

## SANAGUA Europe

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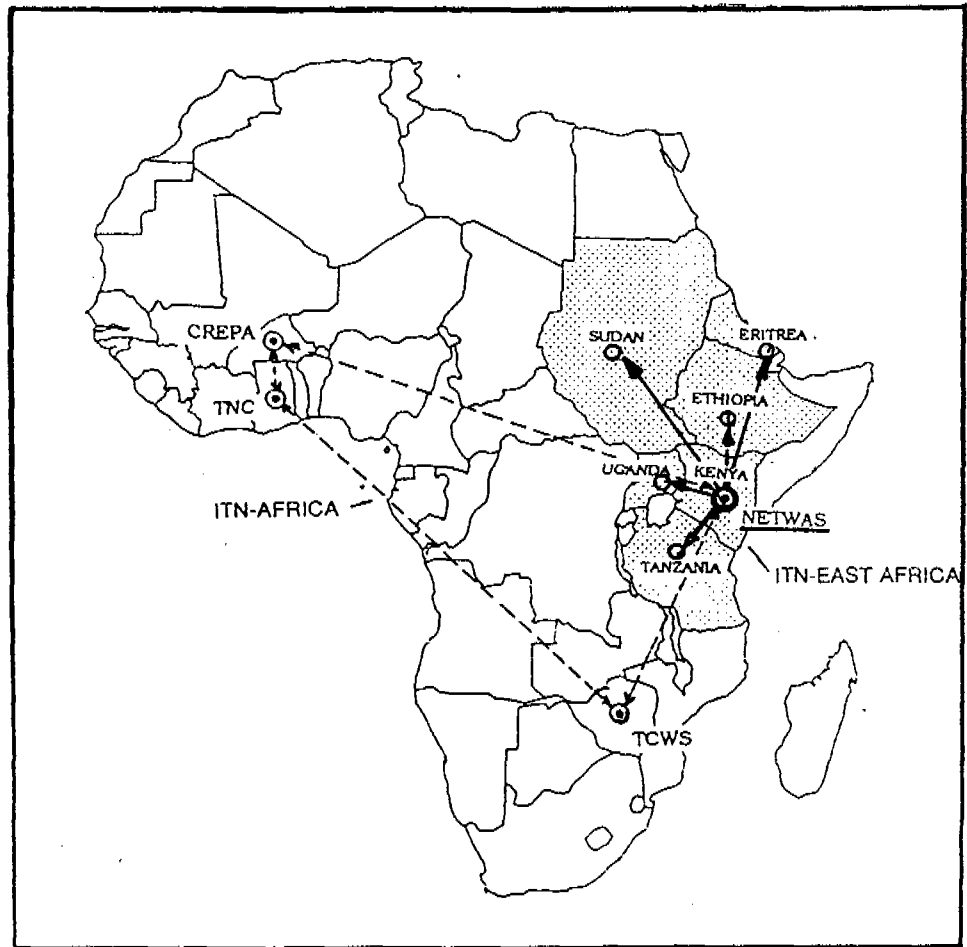
Capacity Building and  
Information Dissemination

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## BRIEF NOTE ON NETWAS, THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING NETWORK (ITN) CENTRE FOR EAST AFRICA

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## BRIEF NOTE ON NETWAS THE ITN CENTRE FOR EAST AFRICA

### **Introduction**

The International Training Network for Water and Waste Management (ITN) is a UNDP/WB Programme that was set up as part of the global support to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD). Its main objective is the promotion of Community-Based Water Supply and Sanitation (CBWSS) through training and information support services. The network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS), established at AMREF in Nairobi in 1986, was the first of the four ITN centres in Africa.

In March 1994 I had the opportunity to lead a thorough evaluation of NETWAS after seven years of operation. In August 1994 I took part in a three-days' brainstorming session to assess ITN on the global level. Again in September 1994, I participated in a one week planning workshop and board meeting of NETWAS.

These three occasions gave me a fairly good insight into the potential, but also the limits of such a global network.

### **Conclusions**

In enclosure the executive summary of the evaluation report informs about the main findings and conclusions. In addition a few tables (extracted from the evaluation report) provide some ideas about the network and its development, the sustainability system, the business-like organization of ITN centres and the principal recommendations and their relations.

The following keywords are intended to direct you through the executive summary :

The ITN has certainly to play an important role in the water and sanitation sector. ITN at global level has, during an initial phase, to emphasize on facilitating a "structured" exchange of experience through various means, such as monitoring, workshops, contracting regional and national ITN centres for the execution of common projects, etc.

Regional ITN centres are entrusted with the task to assist in building up national capacities to meet with the ITN objectives on a sustained base. This means that national centres have to be built up and provide their services based on clearly expressed demands. Only when this policy is followed up strictly, it will be possible to build up ITN centres as sustainable business like organizations.

The policy of demand orientation calls also for active "marketing" of services. But the crux and challenge for the ITN centres will be that not all its training and information support services will be marketable and sellable (i.e. the running cost of a documentation centre can not be covered by its customers, the value of information is often underestimated and many of the potential clients have no or only limited buying capacity).

It is important that the ITN centres are fully aware and transparent about the financing and "profitability" of the various services. This should be reflected in the structure of the centres' subsections. Cross-financing of services should be avoided since experience shows that such arrangement can not be sustained, but ESAs (external support agencies) have to be committed in longterm to finance the essential non sellable services.

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## 1.1 Background and Achievements

The International Training Network for Water and Waste Management (ITN) is a UNDP/WB Programme that was set up as part of the global support to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation decade (IDWSSD). Its main objective is the promotion of Community-Based Water Supply and Sanitation (CBWSS) through training and information support services. The network for Water Sanitation (NETWAS), established at AMREF in Nairobi in 1986, was the first of the four ITN centres in Africa.

The centre is identical with the Environmental Health Unit (EHU) in the Department of Community Health at AMREF.

AMREF has been most helpful in setting up NETWAS because of its network in the region. As NETWAS however, became more established, this strong link seems to have become a hindrance to NETWAS in building up its own identity and to avoid being confused as a competitor to its partners.

The sole donor of NETWAS' regional activities is SDC. An advisory board composed of representatives from government, NGOs, donors and resource centres supports NETWAS' management through regular meetings. In addition an external consultant provides regular backstopping.

NETWAS at present has a total staff of 15, composed of 7 professionals, 4 technicians and 4 administrative support staff. Three of the professional staff are in charge of country offices. Of the rest, two are information officers covering the region and one is a participatory training development associate.

NETWAS has established a network and contacts amongst the following three types of groups:

- partners and suppliers, such as ITN on a global and African level, resource centres, such as UNDP/WB, IRC, IRCWD, SKAT, etc. and donor institutions;
- potential clients, such as government institutions and NGOs;
- governments, policy/decision makers, i.e. managers and directors (this group is situated between the first two).

NETWAS operates in the following countries with reduced intensity : Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea.

NETWAS' main activities with its clients have been in the following three fields :

- Documentation, information and communication
- Human Resource Development (HRD), training both in technologies as well as in approaches and methodologies (hard- and software);
- Advisory services in the areas of hard- and software.

Documentation and information centres have been established and/or supported initially through the supply of well selected free books and teaching aids followed up in an unsystematical way by training of documentalists. Training of trainers including future field staff of government institutions and NGOs has been provided both in technologies as well as in approaches and methodologies. Wherever possible this training has been combined with practical application in a form of on-the-job training. For that purpose, so-called demonstration projects have been implemented by NETWAS at grass roots level. These training and advisory services have been mainly aimed at the dissemination of low cost technologies and the improvement of staff engaged in the W+S sector, but not systematically at institution-building, i.e. establishing national capacities for the ITN objectives.

The achievements are manifold, about six documentation and information centres, sometimes simply in the form of libraries, have been established. They are mostly well-maintained. Many of them, in particular the one at NETWAS, are highly frequented and considered to be of a high quality. Recognition and confidence has been achieved at the various levels of the clients and target groups. Training, in particular on-the-job training, is in high demand by those institutions who have already received such trainings. Awareness of the importance of a CBWSS project which includes participatory approaches to achieve sustainable improvements in the W+S sector has increased, not only at the level of trainers and field workers, but obviously also at the level of regional managers and departmental directors. Some hesitation on the part of NGOs to collaborate with NETWAS originate from the fact that they confuse NETWAS with other units of AMREF, whose activities seem to compete with those of the NGOs. The above-mentioned achievements are concentrated mainly in Kenya, to a lesser extent in Uganda and Tanzania, and to an even lesser degree in Sudan and Ethiopia. In Eritrea only first contacts have been established.

ITN coordination and donor support at country level has been continuously decreased and today has reached the level of practically zero. If it were not for SDC's support for its regional activities, NETWAS would be without financial means. RWSG reinforced the software side of NETWAS through the provision of an experienced trainer on participative learning methods.

The political and economic environment in which NETWAS has to operate has not been favorable everywhere. Travelling freely seems to be impossible for NETWAS staff in Sudan at present. Key personnel to which excellent contacts had been established in the relevant ministries in Ethiopia have recently retired because of the ongoing structural adjustment programme. None of the NETWAS local clients is in a position to pay for the services provided (i.e. government training institutions have no budgets for training of trainers, etc.)

## 1.2 Evaluation, Conclusions and Recommendations

After seven years of operation and just before the planning of phase V, it was decided that NETWAS should be assessed by means of an external evaluation. The main questions to be answered were the following :

- a) **"Are they doing the right thing ?"**
- b) **"Are they doing It In a correct way ?"**
- c) **"Will they be able to do It on a sustained base ?"**

In a first step, the history of the project was studied and the project planning matrix (PPM) reconstructed before the activities and achievements were reviewed and assessed. The assessment and evaluation regarding efficiency, effectiveness and impact were done by the evaluation team in close collaboration with the project team. Solutions and recommendations were elaborated and developed in team working sessions and bilateral discussions before being reviewed and finalized during a two-day debriefing seminar. This process produced the following answers to the above questions :

- a) **"Yes, in general they seem to be doing the right thing. Yet NETWAS' activities are mainly based on a top-down needs' analysis and lack a clear demand and market analysis !"**

A thorough market analysis should provide information on the target groups, their demands and marketing needs (promotion in case of lack of awareness) as well as on existing gaps and holes which could best be filled by NETWAS. Based on this market analysis a business plan including HRD requirements etc. should be developed. By doing this the main aspects of balanced development need to be considered. This includes social, institutional, economic and technical components as well as the one dealing with "knowledge and norms". The presently-applied approach to reinforce existing bodies and work through them and not directly with the end-users is certainly relevant. The promoted method of participative learning is very important and relevant to WSS promotion at all levels. The scope of promotion of low cost technologies needs to be broadened to the level of appropriate technologies. This includes offering technical options to solve the WSS sector's needs and assisting in decision-making by showing their advantages, disadvantages, consequences - both institutional and financial. In other words, appropriate technologies should be promoted together with their system requirements.

- b) **"NETWAS has in most cases been quite efficient in implementation. Effectiveness is probably acceptable as far as achievement of results is concerned, but the effects on the ITN objective are certainly behind expectations".**

Considering the means available and the achievements assessed in documentation and information, networking, training both in technology and approaches, the extraordinarily motivated NETWAS team has been very efficient. The existing planning tool (PPM) has been frequently used to review progress, yet mainly only on the level of activities. The significant changes in the assumptions taken at the outset of the

project were not taken into consideration in reviewing the relevance of the planned results and project concept. These shortcomings in planning and management led to a lack of orientation. Since ITN at the level of UNDP/WB remained passive and did not provide ideas on a reviewed concept and strategy, NEWAS mainly continued in trying to fulfill the targets of the set activities.

A revision of the concept is required. It has to be based on the above-mentioned market analysis and business plan as well as on the planned cross-sectional analysis of various evaluations of ITN centres. In any case, focusing and 'concentrating NETWAS' activities on the main issues is greatly required. This means the building up of National Reference Centres (NRC) in a manageable number of focal countries has to be emphasized with priority.

Donors additional to SDC need to be encouraged to support individual national ITN programmes (building up of NRCs). This support has to be carefully balanced, so that sufficient means are made available on one hand to build up and initiate the NRCs as well as to maintain the non-sellable services, such as documentation and information dissemination. On the other hand, however, marketable services should not be subsidized, so that the centres are forced to adapt their services creatively to the market's demands.

- c) **"The present set up of ITN East Africa and NETWAS lack of clear structures which would provide a sustained base for the institutions and their services and therefore achieve a sustainable impact. Realistic and practical options for a transparent and manageable set up need to be developed."**

The final aim of the project certainly is to achieve a sustainable impact. One of the main criteria of this achievement consists of sustainable provision of the services proclaimed by ITN (training and information support). Since the present ITN system including NETWAS as an institution, is far from sustainable by any measure, the following option has been developed and is recommended for further elaboration. The ITN global network should be revived, provide assistance in concept development and function as a monitoring and evaluation (M+E) pool at least up to the time when regional or national networks are well-established. These M+E activities should support a continuous learning process. NETWAS as RC East Africa has to focus its activities on initiating and supporting the building up of NRCs, preferably within existing capable institutions. Once the NRCs have been established, NETWAS as a RC would merge with the NRC Kenya and probably still maintain some coordinating functions. ITN East Africa would not maintain a separate coordination office with separate budget needs. However, each NRC would be autonomous and the network would continue to function to the extent of their partners benefitting from it.

NETWAS' status within or outside AMREF requires upgrading, which means increased autonomy. This is required to avoid confusing NETWAS with AMREF's other activities which some participating NGOs perceive as being partly competitive, as well as to achieve the required recognition and identity of NETWAS.

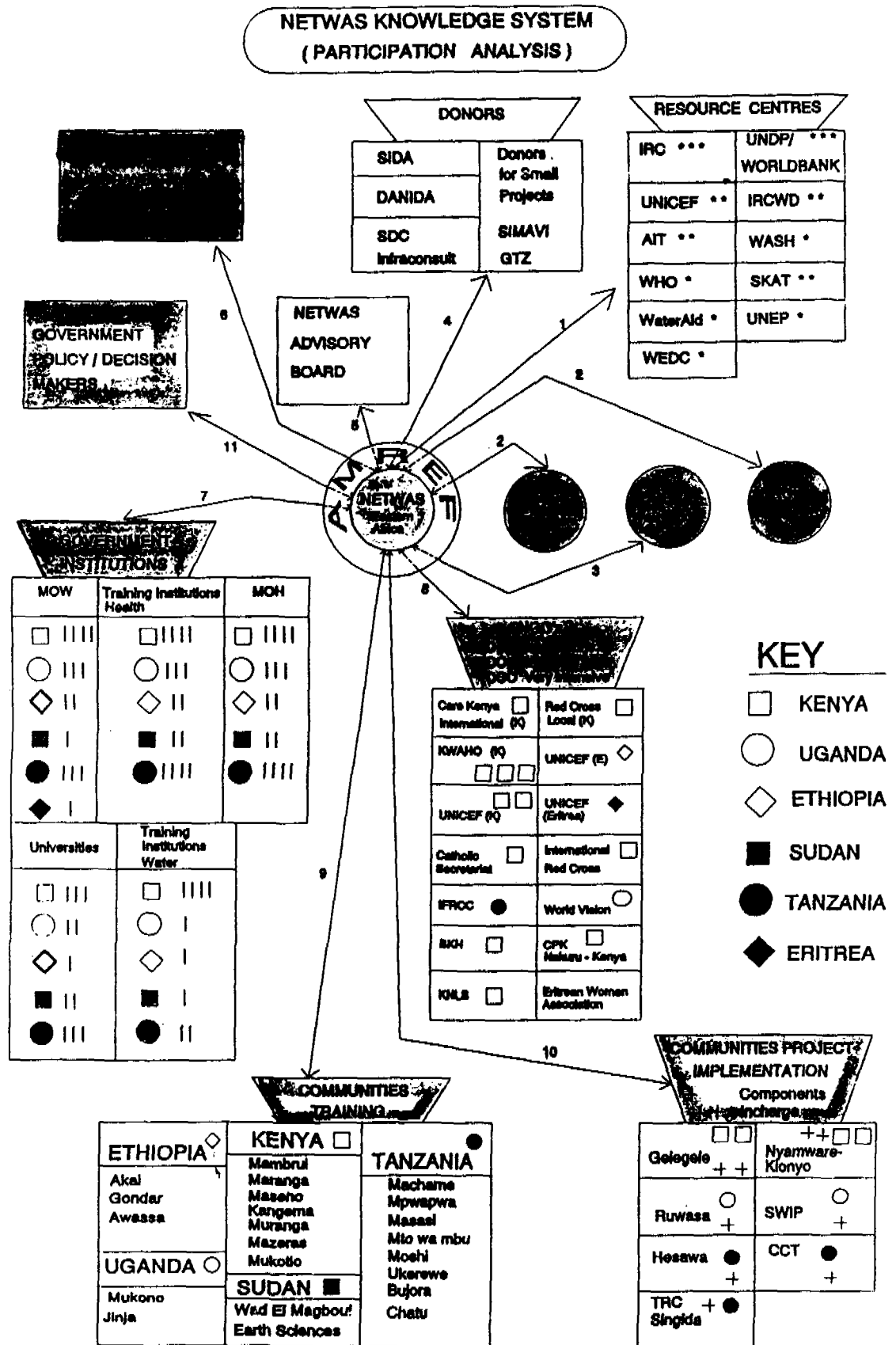
**NETWAS' management system requires reorganization. The different activities and services provided should be covered by separate subsections, such as documentation, information, training, technical advisory service, software advisory service, etc. Each subsection should have its own plan of operation, budget lines, etc. In this way those subsections which require external financial support (such as documentation) can be clearly distinguished from those who have to obtain their income from marketing their services (such as advisory services). NETWAS' internal HRD requirements have to be shown in the market analysis, respectively business plan. Increased capacity for management and institution-building seem to be among the most prominent needs.**

**Whichever measures are considered to be relevant for the improvement of NETWAS' services, the following two aspects need to be kept in mind :**

- The present high motivation and team spirit of NETWAS should not be hampered negatively by any so-called advanced management system.**
- The proclaimed market and demand orientation to achieve sustainable projects and impacts should not result in leaving behind and forgetting the poorest who have no purchasing power.**



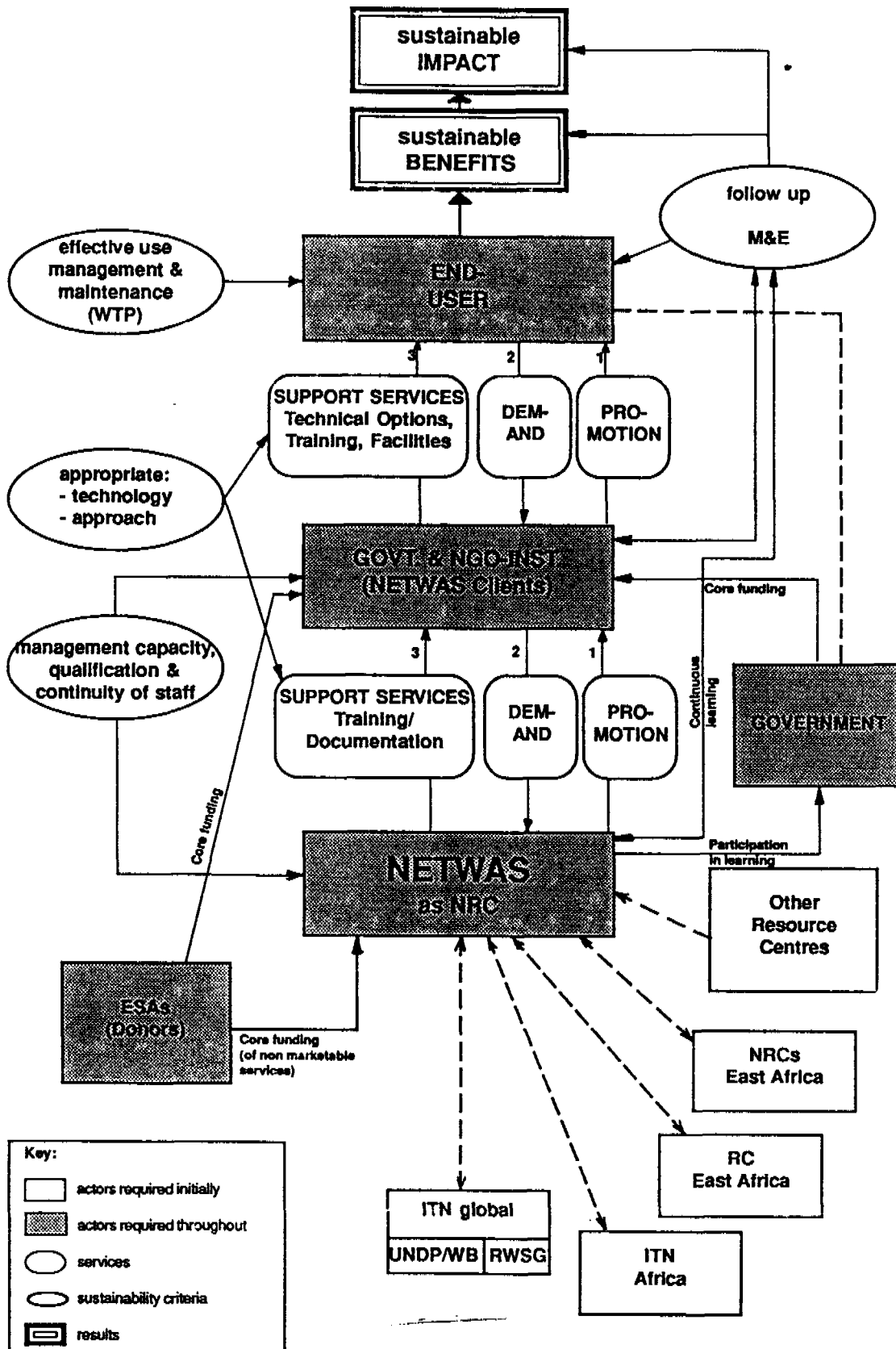
table 4.1



## 6.2.4 The sustainability system

Table 6.2.4 shows the actors involved in the sustainability, their relations and contributions towards the final goal of a sustainable impact.

table 6.2.4



## 7.2 The main actors in the programme

### 7.2.1 Project concept, planning and implementation

#### a) ITN networks at different levels

- It is certainly justified that UNDP/WB's headquarters reviews the approach and strategy within the ITN network. A cross-analysis of the various regional ITN centres' evaluations would provide a useful basis for this exercise. In any case, it is suggested that UNDP/WB act either at a global or continental level as a monitoring and evaluation pool. Essential information would be reported from all directions (ITN centres) to this pool. The information received would be cross-analyzed and the results immediately fed back. The system would only work if the feedback is of a high quality and of benefit to the information suppliers. These services of the pool would contribute to enhancing a continuous and essential learning process and therefore contribute substantially to the sector's goal.

ITN - Global Network  
Built on regional networks  
respective on national networks

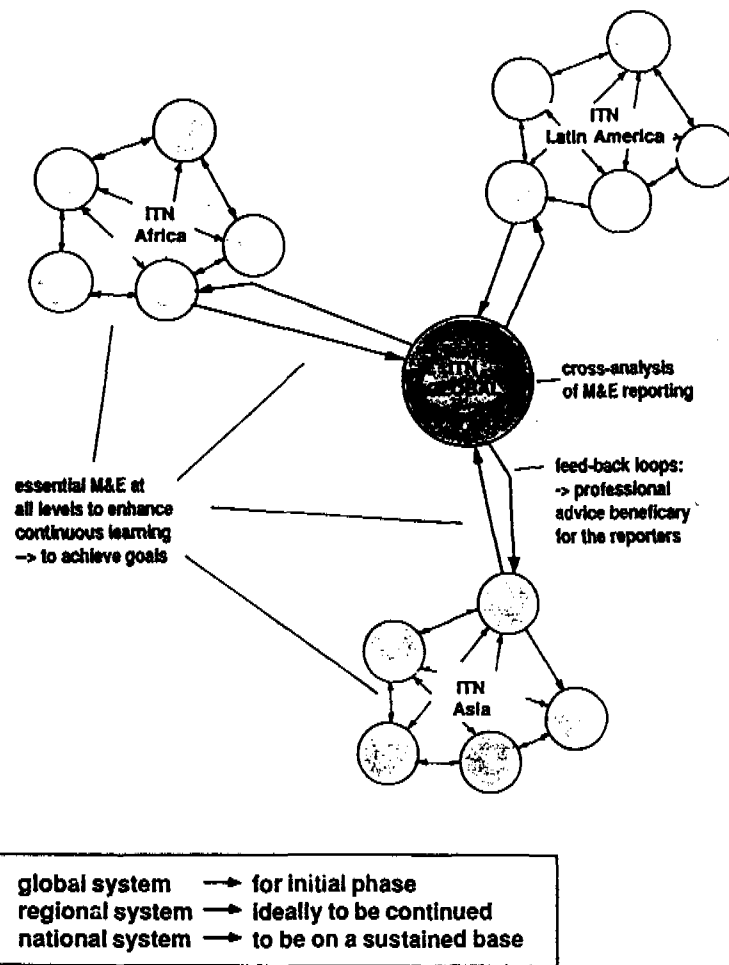


table 7.2.1.1

- The **ITN Africa network** should be maintained, and efficient ways and means developed to achieve an essential coordination consisting of exchange of experiences and information, as well as conceptual orientation. More effective means could consist of professionally-facilitated workshops and seminars clearly geared towards the exchange of experiences and learning processes. In case this approach should not work, at least the monitoring and evaluation pool as described above should be established and maintained at the level of Africa.
- A clear vision concept and strategy need to be developed regarding the design and structure of the **East Africa ITN network**. Based on the mentioned needs and market analysis (chap. 7.1.), NETWAS should study various options and prepare a proposal.

*In the following a possible option and some ideas are provided which evolved during the evaluation mission :*

The underlying idea is to initially make use of the regional centre (RC) to build up and establish autonomous national reference centres (NRC). Therefore the RC would only be required for a transition phase, that is, up to the time the NRCs are well-established. NRCs would preferably be developed at existing, well-established institutions which would provide favourable conditions for a NRC in future. Criteria need to be identified for the selection of such potential institutions as well as TOR for the NRCs.

After the establishment of the NRCs, the network would continue to operate and remain effective if the following criteria are respected:

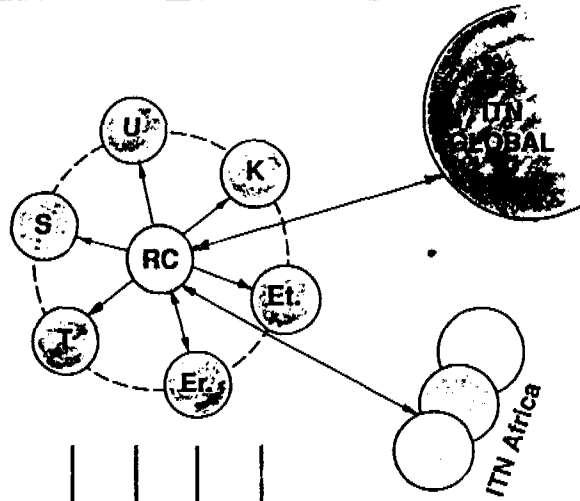
- The driving force of a network are the benefits to its partners. Thus benefits have to be obvious and accepted by all network partners (NPs);
- The NPs should preferably not be alike; each NP has to offer a speciality to the other NPs (i.e. rainwater harvesting, skills in participative approaches (PRA) etc.);
- Each NP is autonomous, both institutionally and financially;
- There is no central administration, office etc. which cause overheads. Each NP fulfils certain duties for the network. At times services may be bought from each other.

table 7.2.1.2

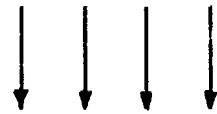
ITN - EAST AFRICA

Initiation and Transition Phase:

Regional Centre (RC) initiates and supports the building up of national reference centres (NRCs) in coordination (M&E) with ITN global and Africa

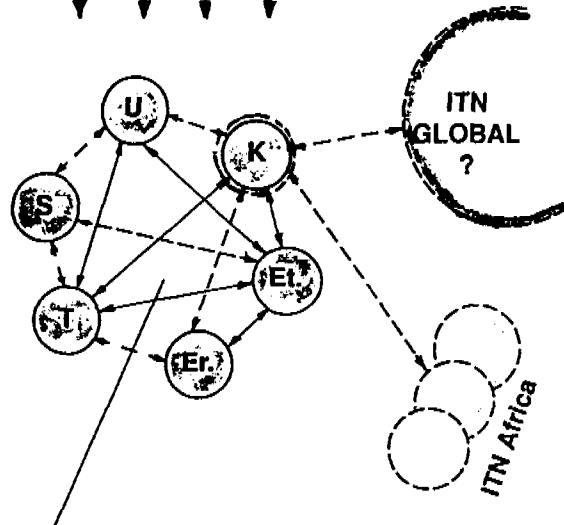


Transition



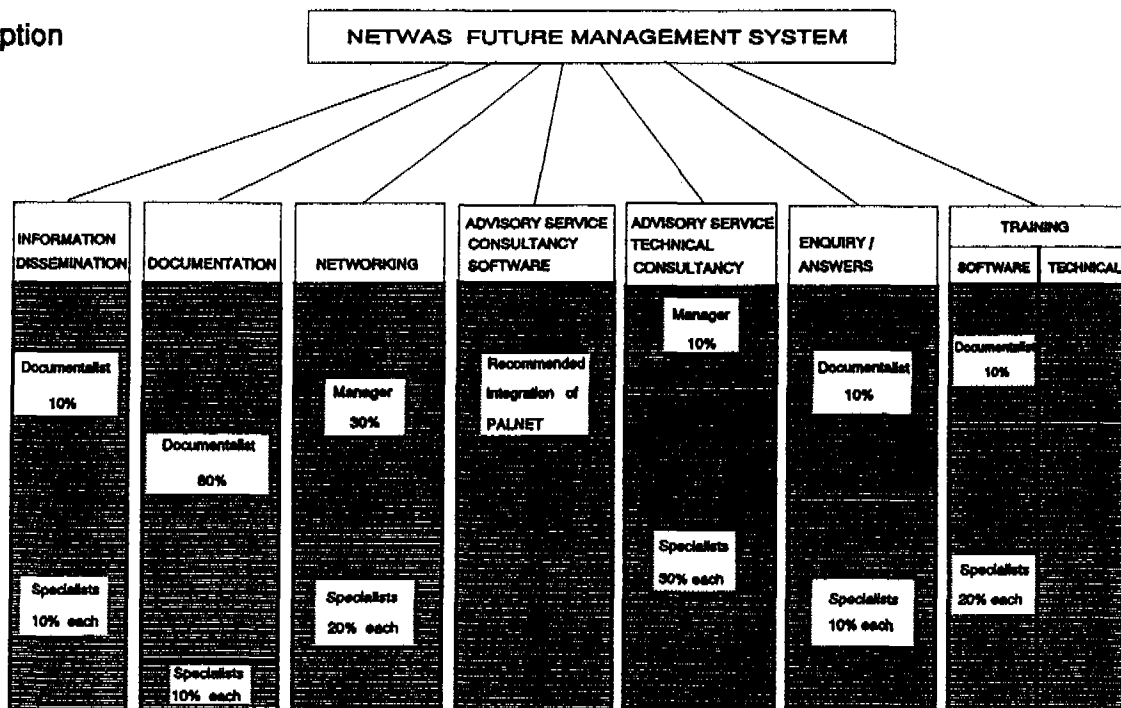
Final Phase :

autonomous national reference centres (NCRs) possibly each with special qualifications



ideally but not necessarily the network is still continued by exchange of experiences and information, exchange of special know-how, M&E, in any case activities which are beneficiary to the NP

Option



Assumptions of the above option :

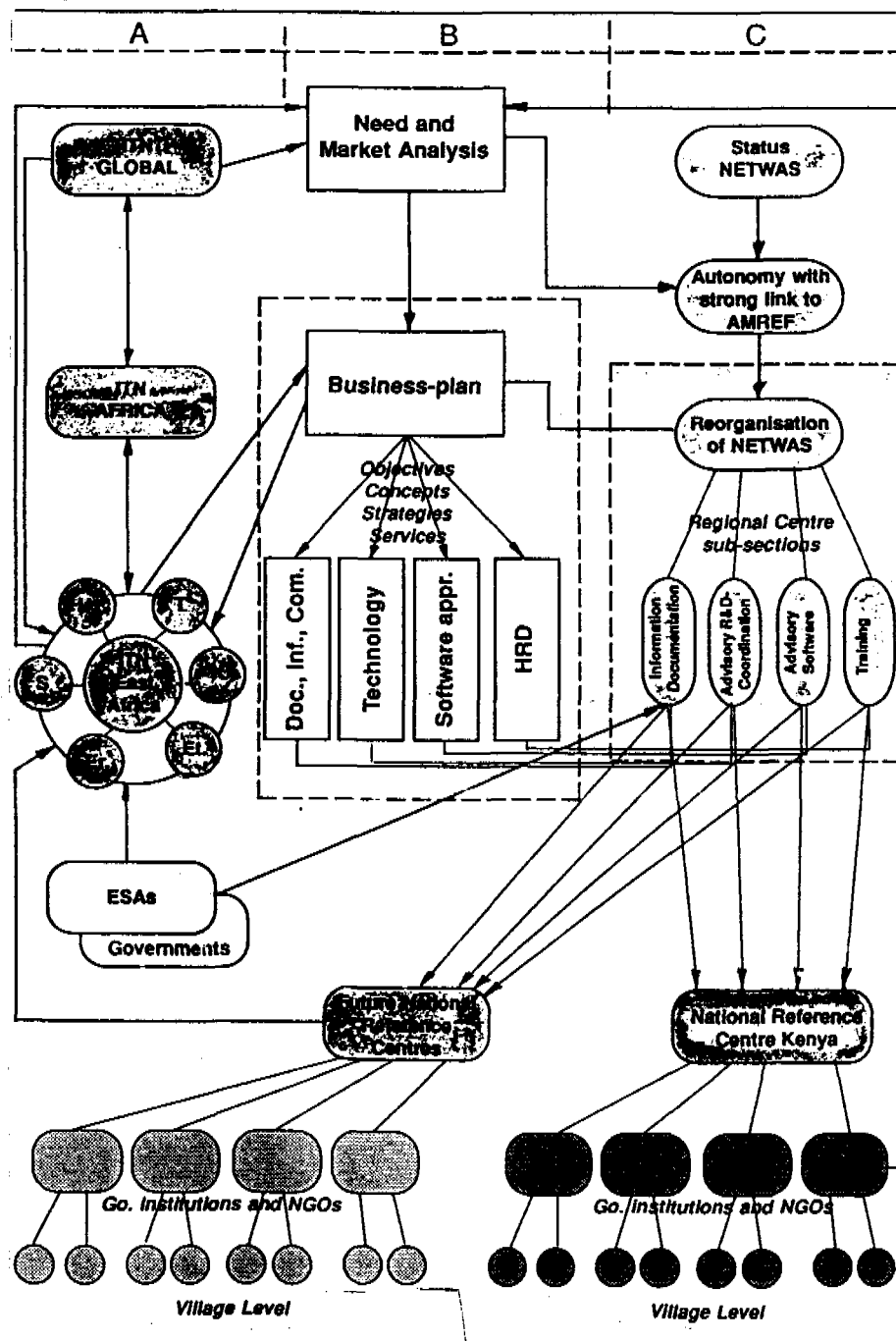
- The system is improved with the assistance of a professional developer of organization system.
- NETWAS' management is capable of handling the system.
- Each subsection is headed by a capable section head.
- Each subsection corresponds to a market demand, respectively to a mid-term mandate commitment of a funding institution (ESA or government).
- NETWAS staff is highly professional and therefore marketable.
- Division into subsections is organized in such a way that collaboration between subsections is reinforced and encouraged.
- Any improvement in the present management system has to be such that it does not negatively affect the current high team spirit, otherwise it will reduce effectiveness.

## 7.8 Principal Recommendations and their relations

The recommendations listed above have been developed and described according to the headings of the report which follow the specified fields of the TOR. These recommendations have been detailed out, so that they provide all currently available information to those who are supposed to implement them. This form of presentation is expected to be useful for the detailed planning. Yet, for prioritization and to get an understanding of the importance and relationship of the recommendations, an overview is required. It is exactly this aspect which is intended to be covered by this chapter. Table 7.8 may provide assistance in visualizing and understanding the relationships. The following three main aspects are represented in vertical columns :

- A) ITN - global/continental/regional;
- B) Need and market analysis → business plan;
- C) Status and reorganization of NETWAS

table 7.8  
Principal  
recommendations  
and their relations



In the following, the principal recommendations are described in the left column, while reference is made to the detailed recommendation chapters in the right column. In addition, reference is made in brackets to the chapters where the subjects are assessed.

Principal recommendations and their relationships	Ref.Chapter: (assessment) recommen- dations
<p>A) ITN - global / continental / regional</p> <p>ITN at global level (ITN-UNDP/WB-HQ) has minimized its support recently, it is therefore recommended to review its concept base by means of a cross-sectional analysis of various evaluations of ITN centres. In any case it is suggested that ITN act either at global or continental level as a monitoring and evaluation pool to enhance a continuous learning process at all levels.</p> <p>ITN East Africa requires a clear concept based on aspect B) needs and market analysis. A possible option suggests that the RC initially provides the required assistance to build up NRCs ideally by upgrading already well-established institutions. After the NRCs are well-established, the RC would merge with one of the NRCs (ideally Kenya). NETWAS is strongly advised to focus its activities according to its available means. The recommended ITN system tries to remain on manageable and sustainable grounds while at the same time still providing the essential services to support a sustainable impact of the WSS sectors' activities.</p> <p>ESAs are urged to support the ITN system once this is based on a clear concept and individual proposals for the RC and NRCs have been developed. Their support should be clearly reserved for services which cannot be sold, such as information and documentation, initiation of NRCs including training of staff, etc. NRCs should be forced by this policy to orientate their services to the market demand, respectively go for marketing (promotion). SDC is recommended to continue its support to the RC, while other donors are invited to support individual country centres.</p> <p>Governments should be promoted to gradually take over the role of ESAs.</p>	<p>(4.2.1.a)) 7.2.1 a)</p> <p>7.2.2</p> <p>(4.2.1 b)) 7.2.1. b)</p> <p>7.2.1 c)</p>



<p><b>B) Needs and market analysis</b></p>	<p>(3)</p>
<p>Most of the recommendations have their basis on the recommended needs and market analysis. This analysis which should be undertaken in all countries of operation, starting from the assessment of already available information / studies, should provide information about needs of and demands for services in the field of HRD, training and advisory services, both in hard- and software, documentation and information dissemination. • Based on this analysis a business plan should be developed which considers the following aspects :</p>	<p>7.1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of the target groups, possibly including focusing.</li> </ul>	<p>(3.4) 7.2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustment and improvement of the concept and strategy by attending more to demand orientation and to all five aspects of balanced development.</li> </ul>	<p>(3.1. + 3.3)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRD and training needs both for NETWAS and the target groups. Recommendations are provided on how to develop the HRD concept as well as hints on obvious training needs.</li> </ul>	<p>(5.1) 7.3</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation, information and communication needs to be maintained and strengthened as one of the most effective tools. Focusing is required at all levels to make better use of the limited available means. Hints for concrete improvements in the new phase are also provided.</li> </ul>	<p>(5.2) 7.4</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scope for CBWSS technology and approaches needs to be broadened from promotion of low cost technology to appropriate technologies, including manageable systems. Information about advantages and disadvantages of different options should facilitate fair elaboration of sustainable solutions. Tools need to be developed to support this approach.</li> </ul>	<p>(5.3)+ 7.5</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBWSS software approaches and methodologies now seem to be generally accepted at institutional level; an effort needs to be made to include participatory approaches in the curricula of different water supply and sanitation courses. The market potential for software seems to be enormous and needs to be explored.</li> </ul>	<p>(5.4) + 7.6</p>
<p>This elaboration, starting from the needs and demand analysis to the adjustment of strategy and concept, and in particular of the services to be provided, has a direct influence on the outline of the East African ITN concept, but even more so on the reorganization of NETWAS.</p>	<p>relation of B to A and to C : cf. graph 7.8</p>

<p><b>C) Status and reorganization of NETWAS</b></p>	
<p>NETWAS status needs to be upgraded to improve its recognition as a network centre and to reduce the view among the collaborating institutions that NETWAS is a competitor. Options of NETWAS having an autonomous status within or outside AMREF need to be studied and elaborated. Maintaining a strong link to AMREF is considered to be essential, since this will be beneficial to both of them. A transition period is recommended to provide NETWAS with sufficient preparation time for a new status.</p>	<p>(5.5) 7.7.1</p>
<p>NETWAS staffing organization and management need to be reorganized with the assistance of an external consultant by considering the following two aspects :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adjustment of services to the needs and market analysis, respectively to the business plan;</li> <li>• reorganization of RC into subsections for more transparency in management and financing and thus to improve services and chances for sustainability.</li> </ul>	<p>(5.5) 7.7.2</p>
<p>It is suggested that the RC and NRC for Kenya are both situated at NETWAS, but are administratively clearly separated (i.e. separate budget lines). It is suggested that the RC provide assistance for the building up of NRCs, respectively to develop ITN East Africa. It is recommended that the NRC Kenya continues to support GO and NGO institutions by providing training of trainers, etc., and thus to improve their services to the villagers and achieve a lasting impact (institutional approach).</p>	<p>(4) 7.2.1</p>
<p>A systematic and continuous cycle of MEPI (Monitoring, Evaluation, Planning, Implementation) needs to be developed and applied with different intensities at all levels of ITN. MEPI has to be designed to improve the management system as well as to ensure synergies among the various ITN activities and to facilitate a continuous learning.</p>	<p>7.1.1 7.2.1</p>