

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

<b>Country:</b>	Costa Rica
<b>Project Title:</b>	<i>National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and Report to the Conference of the Parties of the CBD</i>
<b>GEF Focal Area:</b>	Biodiversity
<b>Country Eligibility:</b>	Convention Ratified -- 26/8/94
<b>GEF Financing:</b>	\$ 195,700
<b>Government Contribution:</b>	\$ 80,000
<b>GEF Implementing Agency:</b>	UNDP
<b>National Executing Agency:</b>	COABIO/INBio
<b>GEF Operational Focal Point:</b>	Ministry of Environment and Energy
<b>CBD Focal Point:</b>	National Biodiversity Commission
<b>Estimated Starting Date:</b>	Sept. August 1996
<b>Project Duration:</b>	15 months

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**1. Background:**

Costa Rica, with a territory of 51,000 km<sup>2</sup>, has one of the highest biodiversities per unit area in the world, supporting approximately 6% of global species, or approximately 500,000. Its position as part of an isthmus between North and South America, its mountainous landscape and close exposure to both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean sea, have given rise to a highly diverse number of habitats. Twelve different life-zones (Holdridge) can be distinguished ranging from humid pre-montaine forests to savannahs and from wetlands to coral reefs. In the recent WWF-WB<sup>1</sup> study Costa Rica is classified as housing outstanding regional and bioregional ecoregions including tropical moist broadleaf forests, tropical dry broadleaf forests and mangrove swamps. These habitats have given rise to a rich species diversity that includes 855 species of birds, 221 mammals, 165 amphibians, 366,00 arthropods and 13,000 plants. Endemisms are high with approximately 10% of the plant species being endemic to the country and 80 species of birds, 18 reptiles and 13 mammals being endemic to the Mesoamerica region.

With a population of 3 million and a GNP per capita of US\$1,780, economic development in Costa Rica has expanded considerably over the last decades and continues to grow. Traditionally the economy has been based on agricultural (including the timber industry) and livestock systems, with more recent industrial expansion in the area of textiles and tourism. Expansion of the traditional sectors has often occurred at the expense of ecosystem integrity, and Costa Rica has been the scene of some of the most rapid and extensive destruction of species-rich, tropical forest biome in the hemisphere. Logging rates for the timber industry alone run at 1,300,000 cubic metres/year, although the government has recently banned natural forest habitat conversion for livestock and agriculture. Presently 10-12% of plant species are threatened by over-exploitation and illegal extraction, and 92 bird and 22 mammal species are endangered. Expansion of export-oriented agriculture (mainly coffee, sugar and bananas), logging, mining, wildlife trade and industrial and urban pollution of rivers and oceans are the principal threats to biodiversity.

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<sup>1</sup> *A Conservation Assessment of the Terrestrial Ecoregions of Latin America and the Caribbean*: E. Dinerstein, D. Olson, D. Graham, A. Webster, S. Primm, M. Bookbinder, G. Ledec; 1995; World Bank in association with the World Wildlife Fund.

In 1970, Costa Rica initiated an aggressive conservation programme which created an extensive system of protected areas covering all major ecosystems and encompassing 22% of national territory under some kind of government protection, or 27%, if private natural reserves and indigenous reserves are included. The system of protected areas represents major progress in the conservation of the nation's unique biodiversity and has become the main attraction for the ecotourism industry - presently the number one source of foreign exchange - producing around US\$ 660 million in 1995 from approximately 800,000 tourists.

Until recently, efforts were focused almost entirely on biodiversity protection through restricted-use (mainly research, education and recreation/tourism) of protected areas. Nevertheless, pressures on protected areas have risen dramatically as a result of natural resource depletion in surrounding areas. In addition, the financial crisis suffered at the end of the eighties resulted in cuts in budgetary resources for protected areas, thereby jeopardizing the sustainability of the entire system.

In view of this, the government has since modified this policy to put equal or greater emphasis on conservation through biodiversity management for sustainable use. Originally, Regional Conservation Units were established as clusters of protected areas surrounded by buffer-zones where sustainable use was promoted. With the creation of the National System of Sustainable Development by the present administration in 1995, the territory covered by the nine Regional Conservation Units has been expanded to cover the entire country. These are now known as *Regional Conservation Areas (RCA)*<sup>2</sup> and stand at the centre of the nation's sustainable development strategy.

A fundamental part of this strategy is the management of biodiversity within and across all relevant sectors throughout the country rather than solely in protected areas and buffer zones. This will be achieved by the integrated application of conservation and sectoral development policies in each RCA. In order to make this possible, important institutional changes have already been undertaken to merge previous authorities into one decentralised entity called SINAC- National System of Conservation Areas. Each RCA is administered through a decentralised and participatory approach in which communities neighbouring the protected areas, together with Conservation Area committees, take part in decision-making and in economic benefit sharing related to biodiversity management.

While this approach to biodiversity conservation demonstrates strong government commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the country lacks a national strategy and action plan which reflects this innovative region-based approach, builds on and strengthens the emerging decentralized decisionmaking system, and incorporates biodiversity management and sustainable use dimensions into sectoral development policies. In this context, effective access to detailed, region-based information by regional and national stakeholders is key to their effective participation in the design and implementation of the national strategy and action plan.

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<sup>2</sup> RCA correspond broadly to major ecosystems and are Arenal, Amistad, Volcanic Cordillera, Central Pacific, Tempisque, Guanacaste, Osa, Tortuguero, Cocos Island National Park

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

The main objective of this project is to prepare a national biodiversity strategy and action plan, as a fundamental component of the national sustainable development strategy, based on regional assessments of existing information, analyses and strategies to be implemented through the decentralised and participatory approach established by the SINAC. Regional stocktaking of existing biodiversity-related information will be undertaken and incorporated into an interactive information system (WWW, etc.) with easy public access. Gap identification and needs-assessments will be undertaken at the regional level providing the basis for the participatory identification of options and the development of regional strategies leading to a National Biodiversity Strategy. The information resulting from the process and products of the strategy and action plan exercise will be used in the preparation of the First National Report to the Conference of Parties.

Biodiversity related information (see section 1.1-1.9-Activity Matrix) will be compiled by region in a centralized interactive information system allowing the integrated regional and national stocktaking of information. At the same time, this system will make this information available to stakeholders through the internet thereby facilitating continuous up-dating as data gaps are filled and actions are implemented. At this point, COABIO will hold a workshop with national consultants, the Executive Committee, the SINAC administration, INBio and others to verify that all sources of information have been consulted and that there are no significant gaps remaining.

A series of regional workshops (as many as twenty to cover the entire country at roughly 2-3 per RCA depending on the complexity of issues) will be held with a wide range of stakeholders, including the industrial, conservation, agricultural, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors, as well as local communities and organisations and municipal governments, to review the results of the stocktaking exercise and identify gaps and needs within each conservation area. Altogether these consultations will include some 400 people from all sectors and regions of the country. The National Commission on Biodiversity (COABIO) will then hold a technical workshop to integrate the findings of these consultations, and prepare a first draft of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. COABIO will then hold three national consultations (North, South and Central regions) with nationally based organizations including government, private sector, NGOs, and academia to discuss, revise and validate the draft strategy. The final version will be prepared based on these consultations and then publicly presented to the media to promote public awareness of its principal points. The first National Report to the Conference of the Parties will be drafted by selected consultants under the co-ordination of COABIO drawing on information resulting from the consultation products and process. This will be validated through consultations with individual experts and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

## **3. Operational Criteria:**

*Coverage without Duplication:* The activity matrix presented in Annex A indicates that activities of this proposal will build on and complement those that have been or are being undertaken in biodiversity related areas in Costa Rica. Of particular importance is the National Biodiversity Study, completed with the participation of the National Museum, the Ministry of Energy and the Environment and the National Institute of Biodiversity in 1992, with the support of CIDA. However, due to lack of funding, the results of this study were not published or discussed or

validated at the national level. In addition, the country's new approach to biodiversity management at the level of Regional Conservation Areas has only been developed since execution of this study, and neither this nor other previous information gathering or stocktaking exercises have incorporated a regional focus or analysed issues in the integrated and participatory manner proposed herein. In view of this, no duplication of coverage is expected.

**Appropriate Sequencing of Activities** The general sequence of activities is 1) the compilation of information at the regional level in a single data base that will permit integrated assessments, 2) the participatory regional identification of gaps, needs and options through workshops, 3) the preparation and validation of the National Strategy and Action Plan based on detailed regional information. Due to the time required to compile information with this new approach and to allow the adequate participation of all stakeholders in the regional identification of options, it is expected that the complete National Strategy and Action Plan will take over one year to formulate and validate. In view of this, an interim National Report to the CoP of the CBD may be prepared and presented pending full finalization of the National Strategy and Action Plan.

Table of Activities

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Activity															
1.1. Regional integrated stocktaking	x	x	x	x	x										
1.2. Regional identification of gaps and options				x	x	x	x	x	x						
<b>2. Formulation of National Strategy and Action Plan</b>															
2.1. Preparation of the first draft									x	x	x				
2.2. Consultations											x	x	x		
2.3. Writing, Publication and Promotion.														x	x
<b>3. Preparation of the interim National Report</b>							x	x	x						
<b>4. Finalization of the first National Report to the CoP</b>															x

**Best Practice:** Recommendations from the document "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences", prepared by the WRI, UNEP and IUCN, will be used as a guide for the activities proposed herein. The Costa Rican Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan process will be consistent with the new focus of decentralised participatory regional administration of conservation areas and will fall within the priorities outlined in the National System for Sustainable Development, its National Council for Sustainable Development and the National Biodiversity Commission. (COABIO).

**Deviations from Cost Norms:** Although Costa Rica is well-known for its conservation policies and programmes, these have been based on a policy of centralised administration of national parks and protected areas. In light of the CBD, and with mounting pressures on these protected areas, Costa Rica has adopted an innovative decentralised and participatory approach to biodiversity conservation which incorporates sustainable-use and management of biodiversity throughout the entire territory as part of its National Sustainable Development Strategy. This new policy framework, together with the nation's extraordinarily high percentage of global biodiversity, has

meant that costs for these enabling activities fall within the middle rather than lower range of cost norms in spite of the small size of the country and its previous initiatives in biodiversity conservation.

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

The project will be implemented by COABIO, one of the technical commissions of the National Council for Sustainable Development. It is comprised of experts in the different areas mentioned in the Convention, such as *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, biotechnology, indicators, education, and economics. Its main function is to advise the Council and the Government on policy issues and long-term strategic planning related to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Co-ordination will be maintained at all times with the National Council for Sustainable Development. The project will be administered and backstopped by the National Institute of Biodiversity (INBio). Regional workshops and consultations will be undertaken using existing participatory mechanisms such as the local committees of the Conservation Areas, the National Council for Sustainable Development, NGO's and NGO networks, and municipalities.

## 5. Budget

### 5.1. Co-financing from government

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost (US\$)</u>
General Director	23,000
Deputy director (6MM)	18,400
Co-ordinator for Information Management (3.5 MM)	6,720
Stocktaking Co-ordinator (3.5 MM)	11,880
Equipment and Office Space	10,000
Support for Information Acquisition	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80,000</b>

### 5.2. GEF Financing

	<b>Product</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><i>Stocktaking and Inventory Existing Information</i></b>	<b>17,600</b>		<b>17,600</b>
1. National Consultants (10m/m)	12,000		
2. Organization of information and input to existing data base on regional basis	5,000		
3. COABIO Workshops for regional stocktaking review	600		
<b><i>Identification and Analysis of Options</i></b>	<b>58,450</b>	<b>57,600</b>	<b>116,050</b>
1. Consultations (@ 20 workshops each with 20 people)		57,000	
2. National Consultants for Executive Committee (For this section and for strategies and action plan) (25 m/m)	55,200		
3. COABIO workshop on results of consultations		600	
4. Miscellaneous ( Materials and communications)	3,250		
<b><i>Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan</i></b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>14,950</b>	<b>22,950</b>
1. First draft of Strategy and Action Plan (preparation, editing and distribution)	5,000		
2. National Consultations on first draft (3 workshops/ 1 day /with 50 people in central, north and south regions)		3,450	
3. Preparation of Final version of Strategy and Action Plan (editing, printing and dissemination)		9,000	
4. Presentation and Promotion of Strategy and AP		2,500	
5. Miscellaneous (materials and Communications etc.)	3,000		
<b><i>First National Report</i></b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>19,000</b>
1. National consultants (3m/m)	9,000		
2. Publication and distribution of report and misc.	5,000	5,000	
<b><i>Administrative Support and Co-ordination</i></b>	<b>20,100</b>		<b>20,100</b>
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b>118,150</b>	<b>77,550</b>	<b>195,700</b>

**ANNEX A: ACTIVITY MATRIX - COSTA RICA - 1996**

ENABLING ACTIVITY	OUTPUT		CAPACITY BUILDING		PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	COMMENTS
	Planning Execution		Institutional Strengthening	Training		
<b>Commitment</b>						
<b><i>1. Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</i></b>						
1.1. Biodiversity and biological resources	NBS / X		GEF-UNEP			1,2
1.2. Cross-sectoral Issues	C21 / X					3
1.3 Policy and Regulatory Framework	MINAE		MINAE			4
1.4 Institutional and Human Capacity	GEF-UNEP					5
1.5 Analysis of root causes of BD loss	Gov / NGO					6
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	MINAE					7
1.10. Identification of Gaps	NBS / X					8
1.11. Assessment of Existing Needs	NBS / X					8
<b><i>2. Identification and Analysis of options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i></b>						
2.1 Strategies for Conservation in situ	MINAE / X		X	X	X	8,9
2.2. Strategies for Conservation ex situ	X		X	X	X	8,9
2.3 Strategies for Sustainable Use	X		X	X	X	8,9
2.4 Strategies for Benefit Sharing	X		X	X	X	8,9
<b><i>3. Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i></b>						
3.1 National Strategy	X				X	10
3.2 National Action Plan	EA / X				X	10
<b><i>4. Preparation of First National Report to CBD</i></b>						
4.1. First National Report	X				X	11

X = Activity Undertaken Within Enabling Activities Proposal  
 MINAE = Ministry of the Environment,  
 NBS= National Biodiversity Study  
 C21= Capacity 21  
 EA = Environmental Action Plan

### Footnotes to the Activity Matrix

1. *Several studies exist on conservation-related issues in Costa Rica*, for example, Park Service Plans, the National Strategy for Conservation in the late 1980s undertaken by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines, and the State of the Nation Report to UNCED by the Fundacion Natura. However, these do not consider biodiversity as a specific theme with the exception of two studies. One is the recently finished Environmental Action Plan undertaken by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy, financed by the World Bank and administered through UNDP, which has one section on biodiversity focusing exclusively on three issues: conservation areas, strengthening of SINAC and awareness building on biodiversity. The second is the National Biodiversity Study completed in 1992 with funding from the Canadian Government (NBS). This study does not include the regional focus that now forms the basis of SINAC, and stocktaking of biodiversity and biological resources, as well as activities 1.2 through 1.8, will be undertaken/up-dated with this regional focus.
2. *Costa Rica is taking part in a GEF-UNEP global project "Biodiversity Data Management Capacitation in Developing Countries and Networking."* This is presently being implemented and includes a survey of types of data management (hardware, software, data) available in governmental institutions, NGO, and academia. Based on the results of this survey an interactive information system will be designed as part of the UNEP project in a format that will be most readily compatible with the greatest number of institutions with existing data management capacity. Information from the stocktaking activities 1.1 through 1.8 will be fed into this data base and will allow not only the integration and cross-referencing of these results at the regional level, but also public access and permanent up-dating of data. Each Regional Conservation Area will have a data base linked to the national data bank and available for consultation by local communities. Access will also be made available to a wide range of sectors and stakeholders through internet communication. This data base represents major institutional strengthening not only for the whole of SINAC but also for all sectors working with biodiversity related issues. It is an instrument that facilitates public access to information and thus participation in decision-making processes. User guides will be produced and promoted as a cost-effective means of training a broad range of sectors in the use of the information system.
3. *UNDP's Capacity 21, the IDB and the World Bank have supported a dynamic discussion on the integration and sustainability of sectoral policies led by the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Environment*; however, a cross-sectoral assessment that focuses specifically on biodiversity must be undertaken with emphasis on those sectors that have a negative impact on aquatic and marine biodiversity.
4. *This activity is covered by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, which is currently reviewing policy and regulatory framework over a range of sectors and makes recommendations for sectoral adjustments.* This process involves different committees and sectors including COABIO. The process has a secondary effect of strengthening these institutions in policy and regulatory stocktaking and assessment.
5. *This activity is covered by the GEF-UNEP project referred to in note 2 which also includes an inventory of the type of information and specialities existing in a broad range of institutions and sectors related to biodiversity*
6. *MINAE, MIDEP and NGOs (including Fundacion Neotropica, regional and national IUCN, Tropical Science Centre, Organisation for Tropical Studies), have undertaken extensive assessments of the root causes of biodiversity loss.* This will be collated on a regional basis and fed into the data base and will not figure as a major activity of the proposal.
7. *MINAE has produced a good preliminary statement of objectives that will be validated at the regional level through the workshops.*
8. *Building on the regional integrated stocktaking exercises and on the National Biodiversity Study (NBS), gaps and needs will be identified in each of the conservation areas, as well as indications of options for conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing strategies.*
9. *The X's in the columns on training and participation signify, first, that those activities indicated will - based on the guidelines prepared by WRI-UNEP-IUCN - build the analytical and technical capacities of participants informally through their participation in activities and formally through short workshops on specific aspects related to the development of the individual strategies and action plan; and second that participation is programmed to take place at both regional and national levels in a systematic way as explained in the text of this proposal.*
10. *Little has been undertaken on biodiversity conservation strategies except for the Ministry of Environment and Energy-supported exercise to define the optimal shape, size and degree of connection between protected areas within the national system.* Based on the results of the regional workshops, and on the National Strategies for Sustainable Development and the Environmental Action Plan (EA), a first draft of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will be drawn up by COABIO. This will be discussed in 3 national consultations with a

broad range of participants and finalised by COABIO. Promotion of the final strategy will enhance public awareness of the major points in the strategy.

11. *The National Report to CBD will be drafted by consultants under the guidance and co-ordination of COABIO and validated through consultations with individual experts from government, NGOs and the academic sector.*

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LINDA CR



REPÚBLICA DE COSTA RICA

Ministerio de Recursos Naturales

Energía y Minas

Despacho del Ministro

22 de febrero de 1996

DM-096-96

Señor Rafael Asenjo  
 Coordinador Ejecutivo  
 FNUD-GEF  
 Fax (212) 906-6998

Estimado señor Asenjo:

Adjunto para su consideración una propuesta para la colaboración de varias actividades relacionadas con la Convención de Biodiversidad. Específicamente nos proponemos llevar a cabo acciones de planificación y consulta sobre este tema, las cuales se enmarcan dentro de las llamadas "enabling activities".

En 1995, el Presidente Figueres creó la Comisión Asesora en Biodiversidad, cuya función es asesorar al Gobierno sobre políticas relacionadas con la conservación, conocimiento y utilización sostenible de la biodiversidad, así como coordinar las actividades de planificación estratégica en este campo (enabling activities).

En vista de que la Comisión no cuenta con personería jurídica que le permita administrar fondos, y dada su trayectoria y el apoyo dado a la Comisión, el Gobierno ha decidido que sea el Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad la organización responsable de administrar los fondos de este proyecto.

En síntesis el proyecto pretende lograr la formulación de una estrategia y plan de acción, incluyendo la recopilación e inventario de información existente, la actualización del Estudio Nacional de Biodiversidad, la identificación de opciones a nivel nacional y sub-regional y la elaboración del primer Informe Nacional.

*Rafael Asenjo*  
*Coordinador Ejecutivo*  
*FNUD-GEF*  
*Saludos*

REPUBLICA DE COSTA RICA

Ministerio de Recursos Naturales

Ecología y Minas

Departamento de Asesoría

Esperamos poder contar con el apoyo del GEF para llevar a cabo las actividades mencionadas, ya que las mismas son consideradas como de altísima prioridad para la Administración del Presidente Figueres, por ser el manejo inteligente de nuestra biodiversidad una acción fundamental en nuestros planes para alcanzar el desarrollo sostenible.

Lo saluda muy atentamente,

  
René Castro Salazar  
MINISTRO



RC/mcv

Cc: José María Figueres, Presidente de la República

Hans D. Kurz, Representante Residente PNUD

Rodrigo Gómez L., Coordinador Comisión Nacional de Biodiversidad