

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Enabling Activity Proposal in Biodiversity

Country:	Slovak Republic
Project Title:	Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and National Report
GEF Focal Area:	Biological Diversity
Country Eligibility:	CBD approved August 1994
GEF Financing:	US\$ 77,000
Government Contribution:	in-kind
National Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment
GEF Operational Focal Point:	Ministry of Environment
CBD Focal Point:	Ministry of Environment
Estimated Starting Date:	October 1996
Project Duration:	7 months

Background/Context

Slovakia is a country of 49,025 km² and 5.3 million people. The geographical position of the country, in the center of Europe and on the boundary of the Carpathian Mountains and the Pannonian lowlands, provides a setting for a diverse flora and fauna. Nearly all Middle European ecosystems occur in the Slovak Republic, except those typical of the coast. Forests and agricultural lands cover 41% and 50% of the country, respectively. There are about 3,500 vascular plant species, including cultivated species and an estimated 40,000 animal species, including 550 vertebrates.

In addition to relatively intact natural areas, there are varied landscapes that have resulted from centuries-old land use patterns. For example, the meadows of the East Carpathians have developed associations of plants and animals as a result of many centuries of agricultural use. Such landscapes are of considerable biodiversity value, as well as historical and social interest, and many are reservoirs of genetic materials such as crop and domestic animal varieties associated with land uses that have disappeared from areas managed under the large scale agriculture of recent times.

Slovakian biodiversity is threatened by unsustainable agricultural and forestry practices, major engineering works, industry and its attendant pollution, drainage of wetlands and stream channelization. Of the 3,500 species of higher plants, 939 (27%) are threatened. Of the 550 vertebrates, 153 (28%) are threatened. Wetlands and floristically rich meadows are among the most threatened ecosystems. Slovakian forests, which have been utilized for millennia, are becoming increasingly impacted. Certain montane forest ecosystems, especially in the Tatra Mountains in northern Slovakia, are threatened by regional and transboundary air pollution as well as associated acid rain.

The Republic of Slovakia, like many of the former Soviet Union countries, is undergoing a transformation to a market economy. This transformation, including its attendant privatization/repatriation of certain public lands, is requiring the rapid assessment of a large number of environmental problems. In many cases, neither state administrators nor new land owners possess the experience or resources to solve these problems. The BSAP will provide a realistic statement of the Republic's policies, recommended courses of action, and resources that will be needed for implementation.

Project Objectives and Short Description

The main objectives of the project are to prepare a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable use of the country's biodiversity, and to prepare the first National Report for submission to the Conference of Parties. Under the project, public understanding and involvement in biodiversity conservation and planning will be increased through the stakeholder participation activities and a public promotion program.

The Slovakian BSAP will build on two important biodiversity stocktaking and strategy-building exercises. A Country Study was completed in 1995 without external assistance. The Country Study is comprehensive, and addresses conservation of ecosystems, habitats and species as well as microorganisms, biotechnology, and biosafety. No additional stocktaking research is needed; a summary in Slovakian and English will be prepared for the BSAP and National Report. In 1996, the MOE developed a preliminary Framework for the National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS), with assistance from UNEP. This draft NBS contains an adequate stocktaking chapter and elaborates 24 goals for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The draft NBS provides a useful starting point for the BSAP, however, it lacks an action plan, an implementation plan, and was not based on public participation. Under this proposal, the BSAP will be completed by prioritizing and finalizing the BSAP goals, and preparing the strategy and action plan based on the participation of the public and private sector, NGOs, and the general public.

A small steering committee working under the direction of the MOE will prepare the work plan, direct the working groups, and provide general guidance to the project. The working groups (including agriculture, forestry, health, protected areas management, and environmental protection) will prioritize and refine the goals from the existing draft NBS, as well as prepare the strategies and actions. The Slovak Commission for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the National Secretariat for the Convention will act as facilitators for the project. An international consultant from either IUCN or UNEP-ROE, which have been active in implementing the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, will participate in one tranche of working group meetings, attend the National Workshop, and comment on the work products (including the work plan, draft and final BSAP, and National Report). Under the project, a public awareness campaign will inform the public about the goals, objectives and results of the BSAP project.

The action plan will be developed in a “bottom-up” participatory process with government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector working together on the steering committee, working groups, and at the National Workshop (held after the draft BSAP is circulated). At the beginning of the project, the public awareness campaign will conduct an outreach effort that invites all interested stakeholders to participate in the formulation of the BSAP strategies and action.

Coverage without duplication

The BSAP will be based on existing capacity, and on existing materials to the maximum extent possible. There are other biodiversity conservation initiatives being undertaken in Slovakia, including a GEF Biodiversity Protection Project and annual forest sector reviews. The existing Country Study and draft NBS will be fully incorporated into the BSAP. The BSAP and National Report activities covered under this proposal are not duplicated by any previous or on-going initiatives.

Time Plan and Sequencing

The BSAP will be produced over a period of 7 months according to the schedule outlined below, starting in October 1996. A steering committee appointed by the MOE will prepare a detailed work plan and Terms of Reference for the national consultants and an international consultant. The MOE, government specialists from other sectors (agriculture, forestry, environmental health and safety), national consultants, and representatives of the private sector and NGOs will: *a*) participate in working groups to refine and finalize the BSAP goals and formulate the policies and actions, *b*) prepare the BSAP document; *c*) hold the national workshop; and *d*) prepare the National Report. The tasks and sequence of events envisioned for the Slovakian BSAP are consistent with those recommended in National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experiences Around the World (WRI/UNEP /IUCN 1993) as well as the “Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity” (Global Environment Facility 1996). The schedule outlined below is consistent with the need for submission of the first national reports on implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity by June 30, 1997.

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Prepare work plan, TOR for BSAP; disseminate existing information on strategies and stocktaking	X						
Roundtable stakeholder meetings to refine/prioritize goals from existing NBS, complete strategies		X					
Working groups discuss strategies, define actions			X	X			
Prepare/circulate draft BSAP				X			
National workshop for BSAP					X		
Prepare final BSAP						X	
Editing/translation of BSAP							X
Public awareness campaign		X			X		X
Preparation of National Report to COP							X

Best practice

The BSAP will be prepared by Slovaks from the public and private sectors and NGOs through a cross-sectoral process that emphasizes national priorities. The proposed activities and those completed by the Government of Slovakia (GOS) to date (the Country Study and the Framework for the Biodiversity Strategy) are consistent with the Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies (WRI/UNEP/IUCN 1993) as well as the “Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity” (Global Environment Facility 1996).

Institutional framework and project implementation

The Ministries of Environment (MOE), Land Management (MLM), and Agriculture (MOA) are the principle institutions responsible for environmental protection of Slovakian public and private lands. To facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into sector planning, the project will be led by a broad-based steering committee led by the MOE, and including MLM and MOA, key non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The MOE will also develop the participation of other institutions and organizations, including the Academy of Sciences, Forest Research Institute, Comenius University, NGOs (e.g., Slovak Union of Nature and Landscape Protectors), and the private sector. The MOE will be responsible for preparation of the BSAP and National Report.

Project Financing

The proposed budget covers the additional activities needed to complete the Strategy, develop the Action Plan and prepare the first National Report. The budget also covers the costs of translation and publishing and a public awareness campaign. The proposed budget relies to the maximum extent on existing materials, including the 1995 Country Study and the preliminary Framework for a National Biodiversity Strategy.

	Product	Process	Total
Strategy and Action Plan	26,000	37,000	63,000
national consultants (includes costs for working groups)	7,000	17,000	24,000
internat'l consultant	1,000	4,000	5,000
1 national workshop		11,000	11,000
dissemination of drafts	2,000		2,000
publication costs	10,000		10,000
translation costs	6,000		6,000
public awareness campaign		5,000	5,000
First National Report	9,000		9,000
preparation	5,000		5,000
translation	2,000		2,000
publication	2,000		2,000
Coordination and Management Costs	2,500	2,500	5,000
Total	37,500	39,500	77,000

Annex: Activity Matrix, Slovakia Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Enabling Activity	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
		Institutional Strength	Training		
Commitment	Planning, Execution				
<i>Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information</i>	CS, FBS				1
<i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i>					
strategies for conservation	X			X	
strategies for sustainable use	X			X	
strategies for benefit sharing	X			X	
<i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i>					
national strategy	X, FBS			X	2
national action plan	X			X	2
<i>Planning and Preparation of first National Report</i>					
first national report	X				
Legend					
X Activity to be undertaken under this proposal					
CS Stocktaking activities will be based on the existing country study					
FBS draft goals were developed under the Framework for Biodiversity Strategy. These will be refined and prioritized early in BSAP preparation, and used as a foundation for formulation of strategies and actions.					

Activity Matrix comments

1. A Country Study was completed in 1995 (without external assistance); this will be summarized for the BSAP stocktaking exercises. The Country Study is comprehensive, and addresses conservation of ecosystems, habitats and species as well as microorganisms, biotechnology, and biosafety. No additional research will be undertaken for the stocktaking, except that a summary in Slovakian and English will be prepared for the BSAP and National Report.

2. The BSAP strategies and actions will build upon the Framework for the National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) developed with assistance from UNEP in 1996. This draft NBS contains an adequate stocktaking chapter and elaborates 24 goals for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The draft NBS provides a useful starting point for the BSAP, however, it lacks an action plan, an implementation plan, and was not based on public participation. Under this proposal, the BSAP would be completed by prioritizing and finalizing the BSAP goals, and preparing the strategy and action plan based on the participation of the public and private sector, NGOs, and the general public.