Namibia EA 7/98

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

ENABLING ACTIVITY PROPOSAL

Country:	**Namibia**
Project Title:	Preparation of a National Biodiversity Strategy/ Action Plan
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	Ratified CBD on 16 May, 1997
GEF Financing:	US$ 242,200
Government Contribution:	In-kind
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNEP
National Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
GEF Operational Focal Point:	Directorate of Environmental Affairs Ministry of Environment and Tourism
CBD Focal Point:	Directorate of Environmental Affairs - National Biodiversity Programme, Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Estimated Starting Date:	September 1998
Project Duration:	15 months

Background/Context:

1. Namibia is a vast dry land (823,988 km^2 of land area), with a small population (1.61 million, 1995 estimate), situated in southwestern Africa astride the Tropic of Capricorn.

2. The overwhelming two features of Namibia's climate are scarcity and the unpredictability of rainfall. Within Africa, the climate of Namibia is only second in aridity to the Sahara: the countrywide average rainfall is under 250mm per year, coupled with an incredibly high annual mean evaporation of 2.5 - 3.6 m. On average, 83% of rainfall evaporates, 14% is transpired by plants, leaving only 2% to enter drainage systems, where some is retained in dams, and only 1% recharges the land's severely stressed groundwater tables.

3. These features, i.e., the low rainfall and the high evaporation over most Namibia, strongly limit the species composition of natural ecological communities, as well as the options for human development. The combination of a cold, subantartic upwelling on the Atlantic coast and a hot subtropical interior have led to hyper-arid, bleak coastal conditions in the Namib Desert. The cold, nutrient-rich, north-flowing upwelling has fostered one of the most productive marine ecosystems in the world. A thin strip of coastal fog, seldom reaching more than 30km inland, frequently blows over the hyper-arid coast and sustains life there in the absence of rainfall.

4. Namibia's varied landscapes stretch from the cold and desolate coasts through gravel plains, "dune seas" and rugged inselbergs to the scrublands, thorn savannas, ephemeral pans and rocky hills

of the interior. Contrasting with these arid lands are the moist woodlands and tropical floodplains of the northeast, making Namibia's habitats among the most fascinatingly diverse and scenic on earth.

5. Despite the overall arid conditions which limit the number of species in comparison to, for example, neighbouring South Africa's Cape Floral Kingdom, Namibia has a high proportion of biota, that are unique to the Southern Arid Zone, with many unusual restricted-range species. Thus, the level of endemism in the arid northwestern escarpment and southern winter-fall zone is considerable.

6. Four major categories of geophysical zones can be distinguished: i) the coastal plain and Namib Desert; ii) the broken and rugged Namib escarpment; iii) the rocky central plateau; and iv) the Kalahari sandveld. The Namib Desert and coastal plain give the country its name, as well as its most forbidding and distinctive scenery.

7. Namibia's steep northeast-to-west climatic gradient, the annual rainfall and the varied soil types and land forms, largely determine the distribution of its characteristic three vegetation zones: deserts, savannas and woodlands. Fourteen (14) major subdivisions of these vegetation zones have been categorized[1]. Many endemics and other species of conservation importance occur in the desert fringe subdivision (which includes the inselbergs and the Namib escarpment) which forms a transition between desert and savanna. The aridity which has prevailed for millions of years has fostered a variety of arid-tolerant species. Species with bizarre growth forms and strategies such as Welwitschia mirabilis have made the Namib a popular destination for scientists for over a century.

8. From a global biodiversity significance stand point, the following features characterize biodiversity conservation efforts in Namibia:

The state-controlled protected area network (PAN): it consists of 21 parks and reserves which make up about 13.8% of Namibia's land area. Two of the national parks, Etosha National Park and Namib-Naukluft, are among Africa's biggest and most important parks, rich in endemic species of both fauna and flora. Although large and relatively well-managed, this state PAN is nonetheless ecologically unrepresentative and efforts are underway to identify other areas of unusual ecological value that need additional protection. The BSAP to be prepared under this project will integrate these efforts.

Conservancies: these are land units managed jointly for resource conservation purposes by multiple landholders, with financial and other benefits shared between them in some way. They occur in both private and communal/tribal land. Most aim to enhance habitat for, and numbers of, game species such as ungulates or gamebirds, and many draw income from tourism ventures. Over 40,000 km^2 of such conservancies currently exist and the trend is increasing. They represent an innovative land use approach which complements and does not necessarily exclude traditional farming and is implemented on the basis of ecologically-sensitive land management plans.

Private reserves and farms: these are privately owned nature reserves and game farms which play also a significant role in biodiversity protection in Namibia. Some are extremely rich in endemic species, unique landscape features or both. As of 1995, there were 148 such reserves totalling 7642 km^2 or 0.9% of Namibia's land area.

Protected industrial areas: Namibia is unusual in having a vast tract of land protected by the mining industry for its own activities. In the southern Namib coast and along the Orange River where diamond mining occurs, a large Sperrgebiet or "Forbidden Area" surrounding the narrow mining strips was declared strictly off-limits to anyone other than the company granted prospecting and mining rights. This coincidentally protected some of the country's most pristine and specialized ecological communities from disturbance. However, the mining industry has not always consciously taken environmental conservation into account and some ecologically important areas, particularly those comprising coastal and intertidal habitats, have suffered major, if localized, ecological damage from mining. It is only recently that the mining industry has recognized environmental conservation as an important

[1] Biological Diversity in Namibia: a country study. Draft of January 1998.

by-product of its land tenure and three areas of the Sperrgebiet have now been identified as ecologically most sensitive:

- **the Orange River Valley** along the southern border forms a linear oasis through arid terrain. It supports a unique flora such as many succulent and fog-dependent species which occur nowhere else in Namibia. The river mouth is a wetland of international significance and the valley is immensely rich in marine and terrestrial fossils;

- **the Atlantic coast, offshore islands** and **coastal dune hummocks** harbour many endemic animals, breeding seabird colonies, and specialized fog-dependent lichens and hummock vegetation, as well as sites of historical, archeological and paleontological value;

- the **inland inselbergs, mountain range** and **rocky outcrops**, which are important ecological refuges for many highly restricted-range plant species and some rare or threatened animals. Mountains such as the Aurusberg and Roter Kamm meteorite crater combine unsurpassed scenic grandeur with a diverse and unique succulent flora.

9. The vast natural terrarium of the Sperrgebiet is of extraordinarily high value in terms of biodiversity and tourism. The area forms one of the last major refuges for red data mammals such as water mongoose (Atilax paludinosus), grey rhebok (Palea capreolus), African wild cat (Felis sylvestris), cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus), aardwolf (Proteles cristatus), Cape clawless otter (Aonyx capensis), brown hyena (Hyenea brunnea), spotted hyena (Crocuta crocuta) and bat-eared fox (Otocyon megalotis). Moreover, many red data wetland and seabirds rely on the Orange River Mouth and islands off the Sperrgebiet coast. Over 700 plant species are believed to occur in the area, of which about 50 species (8%) are endemic to the Sperrgebiet.

10. The northern Namib Desert is a rugged mountainous area with deeply incised valleys, ephemeral rivers, and large megafauna such as elephant, giraffe, and the only population of black rhino (Diceros bicornis) in Africa outside a protected area which is expanding, due to local communities' protection efforts. The area represents an unprecedented opportunity for cooperation between the government-controlled Skeleton Coast Park, adjacent communities in and outside of established conservancies, and non-governmental organizations in the field of biodiversity conservation..

11. As Namibia is so arid, its wetlands have a considerable ecological, economic and social impact. Most of these wetlands are ephemeral. Only five rivers, all with their headwaters in other countries, are perennial. Namibia acceded to the Ramsar Convention in December 1995 and initially designated four wetlands as Ramsar sites: the Walvis Bay wetlands, Sandwich Harbour, the Orange River mouth (shared with South Africa) and the Etosha Pan/ Cuvelai inland delta complex. The two coastal sites, Sandwich Harbour and Walvis Bay, host almost 200,000 migratory shorebirds during peak migration periods and are the most critical coastal wetlands for birds in the entire southern African region. The ephemeral Etosha Pan/Cuvelai inland delta complex is a key source of fish and other wetland resources for rural people.

12. Namibia's marine environment is dominated by the Benguela Current system, which is characterized by cool surface waters and high biological productivity. The driving physical process in the Benguela system is coastal, wind-induced upwelling, in which nutrients trapped in the deeper oceanic layers are brought to the surface. It is one of the world's most powerful and productive upwelling systems, supporting lucrative marine industries. However, following an all-too-familiar trend, heavy overexploitation of pelagic fish off Namibia in the 1960's and 1970's led to the collapse of populations of several economically important fish, especially pilchard or sardine (Sardinops sagax). This history badly crippled the potential for subsequent development of the industry and the greatest prudence is thus needed to protect stocks sufficiently in order to free the industry from the effects of past overexploitation.

Project Objectives and Short Description:

13. As seen above, Namibia has unique, globally significant biodiversity which must be safeguarded, not only for its inherent value but also for the goods and services it provides to the people of Namibia and beyond. However, because of physical, climatic and socio-economic constraints as well as the country's history of natural resource conflicts, finding effective and lasting ways of safeguarding this priceless heritage is a major challenge. The objective of this project is thus to assist the Namibian Government to formulate a strategy and action plan to address this challenge within the overall framework of national sustainable development, which recognizes the environmental constraints of the land and the injustice of natural resource distribution and access bequeathed by colonial administrations.

14. Namibia is a "young" nation which is committed to fulfill the obligations of international environmental conventions to which it has subscribed. The project will thus assist the country to implement Article 6 of the CBD which it ratified in 1997, in line with Decision II/7 of the COP.

15. The country has just completed a biodiversity country study with the assistance of UNEP and GEF, which is a comprehensive assessment of the status of biodiversity in Namibia and the key issues affecting its conservation and sustainable use. Under the present project, to implement provisions of Articles 6, 8, 9 and 13 of the CBD, Namibia will also print extra copies of its country study (so far published only in limited circulation as a book) and of a popular booklet derived therefrom, as a way of informing national decisionmakers and other persons involved in the development of the BSAP. Finally, the first national report to the CBD has been prepared (using Namibian funds), based on information contained in the country study as well as relevant past and present activities.

16. A successful pilot programme on biodiversity information management has been initiated with assistance from GTZ. It is Namibia's intention to seek separate funds through GEF for the establishment of an operational, integrated Biodiversity Information System, which will use an efficient network to link these pilot databases with other, existing biodiversity information resources at different institutes and agencies. This will necessitate (i) a simple needs analysis, (ii) a degree of training for Namibian database managers and network technicians, and (iii) adequate hardware and software to allow for the efficient operation and Internet accessibility (via the Clearing House Mechanism, CHM) of the Biodiversity Information System. Namibia is thus not applying for the add-on module for the CHM under the current project, as its domestic needs are felt to be better and more efficiently served by an integrated approach to its existing resources and capabilities.

17. The MET will be the body coordinating the implementation of this project. The multi-disciplinary/multi-sectoral National Biodiversity Task Force set up under the auspices of this Ministry to conduct the biodiversity country study has been mandated by the MET to follow this up with the preparation of a BSAP, building on the information and momentum generated by the country study. A much wider participation by representatives of all major stakeholders (concerned Government Ministries, Regional Authorities, Mining Sector, Fishing Industries, Tourism Operatives, local communities, conservation NGOs, etc) will take place under this project as the country analyses and identifies options for implementing the objectives of the CBD and prepares a strategy and action plan accordingly.

18. It is thus anticipated that a number of Round Tables and two national workshops will take place in the course of the project: the first workshop will bring together all major stakeholders' representatives and identify options to meet the objectives of the CBD on the basis of the information and preliminary outline of priority actions contained in the biodiversity country study. The workshop will put forward views and recommendations upon which the National Biodiversity Task Force will build in preparing the draft BSAP. The objective of the second national workshop will be to discuss and agree on the draft BSAP before its finalization.

The MET will have the responsibility to ensure that the final BSAP reflects the consensus reached by participants in the second national workshop. In addition to the 2 national workshops, the National Biodiversity Task Force may organize Round Tables at the regional level on selected sectoral themes with the highest impact on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in particular regions of Namibia. The views expressed at the Round Tables will be consolidated in the national workshops.

Identifications of themes and priorities began in 1995 in internal workshops of the National Biodiversity Task Force.

III Operational Criteria

Coverage without duplication:

19. The project will be implemented relying to the maximum degree possible on existing capacity and information, particularly that generated through relevant past or on-going activities, both governmental and non-governmental. The just completed biodiversity country study will be especially used, in terms of both the information it contains and the institutional cooperation it stimulated. Moreover, the BSAP preparation will be closely coordinated with the recently initiated UNEP/GEF "Preparation of a National Biosafety Framework" project to be implemented by the Namibia Biotechnology Alliance, which is a working group of the Biodiversity Task Force.

Appropriate overall sequencing of activities:

20. The project will be carried out over a period of 15 months according to the following time table:

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Meeting of the Task Force to plan implementation of the project	x														
Popularisation of country study (extra copies printed, summary booklet printed)	x	x	x												
Selection of consultants		x	x												
Drafting of background documents		x	x	x	x	x	x								
Stakeholder consultations/round tables/ public outreach			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
First National Workshop							x								
Drafting of National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP)							x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Circulation of NBSAP for Comments											x	x	x		
Second National Workshop													x		
Finalization of NBSAP													x	x	
Printing and Publication of NBSAP														x	x

Best practice

21. The methods used in implementation of this project will follow the approaches described in National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experiences Around the World (WRI/UNEP/IUCN, 1995) and Guidelines for the Preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (UNEP, 1994), and will comply with best practices outlined in the Revised Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity (GEF, 1997).

Institutional Framework and Project Implementation

22. The project will be hosted and facilitated by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Directorate of Environmental Affairs) which will be responsible for overseeing its implementation. Among other things, MET will designate a person to serve as the National Project Coordinator, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, and a half-time Project Officer (50%), who will coordinate public outreach, regional consultations, and awareness-building aspects of the project. The National Biodiversity Task Force which was established to coordinate the just-completed Biodiversity Country Study project has been mandated by MET to guide the preparation of the BSAP. It will provide overall guidance to the consultants regarding execution of the activities stipulated in the project. It will meet regularly to assess progress in project implementation, identify any delays and propose remedial measures to ensure a smooth and timely execution of the activities.

23. As the GEF Implementing Agency for this project, UNEP will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the project, coordinating, and evaluating at the end of the project and reporting to the GEF on these aspects of project implementation. UNEP will closely monitor implementation of the project, through quarterly progress reports to be submitted by the National Project Coordinator, in line with established reporting requirements and procedures of Implementing Agencies.

24. Local consultants and National Biodiversity Task Force members will provide technical expertise in specific areas, including follow-up and other relevant know-how. Together with the Project coordinator and project officer, they will be responsible for the execution of the bulk of the activities under the project.

V Project Financing

Project Budget (US$) Namibia NBSAP

Activity	Product	Process	Total
1.Assessment of Existing Information*	0	0	0
2.Identification and Analysis of Options			
- Project coordinator, full-time, 15 months	24 000	0	24 000
- Project officer, part-time (50%), 15 months	12 000	0	12 000
- Internet/computer training for project staff	0	1 200	1 200
- Communications and data transfer	0	10 000	10 000
- Public outreach activities/regional roundtables	28 000	3 000	31 000
- Popular promotion of country study results	21 000	7 500	28 500
- 1st nat'l workshop (travel, per diem, facilities)	3 500	400	3 900
- Internat'l consultant (1 pers-m@ $4000 p.m.)	4 000	0	4 000
- National consultants (18 pers-m@$1700 p.m.)	30 600	2 400	33 000
- Background reports, production	12 000	1 200	13 200
- Task Force consultations	0	900	900
- 2 computers, software & 1 printer	10 000	500	10 500
- Office supplies	1 500	0	1 500
- Transport	0	3 000	3 000
- Miscellaneous	3 000	1 000	4 000
3. Preparation of NBSAP			
- National consultants (6 pers-m@ $1700 p.m.)	10 200	800	11 000
- International consultant	0	0	0
- 2nd nat'l workshop (travel, per diem,facilities)	3 600	500	4 100
- Dissemination of draft NBSAP report	2 400	200	2 600
- Publication & dissemination of NBSAP report	20 000	1 000	21 000
- Task Force consultations	0	900	900
- Miscellaneous	3 000	1 000	4 000
4. Preparation of first national report*	0	0	0
5. Establishment of Clearing House Mechanism**	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	188 800	35 500	224 300
6. Co-ordination & Management Costs (approx. 8%)	--	--	17,900
TOTAL	188 800	35 500	242,200

* Completed

** To be addressed in future proposal for establishment of integrated biodiversity information system network

TABLE A: Dimensions of Enabling Activities (Standard Activity Matrix), Namibia

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity building		Public Participation	Com (To se footno
		Institutional Strengthening	Training		
Stocktaking of existing information	Biodiversity Task Force				1
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 x x	x x x	x x x	
Planning and Preparation of NBSAP - national strategy - national action plan	x x	x x	x x	x x	
Preparation of the First National Report - First National Report	MET				2
Establishment of Clearing House Mechanism - Strengthening of CHM focal point	x	x	x		

x: Activity to be undertaken under this project.

1: The National Biodiversity Task Force, convened by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, has just completed a Biodiversity Country Study with assistance from UNEP and the GEF.

2: Namibia has finalized its First National Report to the CBD with in-country funding, based on the information contained in the Country Study and other relevant activities. The Country Study was appended to this report as an Annexure.

14-1/0915

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

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Dr Cyriaque Sendashonga
SPO (Biodiversity)
UNEP/ GEF Coordination Office
United Nations Environment Programme
Nairobi

25 June, 1998

Dear Dr Sendashonga,

GEF Operational Focal Point endorsement:
Enabling Activity proposal: NBSAP (Namibia)

The GEF Enabling Activity Proposal, "Preparation of a National Biodiversity Strategy / Action Plan (Namibia)" has high endorsement from this office. We have assessed the draft proposal in detail and have already offered modifications and comments. We are satisfied that this proposal as it stands will facilitate the work of the Namibian National Biodiversity Programme in a further major step towards effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and hereby strongly recommend GEF approval of the proposal.

Please feel free to contact either me or Mr Peter Tarr for further details or recommendation.

With best personal regards,

Dr C J Brown
Director: Environmental Affairs

GEF National Operational Focal Point