

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL**

Country:	Republic of Fiji
Project Title:	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and Report to the COP.
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	CBD Ratification 23 February 1993
GEF Financing:	US\$ 197,925
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Environment (MUDHE)
GEF Operational Focal Point:	MUDHE
CBD Focal Point:	MUDHE
Estimated Start Date:	April 1997
Project Duration:	10 months

Background

1. Fiji is an archipelagic nation consisting of more than 300 islands scattered over 1.3 million square kilometers of the South Pacific Ocean. The 2 large mountainous islands of Viti Levu (where the bulk of the population resides) and Vanua Levu comprise 87% of the total land area. The islands are characterized by diverse ecosystems including significant areas of natural forest. A wide range of coastal and marine ecosystems occur, ranging from extensive areas of mangroves to various coral formations (UNCED Report, 1992).
2. Fiji's vegetation and wildlife are relatively small in number but are of exceptional scientific and genetic interest because of the high proportion of endemic species. The floristic diversity of the forests has not been adequately documented but it is in excess of 100 species per square kilometer. Most of the interior forested areas have been barely exploited while some ecosystems such as the beach forest have virtually disappeared from conversion to agricultural uses. The area of remaining indigenous forest is estimated to be 750,000 ha.

3. Fiji's coasts contain approximately 42,000 hectares of mangrove forests and sustain diverse marine and coastal ecosystems. Coastal zones contain unique marine features such as anchialine pools, marine lakes and caves and landscapes of exceptional beauty.

4. Fiji's small size, young landscape and evolutionary isolation make its natural resources very vulnerable to loss or degradation. It's environment is threatened by a high population to arable land ratio, severe pollution around towns, inadequate environmental administration, land tenure systems which discourage conservation and few effectively managed protected areas. Invasions from exotic species have caused changes in species composition. Presently with the exception of protected areas, habitats have undergone almost total conversion to agricultural use

5. In 1992 a National Report was prepared to the UNCED conference and a State of the Environment report was prepared for the Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. By providing useful background material on environment and resources, these facilitate environment management and decision. In 1993, Fiji prepared a National Environment Strategy (NES) with the assistance of the IUCN and the Asian Development Bank. The strategies of the NES are focused on broad issues of planned development in sectors such as urban planning, pollution, maintaining renewable natural resources and tourism. The broad sectoral strategies and guidelines of the NES currently provide indirect coverage to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Fiji.

Project Objectives and Short Description

6. The objective of this Enabling Activity is to formulate the strategies necessary for the protection and sustainable use of Fiji's biodiversity, as well as prepare a plan for their implementation. The primary output will be a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) as well as a national report to the Conference of the Parties. The BSAP will describe the biodiversity conservation situation in the country, discuss issues, prioritize national and local level actions, define implementation frameworks and identify funding requirements as well as potential sources.

7. The preparation of the BSAP will follow a logical sequence of participatory steps in line with the sequence recommended in the WRI/IUCN/UNEP guidelines. During the first month of the project the Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Environment (MUDHE) will appoint a national coordinator for the project and select a national steering committee comprised of representatives from government agencies and ministries, NGOs¹, the private sector (especially fisheries and tourism) and community groups.

8. The steering committee and national project coordinator will initially establish the workplan and benchmarks for the project following which they will institute a planning team drawing members from research institutes and relevant personnel from environment ministries and NGOs. The planning team will be headed by the national project coordinator

¹ NGO participants will be selected on the basis of a review of the capabilities and expertise of environmental NGOs.

(hired as a consultant) and assisted by a junior national consultant. The planning team will be responsible for planning, management and completion of all project activities. To facilitate this process a regional consultant² will provide familiarization in participatory and strategic planning to the planning team and consultants during the first month of the project.

9. Following the familiarization, the planning team and national consultants will take stock of, and assess existing information on the nations biodiversity and pertinent issues. This information will be summarized and drawn into reports which will provide the basis for discussions at the first 2 national workshops³.

10 The workshops will draw representatives from central government ministries, district government and councils, NGOs, community representatives, regional institutions, potential donors and the private sector. The participants will initially be sensitized to biodiversity, its values, functions and the implications for its loss. The participants will then discuss the reports to prioritize problems and issues for action. The participants will further identify priority geographic biodiversity areas for further in-depth analysis, develop inter-island based strategies and actions and establish modes for future cooperation among all the provincial governments

11. After the 2 workshops the planning team and national consultants will further investigate the issues and options identified during the workshops. As part of this process field consultations will be held with communities at strategic biodiversity locations throughout the island groups. The consultations⁴ will utilize the existing network of district development committees comprised of elected representatives of island communities and involve local stakeholders to identify ground based realities and develop local strategies and actions for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

12. Inputs from the analysis and consultations will be examined with the assistance of the steering committee. Based upon this review national level strategies and actions will be developed and drawn into a draft BSAP. The draft BSAP will be reviewed and discussed at a final national workshop which will draw a small number of participants who will be

² The consultant will be drawn from the South Pacific region, possibly from The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme which has considerable technical expertise and is located in Samoa.

³ Fiji is divided into 14 dispersed provinces, each with their own provincial governments. The regional spheres of influence are centered in Suva (western and central region) and Labasa (northern and eastern regions). The majority of the population in Fiji is concentrated in Suva while most of the protected areas and majority of the biodiversity is in the northern regions. Due to these geo-political arrangements it is therefore advantageous to hold 1 workshop each at Suva and Labasa. Due to the cost of inter-island travel, this arrangement is also more cost effective.

⁴ It is anticipated that upto 6 consultations will be held. Preliminary sites will be identified during the stocktaking and the specific sites will be selected during the 2 national workshops. Some criteria which could be used to select sites include, priority areas for biodiversity conservation; marine and fishing areas, regional decision making centers, and biodiversity areas with existing tourism operations. The consultations will involve key resource users (including private sector), local/state government, NGOs, personnel from natural resource agencies and some members of the relevant district's development committee

selected from the first 2 workshops and the field consultations in a transparent manner, representatives from potential donors organization will also be invited. If necessary, the participants will develop new alternatives but will establish a broad consensus following which, the BSAP will be finalized by the planing team with the assistance of the regional consultant.

13. Upon approval by the steering committee the BSAP will be disseminated widely. During the final month of the project the first national report to the Conference of the parties will be completed by the planning team and project coordinator and submitted to the COP.

Coverage without duplication

14. The BSAP preparation will rely on the existing information in Fiji, no duplicative efforts are known to be underway or proposed. Fiji's NES discusses the state of Fiji's environment, including (1) population and demography; (2) natural resources; (3) land use; (4) forestry (5) fisheries; (6) urban development; (7) water supply; (8) tourism; (9) mining; (10) energy; (11) economic development; (12) waste management; (13) environmental management; (14) protected area management.

15. The NES further presents a strategy and action framework for enlightened environmental development and outlines fifteen projects to this end. Recommendations of the NES include;

- expanding environmental policies and legislation.
- strengthening the DOE.
- protection of Fiji's natural and cultural heritage.
- improvements in land use planning and control of land degradation.

16. The NES, Fiji's national report to the UNCED and the State of the Environment report will provide input into the stocktaking and assessment of this Enabling Activity. The broad guidelines and background material in the NES will facilitate the BSAP's development of strategies for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.

TIME PLAN AND SEQUENCING

Activities will start in April 1997 and last for 10 months.

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Establishment of steering committee, planning team selection of national coordinator and consultants	x									
Familiarization	x									
Stocktaking and assessment of existing information		x	x							
2 national workshops				x						

Analysis and assessment of options, including field consultations, preparation of draft BSAP					X	X	X	X	X		
National workshop to discuss BSAP, finalization of BSAP										X	
Preparation and submission of report to the COP, dissemination of national report and BSAP										X	X

Best practice

17. The methodology for the project will be based on the "Guidelines for Country Study on Biological Diversity" (UNEP, 1993), the "Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity" (IUCN, 1994), and the "Guidelines for Preparing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans" (WRI/IUCN/UNEP). The BSAP will be developed through a participatory process using national expertise. This project will also have the beneficial effect of helping raise national awareness for biodiversity conservation.

Project Financing

	Product	Process	Total (US \$)
<i>Stocktaking and Inventory of Existing Information</i>	7,000		7,000
2 national consultants documentation, misc.	3,000 4,000		
<i>Identification and Analysis of Information</i>	13,500	109,500	123,000
2 national consultants	6,000	15,000	
1 regional consultant	7,500	7,500	
familiarization		10,000	
2 workshops		40,000	
consultations		30,000	
travel, misc.		7,000	
<i>Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan</i>	9,500	37,000	46,500
2 national consultants	6,000	4,000	
regional consultant	3,500	2,000	
national workshop		25,000	
travel, misc.		2,000	
dissemination		4,000	
<i>Preparation of First National Report</i>	3,000	9,000	12,000
national consultant	3,000		
publication/translation		6,000	
dissemination		3,000	
<i>Coordination and Management costs</i>	1,650	7,775	8,125
Total	34,650	163,275	197,925

Explanatory Note to Budget:

The first 2 national workshops have been budgeted as follows; 40 participants for 4 days, DSA and travel per participant has been averaged at \$ 110/day. Materials and hall rental are expected to cost \$ 2,400.

6 Consultations have been budgeted for at an average of \$ 5,000 each. Up to 30 participants will attend each consultation which is expected to 2 days. DSA and travel have been averaged at \$ 75/day. \$ 500 has been budgeted for materials and miscellaneous. The travel costs of the consultants and planning team have been included under 'travel' in the budget.

50 people will attend the final national workshop (probably held in Suva), expected to run for 4 days. DSA and travel has been averaged at 110/participant/day. \$ 3,000 has been budgeted for materials and hall.

Deviations from criteria and norms

This project is in accordance with all the GEF Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities in biodiversity.

Institutional framework and project implementation

18. The Department of Environment (DOE) of the Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Environment (MUDHE) will take the lead in coordinating development of the BSAP. DOE is the main governmental agency responsible for the execution of biodiversity programs as well as overseeing and enforcing measures to conserve and sustainably utilize the biodiversity resources of Fiji. Appropriate cross sectoral government department and ministries will contribute sector specific information and ensure that the BSAP takes into account their objectives also. The DOE will work closely with the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, which has jurisdiction over fishing and living marine resources as well as the Ministries of Tourism, Lands and the National Council for Sustainable Development.

19. A national level steering committee will be formed comprising of representatives from ministries, NGOs, private sector and community groups. The steering committee will review, comment upon and approve initial drafts and the final version of the BSAP. A planning team headed by a national project coordinator will be established. The planning team will be responsible for day to day project activities and responsible for implementing all planning activities, participatory activities such as workshops and consultations, analysis and coordination for the development of the BSAP. Several NGOs will be involved in all the workshops and reviews necessary to develop the BSAP.

Activity Matrix

Enabling Activity Commitment	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
	Planning, Execution	Institutional Strength.	Familiarization		
<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/UNEP				2
- institutional and human capacity					1
- analysis of root causes of BD loss	x				1
- technologies for conservation and sustainable use	x				1
- activities with adverse impacts	x				1
- existing measures and programs	x				1
- preliminary statement of objectives	x				1
- identification of gaps	x				1
- assessment of existing needs	x				1
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i>					
- strategies for conservation	x	x	x	x	3
- strategies for sustainable use	x	x	x	x	3
- strategies for benefit sharing	x	x	x	x	
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i>					
- national strategy	x	x	x	x	
- national action plan	x	x	x	x	
<i>Preparation of First Country Report</i>					
- interim report	x				
- first country report	x			x	

Footnotes to Activity Matrix

1. Although an overall assessment of Fiji's biodiversity resources has never been completed, considerable information is known to exist in disparate studies and policy documents from prior environmental initiatives. The NES will provide most of the information on cross sectoral issues related to biodiversity, information on biological resources and on the root causes of its loss. The information contained in the NES, UNCED report, State of the Environment report and NDP will be reviewed. If relevant, gaps in the information will be identified and additional stocktaking work will be conducted to fill these. The results of the stocktaking will be condensed into reports which will provide the basis of discussion at the workshops.

2. A UNEP/SACEP supported effort provides an overall general legal framework for the establishment and management of protected areas. The outputs of this project will be

reviewed during the stocktaking and if necessary additional information will be obtained from existing sources. Information on the policy and regulatory framework will also be obtained from the proposed Sustainable Development Bill which also provides a broad legal framework for the management of protected areas and encourages reef management.

3. The NES further presents a broad strategy and action framework for improved environmental management (please refer to section on Coverage without Duplication). The strategies embodied in the NES are broad based and provide only indirect coverage to biodiversity conservation. With regard to biodiversity sustainable use and benefit sharing, the strategies of the NES are inadequate.

This project will analyze the strategies recommended in the NES and programs being planned and carried out and develop new strategies for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing through a consensus building and information gathering process. Workshops and field consultations will provide a forum for participation of those who have responsibility for, depend on, live within, and otherwise care for the variety of biodiversity in Fiji: fisheries, farmers, policy makers, resource managers, the private sector and NGOs.