

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Country:	Uruguay
Project Title:	<i>Formulation of the National Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan and Report to the CBD</i>
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	Convention Ratified 11/93
GEF Financing:	\$ 121,300
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Ministry of Housing, Land-Use Planning and the Environment (MVOTMA)
GEF Operational Focal Point:	MVOTMA
CBD Focal Point:	MVOTMA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Estimated Starting Date:	August 1996
Project Duration:	10 months

1. Background:

Uruguay is the smallest country in the Southern Cone of South America, with a territory of 176,215 km². It has an estimated population of 3.1 million inhabitants with approximately 80 % living in urban areas, and a demographic growth rate of 0.9% per year. GNP per capita is US\$ 3,340 with an economy that has traditionally depended heavily on livestock rearing (cattle and sheep) and agriculture, especially rice and small-scale, multi-crop farming systems. Main exports are meat, rice, soy, leather, fish and wood. More recently tourism has become an important economic activity, as has industry - particularly in urban areas - and mining of non-metallic minerals such as marble, granite and sand for construction. This increasingly diverse economy has put pressure on a broad range of natural resources, and conflicts between alternative uses of resources have multiplied.

With a warm sub-tropical, sub-humid climate the main terrestrial ecosystems are grasslands, covering an estimated 85% of the territory, which include winter, summer and mixed habitats. Forest ecosystems cover approximately 3.3% of the territory and include gallery forest, hillside forests, and isolated woodlands in the grassland savannahs; examples of these include "ombu" forests (*Phytolacca dioca*), palm forests (*Butia yatay*) and "ceiba" forests (*Ceiba* sp). Some of Uruguay's most globally significant biodiversity is found in its extensive wetland ecosystems and in the broad coastal areas with dunes, restinga vegetation and coastal lagoons, as well as inland aquatic habitats such as estuaries and river islands.

This diversity of habitats supports approximately 400 species of birds, 60 reptiles, 38 amphibians, and 103 mammals. The diversifying economy, recurrent droughts, increased demand for irrigation water, and extensive agriculture are creating growing pressures on biodiversity. Significant threats are chemical contamination from fertilisers and pesticides - especially related to rice cultivation in wetlands - soil erosion, loss of habitat in wetlands, grasslands and palm forests, forest cutting for fuel, increased mining for non-metallic minerals and, more recently, for metallic minerals including gold, and indiscriminate tourism development especially in coastal and marine areas. Although little specific data on biodiversity loss exists, IUCN Redbook data indicates 18 endangered bird species.

Aware of these threats the Government has made significant steps towards more comprehensive biodiversity management and sustainable development strategies. In 1990 the Ministry of Housing, Land-Use Planning and the Environment (MVOTMA) was formed housing a National Environment Directorate (DINAMA) who is responsible for the planning, programming, supervision and instrumentation of environmental policy and the establishment of norms for environmental quality control. There is also a multisectoral Technical Advisory Commission for Environmental Protection (COTAMA) made up of representatives from all line ministries, the Planning Office, local governments, academia, rural sectors, labour unions, commerce and NGOs. This Commission collaborates in defining environmental policies and promotes the incorporation of the environmental dimension in decision-making in public organisations and private institutions. DINAMA serves as secretariat for COTAMA.

MVOTMA was charged in 1993, with the implementation of a National Agenda 21 as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity. Within the Ministry, DINAMA is responsible for the formulation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the preparation of the National Report to the Conference of the Parties. In line with the CBD recommendations, DINAMA has adopted a multidisciplinary and participatory approach to fulfilling these responsibilities. It has set up a multisectoral and multidisciplinary working group (GT) to assess and carry out the implementation of the CBD in Uruguay. This working group held a workshop on Biodiversity Planning and Strategies (NBW) in June 1994, supported by the World Resource Institute (WRI) and the Biodiversity Support Programme of US-AID. The workshop comprised participants from 18 public and private institutions and permitted a broad range of sectors to discuss the CBD and its implementation in Uruguay as well as to establish a common foundation for the formulation of a National Strategy and Action Plan.

Although important, this workshop represents only the first step towards the formulation of the National Biodiversity Strategy. Information on genetic resources, species, and ecosystems that comprise the nation's biological diversity is dispersed in a variety of different institutions such as Ministries, universities, research institutions, museums, and NGO's and needs compiling and assessing. A variety of multisectoral and biodiversity-related issues must be examined and the whole environmental policy and regulatory framework assessed in the light of the CBD. Such a stocktaking exercise is of special importance in view of the fact that a new law on protected areas is presently under discussion. To date, protected areas have been based on the traditional National Park approach. The proposed Law would establish a System of National Protected Areas with different management categories promoting not only restricted-use areas but also sustainable use of biodiversity in buffer zones and biological corridors to permit gene flows between areas of high biodiversity both nationally and internationally. It would also transfer the responsibility for protected areas, presently with the Ministry of Agriculture, to MVOTMA permitting a closer integration with overall environmental policies and biodiversity management. It is important that such a law should be adopted within the broader context of a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

2. Project Objectives and Brief Summary

The main objectives of this proposal are i) to formulate a National Biodiversity Strategy and a detailed Action Plan that clearly define the multisectoral actions necessary for implementation of the CBD in Uruguay and ii) to prepare the First National Report to the Conference of the Parties

informing it of the actions taken by Uruguay to fulfil its commitments under the CBD. In order to define this strategy, stocktaking exercises will be undertaken around a variety of biodiversity-related issues (see Matrix). Geo-referenced information from these exercises will be fed into an already existing GIS in DINAMA. This enriched GIS will form the basis of an information system that can be easily and permanently up-dated as more information becomes available. It will also provide important inputs for biodiversity planning for example, to draw up integrated regional maps for publication and dissemination to a wide variety of stakeholders including planners, and decision-makers.

In addition, the GIS will assist in the integrated analysis of information for each major ecosystem. This analysis will feed directly into the identification of gaps and options to be undertaken in four multisectoral workshops involving the immediate stakeholders in each of four of the country's major ecosystems; these correspond broadly to the wetlands in the east, the coastal areas, the river basins in central Uruguay and those near the Argentinean border. Local stakeholders would include ranchers, farmers, tourism operators, local government and NGOs, and industry.

A first draft of the strategy will be drawn up based on the results of the four multisectoral workshops, followed by a second series of consultations to be held in each region to revise and validate the draft Strategy and Action Plan. This second round of workshops will involve decision-makers from the tourism, industrial, agricultural and fisheries sectors who can indicate and designate responsibility for implementation of actions outlined in the Strategy and Plan; sectoral decision-makers would come from both public and private sectors, including not-for-profit institutions. This process of consultation, formulation and revision would also provide the basic information for the development of the First National Report to the CBD which would be prepared along with the final version of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

3. Operational Criteria:

Coverage without Duplication: The proposal will build on the information and recommendations emanating from the Biodiversity Planning and Strategy Workshop (NBW). It will also take into consideration the National Environmental Study (NES) undertaken in 1992 with the support of OAS and IDB, as well as the information resulting from the recently completed GEF-UNDP Biodiversity and Sustainable Development programme for the Eastern Wetlands (PROBIDES). As such, no duplication is expected.

Appropriate Sequencing of Activities:

Activity	Month									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Stocktaking and Assessment	x	x	x	x						
Identification of gaps and options				x	x					
Biodiversity Strategy Workshop										
1. First draft					x	x	x			
2. Consultations							x	x		
3. Final version									x	x
First National Report									x	x

xx

Best Practice: The recommendations established in the document "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences" prepared by WRI, IUCN and UNEP, will be used to orient the activities proposed here. They will also be consistent with the recommendations from the NBW in 1994 which called for the development of such a strategy with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders.

Deviations from Cost Norms: None

4. Institutional Framework

The proposal will be implemented by the CBD Multisectoral and Multidisciplinary Working Group (CBD-GT) under the co-ordination of DINAMA and under the supervision and policies of MVOTMA. Multisectoral co-ordination will be effected by DINAMA - as secretariat for COTAMA - in conjunction with the Co-ordinating Technical Unit established within COTAMA for CBD implementation. Regional workshops will be organised in conjunction with NGOs and local communities and will build on participatory processes already initiated under the National Agenda 21 dialogue, incorporating a range of stakeholders including the executive and legislative bodies of local governments. The majority of activities will be undertaken by national consultants and relevant NGOs, with appropriate input from international experts in training project staff and participants in the concepts and recommendations of the WRI-IUCN-UNEP document "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences." As well, international consultants may be requested, during the final stages of strategy preparation, to assist the project team in ensuring the technical quality of the strategy and action plan.

5. Budget

	Product	Process	Total
Stocktaking and Inventory Existing Information	10,950		10,950
1. National Consultants (12m/m total, including consultants in the area of vegetation and fauna)	7,950		
2. Organisation and integration of information into existing GIS by major ecosystems	3,000		
Identification and Analysis of Options	10,700	20,000	30,700
1. National Consultants (4 m/m)	2,700		
2. Workshops for identification of gaps and options in each major ecosystem (4)		20,000	
3. International Consultant	4,000		
4. Travel, misc.	4,000		
Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan	32,650	22,000	54,650
1. National Consultants (10m/m)	6,650		
2. First draft of Strategy and Action Plan (National consultants, preparation, dissemination etc.)	15,000		
3. Regional workshops on first draft (4 workshops)		20,000	
4. International Consultants	4,000		
5. Preparation of Final version of Strategy and Action Plan (editing, printing and dissemination)	3,000	2,000	
6. Miscellaneous (materials, travel, communications etc.)	4,000		
First National Report	10,000	5,000	15,000
1. Publication and translation	10,000		
2. Promotion, misc		5,000	
Co-ordination and Management	10,000		10,000
TOTAL	74,300	47,000	121,300

ANNEX A: ACTIVITY MATRIX - URUGUAY - 1996

ENABLING ACTIVITY	OUTPUT		CAPACITY BUILDING		PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	COMMENTS
	Planning	Execution	Institutional Strengthening	Training		
Commitment						
1. Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information						
1.1. Biodiversity and biological resources	X					1
1.2. Cross-sectoral Issues	COTAMA/	X				2
1.3. Policy and Regulatory Framework	OAS/IDB /	X				3
1.4. Institutional and Human Capacity	X OAS/IDB					
1.5. Analysis of root causes of BD	X					
1.6. Technologies for Conservation and SU	X					
1.7. Activities with Adverse Impact	X					
1.8. Existing Measures and Programmes	X					
1.9. Preliminary Statement of Objectives	MVOTMA					
1.10. Identification of Gaps	OAS / NBW/	X				4
1.11. Assessment of Existing Needs	X					
2. Identification and Analysis of Options to Meet the Objectives of the CBD						
2.1. Strategies for Conservation in situ	X		X	X	X	5,6,7
2.2. Strategies for Conservation ex situ	X		X	XXX	X	5,6,7
2.3. Strategies for Sustainable Use	X		X	X	X	5,6,7
2.4. Strategies for Benefit Sharing	X		XX	X	X	5,6,7
3. Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan						
3.1. National Strategy	X		X		X	8
3.2. National Action Plan	NES /	X	XX		X	8
4. Preparation of First National Report to CBD						
4.1. First National Report	X				X	

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X = Activity Undertaken Within Enabling Activities Proposal; MVOTMA= Ministry of Housing, Land-Use Planning and the Environment; COTAMA= Technical Advisory Commission for Environmental Protection; NES = National Environmental Study financed by OAS-BID; NBW= National Biodiversity Workshop financed by WRI and USAID

Footnotes to the Activity Matrix

- OAS/IDB-supported National Environmental Study Report analyses Uruguay's policies and institutions, and outlines a plan of action with nine programmes focusing on management capabilities, biodiversity and genetic reserves, coastal zone management and reclamation, watersheds, environmental sanitation, sustainable resource use, energy, environmental education, and national resource accounts. While the section on biodiversity and genetic reserves calls for the creation of a National System of Protected Areas, it does not address the full range of biodiversity-related issues such as sustainable use of wetlands, coastal or rangelands biodiversity, or benefit sharing to be addressed in this proposal.
- While COTAMA's mandate is the analysis and coordination of cross-sectoral biodiversity-related issues, its relatively recent creation has not permitted it to fully analyze the range of issues in the detail required for, nor in the context of, a National Biodiversity Strategy.
- The OAS/IDB financed NES provides a basis for the evaluation of policy and regulatory framework and this project will revise this information and more recent policies in the light of the CBD and present national development plans.
- While the NES and the recommendations of the NBW will provide important information regarding the identification of gaps and the corresponding actions, further work is required to reflect the level of detail needed at the level of the four ecosystems.
- The identification of options will be undertaken with stakeholder participation in 4 regional workshops and will have a by-product of increasing biodiversity planning capacity in those institutions participating in these events and consultations.

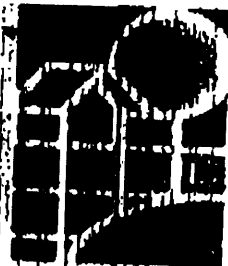
6. A workshop will be held in each region to revise and validate the draft Strategy and Action Plan. This second round of workshops will involve decision-makers from the tourism, industrial, agricultural and fisheries sectors who can indicate and designate responsibility for implementation of actions outlined in the Strategy and Plan; sectoral decision-makers would come from both public and private sectors, including not-for-profit institutions.
7. International experts may be requested, as needed, to train project staff and participants in the concepts and recommendations of the WRI-IUCN-UNEP document "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences." As well, participation in the development of the strategies and action plans will build analytical and planning capacities of participating staff and institutions.
8. The first draft of the strategy and plan will be revised and validated through four regional consultations.

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MINISTERIO
DE VIVIENDA
ORDENAMIENTO
TERRITORIAL Y
MEDIO AMBIENTE

Montevideo, 20 de junio de 1995

Sr. Representante Residente del
Programa de las Naciones Unidas
para el Desarrollo

EDUARDO NIÑO MORENO

De la mayor consideración

Por la presente hago llegar a usted el proyecto elaborado por esta Secretaría de Estado para la implementación del Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica de las Naciones Unidas a los efectos de ser presentado para su financiación al Fondo de Medio Ambiente Mundial (GEF).

Nuestro país ratificó la referida Convención a través de la Ley No. 16.408 y posteriormente el Poder Ejecutivo por Decreto No. 487/993 designó al Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente como "autoridad competente y punto de contacto para la instrumentación y aplicación" del Convenio en el Uruguay.

Esta Secretaría de Estado tiene la competencia de formular, ejecutar, supervisar y evaluar los planes nacionales de protección al ambiente e instrumentar la política nacional en la materia.

En tal sentido la Convención sobre la Diversidad Biológica es un verdadero documento sobre políticas ambientales tendientes a la conservación, uso sostenible y participación justa y equitativa de los beneficios de la diversidad de los Estados Partes según lo expresa su Artículo 1.

En su Artículos 6 y 7 recomienda a los Estados a elaborar estrategias nacionales, planes de acción y emprender estudios de país tendientes al cumplimiento de los objetivos de la Convención. Las mismas deben realizarse dentro de un enfoque multidisciplinario, multigectorial y participativo.

Como se desprende del proyecto que solicitamos, el Ministerio dentro de su marco institucional solicita el apoyo para el desarrollo del estudio de país, la elaboración de la estrategia nacional, el plan de acción y un marco legal que permita la implementación, además de otras obligaciones derivadas del cumplimiento del acuerdo internacional.

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Los pasos que hemos emprendido sobre la Convención y por lo tanto estamos convencidos de la importancia que tiene la presente solicitud de asistencia para poder completar nuestra tarea y asegurar la conservación y uso sostenible de la diversidad biológica en el Uruguay de acuerdo a los principios de las Naciones Unidas.

Muy atentamente

Sin otro particular, saluda a usted


Juan Antonio Chiruchi
MINISTRO DE VIVIENDA
ORDENAMIENTO TERRITORIAL
Y MEDIO AMBIENTE