

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL IN BIODIVERSITY**

Country	Latvia
Project title	National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and Country Report to the CBD
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility	Convention ratified on 14 December, 1995
GEF Financing	US\$ 165,315
Government Contribution	US\$ 20,000
UNDP Contribution	US\$ 20,000
GEF Implementing Agency	UNDP
National Executing Agency	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
GEF Operational Focal Point	Not yet formally established
CBD Focal Point	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
Estimated Starting Date	September 1997
Project Duration	12 months

I. BACKGROUND

Latvia lies on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, in the western part of the East-European Plain between the 55°40' and 58°05' northern latitude and 20°58' and 28°14' eastern longitude. The area of the territory is 64,600 km², 74% of which constitute lowlands and 26% highlands. Latvia's highest point rises 311 meters above sea level. Approximately 2.6 million people live in Latvia.

According to recent scientific assessments, approximately 23,000 animal species, including 18,000 insect species, may be found in Latvia. The large number of species can be explained by the diverse natural conditions (bogs, meadows, forests, coastal areas, etc.) and the substantial territories in which land use was minimal or human impact was insignificant (mainly wetlands). 325 species of birds are known to occur in Latvia. Many of these are seasonal visitors on their way northward or southward along the migratory paths that cross Latvia. In addition, large numbers of migrating bats concentrate along the Baltic Sea coast in the southwestern part of Latvia during August - September. According to the Red Data Book there are 1,600 vascular plant species in Latvia of which 16% are considered to be threatened in Latvia. Similarly, 38% of mammals and 24% of Latvia's bird population are considered endangered. Of the recorded 18,000 insect species in Latvia, 131 are threatened.

The survival of natural biotopes in Latvia that are endangered in the rest of Europe (especially wetlands) in combination with large areas of undisturbed lowland forest habitat enables Latvia to harbor large populations of species that are endangered throughout Western Europe and Scandinavia. The Gulf of Riga and Irbe Strait are internationally important waterfowl wintering sites where the total amount of birds during the autumn/winter period exceeds two million individuals. According to current data, 24% of Northern and Western Europe's population of

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*, 23% of Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* (more than 1 million individuals), 36% of Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*, and 15% of Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* population are found in Latvia. With regard to fish species, the Riga Gulf population of Eelpout *Zoarces viviparus* - the biggest population in the Eastern Baltic - is worthy of mention. Latvia is the only natural spawning site in the Eastern Baltic (specifically the Salaca river basin) for Salmon *Salmo salar*.

Legal and Institutional Arena

The Environmental Protection Law of 1991 serves as the "umbrella" law for environmental protection in Latvia. This Law provides for the basic provisions and programme guidelines on the rights of Latvians to a quality environment. This Law delineates: the type of information to be gathered on the condition of the environment; measures to address environmental problems; institutional responsibilities for environmental protection; penalties and legal liability for environmental violations; mechanisms by which Latvia participates in cooperative, international environmental protection efforts. This law first refers to several new instruments for environmental protection in Latvia: mandatory ecological insurance and ecological certification.

The Protected Natural Areas Law of 1993 delineates the categories of protected areas and the procedures for their establishment and protection. The law also defines the rights of land ownership and land-use in protected territories, and is therefore the basis for protection of these territories during the present period of property rights reform. Several laws, passed in the last two years, are related to biodiversity management as well: the Natural Resource Tax Law, the Northvidzeme Biosphere Reserve Law, and the Kemeru National Park Law.

In 1995 the Government of Latvia (GoL) approved the National Environmental Policy Plan (NEPP), which sets forth the long-term (20-30 years) strategy in the field of environmental protection. The NEPP sets environmental policy goals, introduces principles of environmental policy, describes the most important environmental problems and outlines the measures for solving them. The primary idea of NEPP is to elaborate a general document to serve as a basis for developing strategies and action programmes to deal with priority environmental issues. As such, the NEPP does not contain a list of specific actions to solve these problems, but rather serves as the overall guiding policy document for national environmental policy. The preservation of the existing level of biodiversity is one of goals set forth in the NEPP. The decrease in biodiversity has been identified as one of the most important national as well as global environmental problems.

Currently in Latvia, the responsibilities for environmental conservation and management are shared by 13 governmental institutions. The main governmental institution in field of environmental protection is the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MEPRD), which is responsible for elaboration of environmental policy. The Ministry has several subordinate institutions dealing with nature protection. MEPRD's State Environmental Inspection Department is the main enforcement body for Latvia's environmental laws. Also under MEPRD are eight Regional Environmental Boards, which are responsible for environmental protection issues within their region. MEPRD is also responsible for the management and protection of Latvia's protected areas, comprised of two state reserves, one biosphere reserve and one national park. The following non-governmental organizations

(scientific and advocacy-related) are involved with nature protection in Latvia: the Latvian Fund for Nature, the Institute of Biology, WWF Latvia, and the Latvian Society for Protection of Nature and Monuments.

Threats:

Latvia's rapid political and economic changes have increased the pressure of human activity on natural areas, both directly and indirectly. Under Latvia's Land Reform almost all agricultural lands and about half of the forests will be transferred from state to private ownership by the end of 1997. The use of forest resources has increased considerably. Intensive agricultural activity, the development of a forestry industry and the ongoing process of urbanization is bringing about the depletion and disappearance of habitats, the isolation of populations and the disruption of migratory paths. Pollution of air and water creates qualitative and quantitative changes in community and species interrelationships. The introduction and acclimatization of non-native species has created considerable losses in populations of native species. The lack of current information on species status is also a threat to the sustainable management of Latvia's biodiversity.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The objective of this Enabling Activity is to formulate a strategy for the protection and sustainable use of Latvia's biodiversity in accordance with Articles 6 and 8 of the CBD, as well as prepare a plan of action for their implementation. The primary output will be the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Latvia's first National Report to the Conference of the Parties of the CBD will also be prepared for submission by end of December 1997.

The principal tasks of this project will be to: 1) conduct a comprehensive assessment of the existing information on biodiversity in Latvia; 2) implement a participatory, strategic planning process and develop priorities for action in protecting Latvia's biodiversity culminating in a NBSAP; 3) conduct a public information campaign to encourage participation in the strategic planning exercises; 4) prepare the first National Report for submission to the COP.

Preparation of the NBSAP will follow a logical sequence of participatory steps in line with the sequence recommended in the WRI/IUCN/UNEP Guidelines. The day-to-day work of the project will be implemented by a team of national consultants called the Technical Task Force (TTF), comprised of five working groups and led by a Team Leader. The TTF will conduct the initial stocktaking and assessment of existing information.

Using the results of this assessment, they will work collaboratively with the national Steering Committee (SC) to prepare a detailed "first draft" outline of the national Strategy. This draft will outline the present status in the country of key biodiversity resources and related sectors and define specific goals and objectives covering a range of sectors including, economic development, forestry, fisheries, agriculture, shipping, and protected areas. A planning methodology workshop will be undertaken with the assistance of an international consultant, at which time the draft strategy will be considered and approved by the Steering Committee in their second meeting of the exercise.

restore the Baltic Sea's ecological balance. The Program has currently identified 130 "hotspots" and has also recommended actions on policies and legislation, institutional strengthening, research, and environmental education and public awareness. The international financial institutions involved are working with Latvia and the other Baltic countries to build the Program's priorities into their lending programs. With these international funds supplementing local funds, a broad spectrum of projects have been designed and implemented.

IV. TIME PLAN

The project will follow the sequence recommended in the WR/LUC/UNEP Guidelines. Activities will start in September 1997 and will last for twelve (12) months. The project will be implemented according to the timetable below (specific outputs in bold letters).

Activity/Months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Formation of Steering Committee (SC) and creation of Technical Task Force (TTF)	X											
1 st meeting of SC and TTF, formation of WGs and adoption of schedule and workplans	X											
Stocktaking and Assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Initiation of publicity campaign		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rough Draft of National Strategy produced on basis of Stocktaking and Assessment (this was called the Tech. Advisor Document (TAD) in previous draft)			X									
2 nd SC meeting: introduction of planning methodologies and discussion of draft Strategy. Strategy revised.			X									
Five stakeholder consultations held to discuss draft Strategy (Analysis of Options)				X	X	X						
Draft Action Plan developed by TTF based upon input from 5 consultations. Draft NBSAP produced by TTF.							X					
3 rd SC meeting to review draft NBSAP. Revision of NBSAP based on SC input by working groups							X					
National stakeholder consultation to discuss the draft NBSAP								X				
NBSAP revised by TTF per consultation.									X			
Interim Report submitted to CoP for December deadline					X							
4 th SC meeting to finalise NBSAP for submission to Cabinet of Ministers									X			
Submission of NBSAP to Cabinet of Ministers										X		
Adoption of NBSAP by Cabinet of Ministers											X	
Preparation, translation and publishing of NBSAP and final National Report to CBD											X	X

V. BEST PRACTICES

The methodology for the implementation of the project is based on the "Guidelines for Country Study on Biological Diversity" (UNEP, 1993), the "Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity" (IUCN, 1994), and the Guidelines for Preparing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans" (WRI-IUCN-UNEP). The GoL will follow the best practice criteria as contained in the "Enabling Activity Operational Criteria" document.

VI. PROJECT FINANCING

Activities	Product (USD)	Process (USD)	Total (USD)
<i>Stocktaking and Inventory of Existing Information</i>	4,900	3,000	7,900
• Documentation ¹	1,900		
• national expert (1 @ 3 mo. = 3 p/m)	3,000	3,000	
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options</i>	30,000	32,000	62,000
• national experts (4 @ 3 mo. = 12 p/m)	12,000	12,000	
• int'l consultant (6 weeks)	18,000 ²	~	
• consultations (5)		20,000	
<i>Preparation of Strategy and Action Plan Report</i>	21,000	58,800	79,800
• national consultation		8,000	
• national experts (2 @ 5, 1 @ 6 mo. = 16 p/m)	17,000	15,000	
• translation/publishing ²		18,300	
• international consultant (3 weeks)	4,000	6,000	
• publicity campaign (logo, slogan, TV spots, poster, stickers)		11,500	
<i>First National Report</i>		10,800	10,800
• translation		1,100	
• publishing		5,700	
• national consultant (1 @ 2 p/m)		4,000	
Sub-total	55,900	104,600	160,500
<i>Project co-ordination & management costs (3%)</i>	4,815		4,815
Total	60,715	104,600	165,315

Note:

- UNDP Latvia will contribute US\$ 20,000 to the project to provide additional consultancy support to the facilitation of workshops and seminars during both the identification/analysis and development stages of the project. In addition, the UNDP contribution will go toward additional translation and publishing expenses to ensure a higher quality and broader circulation of the project's outputs.
- The Latvian government's contribution is estimated at USD 20,000. This represents: staff time, provision of facilities for project assistant.

¹ Much of the stocktaking is covered by the Country Biodiversity Study. However, it is necessary to assess existing sectoral strategic documents in order to identify cross-sectoral issues relevant to the National Biodiversity Strategy.

² Based on UNOPS' consultancy rates for international experts.

² Real estimation based on data provided by the private publishing company GANDRS.

VII. Institutional Framework and Project Implementation:

Appropriate government departments and ministries will contribute sector-specific information, objectives, and actions. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MEPRD) will be the National Executing Agency and will take a lead role in the development of the project. The MEPRD is responsible for guiding all GoL strategic planning initiatives as well as for any kind of nature protection even if the management of natural resources is responsibility of other institutions. The State Forestry Service of Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the management of forests and hunting animals. The Fishery department of the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the management and development of fisheries.

A Steering Committee will be established by the MEPRD to oversee the entire activity and to ensure compatibility with government processes and modalities. This body will concern itself primarily with policy and administrative procedure. The Committee will be chaired by the MEPRD and will consist of representatives from other government agencies directly related to biodiversity issues. Representation will take into consideration the need for policy decisions and should be at a senior (e.g. Principal or Permanent Secretary) level. Other non-governmental agencies or qualified persons will be invited onto the Committee. A full-time Technical Coordinator (TC) provided by MEPRD and approved by the Steering Committee will also sit on the Steering Committee.

The TC's function will be to coordinate the meetings of the Steering Committee, to produce minutes from such meetings; and day-to-day oversight of the project. Day-to-day project management authority will be delegated to the TC, who will be responsible for planning, management, and completion of all project activities with the assistance of other national consultants. The TC will be ultimately responsible for the successful completion of this project (i.e. the preparation of a NBSAP and a national report). MEPRD will also provide a Technical Assistant when necessary to organize and coordinate seminars and workshops.

The TC will oversee the TTF and serve as the liaison between the SC and the Technical Task Force (TTF) team -- a team of up to (12) national consultants (the size will vary depending upon the task). The TTF will be established by the Steering Committee and will be comprised of a team leader and five working groups. The TTF will be charged with conducting the stocktaking and assessment, and helping to draft the various versions of the national strategy and action plan through the different stages of the project. The Team Leader of the TTF will be responsible for the actually day-to-day implementation of technical input to the project.

National consultants and NGOs, working in close coordination with government staff, will undertake most of the project's activities. An international consultant will be required for the biodiversity planning methodology familiarization and for advising on the preparation of the first and final drafts of the strategy and action plan.

VIII. PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL REPORT

An interim National Report will be prepared and submitted to the CoP by December 1997. This will be necessary to ensure that this Report can meet the deadline for submissions for the next meeting of the CoP scheduled for May, 1998. A full Report will follow at the end of the Project.

ANNEX A: THE ACTIVITY MATRIX

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
		Inst'l Strength.	Training		
Stocktaking and Assessment of Existing Information					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	CS CS,X NEPP CS CS CS CS CS CS CS CS				1 2
Identification and Analysis of Options to meet the Objectives of the CBD					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies for conservation • strategies for sustainable use • strategies for benefit sharing 	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	
Planning and preparation of a Strategy and Plan					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national strategy • national action plan 	X X	X X	X X	X X	
Preparation of the first National Report					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first national report 	X				

Comments/Explanation:

1. Data currently available in the Country Study. Assessment of existing sectoral strategic documents will be carried out under the proposed project in order to identify cross-sectoral issues relevant to the National Biodiversity Strategy.
2. Covered by the NEPP that serves as a policy document for national environmental policy.