

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL**

Country:	Islamic Republic of Iran
Project Title:	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and Report to the COP.
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	CBD Ratification: 6 August 1996
GEF Financing:	US\$ 350,000
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Department of Environment
GEF Operational Focal Point:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pirooz Hosseini
CBD Focal Point:	None designated
Estimated Start Date:	April 1997
Project Duration:	15 months

BACKGROUND

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran lies on a triangular plateau encompassing a land area of 1.64 million square kilometers, over 50% of which is mountainous, 30% is desert and almost 10% is covered by inland water bodies. These geographical variations in Iran have created a range of climate conditions ranging from the sub-tropical climate of Iran's southern shores to the alpine climates of the northern high mountains, these in turn have engendered an exceptionally high biodiversity.

2. Field studies in Iran confirm the presence of over 500 species of birds and 160 species of mammals. The wetlands of Iran are globally significant, large populations of migratory species including the endangered Siberian Crane, spend the winter at these wetlands or use them on their way to and from wintering areas in Africa or the Indian Sub-continent. The marshes of the south Caspian lowlands in Iran's north-west are particularly important for over 20 species of ducks and geese while the mud flats of the Gulf coast are of critical importance for shore birds, gulls and terns (NES, 1993).

3. Iran is located in the palearctic realm and is considered the center of origin of many genetic resources of the world. It is estimated that upto 10,000 plant species exist in Iran including many

of the original strains of commercially important plant species such as wheat. There are also a wide range of medicinal and aromatic species (NES, 1993).

4. At present only protected areas afford any protection to Iran's biodiversity. In the unprotected areas biodiversity is diminishing rapidly, during the last 30 years 1.2 million hectares, or 40 % of Iran's deciduous temperate forests have been destroyed. Rangelands and marginal farmlands are vulnerable to desertification, the spread of which is being enhanced by overgrazing, marginal farming and soil erosion. In addition coastal habitats and water resources are being degraded by oil, industrial pollution and overfishing, large tracts of wetlands called "hoors" were devastated during the war with Iraq (UNDP Mission Report, 1993).

5. In 1993, formulation of a National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development (NSE) started under a UNDP and World Bank funded capacity 21. National reports were prepared on 20 cross- sectoral environmental issues and a NSE framework was fashioned from these reports. The NSE is linked to the National Development Plan (NDP) which is prepared every 5 years and delineates Iran's principal environment development objectives, establishing linkages with cross sectoral plans. The environmental objectives of the second NDP (prepared in 1994), recommend coordinating environmental activities; developing and modifying environmental norms, standards, criteria and legislation and adjusting the structure and mandate of the Department of Environment (DOE). In keeping with these objectives, Iran has decided to formulate a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) as a priority action to complement and achieve better linkages with the Second National Development Plan (NDP), NSE and cross sectoral plans.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND PROCESS DESCRIPTION

6. The enabling activity project will allow the DOE to prepare the BSAP and a country report to the COP. The project will initially assess and inventory existing knowledge and then through a participatory process of workshops and consultations, identify and agree upon actions to conserve biodiversity, options for biodiversity management and benefit sharing in the country.

7. The DOE will establish a steering committee to guide and monitor the project. Members of the steering committee will be selected to reflect the range of national stakeholders, possibly including the Plan and Budget Organization which is responsible for the preparing the NDP, the High Council of Environment which establishes environmental development objectives for the NDP, cross sectoral ministries and agencies as well as representatives from the private sector, NGOs and local communities.

8. A national coordinator will manage day to day implementation of the project and will head a multidisciplinary planning team drawing experts from environmental agencies and research institutions. The planning team will undertake the active work of the enabling activity with assistance from 2 national consultants, experienced in biodiversity issues and planning. In addition, an international consultant will be recruited for a limited time to initiate the project during the first month, provide familiarization during the course of the project and assist in drafting the BSAP.

9. Initially, the steering committee, planning team and consultants will review the WRI/IUCN/UNEP "Guidelines for the Preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans". The planning team and national consultants will then undertake a comprehensive stocktaking and assessment of the existing information on the status of and threats to biodiversity in Iran¹. The types of biodiversity in Iran and physical and socio-economic resources will be mapped, this information along with summaries of the NDP and NSE and cross sectoral plans will be summarized for presentation at a first national workshop.

10. The first national workshop will be conducted by the planning team and national consultants. The workshop will bring together a wide range of participants from national and local government agencies, community representatives from each province (total of 26 provinces), leaders from nomadic tribes, the private sector and NGOs. This is the first time such a broad based workshop is being held in Iran. The planning team and consultants will initially assess the status of the indigenous knowledge of participants, as necessary, the participants will then be sensitized on biodiversity; issues, its value, reasons for its loss, implications from its loss and economic importance. The participants will analyze and review the results of the stocktaking to discuss and identify key issues and options, actors for further analysis and priority biodiversity areas in which consultations will be held.

11. After the first national workshop, the international consultant will familiarize the planning team and national consultants in biodiversity analysis, strategic planning techniques and participatory methods. 4-6 short term consultants who will be hired to assist in carrying out regional consultations will also be instructed.

12. The familiarization will allow the planning team and national consultants to commence a detailed analysis of the issues and options which were identified during the workshop. As part of this process, wide ranging local/regional consultations to identify issues and needs at the ground level will be carried out with the assistance of the short term consultants. The consultations² will allow development of decentralized, local/regional strategies and actions for biodiversity conservation to be integrated into the BSAP. During this period the planning team will also hold

¹ Information on the status of biodiversity, root causes of loss, threats, important areas etc., is widely dispersed throughout Iran. Each province has a local record of these issues and there are several regional libraries known to contain this information. During the stocktaking and assessment, these sources will be identified and relevant information will be located and repatriated. In addition, natural resource use plans and relevant cross-sectoral policies of each province will be reviewed. It is feasible that members of the planning team may have to travel to regional centers to obtain this information.

² Although, it is anticipated that upto 6 consultations will be conducted, the specific number and location of consultations will be identified during the first national workshop. Given the size of the country, wide range of biomes and biological richness and importance, it is anticipated that at least 4 consultations will be conducted in representative areas located in Iran's four biogeographic zones (Pontic, Irano-Anatolian, Nubo Sindian and Arabian-Saharo). 2 consultations may be conducted with resource users in 'globally important' wetlands of the Orumiyeh basin, South Caspian lowlands, Khuzestan and Central Fars. This approach will ensure that the strategies reflect variations in ecosystems and resource use regimes.

informal meetings with cross sectoral government agencies to encourage input into the BSAP process. The entire process will take 7 months, during the last month an international consultant will assist in drawing the results together into a draft BSAP.

13. A second national workshop will then be conducted to review the draft BSAP and the results of the analysis and consultations. If necessary new options and plans will be developed, but a broad consensus among the participants will be established prior to finalizing the BSAP.

14. The BSAP will be reviewed by the steering committee, following approval it will be disseminated widely within Iran and the planning team will prepare a country report to the COP.

Coverage Without Duplication

15. Iran's National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development (NSE) was formulated in 1993 under a UNDP/WB funded Capacity 21. The NES essentially identifies 7 objectives to strengthen protected area management and improve natural resource management capabilities in the national government and proposes brief strategies to attain these. The preparation of the NES suffered from a lack of cross sectoral input and buy in; inadequate linkages to cross sectoral plans; inattention to sustainable use and benefit sharing from natural resources. Biodiversity conservation is currently limited to establishing protected areas and management practices are limited to regulation enforcement and annual counts of wildlife in key areas.

16. The recommendations of the NES will be reviewed and adapted for use in the BSAP. Nonetheless, strategies and actions for biodiversity conservation need to be developed which reflect the advances in Iran's thinking on this cross sectoral topic. A large gap in the strategic policy framework which the BSAP will address is buy-in from cross sectoral agencies and ministries and consensus building. In addition, current land use practices have been identified as the key threat to biodiversity conservation. Land use plans are based solely on socio-economic considerations and fail to integrate ecological principles. Consequently, land use allocation is carried out in an ad-hoc fashion, threatening the existence of protected areas and natural resources. The BSAP will specifically ensure linkages and complementarity with the 'Spatial Land Use Planning System' which is due to be complemented by 2003.

This project will be implemented by the DOE with assistance from the Plan and Budget Organization. Since both these organizations also collaborated in preparing the NSE, their involvement will eliminate any potential for overlap of BSAP activities with those completed under the NSE.

Best Practice

18. The methodology for the implementation of the project will be based on the "Guide to the Convention on biological diversity (IUCN 1994) and the "Guidelines for Preparing National Biodiversity Planning" (WRI/IUCN/UNEP, 1995). The project will draw upon in-country expertise and emphasize participatory approaches towards conserving biodiversity. This enabling activity will assist in the identification of capacity building needs and project concepts for further development.

Project Financing

	Product	Process	Total
<i>Stocktaking and Inventory</i>			27,000
- National consultants	12,000		
- Documentation, misc.	15,000		
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options</i>			199,000
- national consultants	20,000	25,000	
- International consultant	8,000	16,000	
- First national workshop		40,000	
- Familiarization		18,000	
- Consultations		60,000	
- Travel, misc.		12,000	
<i>Strategy and Action Plan</i>			87,000
- National consultants	8,000	8,000	
- International consultant	8,000		
- Second national workshop		40,000	
- Travel, misc.		7,000	
- Dissemination		16,000	
<i>First National Report</i>			20,000
- publication/translation	10,000		
- promotion		10,000	
<i>Management and monitoring costs</i>	4,300	12,700	17,000
Total	85,300	264,700	350,000

Explanatory Note to Budget

The 2 national workshops have been budgeted as follows; 75 participants from the ministries, agencies and local communities, private sector and NGOs of all 26 provinces and central government. The workshops will be held for 7 days and DSA has been calculated at US \$ 65 per day. Materials, audio visual and hall rental have been budgeted at approximately US \$5,875.

The 6 consultations have been budgeted at \$ 9,000 each (including travel DSA and materials). \$ 6,000 has been budgeted for meetings of the planning team with cross sectoral decision makers and with protected area and forestry personnel.

The national report has been budgeted to allow for translation into the four main languages used in Iran (Farsi, Turkish, Persian and Arabic). This will facilitate promotion throughout the national media and libraries.

Deviations from Criteria and Norms

The project does not deviate from GEF criteria and norms, however, costs are in the upper limit generally allowed for Enabling Activities. This is primarily due to Iran's large size (1.64 million sq. Kms) and population as well as the relative lack of prior biodiversity and environmental initiatives and policies, this is also the first time in Iran that national strategies and plans are being developed through public participation. A factor which has helped to keep project costs lower than initially expected is the reliance on national expertise throughout the project (international consultant costs amount to only 9% of the total project costs).

Institutional Framework and Project Implementation

19. The Government of Iran, Department of Environment (DoE) will establish a broad based inter-institutional steering committee to provide guidance and review the completed BSAP and National Report to the CBD. The actual planning and analysis work will be carried out by a multidisciplinary planning team headed by a national coordinator. As part of the BSAP process, 2 broad based national level workshops will be held and local/regional and sectoral consultations conducted throughout the country to discuss issues, identify options and actions. Consultations will be guided with the assistance of short term consultants attached to national environmental agencies and research institutions.

References

1. *Mission Report: Iran Programme Identification Mission Report*. 15 October 1993, UNDP.
2. *National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development*. 1993. Government of Iran: Department of Environment., UNDP and the World Bank.

Activity Matrix

Enabling Activity Commitment	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participatio n	Comment s
	Planning, Execution	Institutional Strength.	Training		
<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	x x/NSE x/NDP x x x x x x x				1 2
<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	x x x	x x x	X X X	x x x	3 3 3
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i> - national strategy - national action plan	x x	x x	X X	x x	
<i>Preparation of First Country Report</i> - interim report - first country report	x x			x	

Footnotes:

1. As part of the preparation of the National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development (NSE) which started in 1993, 20 cross sectoral issues were identified and analyzed and reports were prepared on these. These reports will be reviewed during the stocktaking to use pertinent information, however, a preliminary gap review has identified a need for additional information. A critical gap in these reports and hence the NSE is the lack of detailed information

on a provincial and local level. During the *Stocktaking and Assessment* phase of the project, this gap will be rectified by locating data in regional/provincial centers and ensuring its repatriation.

2. The second NDP which was prepared in 1994 will provide the policy and regulatory framework with which the BSAP will be integrated. The environmental objectives of the NDP are to coordinate environmental activities; develop norms and standard, criteria and legislation in accordance with national sustainable development goals. Other cross sectoral plans, in particular, plans for land use planning, agriculture, forestry and construction will be reviewed and assessed during the BSAP stocktaking.

3. Through the NSE process strategies for strengthening protected areas were formulated and linkages were established with the NDP. Nevertheless, objectives and strategies outlined in the NSE were not developed through participatory mechanisms and have not been implemented to date. To ensure the long term success of biodiversity conservation, this project will develop detailed participatory strategies for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.

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TO :
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PHONE NO. : 0012129065878

MAY. 23. 1996 3:42PM P 2
PHONE NO. : 0098218738864**Islamic Republic of Iran***Ministry of Foreign Affairs*Date : 22 May 1996
No:622/466**In the Name of God**

United Nations Development Programme Bureau - Tehran

Greetings.

With reference to your letter number P90 of 5 May 1996 concerning 'GEI Biodiversity Enabling Activities' this is to inform that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its capacity as the GEF Focal Point, officially requests Biodiversity Enabling Activities under the GEF. Please transmit this request to the GEF Secretariat and keep this Ministry informed of outcome.

Director General
International Specialized Agencies

Pirooz Hosseini