

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

Country	:	Republic of Maldives
Project Title:	:	National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan and Report to the CBD.
GEF Focal Area	:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility	:	CBD Ratification: October 1992
GEF Financing	:	US \$150,680
Government Contribution	:	US \$20,000 (in kind)
GEF Implementing Agency	:	UNDP
National Executing Agency	:	Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and the Environment.
GEF Operational Focal Point	:	Ministry for Planning, Human Resources and the Environment (MPHRE)
CBD Focal Point	:	MPHRE
Estimated Start Date	:	February 1997
Project Duration	:	10 months

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Republic of Maldives is a small island developing state in the Indian Ocean. Consisting of a chain of 24 coral atolls (8-120 km east-west and 860 km north-south), the Maldives forms the central and largest section of the Lacadive-Chagos chain which extends southwards from India to the center of the Indian Ocean. Although the maritime area of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) under the jurisdiction of the state amounts to more than 90,000 square kilometers, the land area is estimated at around 300 square kilometers. This land area is divided between 1,900 islands, of which some 220 are currently inhabited. The population of the Maldives is estimated at 245,000, with an annual growth rate of 2.75 %. With a *per capita* GDP estimated to be around US\$750, the Maldives is recognized as one of the least developed countries (LDCs) within the UN system.

2. A total of 55 genera of hermatypic corals have been recorded in Maldivian waters (Addu, IUCN/UNEP, 1988), giving it the greatest coral diversity in the western Indian Ocean. Marine fish are extremely abundant and over 1,200 species have been recorded from the reefs and surrounding ocean, making it one of the most species-rich marine areas in the world (Munch-Peterson, 1982; 1985). 185 species of algae are known to occur here. All five sea turtle species breed in Maldivian waters. Sixty-three species of birds have been reported, three of which are indigenous to the Maldives. Giant clams and black coral, which occur in the Maldives are considered globally endangered. However, the status of most species is unknown. The terrestrial vegetation is typical of small islands and Indo-Pacific coastal plant communities. Plant endemism could be more important than previously thought (Moutou, 1985) but the only recorded endemics are five species of *Pandanus* (St. John, 1961).

3. The Government of Maldives (GoM) places a high priority on the conservation and sustainable use of its biodiversity resources. To date, the GoM has designated 16 specially protected areas within which only diving and bait fishing are allowed. As a small island state with precious little land and a fragile coastal and marine areas, the Maldives has been and is very concerned with the state of its land

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and sea environment. The same meeting in the Maldives which issued the Male declaration calling upon the UN to support issues of concern (primarily environmental) to small island states also led to the establishment of the Alliance of Small Island States. The Maldives was a leading advocate of small island development states' (SIDS) concerns leading up to UNCED, playing a particularly vocal role in the prep com meetings with regard to the concerns of SIDS. The GoM was one of the first to sign the Biodiversity Treaty. Currently, the GoM is in the process of preparing a National Agenda 21 focusing on health and the environment.

4. Despite this priority placed upon conservation and sustainable development, growing pressures threaten the resources of concern. A growing population needs food, shelter, and additional infrastructure, making especially heavy demands on the coral reefs of the Maldives. A growing world market places a premium on certain marine products, encouraging unsustainable fishing practices.

5. Although, virtually all Maldivians are literate, few people go on to secondary and higher secondary education. Consequently there is a limited number of people in the country with university level education, and local scientific capacity is extremely low. The lack of capacity in the Maldives is one of the fundamental barriers to the development of strategies and initiatives for environmental conservation and sustainable development.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES and PROCESS DESCRIPTION

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

7. The principal tasks of this project will be to: 1) facilitate short-term training for a MPHRE official and a biodiversity working group in participatory planning methodologies and biodiversity analysis. 2) conduct a comprehensive assessment of the existing information on biodiversity in the Maldives 3) implement a participatory, strategic planning process and develop priorities for action in protecting Maldives' biodiversity culminating in a NBSAP; 4) prepare the first National Report for submission to the COP.

8. Preparation of the NBSAP will follow a logical sequence of participatory steps in line with the sequence recommended in the WRI/IUCN/UNEP Guidelines. Initially the MPHRE will select a working group headed by a GoM project coordinator and comprised of a national coordinator and representatives from government agencies and NGOs. During the initial part of the Stocktaking and Assessment period, the working group will undergo short-term (1 month) training in participatory methods, strategic planning, biodiversity analysis and dissemination. Following the training, a one month stocktaking and assessment of existing information will be conducted by the working group working closely also with GoM, NGO, and multi-lateral representatives. This assessment will provide the primary basis for all future discussions. During this second month, preparations for extensive consultations in the surrounding atolls will also be made.

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9. The GoM project coordinator will be responsible for the overall implementation of the project and will take the lead in running the field consultation workshops. Day-to-day project management authority will be delegated to a national coordinator to be hired as a consultant. The national coordinator will be responsible for planning, management, and completion of all project activities.

10. A Steering Group comprised of high level officials (see section VII for details) will meet for the first of four occasions in Male in the last week of the second month to: provide necessary policy guidance; make certain all the stakeholders are given a voice in the succeeding process; establish the work plan and corresponding benchmarks for the succeeding eight months, and to discuss the WRI/IUCN/UNEP guidelines. The Steering Group will meet once at the beginning, two in the middle, and once at the end of the drafting period. The second and third meetings will review progress of planning effort, make any necessary adjustments, and the fourth meeting will approve the final draft of the plan.

11. An international consultant's assistance is requested for 5 weeks beginning towards the end of the second month - to assist with finalizing the assessment activities, to assist with the initial meeting with the Steering Group, to work with the newly trained planner and the national coordinator to ensure that the planning and consultation process is "on-track" for the following five month planning period and to initiate the consultative process.

12. The active, participatory period begins in the third month of EA work. Consultations will be held at five regional locations throughout the 19 atolls for least-cost transport of participants from the various islands. The working group will set to work organizing and running the implementation of the five consultations to be held in strategic areas of the Maldives. The workshops participants will first be familiarized with biodiversity issues, its value and implications for its loss, through discussions they will then develop local/regional strategies for biodiversity conservation and use.

13. By utilizing the Maldives' existing network of island development committees, or "rah kuri aruvaa," comprised of elected representatives of island communities, the workshops will ensure that all interested stakeholders (fisheries, tourism managers, researchers, policy makers) participate in the formulation of the NBSAP.

14. Inputs from regional workshops will be submitted to the national Steering Group and will form the basis for drafting the NBSAP. Once the final draft of the NBSAP is completed, a national workshop will be held, bringing representatives of the regional workshops together to review and approve the final draft.

15. An international consultant is being requested to assist the national team in finalizing the NBSAP - final national level meetings, regional consultations, clarification, and translation. This will be concluded by end of the ninth month. The First National Report to the CBD will be completed during the final month of the project in an on-the-job training situation supervised by an international consultant.

III. OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

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Coverage without duplication

16. The NBSAP exercise will build on existing information in the Maldives. The activities to be covered (Activity Matrix, Annex A) involve developing a comprehensive assessment of existing information on the Maldives' biological resources, and developing priorities to sustainably utilize and conserve these resources based upon consultations at the national and regional/local level. No duplicative efforts are known to be underway or proposed in Maldives. The NBSAP will build on the stocktaking materials produced in other, sectoral strategies and more general multi-sectoral plans. None of them provide an over-arching, national, strategic perspective on the Maldives' biodiversity conservation. None provide specific links between the conservation of the Maldives' biological diversity and the Maldives' sustainable development. Several, however, do provide useful "pieces" to an overall, yet-to-be-developed, NBSAP.

17. The *Environmental Protection and Preservation Act of the Maldives* provides a legal framework within which regulations and policies to protect and preserve the natural environment can be developed and implemented; among those activities is the establishment and management of protected areas and species conservation. The government's three year development plan outlines major economic and social development programs which are funded by bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies.

18. The *Fisheries Law* empowers the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture to enforce regulations and guidelines to protect and preserve marine resources in the country by enforcing a sustainable fisheries regime. The *Tourism Law* provides general environmental and aesthetic guidelines for tourism development activities.

19. Maldives' *National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP)*, prepared in 1993 with the assistance of the UNEP and UNDP, deals with broader issues of sustainable development including the "brown" sector, such as urban planning, pollution, and some "green" sector issues of renewable natural resources, tourism, and biodiversity conservation. The broad guidelines provided by the NEAP will facilitate this EA's work in identifying gaps and developing opportunities for specific biodiversity conservation interventions. Maldives' *National Report to UNCED* and the *State of the Environment* report prepared for the Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States provide some useful background material on environment and resources as well as a preliminary action plan for Maldives' environment.

20. Some of the ongoing programs and initiatives related to conservation, management, and utilization of natural biological resources include: Southern Atolls Development Project; a Regional Faunal Biodiversity Assessment organized by SACEP (South Asian Council for Environmental Protection) and supported by Norwegian Aid; a soon to be implemented Strengthening of Legal Framework for Environmental Management project supported by UNEP and SACEP; a Capacity Enhancement in Environmental Management is funded by UNDP and supports the development of environmental management tools (EIAs, solid waste disposal, and so on); a national Integrated Reef Resources Management workshop was held by the GoM this past Spring, resulting in several useful background papers; a regional Integrated Coral Reef Initiative workshop was held in Male last Spring, resulting in general recommendations for action; and a GEF-EA for climate change will be closely

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consulted. In addition, an ADB-supported preparation of an Environmental Management Strategy has yielded a useful compilation of coral reef ecology papers. All of these resources will be utilized.

21. In summary, a number of programs have been implemented and studies completed which have peripherally dealt with various issues under the biodiversity umbrella. However, none have taken a comprehensive, strategic approach to biodiversity conservation in the Maldives. Many of the plans and other documents stating various environmental priorities for the country focus on the "what" to do. This proposed EA effort, with the emphasis on consultation, will also focus on the "how." The GoM has requested assistance in developing a consolidated, strategic, multi-sectoral framework for the conservation of the Maldives' variety of life and living resources as well as an action plan to actually carry it out. This Enabling Activity proposes to do this.

IV. TIME PLAN and SEQUENCING

22. The project will follow the sequence recommended in the WRI/IUCN/UNEP Guidelines. Activities will start in February 1997 and will last for 10 months. An interim report will be prepared at the end of June, 1997. The project will be implemented according to the following timetable.

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Establishment of National Steering Group, Working Group, and Regional Consultation Groups/Delineation of Course of Action	x									
Training of working group	x									
Steering Group Meetings		x			x		x		x	
Stocktaking and Assessment of Existing Information		x								
Initiation of public participation process/5 regional consultations/analysis of options/working group meetings			x	x	x	x	x			
Mid-term Review					x					
Preparation of the Draft BSAP							x	x		
National Workshop to discuss BSAP									x	
Preparation of Final BSAP/Consultations									x	
Preparation of National Report to CoP					x					x

V. BEST PRACTICES

23. 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 GoM will follow the best practice criteria as contained in the "Enabling Activity Operational Criteria" document.

VI. PROJECT FINANCING

(Estimated Costs)	Product	Process	Total (US \$)
Stocktaking and Inventory of Existing Information	\$5,000		\$5,000
- 2 national consultants (2 p/m)	\$3,000		\$3,000
1 senior	\$2,000		
1 junior	\$1,000		
- documentation	\$2,000		\$2,000
Identification and Analysis of Options	\$ 11,750	\$ 94,750	\$106,500
- 2 national consultants (11 p/m)	\$4,250	\$12,250	\$16,500
1 senior	\$2,500	\$7,500	
1 junior	\$1,750	\$3,750	
- 1 int'l consultant (1 p/m) *	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$15,000
- training for planning	-	\$25,000	\$25,000
- Consultations (5)	-	\$50,000	\$50,000 ¹
Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan	\$9,000	\$14,000	\$23,000
- 2 national consultants (3 p/m)	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000
- 1 int'l consultant (1 p/m)	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$15,000 ²
- National workshop/ Final Consultations	-	\$5,000	\$5,000
Preparation of First National Report	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$9,000
- int'l consultant (2 weeks)	\$4,000		\$4,000
- publication/translation		\$5,000	\$5,000
Coordination and Management (5%)	\$1,490	\$5,690	\$7,180
TOTALS	\$31,240	\$117,340	\$150,680

¹ An estimated \$250/participant due to the high cost of transporting people between islands. 40 participants (include working group)/consultation. 5 consultations. 5x40=200 participants in total. 200 participants x \$250/participant = \$50,000.

² These figures are standard rates for international consultants. Every effort will be made to utilize a consultant from the region, in which case, we expect these costs to be lower.

VII. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

24. Appropriate government departments and ministries will contribute sector-specific information, objectives, and actions. The Environment Section (ES) of the Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment (MPHRE) will take the lead in coordinating the development of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. The MPHRE is the main governmental agency responsible for the execution of biodiversity conservation programs as well as overseeing and enforcing measures to conserve and sustainably utilize the biodiversity resources of the Maldives. The MPHRE will work closely with: the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, which has jurisdiction over fishing and living marine resources; the Ministry of Tourism; the Ministry of Atoll Administration which coordinates all atoll development work; and the National Commission for the Protection of the Environment (NCPE), which advises the Minister of Planning. Several NGOs will be involved in all the consultations and reviews of the developing strategy and action plan.

25. A national-level Steering Group will be formed under the MPHRE, comprised of representatives from each of the following institutions: the Environment Section, Planning Section, and Environment Research Unit of the MPHRE; Ministry for Fisheries and Agriculture; the Ministry of Tourism; and the Ministry of Atoll Administration; a representative of the NGO community; the private sector. The Steering Group will seek the advice of the NCPE, in addition the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will have observer status on the steering committee to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the project.

26. The Steering Group, supported by the working group, will review, comment upon and approve initial draft and final draft versions of the Strategy and Action Plan. The working group will be responsible for the day-to-day project activities and will be responsible for implementing all planning activities -- discussion, analysis and coordination for the development of the NBSAP.

27. At the local level, representatives from the island development committees (elected by local communities) will participate in each regional consultation. A total of 5 consultations will be held to involve the large populations and cover the main islands. Each consultation will involve 40 representatives (including the working group). They, in turn, will nominate 2 individuals based on experience and expertise in related issues, who will then be brought to Male for the final review of the NBSAP before it is finalized.

VIII. PREPARATION OF THE FIRST NATIONAL REPORT

This report will be prepared following the guidelines provided by the CoP of November 1995.

Annex A: ACTIVITY MATRIX:

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Inst Strength	Building Training	Public Particip	Cmnts (Next Page)
Stocktaking and Assessment - biodiversity & 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 programmes - preliminary statement of objectives - identification of gaps - assessment of existing needs	x				1
	x (IRRM)				2
	x (SACEP)				3
	x (UNDP)				4
	x (Misc)				5
	x (IFAD)				6
					7
	x				8
	x (reports)				9
	x (reports)				10
x				10	
Identification and Analysis of Options to meet the Objectives of the CBD - strategies for conservation - strategies for sustainable use - strategies for benefit sharing	x	x	x	x	11
	x	x	x	x	12
	x	x	x	x	13
	x	x	x	x	14
	x	x	x	x	15
Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan - national strategy - national action plan					
Preparation of first National Report - first national report	x		x	x	16

Legend: x = activity undertaken by the project

Footnotes :

1. No overall assessment of existing information on the Maldives' biodiversity resources has ever been done. In doing so, this effort will rely on disparate studies and research papers published in the Maldives and internationally.
2. The assessments referred to on page three and four provide general information on sectoral conservation action plans and a national conservation plan. The national Integrated Reef Resources Management (IRRM) dialogue (supported in part by the Bay of Bengal Project (FAO) was a national academic and policy maker's discussion on reef management issues. The proceedings, comprised of 14 papers on reef management issues, will be a valuable resource for the stocktaking and preparatory effort. The National Environmental Action Plan and NES recognize biodiversity conservation and sectoral issues. Neither provide the necessary strategic framework and action points, however. This EA will build on the broad guidelines already prepared to prepare realistic and specific actions for an integrated and coordinated biodiversity action plan.
3. The UNEP/SACEP supported effort to strengthen the legal structure for environmental management will be conducting this assessment for the most part. Currently, the Environmental Protection and Preservation Act provides an overall umbrella/general legal framework for the establishment and management of protected areas and reef management. Some additional work will need to be done on biodiversity-specific issues.
4. The MPHRE implemented, UNDP-supported capacity building for environmental management will provide this assessment for the most part. A review will be made of the UNDP-supported effort and any gaps will be filled.
5. While general information exists at the national level (IRRM) and at specific local sites, more work needs to be done in both traditional and non-traditional areas of biodiversity conservation.
6. Conservation and sustainable use technologies are being encouraged and discussed in detail by the IFAD (International Fund for Agriculture Development) project in the southern atolls. An overall assessment of knowledge in this area would provide much-needed detail and be the first step in exchanging information on best practices.
7. Most of these are well known for most of the Maldives' biodiversity resources and ecosystems.
8. Information on ongoing general development programmes is available from the latest three year plan document. There is need for further work to assess various programs being planned and carried out and to compile overall information on environmental programmes in the Maldives.
9. The National Environmental Action Plan is not specifically concerned with biodiversity, but it takes the first step in identifying priority areas for concern which are related to biodiversity. This combined with its overall assessment of environmental measures and programs will be a valuable aid to this EA's stocktaking efforts in this area.
10. An overall gap analysis of biodiversity conservation will be required. This project will build on the existing landuse maps and latest information to identify the protected area gaps and existing needs.
- 11-13. Work will be conducted in such a way as to build capacity while implementing the activities and producing the outputs. Institutional strengthening will come through improved contacts between agencies. Since the EA will be a process driven activity, the regional consultations will be designed to

empower people to remain involved in the process of sustainably utilizing the Maldives' resources, thereby strengthening the link between national policy and local implementation. Training will be undertaken in the form of a short-term course abroad in planning methodologies as well as on-the-job training in participatory methodologies as provided by an international consultant. The regional consultations will provide a forum for the participation of those who have responsibility for, depend on, live within, and otherwise care for the variety of life in the Maldives: fishers, farmers, policy makers, and resource managers.

14. The process of consensus building and information gathering as discussed above (11) will be the main input for preparing the strategy and action plan. The working group will combine regional inputs in drafting the national Biodiversity Action Plan. A final national level workshop will be held to bring together the Steering Group and two local representatives from each of the five regional workshops to review the NBSAP, assess the main priorities and proposed actions and integrate them into a final national biodiversity action plan. The NBSAP will describe the biodiversity conservation situation in the country, discuss issues, prioritize national level actions, define implementation frameworks, and identify funding requirements as well as potential sources.

15. Same as No. 14.

16. The first national report will be drafted by the MPHRE (with initial guidance from the international consultant). The report will be open for public comment and reviewed before being finalized. Final documents will be submitted by MPHRE to UNDP/GEF-CoP.