

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

<b>Country:</b>	Belize
<b>Project Title:</b>	<i>Formulation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for its Implementation</i>
<b>GEF Focal Area:</b>	Biodiversity
<b>Country Eligibility:</b>	Convention Ratified December 30, 1993
<b>GEF Financing:</b>	US\$ 184,500
<b>Government Contribution</b>	in kind
<b>GEF Implementing Agency:</b>	UNDP
<b>National Executing Agency:</b>	Ministry of Economic Development
<b>GEF Operational Focal Point:</b>	Ministry of Economic Development
<b>CBD Focal Point:</b>	Ministry of Natural Resources
<b>Estimated Starting Date:</b>	February 1997
<b>Project Duration:</b>	12 months

### 1. Background:

Located in the northeast of Central America, Belize is bounded by Mexico to the north, Guatemala to the west and south and the Caribbean sea on the east. Covering a total area of 22,960 km<sup>2</sup>, including 1,065 offshore cays, it is extremely varied for its size. Inland the Mayan Massif is the dominate landscape feature and rises to 1,124 metres at its highest point. The mountain range is surrounded by rugged karst limestone hills. Most of the north of the country and entire coastal area, including the Toledo coastal fringe in the south, consists of low lying plains and swamps. Nine land systems, each comprising a particular combination of topography, soils and vegetation have been distinguished.

This variety, together with a sub-tropical climate with substantial differences in rainfall across the country (1,300 mm in the north and 4,500 mm per annum in the south), has given rise to a high landscape and biological diversity despite the relatively small size of the country. Forty-nine vegetation types include a variety of broadleaf forests, pine forest and savannah, littoral and mangrove forests and support a wide range of flora and fauna. 543 species of birds, 162 mammals, 183 lepidoptera, 173 odonata, 121 reptiles, 43 amphibians and 43 fresh water fish species have been documented to date. 2 amphibian and one reptile species are endemic. Forty animal species are listed in the IUCN Red Data Book. This book also lists 144 plant taxa currently considered to be threatened in Belize and 424 taxa that occur in this country but are threatened elsewhere in their range.

This level of diversity is also found in the vast coastal zone and marine systems of Belize. The Belize Barrier Reef is the largest in the western hemisphere and second in the world. This reef forms only part of a complex of largely intact coastal ecosystems that include mangrove forests, mud flats, lagoons, estuaries and seagrass beds of exceptional value in global terms. In addition, seventeen distinct marine environments each with specific sediments, hydrology and topology can be distinguished supporting a wide range of marine species including 117 salt water fishes.

With the lowest overall population density in Central America (10/km<sup>2</sup>), trees dominate the landscape of Belize and almost half the country is still covered with forest. Forestry was formerly the chief economic activity but this has recently been replaced by agriculture with sugar, citrus fruits and bananas being the main export crops. Deforestation rates associated with these activities are growing. Between 1989 and 1994 78,000 ha of forest were lost to agricultural expansion.

The Government of Belize (GoB) is aware of the valuable natural resources of the country and has taken steps towards their protection, conservation and rational use within the context of sustainable human development. The country has a relatively comprehensive although fragmented, set of laws pertaining to forest, fisheries and wildlife use and protection. Recently a Environmental Protection Act has been adopted as well as a number of subsidiary regulations to address overall environmental quality and protection of biodiversity. These include a National Protected Areas System Plan, a National Environmental Action Plan and a Coastal Zone Management Plan which is being developed to address coastal and marine resources. Furthermore a series of internationally funded project aimed at biodiversity conservation and management are presently on-going or under formulation (see Activity Matrix).

Whilst this progress is important, there is still a need to integrate biodiversity concerns into sectoral planning especially in those sectors that impact on, or depend directly on, biological resources for example agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, energy and transport. The GoB proposes to develop a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) to enhance the incorporation of biodiversity issues into national development and sector planning and to provide a comprehensive framework for biodiversity conservation and management that will orient and co-ordinate related on-going and future initiatives and facilitate the implementation of the CBD in the country. For the development of the BSAP to fully incorporate the concerns of different sectors and stakeholders of this ethnically and culturally diverse country, much internal consultation will be needed as well as a wide dissemination of information.

## **2. Project Objectives and Brief Summary**

This project has several objectives: *Firstly*, to prepare, in a participatory manner, a National Biodiversity Strategy to protect the countries biodiversity and increase the knowledge and sustainable use of this valuable asset. *Secondly*, to define the priority actions necessary to implement this strategy including resource needs and responsibilities for implementation. *Thirdly*, to enhance public knowledge on the CBD and hence participation in the strategy formulation process, and to achieve broad commitment for its implementation through wide dissemination of the final version. *Finally* to prepare the First National Report to the Conference of Parties to the CBD.

This will be achieved through the evaluation of existing information on biodiversity related issues (see Activity Matrix). Working groups, comprised of national consultants, government staff, academia, representatives of NGOs and the private sector will use the results of the stocktaking exercises to draw up a report that initially identifies knowledge-gaps, outlines the present status in the country and defines specific goals for the next five years covering a range of sectors including agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry and protected areas.

This report will form the basis for regional consultations to confirm goals and identify options and strategies to achieve them. Eight consultations, covering the countries main eco-regions, will count with the participation of stakeholders from a wide range of public and private sectors as well as from the rich ethnic and cultural diversity present in the country. Participation in these consultations will be enhanced by a campaign, held in parallel with the stocktaking exercises, to inform the general public regarding Belize's commitments to the CBD, and the participatory nature of the formulation of BSAP. This campaign will be based on newspaper and TV advertisements and a series of structured public fora.

A draft version of the BSAP will be prepared, based on the findings of the regional consultations, by a team made up from representatives of the working groups, under the direction of the National Biodiversity Co-ordinating Committee (NBCC) to be officially set up at the start of this project. This version will be reviewed in three regional workshops with the participation of decision-makers that can indicate and designate responsibility for implementation of actions outlined in the strategy. The final version will be formulated by the National Programme Co-ordinator and widely disseminated through a public awareness campaign designed to increase commitment by the broad civil society for implementation of the BSAP.

The first report to the CBD will be developed by the programme co-ordinator and selected consultants. In view of the 31st December 1997 deadline for submitting this report, the Belize Report will be based on existing information and on the progress achieved by then in preparing the BSAP.

### **3. Operational Criteria:**

***Coverage without Duplication:*** The project will build on information available from several related on-going initiatives the most relevant of which are shown in the Standard Activity Matrix. The results of the recently finished USAID/NARMAP project will be considered in the process especially the National Protected Areas System Plan that was developed under this initiative. Relevant information from the capacity building components of the GEF funded Coastal Zone Management Project and the UK-ODA Forest Planning and Management Project will be used during the stocktaking exercises and activities programmed to maximise complementarity between these initiatives. In addition, the process of the strategy formulation and the final Strategy and Action Plan will provide an important framework for these projects as well as for others that are to start in the near future including the GEF Regional Mesoamerican Biological Corridor Project and the Environmental, Social and Technical Assistance Programme of the Southern Highway Project to be funded by IDB (1996-2000). In view of this no duplication is expected.

***Appropriate Sequencing of Activities:***

<b>Month</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
Setting up of a National Biodiversity Committee, an interagency planning team and the project team.	X	X										
Stocktaking and Assessment		X	X	X	X							
Public fora and informing on CBD		X	X	X	X							
Biodiversity planning workshop			X									
Regional workshops for identifying options (8)					X	X	X					
First draft of BSAP							X	X	X			
Regional Meetings to review draft BSAP (3)									X	X		
Final version BSAP										X	X	
Public Dissemination BSAP Final version											X	X
First National Report											X	X

**Best Practice:** The methodology for the project will be based on the "Guidelines for Country Studies on Biological Diversity (UNEP 1993), the Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity (IUCN 1994) and the "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences" prepared by WRI, IUCN and UNEP (1995). In order to incorporate biodiversity into mainstream development, it will be led by a broad based co-ordinating committee- The *National Biodiversity Co-ordinating Committee (NBCC)*- to be set up officially at the start of the project. This committee will have representatives from all relevant ministries including Ministries of Economic Development, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Fisheries, Tourism & Environment, and representatives of civil society including NGO's, academia, community-based organisations and the private sector. The process will be country-driven and will be undertaken by government agencies, national consultants, academia and NGOs. Ample opportunity will be available for public participation at different times in the project.

**Deviations from Cost Norms:** None.

#### **4. Institutional Framework**

Under the overall guidance of the GEF Focal Point (Ministry of Economic Development), and the CBD Focal Point (Ministry of Natural Resources), the project will be developed by a Programme Co-ordinator who will manage a multidisciplinary project team under the general supervision of the National Biodiversity Co-ordinating Committee (NBCC). This multi-sectoral committee act Steering Committee, providing co-ordination at a policy level and facilitating the incorporation of the BSAP into national and sectoral development plans. A sub-committee of the NBCC - the Inter-agency Planning Committee (IPC) - will be formed to provide guidance at the operational level. This committee, together with the programme co-ordinator, will be responsible for detailing the project workplan, defining ToR for the consultants and working groups, planning the consultations and overseeing the formulation of the first draft of the BSAP. Members of the IPC and the project team will take part in a biodiversity analysis and planning instruction workshop in the early stages of the project to become more familiar with the WRI/IUCN/UNEP guidelines and ensure that the strategy planning is undertaken according to standardised practices and procedures.

National consultants and NGOs, working in close co-ordination with government staff, will undertake most of the project activities. International experts, preferably from the region, will be required for the biodiversity planning training and for advising on the preparation of the first draft of the BSAP.

### 5. Budget

	Product	Process	Total
<b><i>Stocktaking and Inventory Existing Information</i></b>	<b>16,000</b>		<b>16,000</b>
1. National Consultants (7 PM)	14,000		
2. Misc.	2,000		
<b><i>Identification and Analysis of Options</i></b>	<b>30,500</b>	<b>51,500</b>	<b>82,000</b>
1. National Consultants	28,000		
2. Public Fora, newspaper ads		10,000	
3. Biodiversity Planning Workshop		5,000	
4. International Expert (for biodiversity planning exercise)		5,000	
5. Regional consultations (8 each with 60 participants)		30,000	
6. Travel, misc	2,500	1,500	
<b><i>Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)</i></b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>25,500</b>	<b>64,500</b>
1. First draft BSAP (National consultants, dissemination etc)	20,000		
2. Regional expert to advise on first draft	8,000		
3. Regional Workshops to review on first draft (3)		18,000	
4. Preparation of Final BSAP (consultants, printing etc)	11,000		
5. Dissemination and awareness campaign for BSAP		7,500	
<b><i>First National Report</i></b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>8,000</b>
1. Preparation, publication	6,000	2,000	
<b><i>Co-ordination and Management</i></b>	<b>14,000</b>		<b>14,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105,500</b>	<b>79,000</b>	<b>184,500</b>

## STANDARD ACTIVITY MATRIX

ENABLING ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	CAPACITY BUILDING		PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	COMMENTS
		Institutional Strengthening	Training		
Commitment	Execution				
<b>1. Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</b>					
1.1. Biodiversity and biological resources	V/ PROARCA/ X				
1.2. Cross-sectoral Issues	X				1
1.3. Policy and Regulatory Framework	CZMP/ X				2
1.4. Institutional and Human Capacity	CZMP/FPMP / X				3
1.5. Analysis of root causes of BD loss	X				4
1.6. Technologies for Conservation and SU	X				
1.7. Activities with Adverse Impact	X				
1.8. Existing Measures and Programmes	X				
1.9. Preliminary Statement of Objectives	NARMAP/NEAP				
1.10. Identification of Gaps	X				5
1.11. Assessment of Existing Needs	X				
<b>2. Identification and Analysis of options to meet the Objectives of the CBD</b>					
2.1. Strategies for Conservation <i>in situ, ex situ</i>	X		X	X	6,7
2.2. Strategies for Sustainable Use	X		X	X	6,7
2.3. Strategies for Benefit Sharing	X		X	X	6,7
<b>3. Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</b>					
3.1. National Strategy	X				
3.2. National Action Plan	X			X	8,9
<b>4. Preparation of First National Report to CBD</b>					
4.1. First National Report	X				

X = Activity Undertaken Within Enabling Activities Proposal

Var = Refers to a range reports on biological resources (see footnote 1); PROARCA = USAID funded Conservation project; NARMAP = USAID funded Natural Resources Management project; CZMP = GEF-UNDP funded Coastal Zone Management Project; FPMP = UK-ODA funded Forest Planning and Management Project; NEP= National Environmental Action Plan;

### Footnotes

1. A range of existing studies and reports include general information on species and ecosystems biodiversity for example the Belize Country Environmental Profile, Tropical Forestry Action Plan, Protected Areas System Plan, the State of the Coastal Zone Report and Belize National Report on the Mesoamerica Biological Corridors Project. Although some of these need reviewing in the light of the CBD, and others cover only specific regions or taxa, they will provide important information which will be evaluated in this project and collated into one report on the biodiversity and biological resources of Belize. The USAID project PROARCA (1995-1998) is currently undertaking inventories in coastal, marine and terrestrial regions and will provide additional material for this report.

2. Fisheries exports record-taking and agricultural assessments are conducted annually and there are some forestry status reports. None of these assessments, however, address the sector impact on biodiversity. This project will review existing material to assess these and cross-sectoral issues.

3. *Planning and land-use laws* and the Environmental Protection Act require that areas of ecological significance and biodiversity be protected. However, the legal basis for biodiversity conservation and management is dispersed throughout a wide range of different laws including the Forest Act, Fisheries Act, National Parks System Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. These will be fully reviewed in this project to determine duplications, overlaps and gaps to define priority actions that should be taken to harmonise and complete the regulatory framework.
4. *Some analysis of institutional and human resources* has been done in specific areas during the preparation for capacity-building oriented projects. The most relevant of these are the CZMP and the FPMP projects which include capacity building activities for NGOs and GoB staff in the areas of coastal management and forestry management respectively. Although this is a source for some information, no overall assessment of capacity with respect to biodiversity has been conducted in Belize. This will be undertaken in this project.
5. *The recently finished USAID/ NARMAP project* developed a National Protected Areas Systems Plan which contains preliminary objectives for biodiversity conservation. This will be supplemented by those in the National Environmental Action Plan and in the CBD.
6. *The project interagency planning team*, members of working groups and project consultants will take part in a biodiversity analysis and planning instruction workshop to acquire a more uniform knowledge and to assure that the strategy planning is undertaken according to standardised practices and procedures
7. *Working groups will evaluate* the results of the stocktaking exercises and report on the gaps between the present status in Belize and preliminary goals for five years time. This report will form the basis for the participatory identification of options for the biodiversity strategy. Eight consultations, each with approximately 60 participants from a range of public and private sector stakeholders including finance, agriculture, forestry, land-use planning, transport, energy, NGOs and ethnic groups, will be held in the different eco-regions of the country. The final selection of these regions will be made based on an analysis of different possible groupings of the 9 land systems and 49 vegetation zones present in the country, and different conservation status of these. It will include terrestrial and marine regions, and both protected and unprotected regions. The workshops will produce reports with specific options and strategies and priority actions and needs and responsibilities for their implementation.
8. *The findings of the regional option-identifying workshops* will be collated into a first draft BSAP by the project team. This draft will be reviewed in three regional workshops (north, south and central) with participation from major sectors and stakeholder groups. The programme coordinator and consultants will be responsible for incorporation the findings of these meetings into a final version. This will be reviewed by the NBCC and submitted to Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly for final approval.
9. *As a final step a public awareness campaign* will be conducted so as to disseminate the BSAP and to achieve further commitment by the broad civil society for its implementation.

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**GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE**  
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April 17, 1996

Ms. Joana Merlin-Scholtes  
Resident Representative  
United Nations Development Programme  
El Salvador

Dear Ms. Merlin-Scholtes,

**NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express Belize's interest to prepare its National Strategy on Biodiversity. The Ministry of Economic Development will assume a coordinating role to ensure that all relevant Ministries of the Government of Belize, NGO's and civil society participate in the preparation of this national strategy document.

As signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and as per Article 8 of the said convention, the Government of Belize hereby officially requests financial and technical assistance from the Global Environment Facility to ensure that the pertinent national institutions prepare the National Strategy on Biodiversity.

Shortly we shall submit to you a document prepared by the relevant institutions which will detail the level of technical and financial assistance necessary for the preparation of the Belize's National Strategy on Biodiversity.

Respectfully yours,

**Y.S. HYDE**  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Economic Development