

As finally  
Submitted

**Republic of Georgia**  
**Enabling Activity Proposal in Biodiversity**

Country	Republic of Georgia
Project Title	Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and National Report
GEF Focal Area	Biological Diversity
Country Eligibility	Convention ratified June 1994
GEF Financing	US\$120,000
Government contribution	In-kind
GEF Implementing Agency	World Bank
National Executing Agency	Ministry of Environmental Protection
GEF Operational Focal Point	Ministry of Environmental Protection
CBD Focal Point	Ministry of Environmental Protection
Estimated Starting Date	August 1996
Project Duration	14 months

**Background/Context**

Georgia is 70,000 square kilometers in area but contains remarkable biological and landscape diversity. The Black Sea forms the western border of Georgia with the Greater Caucasus along the Russian border to the north, the Lesser Caucasus along the Turkish and Armenian borders to the south, and Azerbaijan to the east. The region is tectonically young and active, and the terrain is remarkably varied and rugged. The following biomes are represented: desert, low elevation steppe, high elevation steppe, humid-subtropical forest, humid-temperate deciduous forests, dry-temperate deciduous forests, spruce-fir forests, subalpine and alpine zones, and permanent snow fields and glaciers. Each of these biomes includes associated communities of insects, reptiles and amphibians, birds, and mammals which can not be found in such close proximity and juxtaposition in any other geographic region. This biodiversity is due to the combination of Georgia's mountainous terrain and the associated orographic effects on climate, and Georgia's unique biogeographic location in relation to Europe and Asia. Four Eurasian biogeographic regions converge in Georgia: Eastern Mediterranean, Northern European-boreal, Irano-Turanian, and Colchian (Tertiary meso-phyllous flora). Georgia is one of two last refuges for the latter relictual plant biome. This setting has contributed to Georgia's unique assemblage of plant and animal communities and the high degree of endemism. The cultural/historical landscape is equally varied and often parallels the geographic patterns of biodiversity.

Georgia is undergoing the difficult transition from being a republic of the former Soviet Union to being an independent nation with a free market economy. While there is strong public support for protection of natural resources and the environment in general, difficult economic circumstances is resulting in severe pressures on natural resources and ultimately biodiversity.

This proposal for preparation of a Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (BSAP) builds on the World Bank's on-going efforts in Georgia, which include a municipal rehabilitation project and coastal zone management (CZM) activities under the Black Sea environment program, including the national report on Black Sea biodiversity and a management plan for the Kolkheti wetlands. Also, the Bank is supporting preparation of a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) and a Forest Sector Strategy, both with strong links to biodiversity conservation. In addition, some stocktaking materials for the BSAP have been prepared by Georgian biologists from the Academy of Sciences working with the World Bank. A UNEP-funded country biodiversity study will provide the stocktaking materials for the BSAP.

### **Project Objectives**

The objectives of the Georgian BSAP are to develop a strategic action plan with Georgian authorship that will serve as a vehicle for future project implementation, funding acquisition, and facilitate sustainable protection and management of biodiversity through the development of cross-sectoral programs. The BSAP should integrate the country's unique biological and cultural landscapes and resources, an approach exemplified in the current WWF National Park Planning program. An additional objective is to raise public awareness of the value of protecting biodiversity, through the national workshop and an advertising campaign. Finally, the first National Report for submission to the CoP will be prepared. Preparation of the BSAP and National Report will help satisfy Georgia's responsibilities under the CBD. Georgia is relatively poor in extractable natural resources with the exception of timber, but the country is rich in scenic beauty, biodiversity, and cultural/historical resources. Georgia was the major resort destination in former Soviet times, and the potential for developing an ecotourism industry is great.

### **Operational Criteria**

#### *Coverage without duplication*

The activity matrix is presented in Annex A. The results of several activities that are now in progress will be incorporated directly into the BSAP. The most important of these is the UNEP-funded country biodiversity study currently being prepared by Georgian biologists. Their report will provide most of the materials for the stocktaking summaries of the BSAP. There are additional reports prepared by Georgians in concert with Bank-initiated biodiversity activities, such as chapters on flora and fauna and a management plan for the Kolkheti wetlands. The WWF national parks planning program, which integrates biodiversity protection and preservation of historical/cultural attributes (including monument, historical landscapes, and ongoing agricultural practices such as seasonal grazing migrations), will be reviewed and summarized in the BSAP. There is no duplication with the on-going NEAP and Forest Sector Strategy studies; the BSAP is expected to provide the biodiversity component of these studies.

*Appropriate overall sequencing of activities*

The general sequence of activities is 1) implementation of a public involvement campaign through workshops to develop the strategies and action plan; 2) finalization of the park planning options and strategies; 3) holding of a national workshop; and 4) preparation of the draft and final BSAP and National Report. The BSAP process will require 14 months. The timetable is given below.

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Prepare workplan in conjunction with on-going UNEP study	X	X												
Finalization of TORs for consultants	X	X												
Establishment of steering committee		X												
Review of stocktaking materials with UNEP		X												
1st workshop, initiation of public participation process			X											
2nd workshop, park planning options				X										
Finalization of options and strategies					X	X								
National strategy and action plan workshop							X							
Preparation of draft BSAP								X	X	X				
Review of BSAP, revision based on comments											X	X		
Preparation of National Report to CoP, translation and distribution													X	X

*Best practice*

The Georgian BSAP project is designed in accordance with the Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies. The project will comply with all best practices (including those outlined in the Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity) and based on lessons learned from GEF projects in Georgia (the Black Sea Environment Program) and in other countries. The Georgian BSAP be authored by Georgians, represent national priorities, and be consistent with the country's particular cultural, historical, and geographic setting. The BSAP is envisioned as a living document that will continually develop as data gaps are filled and the actions are implemented.

### *Cost effectiveness*

The Georgian BSAP will be prepared in an accelerated schedule (14 months), and will rely to the extent possible on existing materials. It will be closely coordinated with the UNEP-funded country biodiversity study now underway, which will provide the stocktaking materials for the BSAP.

### *Consistency of approach and procedures*

Various biodiversity conservation activities are being financed in Georgia through the Black Sea Environment program. The approach and procedures of the BSAP will be consistent with these on-going GEF-financed activities.

### **Institutional Framework and Project Implementation**

When Georgia was part of the former Soviet Union, Moscow largely controlled environmental policy and management. Hence, Georgian agencies concerned with environmental management are young and lack financial resources. Responsibility for natural resource management is shared among MEP, the Department of Forestry, and the Department of Nature Reserves and Hunting. The MEP recently created a small biodiversity group within the ministry, which would be the coordinating agency for the BSAP. Given the Ministry's staff and budget limitations, however, the use of in-country consultants is strongly recommended in order to facilitate completion of the BSAP within the planned time frame.

Cooperation and liaison with several other government agencies is vital for the BSAP. The Department of Nature Reserves and Hunting (DNRH) is essential; DNRH holds jurisdiction over the 14 existing strict nature reserves in the republic. Several of these nature reserves serve as the core land holdings in the WWF park plan. Cooperation and liaison with the Department of Forestry is also critical since most of Georgia's 26,500 square kilometers of forested land, which constitutes 38% of the total land area, is under their jurisdiction. Preliminary meetings regarding the BSAP have been held with the latter two departments as well as Bakuz Gulua, now Minister of Agriculture. Georgia is predominantly a rural/agricultural economy, and this ministry has dominant control over land use and land use policies in the country.

	<b>Product</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Identification of options</i>	19,000	47,000	66,000
national consultants	10,000	11,000	21,000
internat'l consultant	5,000	6,000	11,000
2 workshops		30,000	30,000
travel, misc.	4,000		4,000
<i>Strategy and Action Plan</i>	14,000	23,000	37,000
national consultants	8,000	12,000	20,000
internat'l consultants	6,000	8,000	14,000
1 workshop		15,000	15,000
<i>First National Report</i>	9,000		9,000
publication and translation	8,000		8,000
promotion, misc.	1,000		1,000
<i>Coordination and Management Costs</i>	8,000		8,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>

## ANNEX A: Activity Matrix

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comment
	Planning, Execution	Institutional Strength	Training		
<i>Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</i>	UNEP;WWF				1
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i>					
strategies for conservation	X			X	2
strategies for sustainable use	X			X	2
strategies for benefit sharing	X			X	2
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i>					
national strategy	X				3
national action plan	X				3
<i>Preparation of First National Report</i>					
first national report	X				3
<b>Legend:</b>					
X                    Activity undertaken within Enabling Activities					
UNEP;WWF:      Activities undertaken by UNEP and WWF					

### Footnotes to the Activity Matrix

- 1            The stocktaking for the Georgian BSAP will be comprised of existing materials from the UNEP-funded country biodiversity study, WWF national park planning, and chapters on flora and fauna already prepared by scientists from the Georgian Academy of Sciences.
- 2            These strategies will be developed with the assistance of an external consultant. The cross sectoral coordination as well as coordination at local, regional, and national levels for the BSAP will be conducted in concert with the NEAP.
- 3            The preparation of the reports will begin early in the project, and will be managed by WWF. The stocktaking chapters are to be prepared first, with the strategies and action plan prepared following the workshops.