

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL**

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Country:	India
Project Title:	First National Report to the CBD
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	CBD Ratified - 18 February 1994
GEF Financing:	US\$ 25,000
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF)
GEF Operational Focal Point:	MOEF
CBD Focal Point:	MOEF
Estimated Starting Date:	November 1997
Project Duration:	2 months

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**BACKGROUND**

1. India is the seventh largest country in the world with a geographical area of 329 million hectares. Situated at the trijunction of the Afro-tropical, Indo-Malayan and Palearctic realms, India is home to 6.67 % of the global faunal diversity and 12.51 % of the global flora. Surveys have so far identified over 47,000 species of plants and 81,000 species of animals. Biodiversity in India is characterized by a high degree of endemism; for example 4,900 species of flowering plants and an estimated 62% of the known amphibian species are endemic to India. The Western Ghats and Eastern Himalaya regions are included among the 18 biodiversity hot spots in the world. India is also an acknowledged centre of diversity for crops and domesticated animals. It is estimated that 167 important cultivated species and 320 species of their wild relatives originated in the Indian sub-continent

2. The vast biodiversity in India is being eroded rapidly. It is estimated that 10% of all plant species and more than 21% of the 372 mammal species are currently endangered. The proximate causes include habitat loss and fragmentation, invasion by introduced species, over-exploitation of resources, pollution, climate change, industry, agricultural practices and forestry. The ultimate causes include the burgeoning population which puts greater pressure on resources, lack of valuation of biological resources by economic and policy levels, inequities in the ownership, management and accrual of benefits from the conservation and use of natural resources.

3. The Government of India (GoI) has become increasingly aware of these environmental problems. At the national level, environmental protection has emerged as a key national priority in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992 - 1997). There are several legal provisions for the protection of biodiversity, some of the main instruments are the Indian Forest Act (1927), Forest Conservation Act (1980), Wildlife Protection Act (1972) and the Environment Protection Act (1986).

4. The Environment Action Plan (1993) identifies conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in selected areas as one of its priorities for future action. The National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development (1992) delineates biodiversity conservation as an important area for policy-level interventions. The National Forest Policy (amended in 1988), stresses the sustainable use of forests and a greater need for the protection of ecologically fragile but biologically rich mountain and island ecosystems. The National Wildlife Action Plan (1973) addresses the need to establish a protected area network and develop participatory management systems.

5. In 1994, MoEF initiated action for the preparation of a National Biodiversity Action Plan. A small expert group was constituted to determine national level objectives and strategies to guide the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The expert group was supported by working groups that drew upon the members' experience to propose recommendations and strategic thrusts along broad priority areas to guide biodiversity conservation. These have been collated into a draft "Biodiversity Action Plan" (*draft BAP*).

6. The *draft BAP* is only the first step towards formulation of a comprehensive National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which proposes measures to address issues and action points emanating from the CBD. Objectives and strategies proposed in the *draft BAP* were formulated based solely on needs and gaps apparent to policy makers at a national level. A stocktaking and assessment of biodiversity relevant information and its analysis (through consultations), to identify gaps and priorities was not carried out as part of this process. Consequently, the *draft BAP* does not identify gaps and needs and does not develop national-regional-state-local measures to address specific threats to biodiversity and ensure its sustainable use. Stakeholders have not been identified, consulted, and their roles delineated. Measures have also not been proposed to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies (as required under Article 6 of the CBD).

7. Due the dichotomy between the roles of Central and State Governments and decentralized governing arrangements, this process is best carried out at the State level. The Govt intends that the strategies and objectives outlined in the *draft BAP* provide the states with a framework of clearly defined directions and parameters to guide a broad based stocktaking and assessment of biodiversity information. This information will then be organized and analyzed to rank priorities for bio-geographic regions and ecosystems and develop action plans. These strategies and action programmes will be consolidated into India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which contains measures to attain the provisions and objectives of the CBD.

8. India has already requested GEF for Enabling Activity assistance to carry out this process. With the assistance of UNDP, a participatory procedure has been initiated to prepare an Enabling Activity proposal for GEF assistance towards preparation of India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

9. Since the "full" Enabling Activity proposal (under preparation) exceeds cost norms specified in the "Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities in Biodiversity", it will be submitted for GEF Council consideration during its January 1998 inter-sessional work programme. The present proposal specifically supports preparation of India's First National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), by the impending 1 January 1998 deadline.

#### PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION

10. The objective of this Enabling Activity project is to assist the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Government of India to prepare India's First National Report to the CBD by the 1 January 1998 deadline.

11. The activities comprising this project will be overseen by a small interdisciplinary working team within the MoEF. The working team will direct the activities of national consultants who will gather data on; 1) activities, plans and programs related to biodiversity conservation, undertaken by MoEF, cross sectoral ministries and agencies, NGOs and technical; 2) data summarizing the current status of biodiversity in the country.

12. The consultants will obtain existing data from specialized research and environmental institutes, state level environment agencies and regional centers of information. Questionnaires will be prepared and circulated and visits will be made to the main centers of information in the country. Given the vast scale of the country and regional and local variations in resource management regimes, the information gathering process is expected to take two months.

13. The consultants will compile this information into the National Report (the working team will help draft key sections). Prior to submission to the CBD, the National Report will be reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

#### Coverage without Duplication

14. Only pre-existing information will be gathered and compiled into the First National Report. The sources identified, and information gathered through this project will be utilized by the follow-on "full scale" Enabling Activity project to prepare India's BSAP.

#### TIME PLAN AND SEQUENCING

ACTIVITY	1	2
Establishment of working group, selection of consultants	x	
Gathering of existing information	x	x
Preparation of National Report		
Final report submitted to the CBD		
Validation and dissemination		

**BEST PRACTICE**

15 The project will draw upon in-country expertise to prepare the National Report. A wide variety of institutions ranging from government ministries to scientific institutions and NGOs, as well as individuals will be consulted to obtain information on the status of biodiversity, programs and activities.

**Project Financing**

	Product (US \$)	Process (US \$)	Total (US \$)
<i>First National Report</i>			25,000
national consultants	8,000		
travel and documentation	7,000		
printing/publication	9,275		
<i>Operational and Management Costs</i>	725		
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,000</b>		<b>25,000</b>

**Deviations from Criteria and Norms**

16 As a signatory to the CBD, India is eligible for GEF support towards preparation of its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. India is currently in the process of formulating a full Enabling Activity (EA) proposal for this purpose which, due to India's size and diversity exceeds cost norms specified in the GEF Operational Criteria for EAs. The full EA proposal will be submitted for consideration during the January 1998 inter-sessional work programme of the GEF Council. In view of the nearness of the 1 January 1998 deadline for submission of India's First National Report to the CBD, it has decided to submit two separate Enabling Activity proposals. The present proposal seeks GEF support specifically towards preparation of India's First National Report.

**Institutional Framework and Project Implementation**

17 Implementation of the project will be coordinated by the MoEF which will constitute a small interdisciplinary working team within the ministry itself. The working team will guide and assist national consultants in compiling information for the national report and draft key sections. The working team and the Ministry of Environment and Forests will review and approve the completed First National Report prior to submission by the 1 January 1998 deadline.

## 9. Activity Matrix

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
	Planning, Execution	Institutional Strength	Training		
<b>Commitment</b> <i>Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</i> - biodiversity and biological resources - cross-sectoral issues - policy and regulatory framework - institutional and human capacity - analysis of root causes of BD loss - technologies for conservation and sustainable use - activities with adverse impacts - existing measures and programs - preliminary statement of objectives - identification of gaps - assessment of existing needs					
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i> - strategies for conservation - strategies for sustainable use - strategies for benefit sharing					
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i> - national strategy - national action plan					
<i>Preparation of First Country Report</i> - first national report	x	x		x	1

## Footnotes:

1. India has begun the process of preparing a full Enabling Activity proposal to seek GEF assistance in preparing its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP). For this purpose participatory meetings with government ministries and NGOs are being carried out to develop the methodology for preparation of the BSAP. UNDP is assisting the GoI in this process.

The full Enabling Activity proposal will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat towards October/November 1997 for consideration during the January inter-sessional work programme of the GEF Council. Therefore, it has been decided to initially seek funds specifically to prepare India's First National Report to the Convention of the Parties by 1 January 1998.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT &amp; FORESTS

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F.No. 4(2)/18/96-IC-1  
Dt. 18th Sept, 1997

Sub: Enabling Activities Under Biodiversity -GEF  
Assistance reg.

Dear *Dr. Monga.*

This Ministry had earlier communicated its willingness to access funds under GEF for Biodiversity Enabling Activities including the preparation of the first National Report for submission to the CBD Sectt. Also, it was decided to request for additional assistance of US\$ 25,000 for preparing the Report.

While the project brief for the consolidated National Action Plan for Biodiversity is undergoing finalisation and should be ready within a week or so, it has been decided to delink the request for funds in respect of the National Report and take it up in advance in view of the urgency in preparing this Report which is to be submitted by the 1st January, '98. The funds, as discussed with you earlier, would be used for engaging the services of consultants and *capacity building* within the subject matter division. The Ministry, after careful examination, endorses the proposal.

I am accordingly forwarding herewith the proposal for GEF assistance of US\$ 25,000 for the First National Report to the CBD while urging that it may be taken up expeditiously with the GEF Sectt. for early disbursement of funds.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

*UK CHOUDHARY*  
(UK CHOUDHARY)

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