

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL IN BIODIVERSITY

Country	Dominican Republic
Project Title	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, First National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Clearing House Mechanism
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility	Ratification 25 Nov. 1996
GEF Financing Request	US\$230,000
Government Contribution	In-kind
GEF Implementing Agency	World Bank
National Executing Agency	ONAPLAN/Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia
GEF Operational Focal Point	ONAPLAN/Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia
CBD Focal Point	ONAPLAN/Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia
Estimated Starting Date	April, 1998
Project Duration	12 months

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Dominican Republic shares with Haiti (border area, 275 km) the island of Hispaniola, and occupies two-thirds of its extension for a total surface area of 48,730 km² (total land area, 48,380 km²). The terrain is characterized by rugged highlands and mountains (56% of total area) interspersed with fertile valleys, which divide the country into the northern, the central, and the southwestern regions. There are seven major drainage basins, being the most important that of the River Yaque del Norte. The coastline extends for 1,288 km.

Hispaniola supports the largest human population of any single West Indian island-State, with ≥15 million. Current population estimates for Dominican Republic are 7.9 million (64.6% urban, 35.4% rural), with an annual rate of increase of 1.9% (1990-1996) and population density of 161.7 p/km². The country is stressed by socioeconomic and environmental problems generally associated with small, undeveloped, and densely populated States, a fact aggravated by insular isolation. As a result, pressures from both rural and urban populations upon ecologically fragile ecosystems such as mountain areas and coastal zones are on the rise. Destruction and fragmentation of forest habitats is the major environmental problem threatening and reducing biological diversity, and other vital natural resources such as water and soils. Deforestation rates are estimated in 1.2%. Other significant problems include impact of development activities (e.g. construction for free zones, tourism, large infrastructure), air, water and soil pollution (e.g. industrial, mining, agrochemicals), degradation of coastal marine ecosystems (reefs, mangroves, and seagrasses), and over-exploitation of fisheries resources.

Evaluating and confronting these problems have been difficult due to the lack of reliable information, sound environmental regulations, and inter-institutional coordination among responsible agencies. Furthermore, the lack of enough material and human resources, reduced institutional capacities, and lack of political support for an environmental agenda in the recent past, have hampered generating adequate assessments of biodiversity and needed institutional and legal environmental policy reforms. As a result, not enough information has been available to allow the development of national strategies and effective planning for the conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity in the country, in the context of sustainable

development.

A reflection of its ecological diversity, the Dominican Republic contains the highest elevation in the insular Caribbean (3,087 meters at Pico Duarte), as well as the lowest topographic feature below sea level (-40 m at Lake Enriquillo, the largest hypersaline lake in the West Indies with 265 km²). In the region, Dominican Republic is only second to Cuba in the amount of biological diversity known until now (using species richness as an index of diversity), as predicted by species-area relationships. Species density, however, is seemingly higher in the Dominican Republic. Despite this potential, current knowledge about the native biodiversity is widely recognized as deficient. About 5,600 species of vascular plants are estimated to occur (of which 1,800 species or 36% are thought to be endemic). Algae, fungi, lichens, and mosses are poorly documented, if not largely unknown. Although far from adequate, only for terrestrial vertebrates are available some reasonable approximations of species number (mammals, 33; birds, 268; reptiles and amphibians, 402; freshwater fishes, 70). Current knowledge for invertebrates is virtually incipient, and marine biodiversity is largely unstudied. Extinction rates are high for mammals and increasing, with increasing knowledge, for birds and reptiles.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The objective of the proposed project is to assist the Government of the Dominican Republic (GDR) in the preparation of its **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)**, in compliance with Articles 6 and 8 of the CBD. The proposed project will identify key strategies and priority issues and actions for the conservation and management of biodiversity in the context of sustainable development. As such, the project will enhance the capacity of the government and other stakeholders in various fields related to biodiversity for the effective design and preparation of the national strategy and action plan. Furthermore, the project will provide the resources for the preparation of the country's **First National Report** to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the CBD, and for the establishment of the **Clearing House Mechanism (CHM)**.

Project activities to achieve these objectives would include:

- gathering baseline information on the components of biological diversity and their conservation status as a benchmark to monitor the effectiveness of national strategies and action plans
- compilation of all available information on species distribution and abundance in terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems;
- identification of existing gaps in current biodiversity inventory and knowledge;
- identification of priority issues specially related to those components of biological diversity under threat;
- identify activities that are likely to have adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
- identify economic benefits resulting from the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
- identify appropriate measures, such as agricultural practices, training and institutional capacity building, to achieve effective conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
- build the monitoring, assessment, planning and management capabilities of national institutions, particularly in the setting of priorities and implementation of action plans;

- provide a feedback mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of national biodiversity actions plans

The **National Planning Office (ONAPLAN)** will be the Government executing agency for the Project. Responsible for coordination, management and administration of the project will be ONAPLAN's GEF Biodiversity Project Coordination Office, an already established technical and administrative coordinating unit on biodiversity. The Dominican Republic' GEF National Focal Point (at ONAPLAN) and the project Coordination will establish a **National Biodiversity Conservation Task Force (NBCTF)** for the overall development, supervision and guidance of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP), in compliance with GEF Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities in Biodiversity and ongoing local initiatives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

The **National Biodiversity Conservation Task Force** will be headed by ONAPLAN, and composed of representatives of key environmental organizations with expertise in the field, and national technical consultants who will plan activities and prepare the draft BSAP. Under the NBC and the Coordination, the team will review existing information relative to biodiversity conservation (see Standard Activity Matrix). The process of developing the Biodiversity Strategy and the National Report will be consultative and participatory, and stakeholders will take part in 3 consultative regional workshops, whose participants will include representatives from Government institutions, universities, NGOs and other organizations of the private sector. These workshops will focus on identifying and analyzing threats, constraints, challenges, and opportunities for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including areas previously neglected, such as coastal and marine resources, arid and semi-arid lands, and agroforestry biodiversity. Issues regarding policy, legislation, institutional framework, public participation and awareness, and economic incentives for conservation will be addressed. The results of the regional workshops will provide a forum for engaging policy makers in the development of the strategy. A national workshop will be organized to revise the document and ensure stakeholder participation in producing the final draft. Participants will include key representatives from the government and civil society (e.g. environmental agencies, universities, NGOs, research institutions). Representatives from the neighbor Republic of Haiti will also be invited as observers and resource persons. Key issues and options on significant biodiversity-related work carried out in will be identified and synthesized. The final draft of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will be submitted by ONAPLAN/STP to the COP.

The project will include a public awareness campaign to disseminate information related to the CBD and implementation of the BSAP in the country. In the initial stages of the strategy preparation process, **National Biodiversity Conservation Task Force** will receive training from an international consultant on biodiversity analysis and planning, and review existing information on the status and threats to biodiversity. The First National Report will be prepared for the Fifth Conference of Parties to the CBD in month #10, and will describe the development of the biodiversity protection process and other measures taken by the Dominican Republic to comply implementation with the CBD.

The project will also continue technical collaboration with representatives from the Government of Haiti on the preparation of biodiversity protection strategies. Representatives from the Dominican and Haitian Governments met on several occasions in 1997 to draft a general outline for a bi-national biodiversity protection strategy and collaborate on the preparation of their respective Enabling Activity proposals. This low-cost technical collaboration will continue

during the life of this project. Haitian representatives will be invited as observers and resource persons to BSAP preparation workshops and it is expected that Dominican representatives will participate as observers and resource persons in the Haitian workshops. In addition, several separate workshops will be held with representatives of the Haitian Government to ensure that each country's BSAP is complementary, and to identify means to promote bi-national mechanisms for biodiversity protection. The project will seek to institutionalize this collaboration to ensure sustained bi-national coordination on biodiversity protection.

COVERAGE WITHOUT DUPLICATION

The development of a comprehensive National Biodiversity Strategy has been identified as a priority by a number of sources (e.g. Informe de la Consulta Nacional Rio+5 de la República Dominicana 1997; Programa Nacional Capacidad 21; Anteproyecto de Ley sobre Protección Ambiental y Calidad de Vida 1994). Issues relevant to the BSAP were partially addressed by previous initiatives (e.g. biodiversity assessment by DVS/SEA 1990; biodiversity strategy by Grupo Jaragua et al. 1994, jointly with numerous organizations), although these were focused after the Global Biodiversity Strategy (1992) and not towards the objectives and broader, comprehensive and cross sectoral scope of the CBD.

A number of related initiatives are currently underway or in the pipeline. Among the initiatives taken into account in the design of this proposal are both Government and NGO's environmental activities and programs [e.g. GEF-UNDP/ONAPLAN Biodiversity Project; Plan Nacional Quisqueya Verde; Capacity 21 Program; National Environmental Policy Reform Project (World Bank); Human Sustainable Development Projects (Provincial Development Councils); SGP/GEF Small Grants Program (UNDP); Programa Ambiental (Helvetas); and other ongoing/planned activities supported by international donors (e.g. GTZ, USAID-TNC, Lome Convention, AECI, BID) focusing biodiversity protection and management].

BEST PRACTICES

The project will build on the methods and approaches described in the *National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences (WRI/UNEP/IUCN, 1995)* and will comply with the best practices outlined in the *Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity (GEF 1996)*. Several aspects of the policy and planning environment are worth mentioning, as they provide a reference context for preparation of the Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan in a way which reflects many elements of 'best practice'.

Ownership and integration in the policy process. The Dominican Government has placed a high priority on bringing about broad-based, improved environmental management policies. This is reflected by the large number and diversity of ongoing initiatives currently under implementation and planning, by both government and non-government organization. The Strategy will be integrated into the broader development policy framework, and will identify mechanisms and activities to address sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. The strategy will be discussed and adopted by the Inter-institutional Environmental Coordination mechanism headed by ONAPLAN. Sectoral priorities which will be given emphasis in the biodiversity strategy will reflect the country's most important biodiversity resources in the terrestrial, marine, forest, wildlife, and crop biodiversity sectors. National expertise will be used as much as possible in the development of the strategy. External technical assistance will only be provided in specific areas, where national expertise is insufficient.

Stakeholders consultation and participation. Social, economic, and environmental concerns related to the conservation of biodiversity will be addressed through the participation and consultation of a variety

of stakeholders in a number of workshops. Consensus building amongst the stakeholder groups will be an important principle of the strategy process.

Regional and trans-boundary linkages and issues. Cross boundary issues, in particular reference with Haiti, will be identified and discussed during the strategy development process.

Investment planning. The Biodiversity Strategy will identify a number of specific initiatives for which investment is required, and should lay out the basis for preparation of subsequent proposals to GEF and to other multilateral and bilateral donors for the financing of these initiatives.

TIME (WORK) PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

The Strategy and Action Plan will be produced over a period of 12 months, following the schedule outlined below. The project will largely adopt the guidance and sequence of activities recommended in *Guidelines for Country Studies on Biological Diversity* (UNEP); *National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experience Around the World* (WRI/UNEP/IUCN, 1995), as well as in *Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity* (GEF, 1996).

Calendar

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NBCTF and Technical Planning Team Selection	X	X										
Preparation of work plan and in-country training	X	X										
Review stocktaking materials	X	X	X									
Compile existing information Dominican Republic/Hispaniola		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Exchange with Haiti for binational coordination		X				X						
Identification and analysis of options & priorities						X	X	X	X			
Regional workshops and discussions					X					X		
Production of issues and option paper based on regional workshops				X		X		X		X		
Capacity-building and operation of CHM										X	X	X
Drafting of BS and AP							X	X	X	X	X	
National workshop to discuss draft of BS & AP										X		
Finalize Strategy and Action Plan										X	X	X
Submission of First National Report to COP												X

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND PRODUCT IMPLEMENTATION

The National Planning Office (ONAPLAN) of the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (STP) will be the implementing agency for the project and will hire a Coordinator to supervise the project. Implementation will be guided by the National Biodiversity Conservation Task Force (NBCTF), which will consist of representatives from government, research institutions, NGOs, private sector, and the Project Coordination. With assistance from national and international consultants, a smaller, core **Technical Coordination Team** will be responsible for the project's actual implementation. Seven consultants will be contracted for the project, including an independent international consultant, a lead national consultant and five thematic national consultants. The international consultant will facilitate execution of key steps in the

process, especially the initial stages, pre-workshop organization, and revision of the final draft before the national workshop, and will be in charge of training the **National Biodiversity Conservation Task Force (NBCTF)** and **Technical Coordination Team** in biodiversity analysis and strategic planning.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Cost-effectiveness will be achieved in three ways: First, the project will be implemented by ONAPLAN's GEF Project Coordination Unit, which is already administering several GEF projects in different regions of the Dominican Republic, thus building on the existing technical and administrative capacity and reducing costs. Second, project execution will coincide with the implementation of the new, World Bank-funded, National Environmental Policy Reform Project (NEPRP). Although not oriented to biodiversity protection, the participatory processes employed by the NEPRP will facilitate national debate on biodiversity protection. The NEPRP will bear some of the costs of the public information campaigns and participatory debate, enabling the project to focus its resources on biodiversity inventory and strategy formulation. And, third, the project will strategically use the limited technical national and international assistance. Substantial technical expertise on biodiversity exists within the Caribbean, and the project will make special efforts to exploit that expertise.

PROJECT FINANCING

Activity	Product	Process	Total
Stocktaking and Assessment of Existing Information	30,000		30,000
Inventories and existing information assessment	5,000		5,000
International consultants	5,000		5,000
National consultants	15,000		15,000
Training: Information management	5,000		5,000
Identification and Analysis of Options	23,000	68,000	91,000
Training for Technical Coordination Team		4,000	4,000
Capacity building (monitoring system)	3,000	10,000	13,000
Local & regional workshops	4,000	21,000	25,000
International consultants	5,000	6,000	11,000
National consultants	5,000	17,000	22,000
Materials and circulation of draft reports	6,000		6,000
Travel and per diem		10,000	10,000
Preparation of Strategy and Action Plan	25,000	49,000	74,000
International consultant	4,000	2,000	6,000
National consultants	5,000	7,000	12,000
National workshops		20,000	20,000
BSAP preparation and distribution	2,000	10,000	12,000
Publication and translation	14,000		14,000
Coordination with Haiti		10,000	10,000
First National Report	8,000	4,000	12,000
Preparation & draft for COP	2,000		2,000
Publication and translation	4,000	4,000	8,000
Distribution and promotion	2,000		2,000
Clearing House Mechanism (CHM)		10,000	10,000
Hardware, software, and modem		5,500	5,500
Recurrent access costs & web site storage to Internet service provider		2,500	2,500
Consultant fees: set-up and training (internet, email, web site develop.)		2,000	2,000
Coordination and Management	6,500	6,500	13,000

TOTAL	92,500	137,500	230,000
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STANDARD ACTIVITY MATRIX

Enabling Activities	Component			Responsible Party
	Planning & Execution	Institutional Strengthening	Training	
Commitment				
Strategic and Assessment				
Biodiversity and biological resources	X	X	X	X
Cross-sectoral issues	X	X		X
Policy and regulatory framework	X	X		X
Institutional and human capacity	X	X	X	X
Analysis of root causes of BD loss	X	X	X	X
Technologies for conservation and sustainable use	X			X
Activities with adverse impacts	X	X		X
Existing measures and programs	X	X		X
Preliminary statement of objectives	X			
Identification of gaps	X	X		X
Needs assessment	X	X	X	X
Identification and analysis of systems of biodiversity conservation				
Conservation strategies (in & ex-situ)	X	X	X	X
Strategies for sustainable use	X	X	X	X
Strategies for benefit sharing	X	X	X	X
Planning and Preparation of Plans				
National strategy	X			X
National Action Plan	X	X		X
Engagement of the First National Report				
First National Report	X	X		



República Dominicana

Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia
Oficina Nacional de Planificación

Santo Domingo, D. N.

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Señor
Mohamed T. El-Ashry
Chief Executive Officer and Chairman-GEF.
Room 66-005
The World Bank
Washington, D. C.
Fax (202) 522-3240

Asunto :

Puntos Focales, Mecanismos de Facilitación
(Clearing House Mechanism) para
República Dominicana.

Por medio de la presente queremos comunicarle a usted la designación de los
Puntos Focales del Mecanismo de Facilitación para República Dominicana, estos son:

Lic. Zoila González, MSc.
Departamento de Planificación Ambiental
Oficina Nacional de Planificación (ONAPLAN)
Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia
Tel. (809) 221-5140-205
Fax (809) 221-8627
E. Mail onaplan@codetel.net.do

Dr. José Alberto Ottenwalder, Ph. D.
Unidad Coordinadora Proyectos
Biodiversidad y Estrategia Ambiental
ONAPLAN/BM/PNUD/GEF
Apdo. Postal 1424
Tel. (809) 534-1134
Fax (809) 530-5094
Internet: [http:// www. Gef. Biodiversidad.do](http://www.Gef.Biodiversidad.do)
Email : biodiversidad@Codetel.net.do

Muy Atentamente,

Rosaly
Lic. Rosaly Cruz
Directora Nacional

