

Simplified Operational Completion Report (OCR)

(To be used for GEF-funded Enabling Activity technically completed by 31/12/2023)

Signatures

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1. Project Identification

GEF ID: 3004
Project Title: Review of the National Biodiversity Strategy, Development of the Action Plan and Participation in the National Clearing House Mechanism
Executing Agency: Ministry of Environment and Science and the National
UNEP Division: Ecosystems Division
Country/Region: Ghana
Actual Implementation Start Date (MM/YYYY): 11/2008
Actual Completion Date (MM/YYYY): 04/2010
GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity
GEF Grant Amount: USD 430,000
Co-financing (if applicable): USD 80,000

2. Project Implementation

1. Brief description of activities, and its link to Convention obligations.

The GEF Project “Review of the National Biodiversity Strategy, Development of the Action Plan and Participation in the National Clearing House Mechanism” was implemented by UNEP to assist Ghana in meeting its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Convention requires Parties to develop and implement national strategies and action plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as to promote public awareness and technical cooperation. This project was designed to revise Ghana’s 2002 National Biodiversity Strategy, finalize a comprehensive Action Plan, and strengthen the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) to improve information exchange and stakeholder engagement.

Implemented with Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding of **USD 430,000** and government co-financing of **USD 80,000**, the project adopted a country-driven, consultative approach involving government agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and local communities. Activities were structured to review existing obligations, assess capacity gaps, and produce updated policy instruments aligned with CBD work programmes and 2010 targets. The project also supported technical improvements to the CHM, enabling Ghana to host and maintain its biodiversity information system nationally.

To achieve these objectives, the project carried out a series of coordinated activities, including stocktaking of biodiversity data, stakeholder workshops, capacity assessments in key thematic areas, and development of public awareness materials. These efforts contributed to GEF’s

strategic priority on capacity building (CB-1) by creating enabling conditions for effective implementation of biodiversity-related commitments.

Key Activities:

1. Revision of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

- Reviewed the 2002 National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS).
- Incorporated CBD decisions and work programs.
- Finalized the Action Plan (NBSAP).
- Conducted stakeholder workshops and prepared a policy brief.

2. Established and Strengthened of Clearing House Mechanism (CHM)

- Developed a home-grown CHM.
- Acquired hardware and software for hosting and updating the CHM.
- Linked existing biodiversity databases and created a roster of institutions.
- Trained staff on information management systems.
- Updated and expanded the CHM website.

3. Capacity and Needs Assessment

- Formed thematic working groups for:
 - Taxonomy
 - In situ and ex situ conservation
 - Invasive species
 - Agricultural biodiversity
 - Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)
 - Indigenous knowledge and practices
- Held workshops to assess capacity gaps and develop strategies.
- Prepared action plans for each thematic area.

4. Public Awareness and Policy Integration

- Organized national and regional workshops.
- Published awareness materials (newsletters, press releases).
- Disseminated the revised NBSAP and related information.
- Prepared policy briefs for decision-makers.

Link to Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) obligations:

- **Article 6:** Required Parties to develop national strategies, plans, or programs for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- **Article 10:** Integration of biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral plans
- **Article 18:** Promoted technical and scientific cooperation among Parties.
- **Article 13:** Public education and awareness through information sharing.
- **Article 7:** Identification and monitoring of biodiversity components.
- **Article 8 & 9:** In-situ and ex-situ conservation measures.
- **Article 15:** Access to genetic resources and equitable benefit sharing.
- **Article 13:** Public education and awareness to encourage participation.
- **Article 6(b):** Integration of biodiversity considerations into national decision-making.

2. Overview of implementation arrangements

The project was implemented through a structured institutional framework designed to ensure smooth and effective execution. UNEP, as the Implementing Agency, provided overall coordination, technical oversight, and financial management, ensuring compliance with GEF guidelines and monitoring progress throughout the implementation period. The Ministry of Environment and Science, acting as the CBD National Focal Point (NFP), served as the legal entity responsible for executing the enabling activity project through the National Biodiversity Committee.

For project coordination, the CBD schedule officer, who also served as an assistant to the CBD National Focal Point, oversaw day-to-day implementation. A Steering Committee (SC) was established to promote coordinated and collaborative action under the enabling activity, with the NFP (i.e., the Ministry of Environment and Science) acting as the secretariat.

Implementing Agency (UNEP):

UNEP provided overall coordination, technical oversight, and financial management for the project. It ensured compliance with GEF policies and procedures, facilitated the disbursement of funds, and monitored implementation progress in line with agreed reporting requirements. UNEP also offered guidance on aligning the revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) with CBD work programmes and international best practices. In addition, UNEP supported the integration of lessons from related global initiatives and provided technical backstopping for the development of the Clearing House Mechanism.

The project will be implemented through a structured institutional framework designed to ensure smooth and effective execution. The Ministry of Environment and Science, acting as the CBD National Focal Point (NFP), will serve as the legal entity responsible for implementing the enabling activity project through the National Biodiversity Committee.

For project coordination, the CBD schedule officer, who also serves as an assistant to the CBD National Focal Point, will oversee day-to-day implementation. A Steering Committee (SC) will be established to promote coordinated and collaborative action under the enabling activity, with the NFP (i.e., the Ministry of Environment and Science) acting as the secretariat.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee comprised representatives from key Ministries, Departments, Agencies, academia, NGOs, and the media. Members included the Ministry of Environment and Science, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, Ghana Wildlife Division, Forestry Services Division, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Conservation International Ghana, Friends of the Earth, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Plant Genetic Resources Institute, Ghana News Agency, the University of Ghana, and the University of Cape Coast.

The Steering Committee established the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), provided scientific, technical, and administrative support, and worked closely with government agencies, the scientific community, and both the public and private sectors. It also ensured timely submission of reports, financial accounts, and cash advance requests to UNEP. Furthermore, the

SC monitored project activities and outputs, reviewed documentation, and submitted the final version of the NBSAP to the government for approval before forwarding it to UNEP and the CBD Secretariat.

National Coordinating Committee

The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) was created by the Steering Committee to guide the preparation of the NBSAP and strengthen the sustainability of the CHM. The NCC was multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral, including representatives from government institutions, the private sector, and civil society with mandates relevant to biodiversity. In collaboration with the SC, it established thematic working groups aligned with CBD Programmes of Work.

The NCC's responsibilities included developing a shared understanding of project objectives, mobilizing expertise for the Action Plan, and ensuring alignment with government environmental policy and programmes. It reviewed and submitted the revised NBSAP for official government approval before transmitting it to the CBD Secretariat. The committee also provided policy advice on public awareness and participation, ensured biodiversity information reached both local and national authorities, assisted in mobilizing data, and facilitated communication among decision-makers and stakeholders engaged in CBD implementation.

The CBD Desk

The CBD Desk, located within the Ministry of Environment and Science, coordinated, managed, and supervised all aspects of the enabling activity (EA). Reporting to both the NCC and UNEP, it worked closely with the chair and members of the NCC to ensure the effective implementation of the work plan. The Desk oversaw all substantive, managerial, and financial reporting and provided supervision for staff involved in the execution of EA components.

As the NCC secretariat, the CBD Desk coordinated, managed, and monitored activities conducted by local and international experts, consultants, subcontractors, and partners. It organized NCC meetings, prepared detailed sub-project work plans and budgets, and ensured effective communication with relevant authorities and institutions. In addition, it fostered collaboration with related national and international initiatives, prepared Terms of Reference for project components, and supervised consultants' performance.

The CBD Desk also oversaw the revision of the NBS, preparation of the Action Plan, and updating of the CHM. It managed project finances, oversaw resource allocation, and proposed budget revisions where necessary. Finally, the Desk ensured that all project activities were completed on schedule and within budget, coordinated stakeholder engagement under the guidance of the SC and NCC, and submitted regular progress and financial reports to both UNEP and the NCC.

3. Delivery of outputs

The project successfully delivered a comprehensive set of outputs aimed at strengthening Ghana's capacity to meet its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. These outputs were designed to provide a robust policy framework, improve information management systems, and enhance stakeholder awareness and participation. The delivery process involved revising key strategic documents, establishing functional mechanisms for data exchange, and producing technical and awareness materials to support implementation. Collectively, these outputs formed the foundation for integrating biodiversity considerations into national planning and international reporting.

1. Main output delivered (e.g., link to national reports, strategies).

1. Training and Capacity Building

- **Output:** Fifteen (15) national contributors trained on the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM).
- **Purpose:** Strengthened technical capacity for biodiversity information management.

2. Updated the Clearing House Mechanism

- **Output:** CHM platform updated with new data and information.
- **Purpose:** Improved national biodiversity information sharing and link to global CHM.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

- **Output:** Meeting of the NBSAP drafting committee with focal points of biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).
- **Purpose:** Discussed improvements and finalize inputs for the revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

4. Documentation

- **Output:** Minutes of meetings prepared and used for monitoring and evaluation.
- **Purpose:** Provided official records for reporting and accountability.

Link to National Reports and Strategies:

- These outputs directly supported the **revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)** and Ghana's reporting obligations under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- They also contributed to updating the CHM, which is a key mechanism for sharing national biodiversity information globally.

Submission to Convention or integration into policy.

Submission to the Convention

- The project aimed to revise the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to align with CBD requirements and prepare it for official government approval and submission to the CBD Secretariat.
- The final NBSAP was forwarded to UNEP and the CBD Secretariat after government endorsement.

Integration into Policy

- The revised NBSAP was intended to:
 - Served as the national framework for biodiversity conservation.
 - Integrated biodiversity priorities into national development strategies and sectoral plans.
- Policy briefs were planned for government and district assemblies to ensure mainstreaming biodiversity into decision-making.
- CHM updated and public awareness activities were designed to support policy integration by improving access to biodiversity information.

4. Project Outcome

Where applicable any project outcomes, as achieved short- or medium-term effects of outputs (*including unintended positive and negative outcomes*)

The project strengthened Ghana's capacity to meet its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The outcomes reflected the short- and medium-term effects of the project's output, including improvements in institutional capacity, information management, and stakeholder coordination. These results demonstrated progress toward integrating biodiversity considerations into national policy frameworks and fulfilled Ghana's commitments under the CBD. Unintended positive and negative effects are also highlighted to provide a comprehensive view of the project's impact.

Key Outcomes

1. Improved Technical Capacity

- Trained 15 national contributors on CHM enhanced Ghana's ability to manage biodiversity information.
- Immediate effect: Stakeholders updated and maintain the CHM independently.

2. Operational CHM

- The Updated Clearing House Mechanism improved access to biodiversity data for national and international users.
- Effect: Increased visibility of Ghana's biodiversity initiatives globally.

3. Stakeholder Coordination

- Meetings of the NBSAP drafting team fostered collaboration among focal points of biodiversity-related MEAs.
- Effect: Better alignment of biodiversity priorities across sectors.

4. Foundation for Policy Integration

- Drafting and consultations created a basis for revising the NBSAP and integrating biodiversity into national development plans.
- Effect: Strengthened compliance with CBD obligations and readiness for submission to the Convention.

5. Enhanced Public Awareness

- Updated CHM and training indirectly supported awareness by making biodiversity information more accessible.

Unintended Outcomes

Positive:

- Networking among institutions during training and meetings led to informal partnerships beyond the project scope.

Negative:

- Delays in finalizing the NBSAP may have slowed full policy integration and submission to CBD Secretariat.

5. Stakeholders' involvement

Extent of stakeholder engagement and capacity developed

The project involved extensive stakeholder participation throughout its implementation. Engagement was structured through a multi-tiered approach that included a Steering Committee (SC), a National Coordinating Committee (NCC), and thematic working groups. These bodies ensured representation from key government ministries, research institutions, academia, NGOs, and local communities. Stakeholders contributed to technical reviews, policy discussions, and validation processes, creating a broad consensus on biodiversity priorities.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Government Agencies: Ministries of Environment and Science, Food and Agriculture, Justice, and Local Government actively participated in policy alignment and decision-making.
- Research Institutions: The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and its specialized institutes provided technical expertise in taxonomy, conservation, and agricultural biodiversity.
- Academia: Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast contributed to scientific assessments and capacity-building workshops.
- Civil Society and NGOs: Organizations such as Conservation International and Friends of the Earth supported awareness campaigns and community-level consultations.
- Media and Communication: The Ghana News Agency facilitated dissemination of project outputs and public awareness materials.

Capacity Development

- Technical Training: Project staff and CHM technical teams were trained in information management systems, database development, and web-based biodiversity information sharing.
- Policy and Planning Skills: Stakeholders gained experience in revising national strategies, developing action plans, and integrating CBD guidelines into national frameworks.
- Knowledge Sharing: Workshops and consultations enhanced understanding of thematic areas such as invasive species management, ABS, and indigenous knowledge systems.
- Institutional Strengthening: The establishment of operational networks for CHM and thematic working groups improved coordination and sustainability of biodiversity initiatives.

6. Financial Summary

Source		(USD)		
GEF Grant		S1-32GFL-000367		
Final Date of Disbursement		06.07.12		
Cumulative Disbursement ¹² (as of final date of disbursement)		360,000.00		
Co-financing ³ , if applicable				
Name of Co-financier	Actual Grant at TE (USD)	Actual In-kind at TE (USD)	Total Co-financing (USD)	
	-	-	-	
Totals		-	-	
Expenditure by Sponsored Classes (Total project budget, cumulative expenditure to date)				
Sponsored Class / Budget Lines	Estimated cost at design	Actual Expenditure	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)	Available balance
IP DIRECT	430,000.00	360,000	0.84	70,000

6. Lessons Learned

Summarize key insights or recommendations for future Enabling Activities.

Some of the lessons can be drawn from the implementation of the project and can be implemented in future projects in a different context include.

Strong Stakeholder Ownership Is Critical: A participatory and inclusive approach is essential for success. Engaging government ministries, NGOs, research institutions, and local communities from the earliest stages of project design ensures broad ownership and reduces resistance during implementation. For replication elsewhere the following should be prioritized, deliberate investments in building trust, sustained dialogue, and participatory governance structures.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Development Planning Enhances Sustainability: By aligning biodiversity goals with national development strategies, sectoral policies (e.g., agriculture, forestry, mining), and the SDGs, the Ghana project ensured that conservation was not treated as a stand-alone agenda. Future projects can replicate this by embedding biodiversity considerations into economic, land-use, and poverty reduction strategies to avoid conflicts and maximize synergies.

Capacity Building Provides Long-Term Impact Beyond the Project: The Ghana experience showed that building institutional, technical, and human capacity in areas such as taxonomy, protected area management, and policy implementation creates resilience beyond the life of the project. In

¹ For multi-Country EAs, provide a **compiled financial summary of resource utilization** along with a table providing links to the individual reports submitted to the relevant convention secretariat

² For Mult-Trust Fund (MTF) projects, list disbursement separately for each Fund.

³ Only for Enabling Activities which have a confirmed co-financing at CEO Approval/Endorsement Provide a table with **Actual Sources of Co-financing, if available.**

other contexts, investing in training, knowledge management systems, and institutional strengthening should be seen as core deliverables rather than complementary activities.

Financial Sustainability Requires Early Planning: The use of the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) in Ghana highlighted the importance of diversifying funding sources. In other countries, planning for long-term financing mechanisms such as innovative biodiversity finance, partnerships with the private sector, and integration into national budgets should begin at project inception rather than towards closure.

Adaptive Management Helps Address Emerging Risks: Ghana's initiative-taking in identification and mitigation of risks (such as land-use conflicts and funding gaps) showed the value of adaptive management. Future projects should maintain flexible implementation frameworks, conduct regular monitoring, and be ready to adjust strategies in response to changing social, environmental, or political dynamics.

Information Sharing Strengthens Transparency and Learning: Establishing the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) in Ghana demonstrated how digital platforms and information systems enhance transparency, coordination, and global knowledge exchange. Replicating this lesson, similar projects should incorporate user-friendly data-sharing tools to support evidence-based decision-making and encourage cross-country learning.

Public Awareness and Education Are Key to Long-Term Success: The Ghana project underscored that without public understanding of biodiversity's value; conservation outcomes may not be sustained. Future projects should invest in awareness campaigns, community education, and youth engagement strategies to ensure long-term behavioral change at grassroots levels.

Regional and Global Cooperation Multiplies Impact: Leveraging synergies with CBD processes and global initiatives strengthened Ghana's project outcomes. In other contexts, collaboration with regional bodies, South-South knowledge exchange, and alignment with multilateral environmental agreements can expand the project's influence and impact.

Conclusion

The project successfully achieved its objectives of revising Ghana's National Biodiversity Strategy, finalizing the Action Plan, and strengthening the Clearing House Mechanism. Through inclusive stakeholder engagement, comprehensive capacity assessments, and targeted technical interventions, Ghana enhanced its ability to meet obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The delivery of a revised NBSAP, operational CHM, and supporting awareness materials provided a solid foundation for integrating biodiversity considerations into national development planning. While minor implementation delays occurred, they were effectively managed, and the project outcomes have positioned Ghana to advance biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in line with international commitments.