

Albania
Enabling Activity Proposal in Biodiversity

Country	Albania
Project Title	Biodiversity Strategy/Action Plan and National Report
GEF Focal Area	Biological Diversity
Country Eligibility	CBD ratified January 1994
GEF Financing	US\$96,000
Government contribution	in-kind
GEF Implementing Agency	World Bank
National Executing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture & Committee for Environmental Protection
GEF Operational Focal Point	Committee for Environmental Protection
CBD Focal Point	Committee for Environmental Protection
Estimated Starting Date	September 1996
Project Duration	12 months

Background

Albania, a country of 28,748 km² and 3.3 million people, possesses high levels of biodiversity in the broadleaf and coniferous montane forests that dominate the interior of the country and the wetlands found along the coastal alluvial plain. The high forests of Albania support communities of large vertebrates (wolf, bear, lynx, and chamois) and old-growth dependent bird communities. The coastal wetlands of Albania, situated at the border of the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas, are important wintering and stop-over sites for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. There are approximately 400 species of vertebrates and 3,300 plant species. The flora represents approximately 30 percent of the 11,000 species known from Europe, and shows high levels of endemism within Albania and the Balkan peninsula. Nearly 10% of the Albanian flora is considered threatened or endangered.

Albania's past agricultural policies and practices, including the drainage of wetlands and conversion of forests and shrublands to croplands, heavily impacted biodiversity throughout the country. Despite these and other impacts, the high forests still provide an important link in the montane ecosystems of the Balkan peninsula and selected wetlands continue to harbor some of the most important concentrations of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds in the Mediterranean region. Now, in concert with its transition to democracy and economic reform, the Government of Albania (GOA) is revising its environmental policies, and toward this end is committed to preparing a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP).

Project Objectives and Short Description

The project objective is to prepare a Biodiversity Strategy/Action Plan and the first National Report in accordance with Albania's obligations under the CBD. Related objectives are the identification of gaps in existing knowledge of Albanian biodiversity and to develop policies of sustainable development and participatory management. The recently-approved World Bank forestry project will be assisting in this process. The forestry project is designed, in part, to institutionalize public participation and consultation with NGOs, appropriate government agencies, and affected local peoples in preparing forestry policies and forest management plans that promote sustainable management of the interior

montane forests. The BSAP will be coordinated with the forestry project, and will further develop policies for non-forest biodiversity. The groups to be included in this process include interested Albanian NGOs such as the Society for the Protection and Preservation of the Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) and the Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals (ASPBM), biodiversity experts from the Institute for Biological Research (IBR) the Museum of Natural Sciences (MNS), the University of Tirana, and other appropriate institutes, and government agencies responsible for resource management. Natural resources management in Albania is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), especially the General Directorate for Forestry (GDF), and the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) within the Ministry of Health and Environmental Protection (MHEP). Each of these will be represented in the working groups that prepare contributing chapters to the BSAP and will, along with the general public, be asked to participate in the final workshop to revise the draft BSAP. The working groups will convene separately at least twice to prepare the options, strategies, and actions for their thematic topics (e.g., forestry, agriculture, environmental protection, fisheries, protected areas, and environmental education).

The project comes at a time when Albania is modernizing its management and protection of biological resources and biodiversity. The MOA is reorganizing and strengthening its forest management institutions, establishing mechanisms for cross-sectoral coordination and public involvement in the management of state forest lands, and expanding and improving the management of Albania's protected area network. The CEP is improving its capacity for environmental management through training and an expanded network of Regional Environmental Centers. Together, the MOA and MHEP are pursuing actions to improve biodiversity conservation within and outside protected areas. The BSAP will identify the objectives and mechanisms of cross sectoral coordination at the local, regional, and national levels, to be pursued jointly by the MOA and CEP.

The BSAP will focus and provide a vision for these on-going efforts based on a participatory approach that relies on existing materials and additional stocktaking exercises. Two recent review reports on Albanian biodiversity are the Ecological Survey of Selected High Forests of Albania (1995) and the Albania Coastal Zone Management Plan (1996). The former provides reviews on the taxonomy and ecology of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and butterflies in selected montane forests. The latter provides a review of the biodiversity, especially marine biodiversity, in several coastal regions. There are still important gaps in existing materials on both coastal and forest biodiversity, in regards to ecosystems (e.g., maquis and garrigue) and geographic regions (many coastal areas and transboundary regions). Stocktaking exercises by botanists, foresters, and zoologists will be undertaken in order to provide an overview of Albanian terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

The project will involve public and private stakeholders and NGOs from agriculture, forestry, finance, education, environmental protection, tourism, and industry. The working groups will be comprised of specialists in biodiversity and natural resource management, government, NGOs, and representatives of the private sector. Early in project implementation, a public advertising campaign will be used to invite all interested groups and individuals to participate in the BSAP. Depending on the magnitude of the response, respondents will be included in the working groups and/or invited to comment on the draft BSAP and attend the national workshop. The advertising campaign will use newspaper and television media to inform the public about the goals and objectives of the BSAP project, raise awareness of Albanian biodiversity and value of conserving it, and report the results and conclusions of the BSAP.

Time Plan and Sequencing

The BSAP will be produced over a period of 12 months according to the schedule outlined below, starting in October 1996. A steering committee comprised of representatives of the MOA, the Academy of Sciences, and an NGO and, with the assistance of an international consultant, will prepare a detailed work plan and TOR for the national consultants. National consultants and MOA staff will participate in overlapping tasks of: *a)* summarizing existing information on Albanian biodiversity and preparing additional descriptions and analyses to fill information gaps considered necessary for the BSAP (e.g., descriptions of wetlands of national and international significance not found in existing documents); *b)* participating in working groups to formulate the policies and actions of the BSAP; *c)* participating in the working groups and preparing the BSAP document; *d)* holding the national workshop; and *e)* preparing the National Report. The tasks and sequence of events envisioned for the Albanian BSAP are consistent with those recommended in the WRI/UICN/UNEP Guidelines.

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Establishment of steering committee and working groups	X											
Preparation of work plan by national consultant	X											
Finalization of TOR for national consultants and international consultant		X										
Preparation of stocktaking chapters, assessment of gaps			X	X	X							
Analysis and assessment of options, including discussions with stakeholders in 2 workshops					X	X	X					
Preparation of draft BSAP							X	X	X			
National workshop to present BSAP										X		
Preparation of final report, submission to CBD											X	
Preparation of National Report to COP												X

Best practice

The BSAP will be prepared by Albanians from the public and private sectors and NGOs through a cross-sectoral process that builds on the participation of the public. The project is designed based on the Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies (UNEP 1993), the guidelines and recommendations found in “National Biodiversity Planning” prepared by WRI, UNEP, and IUCN, and the criteria for best practice outlined in the Enabling Activities Operational Criteria.

Institutional framework and project implementation

Natural resources management in Albania is mainly the responsibility of the MOA, especially the General Directorate for Forestry (GDF) and the CEP. Biologists of the IBR and the MNS possess important knowledge on Albanian biodiversity and its conservation and NGOs such as the PPNEA and the ASPBM have played an important role in developing a forum for nature conservation in Albania. Preparation of the BSAP will mainly be the responsibility of the MOA, working closely with the CEP, IBR, PPNEA, and the ASPBM.

Project Financing

	Product	Process	Total
Stocktaking and Inventory	25,000	0	25,000
national consultants	21,000		21,000
documentation	4,000		4,000
Identification of options	5,000	22,000	27,000
national consultants	3,000	7,000	10,000
international consultant	2,000	3,000	5,000
working group meetings		6,000	6,000
travel and per diem		6,000	6,000
Strategy and Action Plan	7,000	21,000	28,000
national consultants	5,000	8,000	13,000
international consultant	2,000	4,000	6,000
1 national workshop		6,000	6,000
dissemination of drafts		3,000	3,000
First National Report	8,000		8,000
publication and translation	6,000		6,000
promotion, misc.	2,000		2,000
Misc. admin. and management costs	4,000	4,000	8,000
Totals	49,000	47,000	96,000

Annex: Activity Matrix, Albania Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
Commitment	Planning, Execution	Institutional Strength	Training		
<i>Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</i>					
biodiversity and biological resources	X, WB				1
cross-sectoral issues	X				2
policy and regulatory framework	X				2
institutional and human capacity	X, WB				2
analysis of root causes of BD loss	X				
technologies for conservation and sustainable use	X, WB				2
activities with adverse impacts	X				
existing measures and programs	X				
preliminary statement of objectives	X				
identification of gaps	X				1
assessment of existing needs	X				
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i>					
strategies for conservation	X, WB			X	2
strategies for sustainable use	X, WB			X	2
strategies for benefit sharing	X			X	
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i>					
national strategy	X			X	
national action plan	X			X	
<i>Planning and Preparation of first National Report</i>					
first national report	X				

Legend

X activity undertaken by project

WB Existing materials are available from Bank-financed forestry and coastal zone management studies
(1) or issue to be addressed partly through forestry project (2).

Activity Matrix comments

- 1 All existing information will be utilized, and there will be no duplication of effort. Existing sources of information that will be incorporated into the stocktaking materials of the BSAP. There are still important gaps in existing materials on both coastal and forest biodiversity, in regards to ecosystems (e.g., maquis and garrigue) and geographic regions (many coastal areas and transboundary regions). Stocktaking exercises by botanists, foresters, and zoologists will be undertaken in order to provide an overview of Albanian terrestrial and marine biodiversity. Efforts to address the conservation biology of large mammals (e.g., wolf, bear, lynx, and chamois) will be started under the BSAP project, but longer term efforts will be needed to adequately address this topic.
- 2 These issues are being developed in regards to forestry through a World Bank loan project. The forestry project is designed largely to improve the capacity of the General Forestry Directorate to manage Albanian forests in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

REPUBLIC of ALBANIA

**COMMITTEE of ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

**GENERAL DIRECTORATE
of FORESTRY and PASTURES**

No. 105 Prot.

No. 414 Prot.

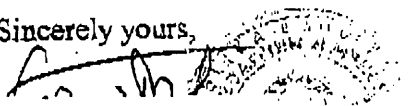
Tirana, 25.03.1996.

**Subject: Request for a financial assistance, through the GEF, for the
preparation of national strategy for the conservation of biological
diversity.**

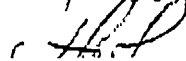
On behalf of the Government of Albania we would like to request that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) provide financial support for the preparation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan as well as the elaboration of national report for Albania.

Also, we understand that the World Bank would be the requesting agency for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and that the Government of Albania would be expected to appoint a Steering Committee and Working Group comprised of representatives of all of the major Albanian institutions working on biodiversity protection and protected areas management. We believe that World Bank collaboration is especially important for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in order to ensure close and effective coordination with the implementation of the Protected Areas Component of the Albanian Forestry Project which was prepared together with the World Bank.

Sincerely yours,



Sincerely yours



To: UNEP/GEF Coordination, P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya

cc: GEF Focal Point, Directorate of Economy and Information.
cc: UNDP office, Rruga Dëshmoret e 4 Shkurtit, Tirana.
cc: World Bank office, Rruga Dëshmoret e 4 Shkurtit, Tirana.
cc: Mark Kosma Francois Wencelius. Fax + 1 202 477 63 91