

REPUBLIC SLOVENIA

Enabling Activity Proposal in Biodiversity

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| Country: | Republic Slovenia |
| Project Title: | Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and National Report |
| GEF Focal Area: | Biological Diversity |
| Country Eligibility: | CBD ratified on July 9, 1996 |
| GEF Financing: | US\$ 89,000 |
| Government Contribution: | in-kind |
| National Executing Agency: | Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning |
| GEF Operational Focal Point: | Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning |
| CBD Focal Point: | State Authority for Nature Conservation |
| Estimated Starting Date: | March 1998 |
| Project Duration: | 7 months |

Slovenian Biodiversity and Conservation

The Republic of Slovenia covers 20,256 square km, with a population of 2,020,000 inhabitants. Situated in the southeastern part of the Alps on the northern most part of the Balkan Peninsula, the country encompasses four biogeographical systems: Mediterranean, Pannonian, Alpine and Dinaric. The convergence of these four systems, with their different types of climate, geological structure, varied relief and great differences in altitude (from 0 to 2864 m, with a 600 m average), provides for rich landscape and biological diversity.

Forests cover about 54% of the total area of Slovenia and support viable populations of brown bear and lynx, especially in the corridor area between the Dinaric mountains and the Alps. Slovenia also contains one of the most important remnant alluvial forests in Europe. These endangered floodplain forests do not occur anywhere in Europe at the same scale as they do along the Sava.

Slovenian flora consists of some 3,200 known vascular plant species. Of these, 60 are endemic, and 330 are included in the national red list. Currently, 423 vertebrate species have been recorded, of which 238 species are threatened. Amphibians are most endangered.

The dominant geological structures in Slovenia are calcareous (53%), mostly triassic limestone, which form typical karstlands. In limestone, 6800 caves and abysses are registered so far, which provide habitat for many unique troglodytic species. The Ljubljana river system, which runs through these karstlands, supports the largest known number of troglodytic species in the world, many of which are endemic.

Since the late 1800s, non-governmental organizations have been instrumental in promoting protected areas, protection of species, protection of caves and troglodytic animals, and environmental education in Slovenia. Primarily due to their efforts, the virgin forest in Kocevsko

became the first protected area in 1892, and in 1896 Edelweiss was protected. In 1922 the list of protected plant species was extended to 23 species, and all caves and troglodytic animals were protected by law. Today, about 8 % of the national territory is under special protection. Triglav, a small national park established in the Julian Alps in 1924, still provides habitat to several endangered species, including the ibex and the capercaillie. One Ramsar site has also been established.

Despite these efforts, there is a need to (i) identify opportunities and constraints for systematic identification, monitoring and sustainable management of biodiversity, (ii) identify processes and categories of activities which have impact on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and (iii) bridge communication problems between all participants interested and involved in activities which affect biodiversity (government, scientific institutions, NGO's, private sector).

Objectives

The objectives of the project are to (i) prepare a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP), which prioritizes issues and the actions to address them for the conservation and sustainable use of the country's biodiversity, in accordance with Slovenia's obligations under the CBD, and (ii) revise the draft of the first National Report for submission to the Conference of Parties (to be published in 1998). Under the project, public understanding and involvement in biodiversity conservation and planning will be increased through stakeholder participation activities and a public promotion program.

Methodology

The BSAP will be developed in a "bottom-up" participatory process. At the beginning of the project, a public awareness campaign will be conducted, informing the public and all interested stakeholders about the goals and objectives of the BSAP and inviting them to participate in its formulation. This awareness campaign will also disseminate information about the goals, objectives and importance of the BSAP project.

The participatory approach for preparation of the BSAP has already been initiated. In June 1997 a questionnaire was sent out, by the State Authority for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, to all institutions, both public and private, that have interest in biodiversity issues, asking for organizational ideas for preparing and implementing a BSAP. From the response, an organizational scheme for implementation of the BSAP was drafted, which calls for the establishment of a National Biodiversity Committee. Under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOE) and comprised of representatives from key economic sectors (including agriculture, forestry, water management, defense, tourism, infrastructure and energy), research institutions and leading NGO's, the Committee would provide general guidance for CBD implementation, enable intersectoral co-operation and direct multi-sectoral working groups.

Working groups, including representatives from government, NGOs, nature conservation organizations, relevant economic sectors, and the science and research community, will focus on themes defined by the Committee. These themes will be harmonized with Action Themes defined in the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (e.g. Grasslands, Mountain Ecosystems, Threatened species, Education and Communication). Following guidelines adopted by the Committee, each working group will prioritize and define the goals and prepare the strategies and actions for their theme.

The findings of each thematic group will be incorporated in a draft BSAP and circulated for comment. After the draft BSAP is circulated, a National Workshop will be held to allow input and comment from all stakeholders. The National Secretariat (NS - the National entity which is administering preparation of the BSAP) will act as facilitator for the project. An international consultant from either IUCN or UNEP-CoE, 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).

Following the ratification Act (1996), the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning (MOE) is responsible for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The focal point for the CBD and Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) are located at the Authority for Nature Conservation (ANC) within the MOE. The ANC will be the coordinating agency for preparation and implementation of the strategy preparation process.

Operational criteria

Coverage without duplication

The BSAP will be based on existing capacity and existing materials to the maximum extent possible. The existing initiatives and activities, such as implementation of the Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Diversity Strategy, Sofia Biodiversity Initiative for CEE, preparation of the National Environmental Report, National Environmental Action Plan, approximation process to the Union (Bird and Habitat Directive) draft Nature Conservation Strategy and draft Nature Conservation Act, 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. Parallel to the BSAP, the National Report will be drafted and discussed through the BSAP working groups and approved by the National Committee.

Time Plan and Sequencing

The BSAP will be produced over a period of 7 months according to the schedule outlined below, starting in March 1998. The NS will facilitate the preparation of a detailed work plan and Terms of Reference for the working group members and an international consultant. The MOE, government specialists from other sectors (agriculture, forestry, water management, biosafety),

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, and c) hold the national workshop. The tasks and sequence of events envisioned for the Slovenian 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, June 1997).

| Activity/Month | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identify gaps in information needed and provide information | X | | | | | | |
| Establish National Committee and Working Groups, prepare work plan, TOR for BSAP; disseminate existing information on strategies and stocktaking | X ¹ | | | | | | |
| Roundtable stakeholder meetings to refine/prioritize goals from existing NBS; complete strategies | X | | | | | | |
| Working groups discuss strategies, define actions in thematic working papers | | X | X | | | | |
| Prepare/circulate draft BSAP | | | X | | | | |
| National workshop for BSAP | | | | X | | | |
| Prepare final BSAP | | | | | X | | |
| Editing/translation of BSAP | | | | | | X | X |
| Public awareness campaign | | X | | | X | | X |
| Review & final version of National Report to COP | | | | | X | | |
| Translation, editing and publishing National Report | | | | | | X | X |
| Set-up and establish Clearing House Mechanism | | X | | X | | X | X |

Best practice

The BSAP will be prepared by Slovenians from the public and private sectors and NGOs through a cross-sectoral process that emphasizes national priorities. The preparation of the National BSAP will comply with all best practices and experience learned from other countries. National priorities and the country's natural, cultural and historical setting will be regarded as well. The proposed activities and those completed by the Government of Slovenia (GOS) to date (the draft Nature Conservation Strategy) are consistent with the Guidelines for Preparation of

¹ Some of activities already started in September 1997

Biodiversity Country Studies (WRI/UNEP/IUCN 1993) as well as the "Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity" (Global Environment Facility, June 1997).

Cost-effectiveness

The Slovenian BSAP will be prepared in an accelerated schedule, and make maximum use of the existing information. The proposed budget, summarized below, is consistent with cost effective budgets that have been approved for BSAP activities in the eastern European region.

Consistency of Approach and Procedures

This is the first GEF-financed biodiversity activity proposed for Slovenia. The approach and procedures of the BSAP will be consistent with other biodiversity activities in Slovenia, as well as the "Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities: Biodiversity" (Global Environment Facility, June 1997).

Institutional framework and project implementation

The central environmental protection authority in Slovenia is the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOE). The Authority for Nature Conservation (ANC) will be the coordinating agency for the project. The ANC will cooperate with, and rely on, other government agencies in preparing the BSAP, including regional institutes for conservation of natural and cultural heritage, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Academy of Science and Art, University of Ljubljana and Maribor, Natural History Museum, institutes dealing with biodiversity, key NGO's, and the private sector. To facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into sector planning, the project will be led by a broad-based National Committee led by the MOE. The MOE will be responsible for preparation of the BSAP and National Report. Leading NGO's (Prirodoslovno drustvo Slovenije - Natural History Society, Drustvo za opazovanje in proucevanje ptic Slovenije - Ornithological Society, BirdLife partner) will participate in the National Committee, other will be contacted and invited to cooperate with the assistance of the Regional Environmental Center (REC - Slovenia).

Under the project, a Clearing House Mechanism will be established in order to accelerate implementation of the CBD through appropriate hardware, software, and technical support.

Project Financing

The proposed budget covers the additional activities needed to complete the Strategy and develop the Action Plan, prepare the first National Report, and set up the Clearing House Mechanism. 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.

| | Product | Process | Total |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Strategy and Action Plan | 23,000 | 40,000 | 63,000 |
| national consultants (includes costs for working groups) | 7,000 | 20,000 | 27,000 |
| international consultant | 1,000 | 4,000 | 5,000 |
| national workshop | | 11,000 | 11,000 |
| dissemination of drafts | 2,000 | | 2,000 |
| publication costs | 7,000 | | 7,000 |
| translation costs | 6,000 | | 6,000 |
| public awareness campaign | | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| First National Report | 4,000 | | 4,000 |
| translation | 2,000 | | 2,000 |
| publication | 2,000 | | 2,000 |
| Coordination and Management Costs | 2,500 | 2,500 | 5,000 |
| Clearing House Mechanism (Option A) | 12,000 | | 12,000 |
| Hardware | 4,000 | | 4,000 |
| Software | 1,000 | | 1,000 |
| Modem | 500 | | 500 |
| Recurrent Costs | 3,000 | | 3,000 |
| Set-up fees | 500 | | 500 |
| Internet and email training | 3,000 | | 3,000 |
| Total | 49,500 | 39,500 | 89,000 |

Annex: Activity Matrix, Slovenia 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> | | | | | |
| | NCS | | | | 1 |
| <i>Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD</i> | | | | | |
| strategies for conservation | X | X | X | X | |
| strategies for sustainable use | X | X | X | X | |
| strategies for benefit sharing | X | X | X | X | |
| <i>Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan</i> | | | | | |
| national strategy | X, NCS | | | X | 2 |
| national action plan | X | | | X | 2 |
| <i>Planning and Preparation of first National Report</i> | | | | | |
| first national report | X | | | X | |
| <i>Clearing House mechanism</i> | | | | | |
| establishment of Clearing House mechanism | X | X | X | | |
| Legend | | | | | |
| X Activity to be undertaken under this proposal | | | | | |
| NCS draft goals were developed under the Nature Conservation Strategy. These will be refined and prioritized early in BSAP preparation, and used as a foundation for formulation of strategies and actions. Goals will be tuned to the nature conservation objectives defined in the National Environmental Action Plan. | | | | | |

Activity Matrix comments

1. A Country Study within the Nature Conservation Strategy draft was completed in 1996 and updated in 1997, by the ANC; this will be summarized for the BSAP stocktaking exercises. The Country Study addresses conservation of ecosystems, habitats and species, protected areas system. Additional research for the stocktaking is necessary for areas that are not covered by Country Study (e.g. biotechnology, microorganisms), as well as double checking the existing information with the objectives of NBSAP.

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.