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Fax No. 212-906-5363
Telephone No. 212-906-5426

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TO Mr. Avani Vaish
(202) 522-3240
GEF Secretariat

FACSIMILE NO.: Programmed

FROM:  Hilda Papani
Regional GEF Coordinator
DRP/RBLAC 

MESSAGE Argentina: National Biodiversity Strategy, Action and Plan and Report to the
CBD

Please find as discussed final copy of above mentioned document.

Regards.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Country: Argentina
Project Title: *National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and Report to the CBD*
GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity
Country Eligibility: CBD Ratification: 22 November 1994
GEF Financing: US\$ 348.890
Government Contribution: (in kind)
Estimated Total Budget: US\$ 348.890
GEF Implementing Agency: UNDP
National Executing Agency: Secretariat of Natural Resources and the Environment, with technical support from the Argentine Committee of IUCN.
GEF Operational Focal Point: Undersecretariat for International Cooperation / Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Religious Affairs
CBD Operational Focal Point: SRN&AH
Estimated Starting Date: October 1996.
Project Duration: 10 months

I. BACKGROUND:

Argentina is one of the countries with the widest range of ecoregions in the world with eighteen continental and four oceanic zones are represented throughout its territory. Five of these ecoregions are found only in Argentina and eight have received the maximum grading as regards conservation priorities in the recent report "A Conservation Assessment of the Terrestrial Ecoregions of Latin America and the Caribbean" (WWF-WB, 1995).

This diversity of ecosystems relates to a high diversity of species: 9000 species of superior plants (Argentina is ranked 17th among the countries with the highest plant biodiversity; 25-30% endemic plants) and 2380 vertebrate animal species, including 38 endemic mammals and 19 endemic birds (ranked 15th among the 25 countries with the highest amount of endemic vertebrates). Out of all these, 529 vertebrate species (22% of the total) and at least 240 species of plants are threatened with extinction. Biological diversity in Argentina has declined in several regions from habitat conversion to agricultural systems, logging, industrialization, and urban growth; these areas include Pampas grasslands, *Espinal*, Chaco savannas and woodlands, sub-tropical Yungas forests, Misiones forests, southern *Araucaria* forests, and Patagonian steppe.

Argentina has a tradition of scientific research in taxonomy, ecology, and agriculture, as well as a national park system established in 1934. However, due to long standing periods of institutional and economic instability, there has been a paralyzing lack of strategic coordination in the planning and

prioritization of activities in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The GoA is undergoing an important economic transition and recognizes this situation as well as the need to protect biological diversity through a bottom-up nation-wide discussion, involving provincial authorities, universities, the private sector and NGO's. This action programme will be complemented by on-going activities such as the recently approved World Bank PDF Block B for strengthening of protected areas management, as well as UNDP's Patagonia Coastal Zone Management Plan.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION:

The primary objective of this project is to assist GoA to define priority actions related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within the context of economic development. It will prepare a National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable distribution of its benefits; establish an Action Plan to implement the NBS; and prepare Argentina's First National Report to the CBD Conference of the Parties in 1997

In keeping with the strong decentralization of government authority to the provincial level, the project will be implemented by initially taking a regional approach to better reflect the country's wide variety of ecological and social realities. The resulting regional information will form the basis for the subsequent development of an integrated national biodiversity strategy. Existing national reports and assessments - including gray literature - describing Argentina's biogeographic regions and major ecosystems, including commercially useful and threatened species, will be collected by consultants at national and regional levels and serve as complementary documentation. These reports include the *National Report to UNCED*, the *Environmental Profile and State of the Environment Report*, and *Utopia of the Environment: sustainable development in Argentina and the National Environment Action Plan*, elaborated by national agencies, IUCN's Argentine Committee, NGOs and universities. The consultants will review this information and use it for the elaboration of regional working documents. These reports will summarize information on existing biodiversity, root causes of biodiversity loss and threats to and opportunities for its conservation and sustainable use, the institutions and organizations involved in or whose activities affect the use or conservation of biodiversity, policy, legal and programmatic frameworks related to biodiversity and sectoral development and planning, and the possible options for the restoration, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity's components.

The regional reports will be used as working documents for regional workshops involving the active participation of provincial governments, federal agencies and sectoral authorities (fisheries, agriculture, forestry, mining, energy), the private sector, academic institutions, and NGOs. Preparation for the workshops will entail initial interviews, identification of key representatives and stakeholder groups, as well as an initial consensus regarding agenda and proposed workshop outputs. Five workshops will be held, each corresponding to a region encompassing a number of major ecosystems; each workshop will produce a report defining regional priorities and elements for a regional Action Plan. These regional reports will be used as the primary inputs to the elaboration of the integrated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

A final national workshop will bring together the Ministries charged with finance, economic development, planning, and sectoral development, as well as provincial authorities, NGOs, universities and the private sector, to review the regional reports, assess the principal priorities and proposed actions, and integrate them into a single National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The NBSAP will prioritize regional and national-level actions, assign responsibilities, and identify funding requirements as well as potential sources.

III. TIME PLAN

The project will follow the sequence recommended in the WRI/IUCN/UNEP Guidelines. Activities will begin in October, 1996 and will last for 10 months. During month one, a national level meeting will be held to establish working groups and define terms of reference for the regional consultants. Stocktaking and assessment of existing information, and the elaboration of five preliminary regional documents will be done over months two and three. The preparation and implementation of five regional workshops will take place over three months, and will conclude with the elaboration of regional reports.

An initial draft national strategy and action plan will be drafted during months six through eight, based on the regional reports. The final national meeting will be carried out in month nine to discuss the draft strategy and action plan and agree on its final form and contents. The Strategy and Action Plan will be finalized during the last month of the project. In parallel, the First National Report to the CBD will be elaborated through months eight to ten, however, an interim Report will be provided by end June 1997.

IV. BEST PRACTICE

The methodology for the implementation of the project is based on the "Guidelines for Country Study on Biological Diversity (UNEP, 1993), the "Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity" (IUCN, 1994), and the "Guidelines for Preparing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans" (WRI-IUCN-UNEP). The GoA will follow the best practice criteria as contained in the "Enabling Activities Operational Criteria" document.

V. Budget

	Product	Process	Total
Stocktaking and Inventory Existing Information	34,940		34,940
1. National Consultants (10m/m total, including consultants in the area of vegetation and fauna)	26,000		
2. Organisation and intogration of information into existing GIS by major ecosystems	8,940		
Identification and Analysis of Options	39,530	159,920	199,450
1. National Consultants (6 m/m)	9,000		
2. Workshops for identification of gaps and options in each major ecosystem (4)		159,920	
3. International Consultant	16,000		
4. Travel, misc.	14,530		
Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan	29,600	60,000	89,600
1. National Consultants (8 m/m)	15,600		
2. First draft of Strategy and Action Plan (National consultants, preparation, dissemination etc.)	5,000		
3. Regional workshops on first draft (4 workshops)		55,000	
4. International Consultants	4,000		
5. Preparation of Final version of Strategy and Action Plan (editing, printing and dissemination)	2,500	5,000	
6. Miscellaneous (materials, travel, communications etc.)	2,500		
First National Report	14,900	10,000	24,900
1. Publication and translation	10,000		
2. Promotion, misc	4,900	10,000	
Co-ordination and Management	0		0
TOTAL	118,970	229,920	348,890

VI. DEVIATIONS FROM CRITERIA AND NORMS None**VII. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Secretariat of Natural Resources and the Environment (SRN&AH), and the IUCN Argentine Committee -as designated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs- will coordinate the development of the Strategy and Action Plan. The Argentine Committee is composed of APN, four provincial governments (Misiones, Cordoba, Mendoza and Entre Rios), the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), under the authority of the Secretariat of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, three universities and 17 NGOs. The IUCN Argentine Committee will act as a permanent forum for consultation, discussion and analysis.

The project will be managed by a **Technical Coordination Unit (TCU)** composed of six members, one of which will act in the capacity of **Executive Secretary**. The members of the TCU will include specialists from different areas: biology/ecology, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, resource economics, socioeconomic and policy issues. Three will be proposed by the IUCN Argentine Committee, and the others, designated by APN, INTA and SRN&AH, respectively. Experts in strategy formulation will be hired for the initial national meeting and for the preparation of final documents and plans of action.

Regional coordinators with a background in each of the regions will be appointed by the TCU. Each **Regional Coordinator** will be supported by an APN professional; APN will provide the physical infrastructure as well as support personnel for each Coordinator and, in Buenos Aires, the same will be provided for the functioning of the TCU. The national network of INTA Experimental Stations will also render support to the project.

VIII. PREPARATION OF THE FIRST NATIONAL REPORT

This report will be prepared following the guidance provided by the CoP of November 1995.

TABLE 1: DIMENSIONS OF ENABLING ACTIVITIES (STANDARD ACTIVITY MATRIX)

Activity	Output	Capac. build		Publi. Part.	Credits
		Instit. Strengt.	Train.		
Stocktaking and Assessment / Elaboration of five regional starting documents -biodiversity and biological resources -cross-sectoral issues -policy and regulatory framework -institutional and human capacity -analysis of root causes of BD loss -technologies for conservation and sustainable use -activities with adverse impact -existing measures and programmes -preliminary statement of objectives -identification of gaps -assessment of existing needs	X				1
	X				2
	X				3
	X				4
	X				5
	X				6
	X				7
	X				8
	X				9
	X				(9)
Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD -strategies for conservation -strategies for sustainable use -strategies for benefit sharing	X	X		X	10
	X	X		X	11
	X	X		X	12
Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan -national strategy -national action plan	X	X	X	X	13
	X	X		X	
Preparation of the First National Report -First National Report	X			X	14

Footnotes to the activity matrix:

- 1) The reports and assessments referred to on page 2 provide general information regarding biogeographic regions and major ecosystems, as well as national lists and distributions of vertebrates and plants. There is, however, a need to obtain and provide biodiversity information at the regional levels where the majority of decisions regarding land, resource use, and conservation are made.
- (2) Agricultural and fisheries production assessments are common practices in the country. Argentina also produced a Tropical Forestry Action Programme in 1988. However, in all three cases, the extent of impact on biodiversity from development in these sectors has not been evaluated. With the exception of the GEF-funded Patagonia Coastal Zone Management Plan project, no national or regional initiatives exist to measure this impact and incorporate conservation and sustainable use factors within the major productive sectors.
- (3) An assessment of the environmental legal and regulatory framework, mainly at the federal level, is being conducted by a national programme (Programme for Institutional Development in Environmental Issues - PRODIA - IDB/SRN&AH). This assessment needs to be conducted at the provincial levels within a regional framework given the high degree of provincial jurisdictional authority over natural resource development.
- (4) As in (3), the same programme is assessing institutional capacity in environmental information. Furthermore, this initiative is evaluating the current institutional capacity for action among NGOs at the national level. This assessment needs to be conducted at the provincial levels within a regional framework given the high degree of provincial jurisdictional authority over natural resource development.
- (5) While general information exists at the national level (see page 2), more comprehensive information is needed at the regional level where the majority of policy is made regarding natural resource use and economic development.
- (6) Technologies for conservation and sustainable use are only documented in a general way; regional assessments of the state of knowledge in this area would provide much-needed detail and comprise the first step in the exchange of information regarding best practices.
- (7) An assessment of the degree of threat at the national level is currently being developed for higher taxa (birds and mammals). Some preliminary information exists on agriculture and livestock activities with adverse impacts on biodiversity. A comprehensive assessment of information at the regional level is needed given that productive activities and economic development vary widely from region to region.
- (8) Information on rural programmes and measures is available from the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA). The SRN&AH is compiling information on environmental programmes currently in execution. A cross-reference assessment of regional programmes and other sectoral development programmes will be carried out by consultants acting at both regional and national levels.
- (9) Gaps and existing needs will be described initially by the consultants acting at the regional levels in the working document. This working paper will be reviewed and discussed at the regional workshops, producing consensus on gaps and existing needs. These will in turn be used as inputs to the identification of priorities and the development of action plans.
- (10) Consultants will compile the information as outlined above to be reviewed and discussed at the regional workshops. The workshops will produce regional reports based on the information which form the basis for the integrated national strategy and action plan (see page 2). Analytical capacities of participating institutions will be strengthened through the provision of updated and cross-sectoral information, as well as the discussions in the different workshops with representatives from the various productive sectors, NGOs, universities, the private sector, and government agencies at federal and provincial levels.
- (11) As in (10).
- (12) Some institutions, mainly universities and NGOs, have initiated the analysis of benefit sharing issues. Institutional strengthening as in (10), above.
- (13) Regional reports will be used as the primary inputs to the elaboration of the Integrated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. A final national workshop will bring together the Ministries charged with finance, economic development, planning, and sectoral development, as well as provincial authorities, NGOs, universities and the private sector, to review the regional reports, assess the principal priorities and proposed actions, and integrate them into a single National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The NBSAP will prioritize regional and national-level actions, assign responsibilities, and identify funding requirements as well as potential sources. Strategy formulation experts will provide technical assistance at the first orientation workshop and the final formulation workshop in which the strategy and action plan will be produced.
- (14) Public participation will be mainly in the strategy and action plan chapters, during the previous process, not in the final stage. At this stage only a review of the draft document will be requested from a small target group of experts.