

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Country:	Ecuador
Project Title:	National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and First National Report to the CBD
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	Convention Ratified April 23rd 1993
GEF Financing:	US\$ 289,300
Government Contribution	in kind
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Ecuadorian Institute for Forestry, Natural Areas and Wildlife (INEFAN) with administrative and technical support from a specialised NGO selected by the Ecuadorian Committee for the Defence of Nature and the Environment (CEDENMA)
GEF Operational Focal Point:	Ministry of the Environment (MMA)
CBD Focal Point:	INEFAN
Estimated Starting Date:	June, 1998
Project Duration:	14 months

1. Background:

The Republic of Ecuador lies between the latitudes of 1°N and 5°S, and has an area of 272,045 km² falling into four clearly distinct geographical regions. These are the coastal plains, covering a little more than 25% of the country; the central highlands, consisting of the Western and Eastern ranges of the Andes and enclosing a narrow central plateau; the eastern region covering over half the country and the Galapagos Islands consisting of 121 islands, islets and rocks with a total land area of 7,882 km² and marine area of 38,000km² within the interior boundaries of the archipelago.

The country's equatorial location and widely varied landscape, affords a range of climates that supports a remarkable biodiversity and places it amongst the world's top megadiversity countries despite its relatively small size. It houses an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 species of vascular plants of which approximately 20% are endemic, and an extremely diverse fauna including 402 amphibian, 380 reptile, 1,559 bird and 324 mammal species (1993 figures). Genetic diversity is equally varied with vast phylogenetic wealth, making Ecuador, and in particularly its Andean region, one of the world's major centres for plant domestication with at least 45 species of regional or global importance.

In addition to this overall megadiversity, Ecuador houses three biodiversity hotspots widely acknowledged to be amongst the world's top priorities for conservation in view of the exceptionally high concentrations of flora and fauna species and endemism. These "hotspots" are the humid and very humid rainforests of the coastal region, the forests covering the flanks of the Andean ranges and the tropical rainforests of the Amazon Basin in the north eastern region of

the country. The Galapagos islands are equally renowned for their importance in terms of evolutionary processes and unique species composition.

With a population of approximately 11.5 million, and per capita income of US\$ 1,600 (1996 figures), Ecuador has traditionally based its economy on agriculture with bananas being the chief crop for exportation. Since the seventies there has been a substantial increase in petroleum exploitation and petroleum and oil products now head the list of exports representing 35.1% of total, followed by bananas (17.5%) and shrimps (14.5%). Forestry is also important and Ecuador is one of the world's chief sources of balsa wood.

Despite the relative shift from agricultural dominance, the economy still remains largely based on natural resource exploitation and the country's exceptional biodiversity is increasingly being threatened by over-exploitation. For example, 96 bird and 39 mammal species are considered to be endangered. Deforestation, resultant from the construction of access roads to petroleum fields, laying of oil pipelines, and industrial timber and agricultural activities, is the single most direct threat to the country's biodiversity. This has resulted in increasing habitat fragmentation and species loss in forest areas and sets up a chain reaction of associated effects such as expansion of the agricultural frontier, soil erosion, sedimentation and drying of water bodies pressurising still further biodiversity. Underlying these direct impacts are a series of factors that include the high population increase rates (2.5/year) making Ecuador the most densely populated country per unit area in South America; lack of knowledge of the potential value of biodiversity and subsequent failure to include this in developmental planning processes; and the unequal distribution of the ownership and management of biological resources and the benefits derived from their use.

The Government of Ecuador (GoE) has taken several steps to address this situation. Actions to conserve biodiversity started as early as the colonial times with efforts to protect the quinine forests in the Province of Loja. In 1934 the Galapagos Islands were formally declared as a protected area and in 1971 the first law of National Parks and Reserves placed other zones of the country under protection. A conservation of wild areas strategy in 1976 laid the foundations for an initial system of protected areas. This was further expanded in 1981 when the Forestry law, established the "National Protected Areas Heritage System" which today consists of 24 areas covering 4.6 million hectares or 17% of the national territory.

Despite these early initiatives, progress in biodiversity conservation and management has been hindered by an extensive yet diffuse regulatory system and poorly co-ordinated institutional framework with responsibilities divided between a variety of institutions. Forest related biodiversity and natural areas protection falls under the mandate of the Ecuadorian Institute for Forestry, Natural Areas and Wildlife-INEFAN. The legal basis of INEFAN rests on the 1981 Forestry and Conservation of Natural Areas and Wildlife Law that provides guidelines for ecosystem protection, forestry management and fishing and hunting limits. This law does not explicitly include biodiversity concerns nor does it clearly address sustainable exploitation of resources or sufficiently separate forestry issues from conservation. Furthermore, there are clear contradictions with other existing laws that govern the exploration and exploitation of

hydrocarbons and agrarian development. With developmental policies oriented towards exploitation of natural resources, the tendency has been to interpret these contradictions in the favour of more economically important sectors.

In recognition of these contradictions and institutional overlaps, in 1994, the GoE called on the National Council for Development (CONADE) to define a set of environmental policies for the country and established an Environment Advisory Committee (CAAM) to co-ordinate them at the national level. The loss of biodiversity and genetic resources were tagged as priority in these "Basic Environment Policies" and included in the subsequent Ecuadorian Environment Plan formulated in 1994. A National Working Group on Biodiversity was also set-up as part of the CAAM and this defined guidelines for a Biodiversity Strategy. However, in the absence of sufficient baseline information these guidelines remained very generic. In the same year a GEF/World Bank funded project "Master Plan for the Protection of Biodiversity in Ecuador Through the Strengthening of the National System of Protected Areas" started execution and has undertaken important activities to increase the capacity of INEFAN for biodiversity conservation and management.

Biodiversity conservation have recently been given higher relevance in the Constitution with the 1996 reform including a section that explicitly calls for laws to regulate the preservation of the environment, conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity and integrity of genetic heritage, prevention of contamination, sustainable exploitation of natural resources and the establishment of a National Protected Areas System. Projects for several related laws are under discussion in Congress including a one-article Biological Diversity Law that reaffirms the strategic value of biodiversity as part of national heritage; and a new Forestry, Natural Protected Areas and Natural Forest Biodiversity Law that establishes the concept of biological diversity and separates forestry resource management from protected area management, acknowledges property-rights and community participation in management of these areas, permits the creation of private protected areas and regulates biotechnology-related biodiversity use.

Whilst this progress is important, there is still a need to integrate biodiversity concerns into sectoral planning especially in those sectors that impact, or depend directly on, biological resources, for example agriculture, energy, industry and transport. The GoE wishes to develop a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to enhance the incorporation of biodiversity issues into national development and sector planning, and to provide a comprehensive framework that will orient and co-ordinate related on-going and future initiatives in biodiversity conservation and facilitate the implementation of the CBD in the country.

2. Project Objectives and Brief Summary

The main objective of this proposal is the formulation of an Ecuadorian Strategy and Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity within the context of national economic development and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD). Further objectives are to develop the First National Report in accordance with Article 26 of the CBD and the Decision II/7 of the Second Conference of Parties to the CBD and to strengthen the capacity of INEFAN to effectively participate in the Clearing House Mechanism .

The strategy will be developed through a series of initiatives designed to allow the participation of a wide range of stakeholders and to cover the country's megadiversity and multi-cultural characteristics making full use of existing information and on-going projects. The process will be overseen by a multi-sectoral National Biodiversity Commission (NBC) presently being established. Technical guidance will be provided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and daily administration and execution of the project activities will be the responsibility of an Executive Unit (EU) to be set up for the project (see section 4). At the start of the project the NBC, TAC and EU will take part in a biodiversity-planning instruction session to become more familiar with recommended methodologies for biodiversity planning and to facilitate the detailing of the operational plan and consultations to be held throughout the process.

Strategy preparation will start with the collation of existing information on a range of biodiversity related issues (see Activity Matrix annex 1). This will be done on a regional basis corresponding to the four geographical division of the country (coast, central highlands, eastern region and Galapagos islands). The recently completed National Biodiversity Assessment will provide much of the required information on the biological resources with the exception of fish, amphibian, reptiles, and terrestrial and marine invertebrates that were not included in the study. Other issues, however, will require more extensive efforts to collect and systematise the substantial, but highly dispersed information, and organise it into a summary providing information on a regional basis.

The stocktaking exercise will provide the basis for the identification and analysis of options to meet the objectives of the CBD in the country. This will take place in two steps. The first step will be to establish working groups in seven thematic areas that have been selected according to priorities outlined in the Ecuadorian Environment Plan and that correspond with the major issues of the CBD as well as other international agreements such as the Cartagena Agreement. These thematic areas are: Conservation *in situ* (including agricultural related diversity and not only protected areas); Conservation *ex situ* (germoplasm banks, collections etc.); processes and activities that provoke the loss of biodiversity; traditional practices and knowledge; sustainable use of biological resources and distribution of benefits; biotechnology and genetic resources; research, education, training and dissemination.

Each working group will be comprised of between 5 and 15 specialists from academia, government and NGOs. Using the regionally collated results from the stocktaking and the relevant articles from the CBD the working groups will analyse options for meeting commitments of the CBD in the respective area. This will be undertaken in five meetings for each thematic area; one to determine procedures, distribute information and delegate specific tasks; three working session to analyse options; and one final meeting to discuss a final report for the group. The final report for each group will be prepared by the group co-ordinator and will have a general section summarising the groups findings on options from a national perspective and specific sections highlighting regional potentials that could provide distinct options as well as specific problems that need to be overcome in each zone.

These reports will be collated into one background document by the EU with the assistance of a consultant hired specifically for this purpose. It will have a general section that integrates the seven thematic areas and addresses options from a national perspective and a regional sections

that focus on specificities of each geographical zone. This background document will form the basis for the second step in the definition of options that will take place through workshops to be held in each of the four regions.

Each regional workshop is expected to count with between 40 and 50 participants from central and local government, sectoral authorities, private sector, NGOs, indigenous organisations and academia. The generic section of the background document and the respective regional section will be discussed in each workshop. Recommendations will be made including the definition of priorities and options for the specific region, the definition of roles, responsibilities, resources and time frames for their execution, forms and mechanisms for implementation. Facilitators, hired to run the workshops will take part in a planning session with the TAC and EU prior to the event to ensure that recommendations follow a common format and provide direct inputs.

Findings from the workshop will be collated into a first draft of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) by the Executive Unit with guidance from the Technical Advisory Committee. The draft NBSAP will be discussed in a National Workshop to be held in Quito with approximately 80-90 participants from national authorities (including the NBC and the TAS), representatives nominated in the regional workshops, representatives of NGOs, private sector, academia, civil society and indigenous organisations.

Recommendations from the national workshop will be integrated into a second draft of the NBSAP that will be reviewed in a round of high-level political consultations with decision-makers to define precise mechanisms for incorporation into planning processes and programmes and to designate responsibilities for implementation. At this stage details of the Action Plan will be finalised including possible funding sources that were identified in the regional workshops but that require more explicit bilateral consultations.

Following final adjustments resultant from this round of consultations, the NBSAP will be submitted to the NBC for definitive approval. It will be printed and distributed to all the participants in the process and to relevant ministries for subsequent execution or respective actions. A summary of the NBSAP will be drafted in easily accessible, less technical language and distribution to a wider public to increase awareness of the country's CBD related commitments and enhance support for strategy implementation.

The first report to the CBD will be developed by the EU with the assistance of a national consultant. The GoE will first submit an interim report by the end of July 1998, and later develop the full report on completion of the NBSAP.

In parallel with the NBSAP formulation, activities will be undertaken through this project to strengthen Ecuador's participation in the Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). The CHM will be located in the INEFAN Biodiversity Reference Centre presently being established through the GEF/World Bank project. This centre is already equipped with hardware and is storing information on biological resources derived from the National Biodiversity Assessment. Direct assistance is required to strengthen the capacity of the centre's INEFAN-allocated staff for participation in the Clearing House both in terms of instruction on the basic concepts of the CHM, and in its operational mechanisms (internet and e-mail training, storing of national CHM

web site on server etc.). Recurrent costs of access to the internet service provider will also be required during the initial pilot phase of the CHM.

3. Operational Criteria:

Coverage without Duplication: The project will complement current and recently completed initiatives that address environmental concerns and biodiversity. These are illustrated in the Standard Activity Matrix in annex 1 and include the 1995 National Biodiversity Strategy Guidelines which provide broad generic recommendations that will be better defined and assessed with information produced from the project proposed herein and with data from the 1996 National Biodiversity Assessment. This assessment will provide much of the necessary input for the stocktaking of biological resources with the exception of fish and reptiles that were not fully covered by that evaluation. Direct input can also be expected from the GEF/World Bank funded project to strengthen biodiversity conservation through better developing the Ecuadorian Protected Areas system. This project is expected to contribute with specific information for the Conservation *in situ* thematic group as well as providing some support for participation in the Clearing House Mechanism by establishing a Reference Centre for Biodiversity and providing hardware for this purpose. The IDB funded programme in Environmental Planning will also provide complementary action through its support to CONADE for incorporating environmental concerns in development planning and the World Bank funded Environmental Management Project, PATRA, will strengthen institutional capacities for environmental management in hydrocarbon, industrial and urban sectors. However, as neither of these latter projects specifically address biodiversity no duplication is expected.

Appropriate Sequencing of Activities:

<i>Month</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>
Establish TAC and EU, hold biodiversity planning instruction session, draft ToR for working groups	X	X												
Stocktaking of information on a regional basis		X	X											
Working group meetings and drafting of reports				X	X	X								
Collate WG reports into one background document							X							
Facilitator-co-ordination planning session							X							
Identification of options (4 regional workshops)								X	X					
Formulation of draft NBSAP										X				
National Workshop to review draft NBSAP											X			
Formulation of second draft NBSAP												X		
High level consultations to finalise NBSAP												X		
Drafting of Final NBSAP and approval process													X	
Publication and dissemination of NBSAP														X
Drafting and dissemination of NBSAP summary														X
Drafting of interim and full National Report to CBD	X	X										X		
Clearing House Mechanism Instruction				X										

Best Practice: The preparation of the strategy will follow the recommendations established in the "Guidelines for Country Studies in Biodiversity" (UNEP 1993); the "Guide to the CBD" (IUCN 1994) and the "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences" (WRI, IUCN and UNEP 1995). It will be centred on the Basic Environmental Policies established in 1994 and detailed in the Environment Plan and will be aligned with other relevant development policies. The multi-sectoral character of the National Biodiversity Commission will facilitate the participation of sectors that have not been traditionally involved with biodiversity planning in Ecuador but that directly impact on, or benefit from, the country's biological resources. It will also facilitate the implementation of the strategy once approved and the incorporation of biodiversity concerns into sectoral planning. There will be ample participation of a range of stakeholders from national and local government, NGOs, academia and civil society.

Deviations from Cost Norms: In view of the megadiversity of Ecuador and the costs involved in the consultations in the Galapagos islands and including representatives from this region in the national workshop, there are no deviations from the cost norms as stipulated in the operational criteria.

4. Institutional Framework

Until recently, the Ecuadorian Institute for Forestry, Natural Areas and Wildlife, INEFAN has held the main responsibility for biodiversity conservation in the country. This institution was created in 1992 and charged with defining actions, policies, planning and control of natural areas and state wildlife, conservation and rational exploration of existing forestry and natural resources and promotion and co-ordination of scientific investigation. Agricultural biodiversity has been addressed as a separate issue through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

In 1996 the Ministry of the Environment was established as the maximum environmental authority in the country and charged with the co-ordination, execution and supervision of policies, programmes and projects of different entities in the environmental area. Although a state centralised authority, this Ministry will sign agreements with provincial, municipal, public and private organisations to enhance a decentralised and participatory management. INEFAN will continue acting within the environmental policies of government under the supervision of this Ministry and maintains responsibility, at the operational level, for protected area management and biodiversity conservation of natural areas.

INEFAN is also the focal point for the implementation of the CBD in the country. To facilitate this process a National Biodiversity Commission NBC, is presently being established. This will be responsible for overseeing the formulation and implementation of strategies and plans that enable the country to fulfil commitments in relation to the CBD. The NBC will oversee and co-ordinate the project proposed herein. It will be presided by the MMA and will have representatives from both private and public sectors including one representative from each of the following institutions: National Council for Development (CONADE), Ministry of Industry, Trade, Integration and Fisheries (MICIP); Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG); Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Tourism; INEFAN; National Agriculture and Livestock Research Institute (INIAP); National Council of Universities and Polytechnic Schools

(CONUEP); Ecuadorian Foundation for Science and Technology (FUNDACYT); Ecuadorian Committee for the Defence of Nature and the Environment (CEDENMA) and the Ecuadorian Confederation of Indigenous People (CONAIE).

The NBC will approve the operational plan for project implementation and the final products (the NBS, Action Plan and First Report to the CBD).

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will provide technical guidance for project implementation. This committee will meet at least every four months to review reports on project implementation prepared by the Executive Unit. It will also meet periodically as necessary with working groups and technical personal of the institutions involved in the NBSAP formulation. The TAC will be presided by INEFAN and consist of a *technical* staff member from each of the following institutions; CONADE, INIAP, National Fisheries Institute (INP), CONAIE and one NGO specialised in biodiversity and nominated by CEDENMA.

At the operational and administrative level, an executive unit (EU) composed of two biodiversity specialists, (one staff member of INEFAN and one from the NGO selected to form part of the TAC), will take responsibility for daily implementation of the project. Project resources will be channelled through this NGO which will provide both administrative and technical support for execution of project activities. Working groups co-ordinators will be hired through this project as well as national consultants for specific activities such as collation of information in stocktaking

and drafting of the First National Report. Terms of Reference for these contractions will be developed by the EU and reviewed by the TAC. The EU will also be responsible for formulating the first, second and final versions of the NBSAP with support from the TAC as necessary.

5. Budget

	Product	Process	Total
Stocktaking and Inventory Existing Information	14,000		14,000
1. National Consultants (6 MM)	12,000		
2. Documentation and miscellaneous.	2,000		
Identification and Analysis of Options	42,000	101,000	143,000
1. Biodiversity Planning Instruction session		5,000	
2. Co-ordinators (24.5 MM {7x3.5 MM})	42,000	7,000	
3. Working group meetings (5x7)		28,000	
4. Regional Workshops (4) including travel, per diems etc.		55,000	
5. Facilitators-co-ordination workshop		1,000	
6. Regional and national workshop facilitators (3 MM)		3,000	
7. Misc. (documentation etc.)	1,000	2,000	
Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	36,000	51,000	87,000
1. First draft NBSAP (consultants, preparation, dissemination)	16,000	4,000	
2. National Meeting to review draft NBSAP (90 participants)		30,000	
3. Second draft NBSAP (4 MM)	8,000		
4. Consultations on draft NBSAP (political-level)		8,000	
5. Preparation of Final NBSAP (editing, printing, distribution)	10,000	4,000	
6. Preparation and dissemination of executive summary	2,000	5,000	
First National Report	6,000	12,000	18,000
1. Preparation, translation, dissemination of interim report	3,000	2,000	
2. Preparation, translation, publication and dissemination of full report	3,000	10,000	
Clearing House Mechanism*	5,900		5,900
Co-ordination and Management	15,400	6,000	21,400
TOTAL	119,300	170,000	289,300

*Budget for Option A (Direct Assistance) for CHM component of proposal

Items	Estimated Cost Norm (US\$)	Actual Proposed (US\$)
Hardware	0-4,000	0
Software	0-1,000	750
Modem	0-500	0
Recurrent Access Costs to Internet Service Provider	0-3,800	1,900
Technician Set-up Fees	500-700	250
Internet and E-mail training	1,000-4,000	3,000
Total	1,500-14,000	5,900

ANNEX 1: STANDARD ACTIVITY MATRIX

ENABLING ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	CAPACITY BUILDING		PUBLIC PARTICIP.	COMMENTS
		Execution	Institutional St.		
Commitment					
1. Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information					
1.1. Biodiversity and biological resources	NBA/NBSG/X	GEF-WB			1
1.2. Cross-sectoral Issues	NBW/X				2
1.3. Policy and Regulatory Framework	NBD				3
1.4. Institutional and Human Capacity	GEF-WB/X				4
1.5. Analysis of root causes of BD loss	VAR/X				5
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	NBSG/EEP				6
1.10. Identification of Gaps	NBSG				8
1.11. Assessment of Existing Needs	X				
2. Identification and Analysis of options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD					
2.1. Strategies for Conservation in situ, ex situ	NPAS/GEF-WB/DBSF		X	X	9,10
2.2. Strategies for Sustainable Use	X		X	X	9,10
2.3. Strategies for Benefit Sharing	X		X	X	9,10
3. Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan					
3.1. National Strategy	X			X	10
3.2. National Action Plan	X			X	10
4. Preparation of First National Report to CBD					
4.1. First National Report	X				
5. Clearing House Mechanism					
		X	X		9

X = Activity Undertaken Within Enabling Activities Proposal;

NBA= National Biodiversity Assessment funded by the Netherlands Embassy, co-ordinated by IUCN SUR and the Ecuadorian Foundation for Ecological Studies (ECOCIENCIA);

NBSG= National Biodiversity Strategy Guidelines produced by the National Working Group on Biodiversity;

GEF-WB= GEF funded project for Biodiversity Protection through strengthened Protected Areas ;

NBW= National Working Group on Biodiversity; NPAS= National Protected Areas Strategies of 1976 and 1987 INEFAN; EEP=Ecuadorian Environmental Plan; DBSF= Biodiversity Strategy in the Forest Sector funded by FAO and the Netherlands Gov.

Footnotes:

1. Considerable information exists on biological resources and has been summarised in the National Biodiversity Assessment. This will provide invaluable data for this aspect of stocktaking, however, some complementary effort will be required to cover fish, amphibian and reptile species, as well as terrestrial and marine invertebrates not included in the assessment.

2. In 1994 an *ad hoc* National Biodiversity Working Group (NBWG) was formed within CAAM and charged with promoting the participation of different sectors in the formulation of policies for biodiversity conservation. This group consisted of 15 participants from public and private organisations. Working on a voluntary basis, the group started an initial analysis of cross-sectoral issues but is no longer meeting regularly. The results of their initial analysis will be up-dated and complemented by this project.
3. Ecuador has a dispersed regulatory framework relating to biodiversity conservation and management. In 1995 a small specialised group held a workshop on Biodiversity and Sustainable Development and made recommendations for a series of constitutional and legislative reforms to facilitate CBD implementation in the country. Some of these recommendations have been incorporated into new laws presently under review in Congress. The recommendations and resulting action will be reviewed in this project and complemented in areas not fully covered.
4. The GEF/World Bank Protected Areas Project has undertaken an analysis of institutional and human capacity for biodiversity management within INEFAN. The project proposed herein will undertake a broader analysis evaluating capacities of both governmental and non governmental institutions on a regional basis.
5. There have been several specific studies that analysis the root causes of biodiversity loss, however, these are dispersed and need to be collated, up-dated and put into a format that will permit evaluation on a regional basis.
6. The Ecuadorian Environment Plan, based on the 1994 Basic Environmental Policies, provides preliminary objectives for biodiversity conservation. These are further supported by the Guidelines for a National Biodiversity Strategy (NBSG) formulated in 1995 by the NBWG that provide broad generic guidelines for initial strategy development.
7. The NBSG outline gaps between the situation of the country in 1995 and the goals defined then for biodiversity conservation. As these gaps were identified on insufficient baseline information they will be reviewed in this project in the light of additional data from the National Biodiversity Assessment and complementary stocktaking to be undertaken herein.
8. The GEF World Bank Protected Areas Project is in the process of up-dating the 1976 and 1989 National Strategies for Protected Areas and designing a Strategy for the Protection and Sustainable Use of Wildlife which will provide important inputs to the Conservation *in situ* strategy. A Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Forest Sector has also been recently formulated as part of a FAO-Holland funded project that is supporting the execution of the Forestry Action Plan in Ecuador. This document was developed by a small group of experts and will provide important elements for the Conservation *in situ* strategy but needs to be discussed and validated by a broader range of stakeholders. The present project will use the working group in this thematic area for defining elements from this document to be included in the background document for discussion at the regional workshops. They will also

cover a wider range of issues involved in conservation *in situ* not included in the protected areas and forest sector strategies or example conservation *in situ* of crop or agricultural related diversity.

9. Institutional strengthening will take place at three levels. The first is through a biodiversity planning instruction session for members of the National Biodiversity Commission, the Technical Advisory Committee, Executing Unit, working-group co-ordinators and project consultants to detail project activities and become more familiar with recommended biodiversity planning methodologies. The second is through specific instruction sessions in internet and e-mail techniques for INEFAN staff allocated to the Clearing House Mechanism Focal Point. The third level refers to indirect capacity building for biodiversity conservation and management in the range of stakeholders that will participate in the regional and national workshops or that have access to the summary of the NBSAP disseminated to a broader public.

10. Four regional workshops will be held to discuss a background document prepared by the Executive Unit on the basis of the working group reports from seven thematic areas. The workshops, to be held in the coast, central highland, eastern region and Galapagos islands with between 40 and 50 representatives from local government, NGOs, private sector and academia, will discuss the background document and make recommendations for options to meet the commitments of the CBS in the respective geographical region. Findings from these workshop will be drafted into a first version of the NBSAP that will be discussed in a National Workshop and recommendations incorporated into a second version of the NBSAP. This will be fine-tuned through a round of high-level consultations and submitted to the NBC for approval. A less technical summary of the NSBAP will be drafted and disseminated to a broader public to enhance support for strategy implementation