7.7 In the 1995 annual presentation to SIDA the CSE management points out that management is a general area of weakness. Specifically it pointed out that good middle-level management is critical for the growth of the organization, but this was considered a weak point in CSE. No wonder that middle level management does not seem to work, when organizational units are frequently exposed to changes and when work programs, resources available, and the delegation of management authority has often been unclear. Under such circumstances it cannot be surprising to find that, when management weaknesses were pointed out in the May 1995 CSE presentation to SIDA, "most team leaders did not set up any management systems themselves - - (but rather) reduced their team members to assistants with no specified responsibility."

7.8 Delegation of management tasks from the two top managers to levels below them has lacked clarity and has caused some uncertainty in the past. One of the strengths of the top management is that the Director and the Deputy Director form a strong team. But below them there is some confusion as to who is responsible to whom. In the 'Review of Programmes for the Three Year Period 1993-94 to 1995-96', the

CSE management concluded that the lack of success with middle level management “ was particularly because journalists, NGOs and academics - the people we work with - have highly individualistic ways of working.” This point applies also to the two top managers of CSE themselves. If the latter have highly individualistic ways of working, one cannot expect middle level managers to behave differently and to manage systematically.

7.9 One of the explanations given to the evaluation team was that the Director is supervising directly the program units, and that the Deputy Director works very closely with the Director on all major matters and that she supervises the management support units in CSE. The 1996 annual presentation to SIDA brings out a somewhat different management structure. It has an organizational chart that shows that all CSE units are reporting to the Director through the Deputy Director. Apparently this was a temporary arrangement during the director's sick leave. Furthermore, the CSE Deputy Director is also the Director of the sister institution, Society for Environmental Communications, and in that capacity she is listed as the publisher of the Down to Earth magazine. Hence, a very heavy management burden is put on a Deputy Director who has no formal management training and no managerial experience outside CSE. It is a tribute to her capacity that so much has been achieved. Yet, the present management system is, in our view, in need of considerable improvement.

7.10 Following the support provided by the Symatec management consultant team in March 1995, several attempts have been made to improve management practices. Work programming has been given a stronger planning focus. Earlier there was little forward planning, but since early 1996 the work programs for each staff and each unit are planned on a six-monthly basis. The external evaluation team was informed that more management responsibility has recently been delegated to the management support units on a quarterly basis and that only on an “exceptional basis” do these need to bring day-to-day management issues to the attention of the two top managers. Such a trend is positive and should be further encouraged.

7.11 Currently CSE seems to favor a smaller team approach which focuses on the individual work programs of each individual staff. If each of these have to be supervised directly by the Director or the Deputy Director this management system may have limitations. A manager can effectively exercise direct supervision of a limited number of staff. For the two senior managers in CSE this limit is likely to be below the present staffing strength. To ensure effective management tasks there has to be a willingness to appoint lower level managers with clear budget responsibilities and day-to-day administration of staff. This is particularly important as CSE is moving from a media-focused organization to one centered on policy research and on advocacy and campaign programs.

7.12 At this stage it would not be wise for CSE to attempt the establishment of offices outside India - as mooted in 1995 - when CSE is involved in considerable soul-searching with regard to its own headquarters structure and its management systems. While CSE should continue to be involved in the major global environment issues related to India, a large part of such work can be done through various networking, partnership and liaison arrangements with other institutions. Branch offices are inevitably costly and they work best when management structures and systems at headquarters are clearly defined and well established. Before it considers opening up any branch offices outside India, CSE should, first of all, explore and test the scope for networking and partnership agreements with organizations outside India.

7.13 An organization as experienced, and as committed, to effective communications as CSE, should have developed internal M & E procedures. It is not evident that this is perceived as a priority for the organization. There are no professional readership/user surveys, and no benchmarks for any given activity. We believe that much greater attention should be paid to internal M & E procedures, both on the finance and program sides of the organization.

7.14 A simple version of the Project Framework (formerly the Logical Framework) would seem useful for all program and project activities. This would help in setting and achieving (or understanding the missed) goals. An annual end-of year workshop for all staff might help focus, in a participatory manner, on

deriving the broad lessons from last year activities - and also for checking the realism of future work programs.

7.15 While the CSE management seems to manage operational activities with prudence and care, it is more difficult to judge whether it has been cost-effective. In non-profit publishing this will always be difficult to make valid comparisons. Compared against its high quality standards there are reasons to conclude this in the affirmative. Yet, measured against the rather small circulation of CSE products, the unit cost structure in CSE would appear on the high side. The main thing to conclude at this stage is that CSE has incurred considerable costs associated with its capital plant (headquarters and information technology) which provides some optimism that there is very substantial scope for making CSE more cost-effective in the future with much more focused marketing efforts.

7.16 With its sister organization, SEC, responsible for publishing DTE, the major publication in the CSE group, it will now be important to set up a solid cost accounting system, to cover both CSE and SEC, for use by top management. There is presently no management information system for determining the true costs of producing each CSE product. A relatively simple cost accounting system would provide management with a comprehensive overview of production costs relative to the prices set for each product. Both senior and middle-level management would benefit from having a monitoring mechanism that can track all costs associated with the publication of DTE, that can provide a solid understanding of the substantial cross-subsidies being provided by CSE to SEC, and that can help to determine the most appropriate price levels for subscriptions and other sales.

7.17 An institutional strategy, with special emphasis on a financial plan, should be prepared for both CSE and SEC. At this stage it is difficult to predict whether DTE can become fully financially self-sufficient in the longer run. Cross-subsidies by way of staff contribution from CSE may be required for some time to come. But at least, DTE should seek to cover most of its own direct costs - including the total costs of the two designated DTE units in CSE which have full time responsibilities for editing and producing it. Within the near term future - say two years - it should be possible to have at least these direct DTE costs fully covered within the SEC budget.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Considerable attention has been focused on the institutional sustainability of the CSE Group. This focus has set the stage for the main recommendations spelled out below. The concerns are not new, since they were flagged in the Abelin report and mutually agreed in the 1993-96 Programme Agreement. In weighing the alternatives the external evaluation team made the judgment that our conclusions must reiterate and emphasize these "old" issues, since they are of such fundamental importance to the longer-term sustainability of CSE as an institution.

8.2 The external evaluation team concluded that CSE has achieved a position of high relevance in India in its field. Its view points are taken seriously by the government, by the private sector and by the civil society. Its work is also highly relevant to on-going global discussions on environmental issues and related international agreements.

8.3 While its relevance has been clearly established, it is more difficult to judge its effectiveness. In many respects CSE has been very effective in making its views known to governmental leaders and other decision makers in India. Its perspectives and opinions are often solicited by international development agencies and international NGOs. on a variety of environmental issues. In regard to the production and publication of the fortnightly Down to Earth magazine, the major activity of the CSE Group since 1992, it has been very effectively established as a medium for expressing non-governmental views which are respected and are considered important both within and outside the government.

8.4 However, the CSE Group has so far been less effective in reaching the wider subscription distribution for DTE and the associated broader readership in India that had been anticipated when the magazine was launched in 1992. Furthermore, since this new publication has made heavy demands on staff time and other resources available to CSE, it has been less effective than in the past in pursuing many other of its traditional activities. The fellowship program for journalists has become inactive. More importantly, the broad participatory processes which produced the widely acclaimed State of India's Environment Reports in the 1980s have lost some momentum.

8.5 The target groups for CSE products are diverse. As a non-governmental advocacy institution it aims to influence government and private sector decision makers on a broad range of developmental and environmental issues. Clearly, it is focusing on these focal groups very effectively. At the same time it aims to educate and stimulate environmental awareness among all people throughout India, including many topics which are important for alleviating poverty and redressing gender biases. Efforts have been made by CSE to include educational establishments in the free magazine and other document distributions paid for by grants made available to CSE through the local offices of international donors. Furthermore, as a media focused organization it is to be expected that many of the key messages contained in CSE products are being published through various media outlets reaching readers, viewers and listeners from diverse income and gender groups. While it does a good job in raising issues of immediate concern for poverty groups and women for in public debates and in campaigns addressing critical policy topics, the external evaluation team noted that the subscribers to CSE products, including the Down to Earth magazine, have been able to include less than 2% of the more than 30,000 educational libraries in India.

8.6 Based on the data made available during the external evaluation it was very difficult to arrive at firm judgments about cost efficiency aspects of CSE's activities. At the general level it would appear that the CSE Group is making determined efforts to be cost-efficient in handling funds available to it. Salaries seem appropriately in-line with the sector, the new office building makes good economic use of space so as to minimize housing overhead costs, and the overall costs associated with general administration would seem to be appropriate for a non-governmental institution of this kind.

8.7 The main area of concern has to do with the publication of Down to Earth. In the absence of a cost accounting system which can cover the combined activities of CSE and SEC (the CSE Group), it was difficult to understand how much of CSE's staff time is involved the production and publication of this magazine. However the impression left was that a considerable amount of available staff was involved on a full-time or part-time basis in this particular activity. Comparing these overhead cost with the relatively small number of paid subscribers and the rather modest sales at newsstands, one has to conclude that at present the unit costs of the magazine are high. In order to make unit costs more favorable to the magazine, there would have to be substantial increases in magazine revenues - from subscriptions and also copy sales.

8.8 Finally, we were asked to assess SIDA's role in providing support to CSE, specifically its organizational support. In this regard both praise and critique seem appropriate. The flexibility and safety associated with the core program support to CSE was without doubt very valuable to the creative energies of its talented founder and his associates. It provided the means to overcome some turbulent changes in the organization and its working environment. It also provided a considerable safety margin for the qualitatively successful launching of its major flagship product in 1992 - the Down to Earth magazine. Furthermore the organizational support which SIDA has provided to CSE Group has been appropriate, but it could have been provided at a much earlier point in time, with a much stronger sense of urgency, and with much more emphasis on clarifying the institutional linkages between CSE and SEC.

8.9 What seems most puzzling was the softness and lack of consistency in SIDA's monitoring and supervision of the generous core budget support to CSE. At the outset of the three-year program agreement SIDA had identified four issues for special attention during implementation. Given their importance to a positive institutional development in the CSE Group it was quite surprising to find during the external evaluation that no serious effort had been made to derive one or more specific

indicators for expected progress on each of these four issues. Furthermore, in reading the summaries from the annual consultation meetings between CSE and SIDA it would appear to have been no consistent substantive reviews of these issues during the course of these main dialogues between the two parties to the agreement and in monitoring progress achieved and difficulties encountered during implementation.

8.10 A clear illustration of the lack of adequate attention given by SIDA to this matter can be seen from the follow-up on how to improve CSE's self-financing capacity. Yet this was clearly spelled out as one of the four issues for special attention in the program agreement. Over time this point seems to have become diluted. For example, there was no mention of the issue of self-financing in the minutes from the May 1995 Annual Consultations between CSE and SIDA. Nor what this mentioned in the minutes from the June 1996 Consultations. At that time it was emphasized that CSE should seek more donor assistance from others, in order to reduce SIDA's share in foreign donor funding to the CSE Group.

8.11 By the time of the visit of the external evaluation team in late 1996, CSE management seemed to have lost an understanding for the importance of the sound advice which had been provided earlier by SIDA and which had been mutually agreed in the 1993 Programme Agreement. The idea that the institutional sustainability of CSE would be strengthened if the self-financing objective was pursued actively, seemed not so important to CSE management. No wonder that this was a result, when SIDA failed to convey that message with consistency and clarity in its on-going implementation dialogue with CSE. Instead it conveyed repeatedly an optimism about future prospects for a continuation of generous financial support from SIDA. The signals conveyed to CSE management from SIDA, and from other donors also positively inclined to respond to new funding requests from CSE, were to emphasize the point that there was considerable potential for further external funding to CSE. Hence it can come as no surprise that CSE management saw little urgency in spending much time on how to raise revenues for CSE from domestic sources in India.

8.12. In light of the above findings the external evaluation formulated three sets of major recommendations for immediate attention by CSE management and its Board.

8.13 The *first recommendation* is to formulate a clearer vision about CSE's future direction. A short mission statement and a longer term strategy document (perhaps in the format of the Logical Framework) should be prepared through consultation processes with its Board and staff. These should form the framework for annual work programs and budgets for each program activity. The sources of funding for each such program activity should also be made clear, including quantitative projections of what is expected from sales and direct income from each program activity.

8.14 The *second recommendation* is that a major effort should now be made to secure a domestic financial resources for CSE and SEC activities. Our field investigations have indicated considerable optimism in regard to the prospects for considerable self-financing through vigorous marketing efforts of DTE and CSE products - and from advertising revenues.

8.15 Furthermore, various sources of grants from industry and from research funds should also be actively explored. Many with whom we spoke felt that CSE should be able to accept government grants, but management has resisted this - since it would impact on its editorial freedom. This should be respected. While some types of government grants may involve unacceptable government restrictions, others may not, such as grants from government-funded research councils.

8.16 After 16 years of institutional existence it is now time for CSE to become less dependent on foreign aid by boosting its domestic sources of funding. As recommended by the Abelin report in 1993, a long term finance plan is needed. It should be formulated in consultation with the Board, which should play a more active role in financial matters. It will also be a good reference tool for donors whose continued support will be needed. The targets for reaching higher levels of domestic funding should be explicitly stated in this plan. As part of a longer term financial plan CSE should attempt to augment its 'Corpus Fund' to provide a more secure and dependable basis for the future growth of CSE.

8.17 The *third recommendation* relates to organizational and management issues. With the past history of considerable organizational flux and management capacity problems, what CSE now seem to need most of all is organizational stability over the next few years. With a highly centralized management system centered on the Director and the Deputy Director, there is a limit to what they can directly supervise. Further institutional growth cannot be achieved without considerable wider decentralization of decision-making.

8.18 CSE can boost its management effectiveness in several ways. It may enter into customized management training. It can broaden the top management team by including one or more senior level managers. It can further delegate management authority by appointing first line managers with responsibilities for budget responsibilities of each management unit and for work programs of individual staff.

8.19 The evaluation team recommends that action be taken on all of the above points. There is considerable management literature and case studies related to the specific situation in which CSE now find itself - relating to the experiences of both the small scale private sector and non-profit organizations. The situation in which CSE finds itself is an almost classical case of the "founder syndrome" in management literature. A specially designed short term management program with repeater follow-up exercises, should be easily identifiable based on management training available in India and supplemented with training skills and experiences from other countries.

8.20 Financial issues are now of such critical importance to CSE's future that a experienced financial manager should be included in the top management team. We believe the organization is now is so large that it needs to have at least two Deputy Directors - one for Programs and one for Finance. The Deputy Director for Finance should handle fund-raising activities and budgets, and should also help to set up a cost-accounting management system for CSE and SEC.

8.21 Furthermore, as seems to be well recognized in CSE, there needs to be much stronger move towards decentralized management responsibilities for middle-level management. The recent steps in that direction are encouraging. The important point is now to simplify the organizational structure of the CSE Group and to make very explicit the annual work programs of each unit. With this framework in place, middle level managers would get a clear understanding of the specific output expectations for each unit, as well as the staffing and financial resources available. A simple management information system would make these quantifiable objectives open and transparent to the staff concerned and to the managers at all levels. Monitoring and evaluation processes ought to be made part of all management tasks.

8.22 Finally, the external evaluation team is satisfied that SIDA funding has been generally put to good use in the program support provided to CSE over the last three years. The share of the core budget supporting the building program and the completed investments in information technology will no longer be needed, but there will still be a need for SIDA support to ensure a continued momentum in the program activities which have been set in motion. Beyond maintaining current levels of program activities, it is recommended that further increases in the overall budget for the CSE Group should be largely funded from domestically generated income. It may be strategically important for SIDA to encourage this development by offering some form of incentives in some form of matching grants. This would help to increase the likelihood that the CSE Group will be able to build a stronger financial basis for its future institutional growth and sustainability.

9. LESSONS LEARNED

9.1 Core program support provided by SIDA to CSE can be a very effective means for providing valuable flexibility for encouraging creativity and for stimulating intellectual and technical leadership in a non-governmental organization. Important prerequisites in this regard are that the donor has trust and

confidence in the top management team in the institution and that it has a convincing track record in producing results of high quality and thereby deserving to be given support for further strengthening and expansion of the recipient institution. This was the situation facing SIDA in respect to CSE. Its judgment and accompanying financing decision were soundly based.

9.2 With the flexibility provided in this way, it is important that the donor reaches mutual agreements on key institutional, managerial and financial issues that are clearly understandable to both parties. Moreover, specific indicators should be laid down in the Program Agreements forming the basis for forward progress to be monitored on a regular basis. The monitoring of the agreed indicators must become regular reference points for consultations between donor and recipient throughout implementation.

9.3 While it is easily understood that lack of adequate funding can be a very serious problem for a non-governmental institution, it is not so easy to detect at what point, and under which circumstances, a situation of over-funding can become problematic and cause significant bottlenecks for the desired path towards sound institutional development and growth. SIDA should be encouraged to explore this specific issue at a more general policy level, based on its diverse experiences with core program support to many different institutions in developing countries. What is clear from this case is that the relationships between SIDA's own support, that of other donors, and the desired self-financing capacity of a recipient institution, have been blurred and open to considerable misunderstanding and some confusion.

9.4 Evaluations of institutions, as distinct from projects, require an even deeper gaze into the future. We have attempted this. Institutional development clearly needs careful forward planning and not be largely dependent on a "star" or a "star team". In the NGO world this has proved difficult to achieve and CSE is no exception. Best practice requires donors to be consistent in their support, but at the same time assist organizations in developing a sustainable future. This must go beyond periodic evaluations, and encompass the concept of 'accompanying' which might involve regular meetings between donors and recipient institutions at the policy level. This also raises the question of how policy within donor organizations is shaped. While it is unrealistic - and inappropriate - for NGOs (such as CSE) to seek to determine donor policy, their experiences and knowledge could play a greater role in informing it. This can only happen if there are more structured, long term relationships between donors and NGOs. This would make donor assistance to such institutions infinitely more effective.

A Note on Subscriptions to “Down to Earth”

1. A total of 4124 subscribers are on the list of subscribers of Down to Earth though many of those have lapsed. However the list provides a helpful starting point for analyzing readership. Out of 4124 active and lapsed subscribers, 3752 are from within India and the remaining are from outside.

2. Its target readers include policy makers and planners; politicians and bureaucrats; industrial managers and professionals; and university teachers and students. According to the readership survey conducted by the CSE Research Team, “Down to Earth readers are top professionals who belong to core groups of decision makers. A large section of Down to Earth readers are captains of industry, policy makers, managers, scientists, academicians, senior bureaucrats, NGOs, who are responsible for charting the future course of this country.” The subscribers of Down to Earth are not evenly distributed across the different states of India. The magazine has relatively higher presence in Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

Subscribers of Down to Earth

Sl.No	Categories	Within India	Outside India	Total
1.	Educational Institutions			
	a) Schools	165 (4.4)	-----	165
	b) Colleges/Institutes	299 (7.9)	-----	299
2.	Research Institutes	130 (3.5)	22 (5.9)	152
3.	Voluntary Organizations	234 (6.2)	66 (17.7)	300
4.	Government Institutions	295 (7.8)	23 (6.2)	318
5.	Media/Service Industries	124 (3.3)	47 (12.6)	171
6.	Industries	222 (5.9)	1 (0.3)	223
7.	Individuals	2211 (58.9)	142 (38.2)	2353
8.	International Organizations	72 (1.9)	71 (19.1)	143
	Total	3752	372	4124

Figures in brackets are percentages of total.

3. Many of the about 1100 lapsed subscribers, who are long overdue in payments, have continued to receive copies of DTE in the hope that they may once again become paying subscribers. If one deducts these lapsed subscribers, one will find that there has been no growth in paid subscriptions over the four year history of DTE:

1993: 1757 paying subscribers
 1994: 3501 -----“-----
 1995: 2891; -----“-----
 1996: 2999 -----“-----

4. While the core subscription level has been stuck at some 3000, nearly all respondents surveyed believed the level to be between 15,000-20,000 in line with the editorial and production quality at a cover price of twenty rupees.

5. There have been some fluctuating news stand sales in 1996. While these are necessary, valuable and worthwhile, they are unlikely to provide a significant income, as competition from more popular magazines is fierce. About 40% of the cover price is paid to the vendor who pays CSE four months in arrears. Equally, all our respondents, including experienced media people, agreed that DTE had a much greater subscription sales potential ranging from 10,000 to 50,000, particularly among colleges and institutional libraries.

6. The next three years should be seen as make or break. Most magazines give themselves just one year. But if DTE can substantially increase subscriptions and readership from now, the donor investment will have been very worthwhile. The minimum target for paid-up subscription should be 10,000, the sales minimum should be 15,000, and if newsstand/casual sales cannot make up the 5,000 difference then DTE will need more subscribers. CSE should research and prepare their own business plan for DTE 1997 - 2000 and set achievable goals with clear indicators along the way.

7. But the readership must be much broader in order to provide DTE with a sustainable future. A priority should be to extend the subscription base in schools, colleges and other academic institutions. As the table on the next page shows, present subscribers include 165 schools and 299 colleges in India. This is less than 2% of the more 30,000 educational libraries in the country.

* * *

SUBSCRIBERS OF DOWN TO EARTH :
Educational Institutes

Sl. No.	State / Place	Schools	Colleges
1.	A P O	2	
2.	Chandigarh	1	1
3.	Delhi	29	24
4.	Pondicherry	--	1
5.	Andhra Pradesh	7	19
6.	Arunachal Pradesh	--	2
7.	Assam	1	4
8.	Bihar	5	8
9.	Goa	8	5
10.	Gujarat	5	19
11.	Haryana	6	5
12.	Himachal Pradesh	3	2
13.	Jammu & Kashmir	1	3
14.	Karnataka	10	38
15.	Kerala	3	14
16.	Madhya Pradesh	3	8
17.	Maharashtra	16	56
18.	Meghalaya	2	4
19.	Mizoram	--	1
20.	Nagaland	--	1
21.	Orissa	1	4
22.	Punjab	6	2
23.	Rajasthan	3	10
24.	Tamil Nadu	23	37
25.	Uttar Pradesh	17	20
26.	West Bengal	13	11

Total

165

299

List of CSE Books published between 1993-1996

Children's Booklets

1. Within the well
2. Raindrop
3. Chipko

Lecture Series and other occasional publications

1. Children and Environment - Karl Knut Ericsson
2. Northern Lifestyles - A major threat to the global environment - Anders Wijkman
3. Green Farming- Directory of
4. A duty to Hope - The future of the worlds environment - Mostafa Tolba.
5. Ecological Tax Reforms: making the budget environment friendly
6. Environmental Impact of India's Economic Liberalisation Policy.
7. Should paper and pulp industry get forest lands for captive plantation?

State of Environment Series

1. Curse of the White Gold
2. Protection of Nature Parks.
3. Slow Murder.

Reprints

Apart from these, the following publications were reprinted in response to orders. The number of copies is given in brackets.

Wrath of Nature (3720)
 Towards Green Villages (3500)
 Chakriya Vikas Pranali (3600)
 Call of the Commons (3500)
 Global Warming (4000)
 Children and Environment (3800)
 Northern Lifestyles (3600)
 Duty of Hope (3700)

Further reprints of the three State of India's Environment series is also in the pipeline.

The Main Documents and People Interviewed by the External Evaluation Team for CSE

Main Reference Documents:

Three Year Perspective Plan for CSE, 1992
 1992 Prospectus for the 'Down to Earth' magazine
 Memorandum of Association of the Centre for Science and Environment (undated)
 Stig Abelin "A review of the CSE, New Delhi, India and an appraisal of SIDA-support to CSE 1989-92", January 1993
 SIDA-CSE Programme Agreement, dated November 10, 1993
 CSE Annual Reports 1990-95
 CSE Annual Financial Statements 1990-96
 SEC Annual Financial Statements 1993-96
 CSE Annual Presentations to SIDA, 1993-96
 Minutes from CSE and SIDA annual consultations in 1994, 1995 and 1996.
 'CSE Diagnosis and Development of Management Support Units', March 16, 1995, Symatec Associates Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, March 16, 1995
 CSE Programme Review April-September 1996
 CSE Review of Programmes for the period 1993-94 to 1995-96, November 1996
 Gabor Bruszt "Management System and Organization Review of the Center for Science and Environment", ISO Swedish Management Group, January 1996.

Fortnightly Issues of 'Down to Earth' magazine
 CSE Publications

People Interviewed:

Besides the managers and staff of CSE and in addition to informal contacts with international development and environment experts in Washington, New York, Montreal, London, the Hague and Katmandu, the main individual interviews conducted by the external evaluation team in India, included the following:

Darryl D'Monte	Editor, Times of India, Bombay Edition Chairman, Journalists Environment Forum, India
Mrs. D.S. Variava	Vice President, Bombay Natural History Society
Dr. Shyam R. Asoleker	Centre for Environmental Science and Engineering Indian Institute of Tecnology, Bombay
Bgaradwaj Chandramouli	M. Techn. student at IIT, Bombay
Ramkrishna Joshi	M. Techn. student at IIT, Bombay
Anand B. Rao	M. Techn. student at IIT, Bombay
Dr V. Nanjundiah	Indian Institute of Technology, Bangalore
Dr. Madhav Gadgil	Centre for Ecological Studies, IIT, Bangalore
Anuradha Bhat	Ph.D. student at CES, IIT, Bangalore

Darshan Sharker	Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions
P.S. Ishwara Bhat	Editor, Udayavani Daily, Karnataka
Mune Reddy	Conservator of Forest (Research), Banagalore
Ashish Sen	Communications Coordinator, Action Aid India
Nupur Basu	New Delhi TV
Dr. Danjeev Jain	National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences
Munira Sen	Executive Director, Madhyam
Prof. M.A.Sethu Rao	KRVP, Karnataka State Science Council
Anita Anand	Executive Director, Women's Feature Service
D. Bandyopadhyay	Head of Information, Ministry of Environment
Usha Rai	Features Editor, The Hindustan Times
G.V. Rao	Advisor, NORAD, Norwegian Embassy, New Delhi
Kanak Dixit	Editor, Himal, South Asia
Anupam Mishra	Gandhi Peace Foundation, Board Member, CSE
Sudhierenda Sharma	Energy Environment Group, New Delhi
Murari Shivakoti, et al.	President and staff members of Nepal Forum of Environment Journalists
Avdhash Kaushal	Chairperson, Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra
Jan-Olav Agrell	SIDA, New Delhi
Anita Ingevall	SIDA, New Delhi
Bishakha De Sarkar	The Telegraph, Calcutta
Lone Spenner	DANIDA, New Delhi
Hans von Sponeck	UNDP Res. Rep., India
Edward Lim	World Bank Res. Rep, India
Ashok Jhunjhunwala	India Institute of Technology, Madras
Nirmala Lakshman	Co-Editor, The Hindu, Madras
S. Venkataramanen	Former Financial Secretary of the Gov. of India
Dr. M.S.Swaminathan	Member, Planning Commission, Tamil Nadu
Avindar Singh	MSS Research Foundation, Madras
	Managing Director, Indfoss Industries and CSE Board Member
Dr. V. Ramalingaswami	Medical Scientist and CSE Board Member

Sida
Dept. For Natural Resources
and the Environment
D.Asplund

Terms of Reference for an Evaluation of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), India

1. Background

CSE was constituted in 1980 as a Non-Governmental Society with the following and still valid, main objectives

- to study the social and economic impact of science and technology;
- to promote and conduct research on science and technology appropriate for developing countries;
- collect, document and disseminate information about science and technology through various forms of publications;
- to create public awareness, particularly through the mass media, of science, technology, environment and development related issues.

CSE has since developed into one of the most renowned environmental institutions in India, with a strong positive reputation also on the international arena. Major programme areas and lines of action include:

- environmental publications and information including a number of publications series such as the State of India's Environment Series, CSE Occasional Series, Catalogue and Directory Series as well as publications like the Green file and the fortnightly international magazine Down to Earth;
- fellowships for environmental journalists;
- networking and interaction with NGO:s engaged in environmental or rural development activities;
- education and training
- environmental documentation
- public and policy related advocacy and lobbying on environmental issues.

Sweden has through Sida provided support to CSE since 1989 at an accumulated level of some 13 MSEK, most of in the form of core budget support. The current support of some 9,0 MSEK covers the period July 1993 - March 1997, which apart from core support also includes specific activities and consultancy expertise related to organizational strengthening and development.

CSE is receiving financial support from a large number of other international donor agencies.

An evaluative study of CSE was undertaken by Sida in 1992 (A review of the CSE, N.Delhi, India and an appraisal of Sida-support to CSE 1989-1992. S.Abelin, January 1993), the conclusions of which were strongly positive and appreciative of CSE and its work. A more comprehensive evaluation of the organization and its longterm role and impact has been regarded as a prerequisite before continued Sida-support is considered.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The primary motive for the evaluation is to ascertain the relevance and effectiveness of CSE, and thus to provide guidance to CSE and its members with regard to the further development of the organization. Secondly, the evaluation will provide an important basis for Sida's considerations of a possible continued support to the organization including volume, form and content.

Primary stakeholders of the evaluation and its results are therefore CSE members, board and staff, Sida as well as environmentally concerned people and organizations nationally as well as internationally.

The evaluation is being commissioned by Sida. The elaboration of the ToR and the composition of the evaluation team has however been done in contact with CSE and have been jointly approved. CSE will be given the opportunity to comment on the draft evaluation report and a joint seminar will be arranged on the basis on the final report.

3. The Assignment

3.0 General

The evaluation shall concentrate on but not limit itself to the last 10-year period ending 1995. The evaluation shall focus on the role and results of CSE in the national Indian context, and to minor extent, on its role in relation to the environment and the Third World.

The evaluation shall cover the following major aspects and issues:

3.1 Relevance of CSE

Analysis of the organization, mandate and objectives primarily in relation to

- environmental problems, visions, policies and priorities in the Indian national context;
- poverty and improved livlyhood, primarily within a national perspective.
- development of environmental awareness, capability and capacity related to the environment and the Third World.
- major factors influencing the continued relevance of the organization, its objectives and the possible need for readjustments.

3.2 Achievements

Broad overview of achievements during the last decade as well as a more detailed compilation and assessment, progress, achievements and outputs during the period 1993-1996 in quantitative and qualitative terms. The compilation and assessment should be done in relation to annual and medium term workplans and against major programme areas and categories of activities and should include organizational development.

The assessment should identify and comment on major changes in emphasis, strategies and priorities in the activities carried out by CSE.

3.3 Effectiveness

Analysis of the ability and efficiency of the organization and the means applied to reach its objectives. The analysis should include:

- analysis of overall as well as relative adequateness, strength, weaknesses and particular constraints of the approaches, programme areas and types of activities used to reach the objectives of CSE,
- analysis of the degree to which the achievements made so far are in conformity and have contributed to the objectives, distinguishing between major programme areas and categories of activities;
- analysis of priorities and possible changes of strategies and types of activities during the period and implications for effectiveness

The analysis should also include cover:

- the effectiveness and appropriateness of the organization as such. A brief overview of the current organization should be included;
- scientific and professional quality of the research and investigations work;
- quality and relevance of features and information material produced;
- quality of training provided and seminars/workshops organized etc;
- quality and effectiveness of linkages and relations to institutions and organizations dealing with similar areas of concern
- differences if any in effectiveness between the major programme areas and line of actions adopted by CSE

3.4 Impact

Attempting to measure impact (lasting benefits and durability of results) of the work and activities carried out by an organization like CSE is a methodological challenge. Ambitions will have to be realistic and basically aim at an informed discussion on and tentative assessment of long-term effects of the work of CSE, distinguishing between the extent needed between the major strategies and line of actions used by CSE.

The assessment should among other aspects consider

a) impact in India

- outreach priorities - what type of individuals, organizations and institutions have been the prime target and reached in qualitative terms and possible implications with regard to longterm effects;
- outreach capacity - individuals, institutions and organizations reached and served in quantitative terms
- likely effects and lasting in terms of increased environmental awareness;
- likely effects in terms of new knowledge disseminated and used, networks initiated, pressure groups created, local, state and national decisionmakers reached

- capacity and competence created with regard to environmental issues and information methods;
- possible effects in terms of local, state or national action taken, legislation and policy influenced, institutions created, local, regional or national action, influence on policy and institutional development etc.

b) Globally the assessment may be limited to the role, presence, status and renommé of CSE and its work with special regard to environmental policy and issues and the third world.

c) assess the methods, criteria and indicators applied by CSE to measure and monitor effectiveness and impact of its programmes, suggesting as needed improvements.

3.5 Target group aspects

a) Analysis of the direct target group of CSE activities in broad categories and in relation to CSE objectives and effectiveness.

b) Assessment of possible targetgroup aspects and distributional effects, considering inter alia

- to what extent the activities and the results of CSE would have any special beneficial or negative impact with regard to poverty, equality and gender equality in Indian society as well as globally;
- poverty and gender related representation among members and leadership ;
- organizational sensitivity, policy and professional knowledge with regard to gender and equity issues.

3.7 Cost Efficiency

Analyse outputs and results in relation to costs, differentiating between major areas of action. The analysis should include aspects and areas such as:

- efficiency of the organization as such;
- generation and gathering of knowledge and information;
- dissemination and distribution of knowledge and information (publications, media, networking, meetings etc);
- training, education, workshops and seminars;
- lobbying and advocacy activities.

3.8 Sustainability

Assess CSE in terms of sustainability including aspects such as:

a) With regard to organizational sustainability:

- * membership vitality, growth, influence and role
- * current leadership and future perspectives
- * management capabilities and management development
- * competence and staff development
- * professional abilities - today and in the future
- * resources and ability for feed back, monitoring, analysis, learning and development within the organization
- * trends as well as concrete actions and plans for promoting organizational sustainability;

b) With regard to economic sustainability:

- * the current financial situation of CSE and recent trends;
- * an assessment of financial and economic sustainability covering aspects such as:
 - degree of self financing through membership contributions, cost coverage, consultancy incomes and other incomes;
 - degree of financial dependance on external funders (national bodies, external donors) and its current and future implications with regard to CSE:s character, role, ability to fulfill its mandate, future development etc.

3.9 Support provided by Sida

- Assess the use and role of the Swedish financial support and its possible alternative costs/use, taking also into consideration other external assistance to CSE;
- specifically assess the usefulness, quality and use made of the support to organizational development.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the Team shall make recommendations relating to:

- major actions, if any, to contribute to the relevance, effectiveness, impact, poverty and gender contributions, efficiency and sustainability of CSE and its work;
- possible need and in such a case, the recommended form and modalities of a continued Swedish support to CSE.

5. Methodology and organization of the evaluation

a) Organization

The evaluation be composed of four parts:

- an independant study on subscribers and users of CSE documentation and materials in India, undertaken by an Indian consultant;
- Study of documentation (desk studies)
- Visit/interviews with a selected number of international environmental institutions/organizations
- Visit and study of CSE and its work in India

b) Methods

The documentation will mainly be composed of material published by CSE over the years, its Charter, Annual plans and Annual Reports. It will also include special studies done during the last 3-4 years of CSE including the Sida evaluative study from 1992, and the organizational diagnosis and action plan on organizational development prepared 1994/95.

The methods of the evaluation will, apart from study of available documents, primarily include:

- interviews with staff of CSE, members of CSE, subscribers, as well as reprsentatives of govt. and non-government organizations and institutions in India as well as globally;
- Analysis of subscribers and receivers of regular publications and other CSE-material
- random sample interviews and on-spot checking of uuse, utility and availability of CSE-material

To a large extent, the evaluation will be based on informed and qualitative comparisons with similar organizations and their work throughout the world.

c) The Team

The evaluation team will be composed by:

- a Team leader having qualified experience of evaluations of externally supported projects in the third world, as well as of non-government organizations and organizational development;
- a specialist on environmentally related information and communications;

- a member with qualified experience of environmental and development issues in India.

d) Time Schedule

The evaluation should be undertaken and completed within the period October-December 1996 with the following rough time schedule:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| - Global assesment and interviews - | October 1996 |
| - Visit - field study India 3 weeks | Nov/Dec |
| - Report writing and presentation | December 1996. |

6. Reporting

a) General

Reporting of conclusions in India. Debriefing and seminar in Sweden

b) Reporting format

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 25 pages excluding annexes. The outline of the report the format given in annex 1. Three copies of the draft report shall be submitted to Sida/Stockholm not later than December 6th, 1996. Within three weeks after receiving comments from Sida and CSE on the draft report, a final version in six copies as well as on disquette shall be submitted to Sida. Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluation series. The report shall therefore be written in WP 6.1 for Windows or a compatible format and should be presented in a way that facilitates publication without further editing.

The evaluation assignment also includes production of a summary of the report as well as the completion of a Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet in accordance with the guidelines anclosed in annex 1, to be submitted to Sida along with the final main evaluation report.

Sida Evaluations - 1997

- 97/1 Swedish Consultancy Trust Funds with the African Development Bank. Karlis Goppers, Sven Öhlund
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/2 Programa de Vivienda Social de FUPROVI, Costa Rica. Lillemor Andersson-Brolin, Bauricio Silva
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/3 Sida's Assistance to the Environment Protection Training and Research Institute, EPTRI, India. Bo Lundberg, Bo Carlsson, K P Nyati
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/4 Environment & Land Management Sector Activities, ELMS 1991-1995, Southern African Development Community, SADC. J Erikson, M Douglas, J Chileshe
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/5 Labour Construction Unit, LCU - Lesotho, 1977-1996. David Stiedl
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/6 Sida's Support to the Start East Programme. Cecilia Karlstedt, Sven Hilding, Piotr Gryko
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 97/7 Sida's Cultural Support to Namibia, 1991-1996. Dorian Haarhoff
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 97/8 Sida-SAREC's Support to the International Centre for Theoretical Physics. Olle Edqvist, John S Nkoma
Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC
- 97/9 Sida Support to Dissemination Division at Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad, INBio, Costa Rica. Bjorn Hansson
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/10 Swedens Support to Mayibuye Centre, University of Western Cape, South Africa. Inger A Heldal, Jenny Hoffmann
Department for Democracy and Social Development

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