

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL**

Country: The Gambia

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 10 June 1994

GEF Financing: US\$ 243,000

Government Contribution: In kind and personnel

Estimated Total Budget: US\$ 243,000

GEF Implementing Agency: UNEP

National Executing Agency: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR)

GEF Operational Focal Point: National Environment Agency (NEA)

CBD Focal Point: MANR

Estimated Starting Date: September 1996

Project Duration: 12 months

I. Background/Context:

" It is a sobering reflection that in a relatively short period of our history most of our larger wildlife species have disappeared together with much of our original forest cover. The survival of the wildlife still remaining with us and the setting aside of protected natural habitats for them is the concern of all of us. It would be tragic if this priceless heritage, the product of millions of years of evolution, should be further endangered or lost for want of proper concern. This concern is a duty we owe to ourselves, to our great African heritage and to the world. Thus I solemnly declare that my Government pledges its untiring efforts to conserve for now and posterity as wide a spectrum as possible of our remaining fauna and flora" - The Banjul Declaration, 1977 - Sir Dawda Jawara, His Excellency The President of The Gambia.

The above declaration clearly indicates the commitment of the President and the People of The Gambia to the conservation of Biodiversity in The Gambia to the fullest extent possible. The Gambia is a small sub-tropical country in West Africa with an area of 10,689 sq. km., a population of 1.014 million people (1993) and a population growth rate of 4.1%. It consists of a narrow strip of land about 400 km long and 30 km wide, on both sides of the Gambia river, bordered by the Atlantic ocean on the west and surrounded by Senegal on all the other three sides. Gambia is geographically located in the drought-threatened Sahelian scrubland with a sahelian climate, typified by a long dry season (November to June), and a short wet season (July to October).

There exists considerable potential for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in The Gambia. However, insufficient information on the status of biological resources hinders progress towards tapping this great potential. Direct harvesting of plants and animals from their natural habitat (eg forest & wetlands) has not been fully based on their reproductive capacity. Consequently, there is a number of species suffering reduction in population size and some of the species with limited distribution are becoming rare. Of the 67 species of mammals known to have occurred in The Gambia, 13 have become extinct and a similar number threatened with extinction. The rapid alteration of the habitat and increased rate of utilization of natural resources in The Gambia has depleted many species of animals and plants of unknown medicinal and food value while leaving behind no records or documentation of their potentials.

From the point of view of The Gambia, biodiversity in The Gambia is not restricted to the wild flora, fauna and associated ecosystems, but embraces the rich genetic diversity found in the domestic species as well. This includes plant varieties and land races of domestic animals that have been bred and developed over thousands of years by farmers, as well as species that are dependent on the agricultural systems developed and maintained by mankind. An excellent example of this are the Trypanotolerant Ndama and Muturu cattle found in the Gambia which are tolerant of the animal disease known as trypanosomiasis. Thus these cattle (and their germplasm) are now much in demand all over the tsetse infested areas of Africa.

What is presently known is just the tip of the iceberg. There is therefore an urgent need to gather information on, and study life forms in The Gambia to provide the basis for present and future actions in areas relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources as called for in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Concern has been raised about the scale of ecosystem degradation and loss of species and genetic diversity in The Gambia, mainly as a result of human mismanagement. It is equally strongly endorsed at the national level that the primary responsibility for conserving and ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity should be the duty of every Gambian at all levels of society. In this regard it is necessary to include the local communities in the study process as they are the ones directly affected as important stakeholders and custodians. Against this background, the preparation of both the country study and the strategy/action plan would call for wider consultations at the grass roots in order to have more insight into the environmental management issues as perceived by the communities and provide information on the priorities as outlined by the communities themselves. This is based on the notion that it is these very communities that will be responsible for the implementation of strategic actions/plans as they

relate to the biodiversity convention, which must reflect the realities of these communities if they are to have any meaning to the country as a whole. The Gambia is a small country, but due to its long east-west orientation, it is directly in the path of the desertification tendency. Therefore the condition of its lands and the protection and improvement of its vegetation merits more attention than would normally be the case in view of the size of its territory.

II. Project Objectives & Short Description:

Due to the small size of the country and the high population growth rate (4.1%) and high population density (96 per sq. km.), there is enormous population pressure on the remaining natural resources in the country. 85% of the population of The Gambia depends directly on the utilization of biodiversity (e.g. forest and wood products, fishing, shifting agriculture, pastures for livestock) and consequently the population growth phenomenon has had and will continue to have significant implications for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Hence urgent measures are necessary to conserve the remaining biodiversity in the country. The principal objective of the project is therefore to assist the Government of The Gambia (GoTG) to prepare a comprehensive framework that will guide national efforts to conserve and sustainably use biological resources within the overall context of the Gambian Environment Action Plan and the national sustainable development vision.

The Government of The Gambia is committed to the conservation of the remaining biological diversity in the country through as much public participation as possible, as emulated in the "The Banjul Declaration". Public participation will be a very important aspect of this conservation effort. During this exercise, an initial preparatory workshop will be held at the national level with the participation of representatives of all the stakeholders. Following this, two day sensitization and issues identification seminars/workshops will be held in the various zones or districts as appropriate, reflecting the different eco-regions of the Gambia. These seminars will be directed towards all stakeholders including farmers, herders, herbalists, fisherman, educators and other interested groups. The consultations will be gender-sensitive and will be facilitated by the divisional extension staff and some Task Force members. The results of the zonal/district meetings and the strategic action preparation process will serve as inputs for the second national workshop which will consider the draft national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

The preparation of the national report will enable The Gambia to meet the commitments deriving from Decision II/17 adopted by the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP 2). The project would be carried out over a period of 12 months as shown in section III (ii).

III Operational Criteria:

i) Coverage without duplication:

Although a Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP) was formulated with assistance from UNDP/UNSO (1991-1995), it will be the first time that The Gambia will be undertaking an in-depth assessment of its biodiversity. The information of relevance in the GEAP as well as in the FAO assisted Tropical Forests Action Programme (TFAP) and various other

activities (see activity matrix) on biodiversity in the Gambia will be fully utilized for developing the NBSAP with the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Experience gained by neighbouring countries that have prepared biodiversity country studies (The Republic of Guinea and Burkina Faso) will also be made use of. There is therefore no duplication.

ii) Appropriate overall sequencing of activities:

The study approach for the Country Study and the elaboration of the NBSAP will be undertaken as one process, but the final product will be presented as two separate inter-related reports.

The project will run for a period of 12 months as reflected in the schedule in the table below:

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Formation of Task Force	x											
Training of Planning Team and Orientation of Consultants in BD analysis & planning	x											
First National Workshop to Initiate Public Participation & Present the Objectives of the Project		x										
Survey of Existing Information (Country Study)		x	x	x								
Zonal/District Level Consultations, Discussions, Seminars			x	x	x							
Drafting of Reports (Country Study & NBSAP)						x	x					
Circulation of Country Study & NBSAP for Comments								x				
Second National Workshop									x			
Finalization of Country Study & NBSAP										x		
Printing and Publication of Country Study & NBSAP											x	
Preparation of First National Report for CBD*												x

*Because of the deadline of 30 June 1997 stipulated in Decision II/17, an interim report will be submitted by that date.

!!!! Best practice:

The methodology for the implementation of this project will be based on the "Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies" (UNEP 1993) and the "Guidelines for Biodiversity Planning" (WRI/UNEP/UCN 1995) and other relevant experience particularly that deriving from the preparation of the GEAP and the TFAP. The WRI/UNEP/UCN Guidelines will be used for training the project co-ordination team on biodiversity analysis and planning.

IV Institutional Framework:

Implementation of this project will be co-ordinated by the National Environmental Agency (NEA) under the general leadership of the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management of the MANR which will form a multi-disciplinary Task-Force to oversee the process. The Task Force will be made up of a multi-disciplinary team of different professionals, representatives from government, scientific institutions, NGOs, the private sector, communities and government field officers. A core Planning Team of this Task Force consisting of key Ministries and relevant organizations will be set up to co-ordinate the planning of all activities under the project.

The Task Force will conduct zonal and district level meetings to ensure the participation of a wide spectrum of local community representatives. This approach has the advantages of disseminating information about the CBD and its relationships with The Gambian Environment Action Plan (GEAP).

V Project Financing

Project Budget (US\$) The Gambia

Activity	Product	Process	Total
1. Country Study - National Consultants - Documentation (Report)	17,000 14,000 3,000	0	17,000
2. Identification and analysis of options - Training for Planning Team - 5 Zonal / District meetings (travel, per diem, facilities) - 1st National Workshop (travel, per diem, facilities) - International Consultant - National Consultants - Reports - Miscellaneous	20,000 3,000	90,000 9,000 30,000 23,000 12,000 16,000	110,000
3. Preparation of NBSAP - National Consultants - International Consultant - 3 Task Force Consultations (travel, per diem, facilities) - 2nd National Workshop (travel, per diem, facilities) - Dissemination, Public awareness - Printing & Publication - Miscellaneous	29,000 20,000 3,000	59,000 8,000 6,000 12,000 23,000 10,000	88,000
4. Preparation of First National Report - National Consultant - Printing & Publication - Miscellaneous	6000 3000 3000	3,000	9,000
5. Co-ordination & Management (8%)	19,000	0	19,000
Total	91,000	152,000	243,000

VI) Deviations from criteria and norms: None

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

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Building	Institutional Strengthening	Public Participation	Comments (To see footnotes)
Stocktaking of existing information	X	X	X	X	*4
Options to meet the objectives of the CBD	X, *1, *6	X	X	X	X
Planning and Preparation of NBSAP	X	X	X	X	*5
Preparation of the First National Report	X			X	
- First National Report				X	

x - Activity undertaken by this project

*1 Under the UNDP/UNSO project (GAM/NAT/0007), The Gambia was assisted with a grant in the co-ordination of the formulation and implementation of the Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP).

*2 USAID assisted Establishment of National Parks for Biodiversity Conservation through the Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (Feasibility studies only)

*3 GTZ project on forests (since 1981) - Conservation of natural forests, propagation of indigenous trees, utilization of dead trees in saw mills, capacity building and raising public awareness.

- *4 There is insufficient information on the status of biological diversity in The Gambia since no in-depth study was done for the purpose of preparing the GEAP. This will be strengthened by the country study process.
- *5 The NBSAP will be part of The Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP)
- *6 The Food & Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) has assisted the Forestry Department (FD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (MNRE) to carry out the Tropical Forestry Action Programme (TFAP)