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TEL: 212-906-6362

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Mario / Choua**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL**

Any final comments?

This is the revised doc.

**Country:** Central African Republic

**Project Title:** National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and Country Report to the COP

**GEF Focal Area:** Biodiversity

**Country Eligibility:** Convention Ratified 15 March 1995

**GEF Financing:** \$164,700

**Government Contribution:** In kind

**GEF Implementing Agency:** UNDP

**National Executing Agency:** Ministère de l'Environnement et du Tourisme (MET)

**GEF Operational Focal Point:** None designated

**CBD Operational Focal Point:** None Designated

**Estimated Starting Date:** November 1996

**Duration of Project:** 10 months

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10/10/96**Background**

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country, which is subdivided into 16 prefectures (provinces) holding only 3.4 million people in an area of 623,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The CAR straddles a wide range of ecological zones. The northern half of the country is primarily covered with dry deciduous woodland savanna within which there are gradations from predominantly Sudanian savanna to predominantly Guinean savanna. The southern half of the country is a mosaic of Guineo-Congolese lowland rain forest and secondary grassland (IUCN 1992). With its unusual ecosystem diversity and species richness, many of CAR's ecosystems are unique and globally important. Research on biodiversity undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) indicates high levels of species richness and endemism. Surveys indicate that CAR has 3,602 plant species of which at least 100 are endemic, 209 mammal species and 668 bird species (WRI 1994).

The CAR's ecosystems suffer from a variety of pressures, from desertification in the north to a relatively rapid deforestation rate of 0.7% per annum in the south. Areas along the borders of Chad and Sudan are reportedly subject to incursion by well-armed rebel bands who are responsible for widespread poaching. Contributing to the problem, informal subsistence level hunting is a major

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source of nourishment, representing an estimated 30-40% of the meat consumed in the country each year (IUCN 1992).

Although the formal protected area system covers 9.8% of the CAR's land area, many of the protected areas are in poor condition, with weak or virtually non-existent management in some cases as a result of weak institutional capacity and resistance to government regulations, and encroachment from local populations. The protected areas system emphasizes savanna ecosystems containing large mammals, and only one lowland rainforest area is currently under formal protection. A long term threat therefore rests over the survival of this biome in CAR.

CAR had a per capita GDP of \$390 in 1993 (World Bank, 1995), as well as high levels of external debt due to low and unstable prices for commodities such as cotton and coffee. The CAR has therefore been unable to direct significant financial resources towards conserving its remarkable natural resources and promoting their sustainable use. The country's development has also suffered from political disturbances and weak infrastructure.

Declining state budgets as a result of these social and economic obstacles have led to the non-enforcement of protected area regulations. The policy structure concerned with environmental protection is ill-suited to tackle present problems. However, promising signs exist and the government is attempting cost effective ways of conserving its natural resources. Towards this end, a new Ministère de l'Environnement et du Tourisme (MET) has recently been created within the Ministère des Eaux, Forêts, Chasse, Pêche, Tourisme et de l'Environnement, to ensure a flexible body with a narrower scope. Additional milestones include preparation of a country report for the 1992 UNCED conference, an Agenda 21 workshop held in 1993, and ratification of the biodiversity and climate change conventions. A National Committee for the Environment (NCE) was also created in 1994 to oversee the MET and facilitate donor efforts.

As a result of the government's interest, several donor and NGO driven projects to conserve natural areas in the CAR have been initiated. Foremost among these is the GEF and USAID/WWF supported Bangassou Forest project which is expected to begin soon. Projects already carried out in southwestern CAR by the World Bank and WWF have combined protected area zones with multiple use areas. Surveys and social development projects have been carried out by the EU, GTZ, Peace Corps, and USAID. Policy shortcomings identified with the assistance of these projects have resulted in a MET initiative to formulate a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) with the strong support of UNDP and USAID.

These activities were interrupted as a result of the recent civil unrest in the CAR. Due to the improved civil situation most of the projects have now been restarted. As a result of the government's continuing interest in environmental protection, formulation of a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) has been identified as a priority measure. In association with the National Environmental Action Plan, the BSAP will provide a comprehensive framework for environmental protection and sustainable use. During the NEAP process, the 16 prefectures of the country have been regrouped into 4 distinct ecological regions; namely, Berberati (forest region), Bosongoa (savanna region), Ndele (sub-Saharan steppes region), and Bambari (degraded savanna region).

### **Project Objectives and Short Description**

The project will support the participatory development of a BSAP by the MET in association with relevant government ministries, local communities and NGOs. The project will build on the existing knowledge base in the country and strengthen local and institutional capacities to elaborate the BSAP through a process of participatory planning and stakeholder consultation during national and regional workshops. The BSAP will identify the current status of, pressures on, options for, and actions to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the CAR. The BSAP will complement other national strategies and plans, especially the NEAP. The enabling activity will allow the CAR to meet its obligations under the Convention on Biodiversity by assisting it to prepare its first national report for the COP.

Initially, the MET will establish a multi sectoral steering committee to provide overall policy guidance and supervision to the BSAP process. The steering committee will draw members from relevant government agencies such as the Ministries of Forests, Water and Fisheries, Agriculture as well as other resource based ministries. The private sector, NGOs, research institutions, universities, tribal leaders and local communities will also contribute members to the steering committee.

The steering committee will oversee the creation of a multisectoral planning team which will undertake the work of the enabling activity. The planning team will draw upon appropriate expertise from government agencies, the private sector, NGOs, educational and research institutions. Experts involved in ongoing biodiversity related projects in the CAR will also participate in the planning team. The planning team will be assisted by a lead national consultant and national consultants experienced in biodiversity issues and an international consultant recruited to help launch the BSAP process and provide guidance.

With assistance from the consultants, the planning team will initially undertake a review of WRI/IUCN/UNEP guidelines for the preparation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (Miller and Lanou 1995). They will then compile and summarize existing information on the status of, and threats to the nation's biodiversity. This, together with summaries of the National Environment Action Plan, UNCED report, Agenda 21 workshop, the Bangassou project and other ongoing projects will be presented at the first national workshop.

The planning team with the support of the national and international consultants will conduct the first national workshop which will draw together the full range of actors relevant to biodiversity in the CAR. Participation in the workshops (first, second, and regional) will be as broad as possible by drawing from all walks of life, particularly tribal leaders, local communities, interest groups, local NGOs, research and educational institutions, and private and public sectors. The first national workshop will include also participants from national and local government agencies and institutions, and experts from neighboring countries with ongoing BSAP activities. The workshop participants will analyze the results of the stocktaking and inventory to select objectives, identify key issues and options as well as actors and priority geographical areas for review.

Towards the end of the first national workshop, the international consultant, assisted by the lead national consultant, will provide instruction in participatory methods, biodiversity analysis,

strategic planning techniques and dissemination techniques to the planning team and national consultants. Short term consultants hired to facilitate local and regional workshops will also receive instruction.

Following the first national workshop and training, a detailed analysis of the issues and options will be carried out by the planning team and lead national consultant. As part of this process, wide ranging local and regional consultations with local communities and institutions, private sector representatives and government agencies will be conducted during 4 regional workshops. The regional workshops will assess various issues and options by ecological region and involve the full range of local stakeholders in the BSAP process. The regional workshops will be conducted primarily by the short term consultants with assistance from the planning team and the lead national consultant.

The results of the analysis and national and regional workshops will then be drawn together by the planning team, national and short term consultants with assistance from the international consultant. A second national workshop attended by government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, representatives of tribal leaders and local communities will invite comment on the initial analysis and presentation of options. New alternatives and options may be developed and identified and a broad consensus among the relevant actors will be established prior to the finalization of the details of the BSAP.

Following approval by the steering committee, the BSAP will be disseminated widely within the CAR and a national country report to the COP of the biodiversity convention will be prepared by the planning team.

### **Coverage Without Duplication**

The BSAP initiative will supplement and be integrated in the NEAP (also by the MET), which has started. To avoid possible overlap, the MET will divide the stocktaking activities of the 2 projects so that each project will be able to draw upon a common database of relevant information. The extent and actual stocktaking undertaken by each project will be determined by the MET before the project starts.

The BSAP will build on experience gained and existing data collected through NGO projects and other donor financed initiatives in the CAR. These include the GEF operational program in the Bangassou dense forest as well as initiatives by the EU, GTZ, USAID and WWF. Also during the BSAP process, the problem of transboundary poaching will be discussed among various interest groups and stakeholders at national and regional workshops. The issue of non-enforcement of the legislation of protected areas will be accordingly analyzed and options will be assessed during the BSAP process.

### Time Plan and Sequencing

Activities will begin in November 1996 and will last for 10 months. Because the country report will not be ready during the COP meeting of June 1997, an interim report will be prepared and submitted to COP then.

Activity / Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Establishment of steering committee and planning team	x									
Stocktaking and inventory of information	x	x								
First national workshop			x							
Training of planning team			x							
Identification and analysis of options, regional workshops				x	x	x	x			
Second national workshop								x		
Preparation of biodiversity strategy and action plan, dissemination									x	
Preparation of interim report and submission to COP								x		
Preparation of country report and submission to the COP										x

### Best Practice

The project's methodology will be based on 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 project will benefit from previous biodiversity related ventures in the CAR and utilize in country expertise. Assessment of existing information will be carried out largely by the planning team and national consultant, with the international consultant used mainly to build capacity, frame key questions, and facilitate participation by all relevant groups.

**Project Financing( in US \$)**

	Product	Process	Total
<i>Stocktaking and Inventory of Existing Information</i>	8,000		8,000
- national consultants	3,000		3,000
- international consultant	3,000		3,000
- documentation, misc.	2,000		2,000
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options</i>	14,700	64,300	79,000
- national consultants	7,200	14,800	22,000
- international consultant	4,500	4,500	9,000
- first national workshop		20,000	20,000
- training (instruction)		10,000	10,000
- regional workshops (4)		15,000	15,000
- travel, misc.	3,000		3,000
<i>Preparation of Strategy and Action Plan</i>	11,500	43,500	55,000
- national consultants	8,500	8,500	17,000
- international consultant		18,000	18,000
- second national workshop		15,000	15,000
- travel, misc.	3,000		3,000
- dissemination		2,000	2,000
<i>First National Report</i>	7,500	3,000	10,500
- preparation of interim report	2,500		2,500
- preparation and publication of first country report	5,000		5,000
- promotion		3,000	3,000
<i>Coordination and Management Costs (8%)</i>	3,336	8,864	12,200
<b>Total for Enabling Activity</b>	<b>45,036</b>	<b>119,664</b>	<b>164,700</b>

**Deviations from Criteria and Norms**

This proposal does not deviate from the criteria and norms for enabling activities.

**Institutional Framework and Project Implementation**

Project development will be overseen by a steering committee composed of representatives from the MET, NEC, the Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, NGOs, scientists researchers, and other stakeholder groups. Under supervision of the steering committee a multi sectoral planning team will be established to undertake the actual work of the enabling activity. The planning team will conduct two broad based and participatory national workshops, 4 regional workshops, and carry out a range of stocktaking, analyzing and planning activities. The planning team will be assisted by a lead national consultant, national consultants and an international consultant who will impart training.

**Activity Matrix**

Enabling Activity Commitment	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
	Planning, Execution	Institutional Strength.	Training		
<i>Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</i>					
- biodiversity and biological resources	x				1
- cross-sectoral issues	x				1
- policy and regulatory framework	x				2
- institutional and human capacity	x				
- analysis of root causes of BD loss	x				
- technologies for conservation and sustainable use	x				
- activities with adverse impacts	x				
- existing measures and programs	x				1
- preliminary statement of objectives	x				
- identification of gaps	x				
- assessment of existing needs	x				1
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i>					
- strategies for conservation	x	x	x	x	3
- strategies for sustainable use	x	x	x	x	3
- strategies for benefit sharing	x	x	x	x	3
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i>					
- national strategy	x	x	x	x	
- national action plan	x	x	x	x	
<i>Preparation of first National Report</i>					
- interim report	x				
- first national report	x			x	

**Footnotes to Activity Matrix:**

1. Significant information on biodiversity and cross sectoral issues exists as a result of projects by the EU, GTZ, Peace Corp, World Bank and USAID and 1992 country report to the UNCED. Needs and gaps identified in part by these projects have led to the GEF, USAID/WWF Bangassou Forest project. The BSAP stocktaking will build on the base of information which exists as a result of these initiatives, however, existing information needs to be updated to reflect the changed civil situation, institutional structure, environmental conditions and current needs.
2. Although NEAP preparation by the MET was postponed due to the civil situation, it has started. To avoid potential duplication of stocktaking efforts, the NEAP and the BSAP stocktaking and assessment processes will be coordinated by the MET, which will establish a common database of information.
3. Although NEAP preparation is underway, its strategies will be coordinated with strategies and measures developed under the BSAP, to achieve complementarity.

**References Cited**

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