

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Enabling Activity Proposal in Biodiversity

Country	Republic of Croatia
Project Title	Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and National Report
GEF Focal Area	Biological Diversity
Country Eligibility	Convention ratified April 1996
GEF Financing	US\$102,000.
Government Contribution	In-kind
GEF Implementing Agency	World Bank
National Executing Agency	Directorate for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage
GEF Operational Focal Point	State Directorate for Environmental Protection
CBD Focal Point	Directorate for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage
Estimated Starting Date	March 1997
Project Duration	13 months

Background

The Republic of Croatia is both a central European and a Mediterranean country, covering 56,538 km² and a population of 4.8 million people. The country is divided into coastal, lowland, and montane bioregions. The coastal region covers about 31% of Croatian territory, with an indented coastline that spans nearly 6,000 km. This area supports the richest biological and landscape diversity in Croatia. The 1,200 islands and reefs that occur in coastal Croatia are rich in endemic fauna. Croatia's territorial waters in the Adriatic sea cover 33,200 km² and provide habitat for monk seals, dolphins and other endangered marine species.

Croatia has a high diversity of forest ecosystems which belong to three broad forest types: *i*) lowland forests on alluvial deposits along the rivers of central and eastern Croatia at elevations from 80 m to 200m; *ii*) mountain forests ranging from 200 m to 1,200 m, from Slovenia in the east to the border of Slavonia in the west and to the southern reaches of the Dinaric Mountains, which support unique forest communities on karstic soils; and *iii*) coastal forests on the coasts and in the islands that are evenly distributed among Mediterranean and sub-Mediterranean belts. These forests have been heavily impacted by centuries of human use and the recent war.

The native flora of Croatia consists about 3,600 species (up to 4,500 taxa including subspecies, varieties, and forms), 312 of them endemic to Croatia. The recent Red List of Croatian flora and fauna contains 124 plant species classified as endangered, vulnerable, and rare, nearly all of them herbaceous and woody shrub species. There are 28 mammals species in the same rarity categories, many of which occur in forest habitats. Under the updated Law on Nature Conservation of 1994, the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage (DPCNH) is responsible for preparation of action plans for the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species. There is need for extending formal protection provided under the Croatian Red List to include fish species, over 20 of which are considered threatened or endangered, such as the endemic frog *Rana latastei*, marine turtles and the gecko *Hemidactylus turcicus*.

The forests of Croatia support abundant wildlife populations, the most conspicuous of which are the red and roe deer, wild boar, lynx, and brown bear. The forest communities of the central Dinaric Mountains of Croatia contain large predator communities of wolf, brown bear, and lynx in natural conditions unique for western Europe. In addition to being a more or less intact European forest

community, the Dinaric ecosystem is important as a colonization source of wolf, lynx, and bear for other countries, either by translocation efforts or, more preferably, by natural dispersal through Slovenia and the Alps. The impact of the recent war on these populations is not fully known, but bear populations in some areas have been reduced by as much as 50%. The uniqueness and importance of the Dinaric large predator community and the uncertain impacts of the recent war warrant recognition as a conservation priority to be addressed by the BSAP.

The Croatian lowlands, with its oak forests, river and marshland biotopes, cover about 54% of the country. Its natural and artificial (carp fishponds) wetlands and alluvial lowland forests are of international importance for migratory waterbirds, nesting colonies of herons and spoonbills, and important populations of various species that are threatened elsewhere in Europe, such as otter, white-tailed eagle, lesser spotted eagle, and the black stork.

The Croatian Adriatic river systems are occupied by 50 native species of freshwater fish, 11 of them endemic. The ichthyofauna of the Croatian Adriatic rivers is considered among the most important of Europe. Many are threatened or endangered, the major threats being habitat loss to hydroelectric plants and water reservoirs and pollution of coastal waters.

In addition to its natural biodiversity, certain breeds of domestic animals found in Croatia such as the Istrian cattle from the mountains of the Istrian peninsula, are genetically unique and adapted to local conditions and are an important component of the nation's biological and cultural diversity.

Project Objectives and Short Description

The principal project objective is to assist with activities for implementing Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity through the completion of a Croatian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The purpose of the BSAP is to identify the native biological diversity, gaps in existing knowledge, conservation, and sustainable use, and realistic goals and actions for closing these gaps.

The BSAP will identify current challenges to the conservation and wise use of Croatian biological resources, including the effectiveness of Croatian laws and institutions. A priority of the BSAP will be to identify land uses, and proposed changes in land uses under the new government, and other threats that are adversely impacting ecosystems and threatening species with extinction. These solutions may include, but are not limited to, the creation of new laws, more effective enforcement of existing laws and regulations, creation of new protected areas, expansion of existing protected areas, better land and habitat management, and broader participation of interested and responsible governmental and non-governmental organizations and citizens in natural resources management. The BSAP process will promote cross-sectoral coordination at the local, regional and national levels.

The management and protection of Croatian biodiversity are mainly the responsibility of the Directorate for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage (DPCNH), the State Directorate for Environment (SDE), and Hrvatske Šume within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The DPCNH is responsible for implementation of the Nature Conservation Law throughout Croatia, one of the principal vehicles for biodiversity and landscape protection in Croatia. The DPCNH is also extending its efforts outside of protected areas and incorporating nature conservation in different economic activities in order to ensure sustainable use of natural resources. The BSAP activities will provide an important opportunity for the continuation of these efforts.

The State Directorate for Environmental Protection implements the Law on the Protection of Environment, which mandates monitoring of environmental pollutants and regulations on the preparation of Environmental Impact Analyses (EIAs) for projects with potentially adverse environmental impacts. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) implements the Laws on Forests, Agricultural Land, Hunting, and Freshwater Fisheries. Within the MAF, Hrvatske Sume is responsible for management of forests, including flora and fauna, on state lands outside of protected areas. The State Directorate for Waters implements the Law on Waters. The 20 district authorities are adequately organized, but they lack the capacity to address substantive problems of biodiversity protection.

The BSAP will be the result of consultations between the steering committee, thematic working groups and all stakeholders. The steering committee, comprised of representatives of the DPCNH, MAF, SDE, Academy of Sciences, and NGOs, will direct working groups that will identify the options and prepare the strategies and actions. The DPSNH and SDE will identify the members of the Steering Committee and working groups based on the following criteria: *i*) governmental representation. The BSAP will be an official government policy and action plan document that identifies responsibilities of the various departments and ministries (forestry, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, agriculture, tourism, and finance) for its implementation. Each of these departments and ministries will be asked to participate in the Steering Committee and/or relevant working groups; *ii*) non-governmental organization representation. There are a number of NGOs active in Croatian biodiversity and sustainable development issues. At least one national NGO will be represented on the Steering Committee, and in each thematic working group; and *iii*) technical expertise. Experts in biodiversity, forestry, agriculture, hydrology, and other technical fields will be included in the appropriate thematic working groups.

The stocktaking exercises will build on the Croatian scientific and resource management literature, unpublished data, sector studies underway or approved by the Government, documentation from the DPCNH and other sources. The working groups will be organized around the themes of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, environmental protection and education, and protected areas, and will include government staff, representatives of the private sector, and NGOs such as the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, Green Action, and Our Beautiful Homeland.

The DPSNH and SDE will identify the members of the Steering Committee and working groups based on the following criteria: *i*) governmental representation. The BSAP will be an official government policy and action plan document that identifies responsibilities among the various departments and ministries (forestry, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, agriculture, tourism, and finance) that will be responsible for its implementation. *ii*) non-governmental organization representation. There are a number of NGOs active in Croatian biodiversity issues. At least one national NGO will be represented on the Steering Committee, and in each thematic working group; and *iii*) technical expertise. Experts in biodiversity, forestry, agriculture, hydrology, and other technical fields will be included in the appropriate thematic working groups.

In addition to numerous consultations and meetings undertaken by the steering committee, working groups, and other project participants, two workshops are planned. The first will be held on the identification and analysis of conservation options. The conservation options workshop will be conducted over 2 days early in the project, and will be run by an international biodiversity expert that is familiar with Croatian conservation issues and challenges. The second, a National Workshop, will be held to present the draft BSAP to all interested groups and individuals. Copies of the draft BSAP will be disseminated at least several weeks prior to the National Workshop. The public, Croatian NGOs, government agencies, and the project participants will be invited for this 1-day workshop that presents the BSAP product, describes the

process, and seeks comments and recommendations on the BSAP and its implementation. The final BSAP will specifically address the comments and suggestions raised in the National Workshop. Prior to and after the National Workshop, a public awareness campaign will use newspaper and television media to inform the public about the goals and objectives of the BSAP project, raise awareness of Croatian biodiversity and value of conserving it, and report the results and conclusions of the BSAP.

The DPCNH possesses the institutional strength to guide the BSAP process. The international consultant will provide focused training to the steering committee and working groups, especially in regards to developing country-specific strategies for conservation, sustainable use, and benefit sharing.

Time Plan and Sequencing

The BSAP process will span 13 months, starting with a planning and consultative process involving national consultants and an international consultant. The stocktaking phase will require up to 4 months to compile a large amount of unpublished literature on Croatian biodiversity into an existing conditions summary. A steering committee and working groups will be established, following with the preparation of the working plan and TOR for consultants. These activities will overlap with initiation of the analysis and assessment of options, followed by preparation of the draft BSAP.

A preliminary schedule for completion of the various tasks is included below. The sequence of project activities is consistent with the National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines on Early Experiences Around the World (WRI/UNEP/IUCN 1995), as well as the Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities (GEF 1996). The schedule is consistent with the need for submission of the first national report on implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity by January 1, 1998.

Coverage Without Duplication

No efforts that duplicate the BSAP are being pursued in Croatia. The BSAP will form a source for the biodiversity component in the future NEAP, now being planned by the State Directorate for Environmental Protection. The BSAP will be based on existing capacity and make use of existing information to the maximum extent possible. There are two activities underway in Croatia that complement the proposed BSAP activity:

- i)* The State Directorate for Environment (SDE) is preparing a State of the Environment report that will include a summary of biodiversity conservation issues and efforts. This report will contain stocktaking and priority-setting efforts that will be incorporated into the BSAP; and
- ii)* the Ministry of Health is preparing the National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP), which focuses on air quality, drinking water quality, disposal of waste waters, health security of food articles, and the environmental impacts of the recent war. Information relevant to the objectives of the BSAP activity will be incorporated through participation of the Ministry of Health in the BSAP process.

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Establish steering committee and working groups	X												
Prepare work plan	X												
Finalize TORs for national consultants and international consultant	X												
Review of stocktaking materials, preparation of stocktaking chapters, assess gaps		X	X	X	X								
Conduct analysis of assessment of options, including discussions with stakeholders in 1 workshop			X	X	X								
Prepare draft BSAP						X	X	X					
Convene National Workshop to present BSAP									X				
Prepare final reports										X	X		
Public awareness campaign			X						X			X	X
Prepare National Report to CoP										X			

Best Practices

The Croatian BSAP is designed in accordance with the guidelines for National Biodiversity Planning prepared by WRI, UNEP, and IUCN. The project will comply with all best practices (including those outlined in the Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity) and based on lessons learned from GEF projects in other countries. The Croatian BSAP, particularly its goals, objectives, and actions, will be developed by Croatians, will represent national priorities, and be consistent with the Croatian biological, geographic and historical setting. The participation and consultation of different stakeholders will occur primarily through the consultations of the steering committee and working groups, as well as through the National Workshop and public awareness efforts. Special attention will be paid to address consistency with the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy.

The BSAP will be integrated with other development and reconstruction programs being implemented after the recent war. The BSAP will identify the mechanisms for achieving sectoral and cross-sectoral objectives, and ensure that consistent principles of sustainable use are incorporated into the agriculture, forestry, hunting and fisheries, and physical planning sectors. The BSAP will address trans-boundary

issues, as mechanisms of information dissemination such as the clearing house, and prioritized investment actions. The BSAP will be submitted to the Government of Croatia and its Parliament for approval.

Institutional Framework and Project Implementation

The DPCNH will be responsible for preparation of the BSAP and National Report, in cooperation with the SDE and Hrvatske Sume. The NGOs and other public participants will be given the opportunity during the BSAP process to discuss all aspects of biodiversity conservation with the departments responsible for land and water management. During the National Workshop, the responsibilities of the various departments regarding biodiversity conservation will be reviewed and discussed in order to educate the public about divisions, responsibilities and politics of land management in Croatia, and to provide input to the departments on the concerns of the public and the need for unified policies and practices.

Cost-Effectiveness

The Croatia BSAP will be prepared in an accelerated schedule, and make maximum use of existing information. National consultants will assist the DPCNH in all aspects of the BSAP process and product. The proposed budget is consistent with cost effective budgets that have been approved for BSAP activities in the eastern European region.

Deviations from Criteria and Norms

The proposal does not deviate from the *Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity*.

Consistency of Approach and Procedures

This is the first GEF-financed biodiversity activity proposed for Croatia. The approach and procedures of the BSAP will be consistent with other biodiversity activities underway in Croatia, as well as the *Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity*.

Project Financing

	Product	Process	Total
<i>Stocktaking and Inventory</i>	17,000		17,000
national consultants	15,000		15,000
documentation	2,000		2,000
<i>Identification of options</i>	7,000	16,000	23,000
national consultants	5,000	5,000	10,000
international consultant	2,000	3,000	5,000
1 workshop		5,000	5,000
travel, misc.		3,000	3,000
<i>Strategy and Action Plan</i>	13,000	41,000	54,000
national consultants	12,000	15,000	27,000
international consultant	1,000	3,000	4,000
1 national workshop		7,000	7,000
dissemination and public awareness		6,000	6,000
translation and publication		10,000	10,000
<i>First National Report</i>	8,000	0	8,000
preparation, translation, publication	7,000		7,000
promotion, misc.	1,000		1,000
Total	45,000	57,000	102,000

Annex: Activity Matrix, Croatia Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and National Report

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				1
cross-sectoral issues	X				1
policy and regulatory framework	X				1,2
institutional and human capacity	X				1
analysis of root causes of biodiversity loss	X				1
technologies for conservation and sustainable use	X				1
activities with adverse impacts	X				1,3
existing measures and programs	X				1
preliminary statement of objectives	X				1,4
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	X	X	X	5,6
strategies for sustainable use	X	X	X	X	5,6
strategies for benefit sharing	X	X	X	X	5,6
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i>					
national strategy	X	X	X	X	
national action plan	X	X	X	X	
<i>Planning and Preparation of first National Report</i>					
first national report	X			X	

Activity Matrix comments

- 1 The Directorate for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage (DPCNH) will contract experts from governmental institutions or NGOs to prepare materials on biological and landscape diversity in Croatia. As there are very few published adequate data, this stocktaking is expected to involve a number of Croatian specialists. Representatives from relevant ministries will be engaged to help with cross-sectoral issues and technologies for conservation and sustainable use.
- 2 The BSAP will identify gaps and insufficiencies of the Croatian system and capacity for biodiversity-related policies. The actions and implementation schedule will identify how these gaps and insufficiencies will be remedied. The role that public involvement will play in development of the policy and regulatory framework will be addressed, but is not expected to be formalized during the project.
- 3 Activities with adverse impacts will be enumerated and measures and programs to mitigate these will be described. These issues are to be included in the workshops, which will serve as the platform for consensus building among the public and governmental departments.
- 4 The external consultant and internal consultants will assist the departments and public in preparing the preliminary statement of objectives. The DPCNH possesses the institutional strength to guide this process, with focused support and training from an international consultant, especially in regards to the strategies for conservation, sustainable use, and benefit sharing.
- 5 Preparation of the BSAP is important now because the DPCNH is trying to improve the management and protection of biological and landscape diversity within and outside protected areas. The Enabling Activity is needed to define the strategies for conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing, and to improve cooperation among the government departments with environmental management responsibilities such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the State Directorate of Environment. An international expert will be contracted to assist the Croatian team with developing these strategies.
- 6 NGOs and the public will be given the opportunity during the BSAP process to discuss all aspects of biodiversity conservation with the departments responsible for land and water management.

**REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**STATE DIRECTORATE FOR
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Zagreb, 24 January, 1997

Mr. Ken NEWCOMBE
Chief, ENVGC
World Bank
Washington DC
USA
(by fax & mail)

Subject: Support to the project proposal "Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and National Report"

Dear Mr. Newcombe,

As newly independent state, Croatia was among 154 nations which signed Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at Rio meeting in 1992, thus confirming its strong commitment to protect, conserve and enhance global biodiversity. Afterwards, the Convention was ratified by Croatian Parliament, and on 5th January 1997, Croatia became a Party to the CBD. Croatia also adopted Bio-European Biodiversity and Landscape Strategy as regional echo of the CBD.

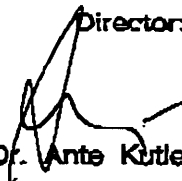
Nowadays, the international cooperation in the field of conservation of biodiversity is enhanced day by day. During a World Bank mission to Croatia in 1996, representatives of the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage of Ministry of Culture, responsible for nature conservation and coordination of implementation of CBD, have been holding discussions with Mr Francois Vencelius and Ms Emilia Battaglini (EC2AU) on the opportunity to develop a biodiversity strategy for Croatia consistent with the requirements of the CBD. According to these discussions, a project proposal was prepared with the request for GEF/World Bank support for enabling activities in the biodiversity area.

Croatia is and will always be strongly interested in cooperation towards the protection and sustainable use of Earth's natural resources. In that sense we are taking this opportunity to express our vast interest in activities concerned with protection, conservation and enhancement of nature in Croatia. Therefore, this State Directorate as National Focal Point for GEF attaches great importance to the results coming from the "Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and National Report" project. This project is considered as one of priority issues and has our full support.

Please, sir, accept assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Director:



Dr. Ante Kutle

cc:

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