

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL**

Country: Cuba

Project Title: National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and First National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Country Eligibility: Ratified the CBD on 8 March 1994

GEF Financing: US\$ 206,280

Government Contribution: In kind and personnel

Estimated Total Budget: US\$ 206,280

GEF Implementing Agency: UNEP

National Executing Agency: Instituto de Ecologia y Sistemática, Agencia de Medio Ambiente

GEF Operational Focal Point: Dirección de Colaboración Internacional, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)

CBD Focal Point: Centro Nacional de Biodiversidad (CeNBio) [National Biodiversity Centre]

Estimated Starting Date: November 1996

Project Duration: 14 months

I. Background/Context:

The archipelago of Cuba is situated in the north-eastern part of the Caribbean Sea between North and South America and comprises the island of Cuba, the island of Juventud and more than 1,200 other small islands and cayos making up a total land area of nearly 111,000 km². The population of Cuba is 11 million and over 80% of the land is state owned. Nearly two thirds of available land is used for agro-pastoral purposes (principally pasture, sugar cane, rice, tobacco and citrus fruits) and more than half of the non-agricultural land is forested (three quarters of this in natural woodland).

Cuba has a large diversity in its biota with a level of endemism estimated at 42 % for some animal species. For example, out of the 612 species of vertebrates described in the country, 15 mammals, 91 reptiles, 43 amphibians 23 fishes and 22 birds are endemic. Around 6500 species of vascular plants exist in Cuba. 10 % of animals and 2% of vascular plants in Cuba are considered to be on the verge of extinction. The biodiversity in Cuba is on the decline in the different regions due to the loss of natural habitat to agriculture, pasture, industrialization and urbanization. The affected areas include coastal vegetation, evergreen forest and semi-deciduous forest.

There have been various studies on the plants and animals of Cuba for several decades since 1930 and the number of institutions involved in biodiversity has been increasing since 1959. A National Plan of Action for Protected Areas was prepared in 1980 by the National Centre for Protected Areas.

Seventy percent of Cuba's forests and woodlands are protected as national parks, reserves, recreation centres, wildlife reserves, or under soil conservation and coastal protection schemes, etc. The remaining 30% are commercial plantation forests. All of Cuba's forest/woodlands have been inventoried and are under sustainable management plans except for the coastal mangroves (17.7%) for which no integrated management plans yet exists. (although a Mangrove Commission was set up in 1984 to this end). Current levels of deforestation are well within the maximum permitted under the management plans but are now increasing largely as a result of the need to provide alternative sources of energy since the recent decline in the economic situation. The management plan of the Institute of Forestry Investigations set up under the auspices of FAO some 26 years ago, is also now out of date and requires substantial modification.

Coastal waters, important for the fishing industry, extend for some 68,800 km² and include estuaries, coral reefs, mangroves and ocean waters. The Cuban fishing fleet has been down-sized since 1990 by some 30-40%. Shellfish are the principal catch (23% - lobster being the most important economically).

Since the beginning of the decade Cuba has been undergoing a process of economic adjustment, both as a result of the collapse of socialism, the breakup of the former USSR and the renewal of the USA's economic blockade - all of which have had enormous impact on the Cuban economy.

Around 1.3 million people live within 1 km of the coast and have both a direct and indirect impact on coastal biodiversity through pollution of both fresh and sea water, atmosphere, and soils; by deforestation and removal of other vegetative cover which leads to soil erosion and flooding. The state of the natural environment around human settlements has worsened since the beginning of the 1990s in direct relation to the increase in poverty and decrease in available funds as a result of the economic situation. The population remains largely ignorant of environmental issues, except in the worst situations, and in many cases contributes unwittingly to environmental degradation. There is a need to raise public awareness and involvement in management of the environment and to reinforce local government structures so that they are able to assimilate knowledge and evaluate biodiversity and find solutions to environmental problems.

The increasing human population and declining economy of the country are causing an increase in poverty among the people and are indirect causes of biodiversity loss. The main direct causes of biodiversity loss are deforestation for fuel wood, construction etc by poverty stricken people and the destruction of forests for livestock grazing and crop production.

Since signing the Convention on Biological Diversity the Republic of Cuba has created various institutions to strengthen the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity, including the Ministry of Sciences, Technology and Environment, the National Group for Biodiversity to coordinate and conduct the corresponding national actions, the National Biodiversity Centre, the National Centre for Protected Areas and the National Centre for Biological Security.

In addition, under the National Strategy of Environment and Development, Cuba is currently implementing programmes related to forest development, mountain development, tourism, biotechnology and the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. These programmes have already resulted in many activities including the establishment of tree nurseries to reinforce reforestation initiatives, the introduction of management plans for existing forests, the establishment of a national system for protected areas, the development of the Turquino Plan for the Integrated Management of Mountain Systems, the development of the tourism industry in harmony with conservation policy, the production of disease-resistant plants, the production of new biofertilizers and the biological control of pests.

II Project Objectives and Short Description:

In order to co-ordinate the activities of all these institutions which relate to biodiversity, the Government of Cuba has expressed the desire to prepare a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), as an integrative and committing framework to guide the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within the overall context of national development. The project will be the culmination of the process started with the biodiversity country study as well as a response to Decisions II/7 and II/17 adopted by the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention.

Drawing on existing knowledge and information, and through an open process of consultation and participatory planning, the NBSAP will review the current status of and pressures on biodiversity, and identify options and priority actions to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the components of biological diversity. It will also introduce biodiversity concerns into other resource management sectors such as forestry, fisheries and agriculture. It will complement and support other national strategies and plans such as the National Plan of Action for Protected Areas and the National Forestry Management Plans. The NBSAP will be integrated in the National Strategy of Environment and Development.

The proposed NBSAP will be prepared using a multi-disciplinary, integrated and participatory approach, involving relevant government institutions and other public and private organizations including NGOs and local communities (refer to the Institutional Framework section). A multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral **Task Force** comprising of representatives of Government Ministries, other relevant scientific organizations, NGOs, the private sector and local communities will be formed to oversee the implementation of this

project ensuring that public outreach is integrated in the process. The Task Force will designate a core group (Planning Team) consisting of representatives of key ministries, NGOs and other relevant organizations, which will, at the onset of the project, receive orientation on the objectives of the project and methodologies for its implementation, and lead its execution. Public outreach will include consultations with local communities which will be in the form of local seminars and regional workshops in each region corresponding to the major ecosystems in the country. A first national workshop will be organized by the Planning Team to present the views gathered in the regional consultations. It will draw together representatives from a wide range of stakeholders. The regional plans of action will be consolidated into a single National Strategy and Plan of Action which will be presented and discussed at a second national workshop before its finalization by the Planning Team. Stakeholder participation, particularly participation by local communities throughout the whole process will be maximised by the holding of regional seminars, national workshops and by the circulation of the NBSAP to all stakeholders' representatives before finalization.

The preparation of the first national report to the CBD will enable Cuba to meet the obligations under Article 26 of the Convention as stipulated in Decision II/17 adopted by the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP 2). It will be prepared in the time frame set out in Decision II/17.

III Operational Criteria:

i) Coverage without duplication:

The NBSAP will make maximum use of existing capacity and information including that from the UNEP/GEF assisted Biodiversity Country Study and the UNDP/GEF "Protecting Biodiversity and Establishing Sustainable Development in the Sabana-Camaguey Region" project. Other biodiversity related work has also been ongoing in Cuba since the 1930s. All the information and data from both national & international efforts in biodiversity conservation will be fully utilized so that there is no duplication.

ii) Appropriate overall sequencing of activities:

The project will be conducted over a period of 14 months as reflected in the schedule shown in the following table.

	Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Formation of Task Force & Planning Team	x													
2	Orientation of Planning Team & Consultants in BD Analysis & Planning		x												
3	Review of Existing Information, Preparation of Regional seminars			x											
4	Initiation of Regional Seminars to analyze and indentify options				x	x	x	x							
5	First National Workshop							x							
6	Drafting of NBSAP							x	x	x					
7	Circulation of NBSAP for Comments										x	x			
8	Second National Workshop												x		
9	Finalization of NBSAP												x	x	
10	Printing & Publication of NBSAP														x
11	Preparation of First National Report to the COP*							x	x						

* - Because of the deadline of 30 June 1997 stipulated in Decision II/7, an interim report will be submitted by that date

iii) Best practice

The methodology for the implementation of this project will be based on the following guiding documents: 1) "Guidelines for Biodiversity Planning "(WRI/UNEP/IUCN 1995), 2) Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity (GEF Secretariat) and 3) A Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity (IUCN, 1994). The lessons learned from the UNEP Biodiversity Country Study in Cuba will be fully utilized. The First National Report to the CBD will be based on the information contained in the country study and the progress achieved in preparing the NBSAP. This report will be done in the time frame stipulated in Decision II/17 of COP 2.

IV Institutional Framework:

The project will be coordinated and implemented by the Centro Nacional de Biodiversidad (CeNBio), a department of the Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática [Institute of Ecology and Systematics] that is part of the Environment Agency (AMA) under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Sciences, Technology and Environment (CITMA). CITMA is the main arm of the government in charge of directing, executing and controlling the environmental policy of Cuba. The project will follow a similar institutional framework as was used in the preparation of the National Biodiversity Study (*Project GEF/UNEP GF/610592-76*). Besides the government institutions already mentioned, CeNBio will consult with experts from the Institute of Oceanology; the National Center for Protected Areas; the Scientific Divisions of Botany, Zoology and Ecology of the Institute of Ecology and Systematics; the Centre for Environmental Negotiation and Inspection; the Eastern Biodiversity Centre; the Science and Technology Agency; the Centre of Biological Security; the Ministry of Planning and Economy; the Institute of Physical Planning; the National Office of Statistics; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Directorate of Science and Technology; the Ministry of the Fishing Industry; National Universities; the Ministry of Public Health; the Ministry of the Sugar Industry and NGOs and any other relevant bodies.

In order to ensure that the NBSAP is incorporated into national development planning and to raise public awareness, key stakeholders including decision-makers, representatives of the community and public and representatives of decentralised agencies, particularly those from the interior of the country, will be invited to participate in its development and comment prior to its finalization.

V Project Financing**Project Budget (US\$) Cuba NBSAP**

Activity	Product	Process	Total
1. Assessment of Existing Information	0	0	0
2. Identification and analysis of options	35,000	63,000	98,000
- Orientation workshop for Planning Team		8,000	
- 10 Regional workshops to integrate public participation (travel, per diem, facilities) @ \$3000 each		30,000	
- First National workshop (travel, per diem, facilities)		25,000	
- International Consultants	15,000		
- National Consultants	10,000		
- Reports	7,000		
- Miscellaneous	3,000		
3. Preparation of NBSAP	30,000	51,000	81,000
- National Consultants	5,000	5,000	
- International Consultant	12,000	3,000	
- 3 Task Force Consultations (travel, per diem, facilities)		12,000	
- Dissemination of drafts		6,000	
- Second National Workshop		25,000	
- Printing & Publication of NBSAP report	10,000		
- Miscellaneous	3,000		
4. Preparation of First National Report	12,000		12,000
- Editor	5,000		
- Printing, Publication & Translation	6,000		
- Miscellaneous	1,000		
5. Co-ordination & Management Costs		15,280	15,280
Total	77,000	129,280	206,280

VI Deviations from norms and criteria: None

TABLE A: Dimensions of Enabling Activities (Standard Activity Matrix), Cuba NBSAP

Enabling Activity	Out-put	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments (To see footnotes)
		Institutional Strengthening	Training		
Stocktaking of existing information	UNBP,UNDP NCPA,FAO	NCPA, FAO			1 2 3 4
Identification and Analysis of Options to meet the Objectives of the CBD					1 2 3 4 5 6
- strategies for conservation	1,2,3,4, 5,6,x	2,3,4,x	x	x	
- strategies for sustainable use	1,2,3,4, 5,6,x	x	x	x	
- strategies for benefit sharing	x	x	x	x	
Planning and Preparation of NBSAP					
- national strategy	x	x	x	x	
- national action plan	x	x	x	x	
Preparation of the First National Report					
- First National Report	x		x	x	

x - Activities to be accomplished under this project

1. Cuba has already completed a UNEP/GEF funded Biodiversity Country Study

UNDP/GEF has funded the "Protecting Biodiversity and Establishing Sustainable Development in the Sabana-Camaguey Region" project. Under this project, there has been a biological/ecological inventory and a GIS system has been installed and is functional. Recommendations made for ecotourism development and Master Plan 60% finalized.

The project enhances current surveys of biodiversity by providing equipment and resources and assisting with rapid ecological inventories. Includes facilitating creation of a geographic information systems (GIS), ongoing monitoring and analysis, and translation of data into procedures and guidelines for eco-tourism development. The project will produce a Master plan for Conservation and the development of the project area

3. National Plan of Action for Protected Areas prepared by the National Centre for Protected Areas (NCPA)
4. National Forestry Management Plans prepared with assistance from FAO
5. National Strategy of Environment & Development
6. Studies conducted by the National Centre for Biological Security



Dirección de Colaboración Internacional.

CITMA
MINISTERIO
DE CIENCIA
TECNOLOGIA
Y MEDIO
AMBIENTE

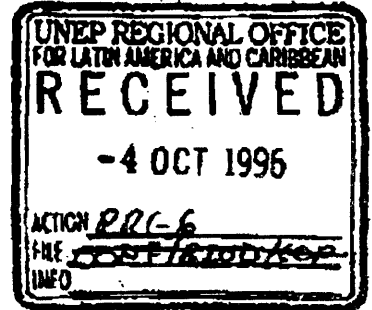
Ciudad de la Habana, 2 de octubre de 1996
"Año del Centenario de la Unión en Combate de Antonio Maceo".

DCU 1299

ATT/ Sr. Mohamed El Ashry
GEF - Washington, USA.

Subject: Endorsement Letter

031618



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PRO/BIOD

Dear Sir:

This is to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Cuba fully endorses the project proposal "Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Country Report to the COP".

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) has full confidence that this project will create sufficient capacity within CITMA and other relevant ministries to initiate a process of biodiversity planning and to fulfill the reporting requirements under the CBD with respect to the first national report.

Sincerely,

Lic. Humberto *[Signature]*
GEF Operational Field Agent



Se envia fax
No. 615 del
4/X/96

CC/ Sr. Rafael Rodriguez Capotillo
UNEP-ROLAC - Mexico.