

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
Global Environment Facility**

Project Brief

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| Country: | Republic of Kiribati |
| Project Title: | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP), and Country Report to the Conference of Parties (COP) |
| GEF Focal Area: | Biodiversity |
| Country Eligibility: | Convention on Biological Diversity, Ratification on 16 August 1994 |
| GEF Financing: | US\$ 198,790 |
| GEF Implementing Agency: | UNDP |
| National Executing Agency: | Ministry of Environment and Social Development (MESD) |
| GEF Operational Focal Point: | MESD |
| CBD Focal Point: | MESD |
| Estimated Start Date: | April 1998 |
| Project Duration: | 10 months |

Background

1. The Republic of Kiribati is made up of 33 coral islands and atolls located in the central Pacific. It consists of three main island groups -- the Gilbert group in the west, the Phoenix group in the center, and the Northern and Southern Line islands to the east. The islands are widely dispersed within an Exclusive Economic Zone area of 3.5 million sq. km. The sea to land ratio is a staggering 4,000 to 1 (National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS), 1994).

2. The flora of the main Gilbert group consists of approximately 306 species, of which 83 are indigenous. The Phoenix and Line Island groups contain a total of 283 species of flora, of which 67 are indigenous. Although greatly outnumbered by exotics, indigenous species still dominate some of the most disturbed habitats, as well as constitute the most culturally and ecologically important species (NEMS, 1994).

3. Kiribati has only one reported endemic vertebrate, the Christmas Island warbler, however, its lagoonal and pelagic environments support an abundant marine avifauna that nest in vast numbers on the uninhabited atolls of the Phoenix group. There are 19 species of sea birds known to breed on the northern islands of the Line Islands, and colonies numbering in excess of six million sea birds are established on the more southern Christmas Island. Christmas Island supports the largest seabird colony found on a single island in the world and the most extensive system of seabird rookeries in the world. Kiribati's marine fauna includes between 600 and 800 finfish species. This marine life is a critical and strategic resource for Kiribati and is most likely its main hope for economic development (NEMS, 1994).

4. Kiribati's natural resources are under threat from an array of factors. As in most South Pacific islands, introduced species are displacing indigenous species. The atoll soils of Kiribati are probably among the most infertile in the world, and due to their shallow, alkaline characteristics are highly vulnerable to erosion and degradation. A number of islands contain deposits of phosphate

rich soils that are guano accumulations from extensive sea bird colonies. A substantial proportion of these soils has been excessively mined for phosphate, leaving a degraded landscape. Although the human population of Kiribati is fairly small (estimated in 1991 at 72,298) it is unevenly distributed, with 96 % living on the Gilbert group, and places a considerable strain on its environment (NEMS, 1994).

5. Kiribati's ability to protect its environment has been hampered since 1979 when it exhausted its phosphate resources just before it achieved independence. The cessation of phosphate mining immediately cut government revenues in half, and turned a positive domestic saving rate into a highly negative one. At the same time, public aspirations and demands for the government to ensure a higher standard of living and greater social services increased. These circumstances have created a need for the government to balance its books without overusing its limited resource base.

6. Within this context, the government committed itself to implementing ecologically sustainable development practices in its National Development Plan 1992-1995 (NDP). To ensure that all government departments take the importance of ecologically sustainable development into account in all decision making processes, the government has established an Environment Unit within the Ministry of Environment and Social Development (MESD) and created an Environment Advisory Council (EAC). The EAC's composition, with members drawn from all the relevant government agencies and NGOs, is intended to reflect the cross-sectoral nature of environmental concerns as it advises decision-makers on environmental policies.

7. Kiribati developed a National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS) with UNDP assistance in 1994. The NEMS was carried out through an institution building project designed to enhance the capacity of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). SPREP is an inter-regional body with a mandate from member governments of the South Pacific Commission to conduct environmental assessment and management. As part of this effort, UNDP coordinated the development of NEMS for seven South Pacific Island States. Through this process, UNDP ensured that States cooperated, developed linkages between their programmes, and raised awareness of sustainable development within their states and the region as a whole.

Project Objectives and Short Description

8. This enabling activity will allow Kiribati to formulate a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) and a country report to the Conference of the Parties in fulfillment of its obligations as a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through a participatory process, the BSAP will identify the current status of, pressures on, and options and priority actions to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of Kiribati's biodiversity. The BSAP will complement and build upon the NEMS as well as the NDP and other cross-sectoral plans, and will involve representatives from different sectors of society. The BSAP process will be transparent, consultative and participatory reflect national priorities and develop action plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

9. The MESD will be responsible for executing this project. During the first month of the project, the MESD will establish a biodiversity steering committee that will be comprised of representatives from the Environment Unit, the EAC, cross-sectoral ministries and agencies, NGOs, the private sector and local communities. The biodiversity steering committee will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the project and will review and approve the BSAP when finished.

10. The biodiversity steering committee will appoint a national project coordinator to oversee the activities of a planning team, which will provide technical backstopping and help conduct planning activities. The planning team will be made up of experts from the Environment Unit, EAC, universities, research institutions, and experts and organizations that were involved in the preparation of the NEMS, the NDP, and the 1994 State of the Environment Report. Two national consultants will be hired to conduct project activities and an international consultant will be recruited as the project advisor.
11. At the advent of the project, the international consultant (from the South Pacific Region) experienced in will assist in the start-up of the BSAP process. In particular, the international consultant will run familiarization sessions in biodiversity planning, analysis, assessment and public participation for the planning team, national coordinator, national consultants, decision makers and key personnel in other ministries. The WRI/IUCN/UNEP's "Guidelines for the Preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans" (Miller and Lanou, 1995), UNEP Country Study Guidelines and Lyle and Glowka's Guide to the CBD will be reviewed and a detailed project workplan and methodology will be developed. The planning team and national consultants will also begin drafting the interim Country Report to the COP.
12. The consultants and planning team will commence compiling and analyzing existing information on Kiribati's biodiversity. Information will be gathered on the current status of biodiversity, threats, legislation, institutional arrangements, socio-economic issues. Data will be gathered specifically pertaining to indigenous knowledge, agro-biodiversity, and biosafety and property rights issues. Information found in the NEMS, the UNCED report, the State of the Environment Review, the Environment Sector Study will be reviewed to avoid duplication. The results of the information gathering will be gathered, mapped, analyzed, spatially referenced and condensed into reports for discussion during the ensuing participatory process.
13. The planning team will present the results of the stocktaking activity at two inter-island workshops: one in the Gilbert Islands and another in the Line Islands. Given the vast geographic area under focus, two workshop sites have been chosen to provide adequate coverage for the distribution of both the biodiversity and to facilitate participation. Participants will be drawn from relevant national and regional cross-sectoral ministries and agencies, NGOs, the private sector (especially tourism and fisheries businesses), local governments and local communities. The participants will analyze the prepared reports to analyze and prioritize gaps, issues and options, priority geographic areas will be identified for further in-depth scrutiny.
14. The planning team will conduct consultations in key geographic areas identified during the workshop, with representatives from all segments of society, including relevant institutions, officials and agency personnel, representatives from key resource use sectors and key decision-makers. Through these consultations, the planning team will discuss local issues related to biodiversity loss with resource users (communities, private sector, landowners, etc.) and community leaders. The planning team will then develop strategies and implementable action plans, through consensus, for each island cluster to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
15. Based on the results of the consultations and inter-island workshops, the planning team, with the assistance of the international consultant, will draft a preliminary BSAP that will be discussed and reviewed at a final national workshop. Participants will be drawn from the full range of

stakeholders in Government, NGOs, private sector and outer island representatives. The draft BSAP will be analyzed and changes proposed as necessary. A broad consensus will be developed on the priority strategies and action plans.

16. Upon finalization, the BSAP will be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval and onward transmission to the Kiribati Cabinet for endorsement. The BSAP will then be disseminated widely within Kiribati through the national media and libraries.

17. The planning team and national consultant will prepare an interim country report to the May 1998, COP- 4 in Bratislava. Upon completion of the project, a comprehensive first country report will be prepared and approved by Cabinet prior to formal submission to the CBD. The country report will be translated into I-Kiribati and promoted nationally by making copies available to educational institutions and through the national media. It will also be shared with other countries.

Coverage without Duplication

18. The BSAP will provide a biodiversity conservation framework to complement the NDP, and in particular, the NEMS. The NEMS developed strategies for attaining sustainable development under five broad objectives.

- Integrating environmental considerations into economic development;
- Improving environmental awareness and education;
- Developing and protecting the resource base;
- Improving waste management and pollution control; and
- Balancing development, planning urbanization and lowering population growth rates.

19. The focus of the NEMS is on broad issues of national development and environmental health, providing only incidental coverage to biodiversity conservation. The NEMS process did not include an assessment and analysis of biodiversity related information and cross-sectoral issues. Consequently, the NEMS does not propose detailed strategies and implementable action plans. The NEMS is very valuable in the sense that it provides a policy basis and framework which the BSAP team will use to integrate biodiversity in other sectors

20. The Country Report to the UNCED (1992) and the Environment Sector Review undertaken by the Asian Development Bank in 1993 contain general information on the environment. The information in these reports is summarized in the 1994 State of the Environment Report (SOE), prepared as a component of the NEMS. The SOE report presents broad information in areas such as the terrestrial environment, marine resources, culture, and archeological resources. It also provides synopses of measures being taken to ensure the health of the environment and briefly discusses the effect of social and economic factors on the environment and trends for the future.

21. The BSAP stocktaking and assessment will include a review of the biodiversity and cross-sectoral information contained in the SOE and will build upon the work carried out by Thaman and Tuxon for SPREP in 1996 on the flora and fauna of Kiribati. Updated information will be obtained from existing sources in ministries, research institutions and libraries. However detailed information on several aspects of biodiversity also needs to be obtained and repatriated. These are; indigenous knowledge biosafety, agro-biodiversity, access regimes and ownership, threats and adverse activities, institutional human capacity, incentive measures, identification of gaps and needs.

Work Plan

22. Activities will start in April 1998 and last for 10 months as follows

| Activity/Month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Appointment of national coordinator, Establishment of Steering Committee and planning team | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Familiarization sessions | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Preparation and submission of interim Country Report to COP-4 | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Stocktaking and assessment of existing information | | x | x | x | | | | | | |
| Inter-island workshops (2x) | | | | x | x | | | | | |
| Analysis and assessment of options, including consultations and preparation of draft BSAP | | | | | x | x | x | x | | |
| National workshop | | | | | | | | x | | |
| Finalization of BSAP | | | | | | | | | x | |
| Review and approval of BSAP by Steering Committee | | | | | | | | | x | |
| Approval of BSAP by Government and dissemination | | | | | | | | | | x |
| Approval and submission of first Country Report to CBD | | | | | | | | | x | x |

Best Practice

23. The project will follow the methodology recommended in the IUCN's "Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity" (Glowka, et al. 1994), the WRI/IUCN/UNEP's "Guidelines for the Preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans" (Miller and Lanou 1995) and the UNEP Country Study guidelines. The project will draw upon in-country expertise and emphasize participatory approaches towards conserving biodiversity. The Enabling Activity project will assist in the identification of capacity building needs and project concepts for future implementation.

Deviations from Criteria and Norms

24. The project does not deviate from GEF enabling activity criteria and norms.

Institutional Framework and Project Implementation

25. A biodiversity steering committee will be setup, comprised of representatives from the Environment Unit, the EAC, cross-sectoral ministries and agencies, NGOs, the private sector and local communities. The biodiversity steering committee will be responsible for guiding the project, ensuring cross sectoral involvement and integration, monitoring the progress of the project and ensuring high level support to the BSAP. Mechanisms will be explored to ensure the continuation of the biodiversity steering committee upon the completion of this project so that it can oversee implementation of the BSAP.

26. A planning team will be established, guided by a National Coordinator. The planning team will provide technical backstopping to the project, reviewing outputs such as studies, reports, draft strategies, action plans, etc. An international consultant will be recruited as the project advisor and will conduct short missions to structure project activities, provide familiarization, organize workshops and review outputs. Two national consultants will carry out the day to day activities of the project. Short-term national consultants will be recruited as necessary to prepare key studies and assist in conducting consultations.

Project Financing

27. Project costs are estimated at US\$ 198,790 as follows;

| | Product | Process | Total (US\$) |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Stocktaking and Inventory of Existing Information | 13,000 | | 13,000 |
| - Two consultants | 8,000 | | |
| - documentation, travel**, misc. | 5,000 | | |
| Identification and Analysis of Options | 11,000 | 105,000 | 116,000 |
| - international consultant | 5,000 | 12,000 | |
| - national consultants | 6,000 | 17,000 | |
| - familiarization sessions | | 5,000 | |
| - two inter-island workshops | | 40,000 | |
| - consultations | | 16,000 | |
| - travel *, misc. | | 15,000 | |
| Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan | 24,000 | 29,000 | 53,000 |
| - international consultant | 6,000 | 5,000 | |
| - national consultant | 8,000 | 4,000 | |
| - national workshop | | 20,000 | |
| - Publication/ translation/ dissemination | 10,000 | | |
| Preparation of First Country Report | 8,000 | 3,000 | 11,000 |
| - national consultant | 3,000 | | |
| - publication/translation into I-Kiribati ¹ | 5,000 | | |
| - promotion | | 3,000 | |
| Coordination and Management | 1,680 | 4,110 | 5,790 |
| Total | 57,680 | 141,110 | 198,790 |

Explanatory Note:

* The island clusters which constitute Kiribati are widely dispersed and, therefore, costs for inter-island travel to the inter-island workshops and consultations are extremely high.

** Members of the planning team will contribute to this stock-taking exercise. The project will pay their travel and accommodation.

¹ The document must be in Kiribati in order for it to be reviewed and endorsed by the government and disseminated to the public.

Activity Matrix

| Enabling Activity Commitment | Output | Capacity Building | | Public Participation | Comments |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| | Planning, Execution | Institutional Strength. | Training | | |
| <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 | | | | 1 |
| - institutional and human capacity | x | | | | 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 | | | | |
| - assessment of existing needs | x | | | | |
| <i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i> | | | | | |
| - strategies for conservation | x | x | x | x | 2 |
| - strategies for sustainable use | x | x | x | x | 2 |
| - strategies for benefit sharing | x | x | x | x | 2 |
| <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> | | | | | |
| - first country report | x | | | x | |

Footnotes:

1. Relevant Information about these topics will be obtained from the National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS), the Kiribati country report to the UNCED (1992), State of the Environment Report (1994), and the Environment Sector Review undertaken by the Asian Development Bank in 1993. As explained earlier, these documents do not present detailed site-specific information on biodiversity and on cross-sectoral issues. These documents will be reviewed to identify gaps and avoid duplication. However, it is anticipated that information will have to be obtained from scientific literature, cross-sectoral ministries, land-use registers, existing databases and repatriated from abroad.

2. The NEMS presents strategies for attaining sustainable development in five chapters: Integrating Environmental Considerations into Economic Development; Improving Environmental Awareness and Education; Development and Protection of the Resource Base; Improving Waste Management and Pollution Control; and Balanced Development, Planned Urbanization and Lower Population Growth Rates. The NEMS concludes with a range of programme profiles that specify requirements to address these environmental issues. The BSAP's strategies for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing will supplement the broader strategies of the NEMS.