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for your review
and comments.

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION



United Nations Development Programme

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)

AU



10/25/96

To: Mr. Avani Vaish, GEF
Ms. Kathy McKinnon, World Bank
Ms. Cyrie Sendashonga, UNEP
Mr. Sam Johnston, CBD
Mr. Pier Vellinga, STAP

Date: 25 October 1996

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From: Eduardo Fuentes

Subject: Submission of Biodiversity Enabling Activities for Guatemala, El Salvador
Venezuela

Dear Colleagues,

Please find enclosed for your comments three enabling activities submitted by UNDP for your consideration. We sincerely hope that with the short time available before the CoP, we will have a chance to see them approved.

Regards,

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Country:	Venezuela
Project Title:	<i>National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and First National Report to the CoP CBD</i>
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	Convention Ratified September 1994
GEF Financing:	US\$ 317,620
Government Contribution	in kind
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (MARNR)
GEF Operational Focal Point:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CBD Focal Point:	MARNR
Estimated Starting Date:	November 1996
Project Duration:	12 months

1. Background:

With a continental territory of 916,445 km² and marine territory of 450,000 km², Venezuela is one of the most biodiversity-rich nations in the world and ranks among the five most biologically diverse countries in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

Four major biogeographic regions, Caribbean, Andean, Guayanan and Amazonian, converge in this country and support a highly heterogeneous range of landscapes and habitats including the andean montane forests and paramos of Perija, Tama and Merida; the montane forests of the Coastal Cordillera; the arid and semi-arid zones of the north-west (La Guajira and Paraguana); coastal and island ecosystems: the seasonally flooded llanos; forest riverine and delta ecosystems of the Orinoco Delta; and humid tropical forests, savannahs and table-mountain (Pantepull) ecosystems of the Guayana and Amazonia. This variety is reflected in biological diversity with some 20,000 species of higher plant, of which 5,000 are endemic, 1,308 species of birds, 1,195 fish, 332 reptiles, 113 amphibians and 315 species of mammals of which 25 are endemic.

With a per capita GNP of US\$ 2,586 (1991), the Venezuelan economy is based primarily on oil located in the Lake Maracaibo Basin and in the eastern part of the country. However, the government is promoting the diversification of industry, agriculture and forestry as other important sources of revenue as well as the commercial exploitation of the countries rich mineral deposits including bauxite, diamonds, gold, silver, magnetite, titanium and iron ore. Growing pressure from these extractive industries is causing increasing habitat destruction and consequently loss of this extraordinary biodiversity. Whilst the national annual deforestation rate for the years 1991-96 is 0.25% to 0.30% (SERVOFEN), this is considerably higher in some areas principally the Coastal and Andean Cordillera, for example, between the years 1975 and 1988 35% of forest

cover was lost from ten western states. At a national level, 107 plant and 66 animal species are thought to be threatened. However, in spite of the high level of degradation in some regions, vast areas of the country remain in pristine conditions especially in Southern Venezuela where original forest is almost entirely intact. About 35% of the country is still covered with forests.

In addition to the extractive activities, the uneven distribution of the countries 20,407,000 inhabitants presents further challenges to biodiversity conservation. Over 90% of the population live in cities and about 80% live in the northern highlands or coastal regions. Development of heavy and medium industries linked to urban expansion in this area is exerting further pressures on biodiversity.

In response to these challenges the Government of Venezuela (GoV) has made important advances in environmental management and more recently biodiversity conservation. These include an extensive protected areas system, covering more than 50% of national territory with a National Park System covering 18%; an extensive legal system including the Organic Law of the Environment, Penal Law of the Environment, Law of Territorial Planning and the present development of a National Biodiversity Law that started in 1995 and is expected to finish in 1997. It also includes the decentralisation of environmental management to state and municipal levels in line with the general government policy of decentralising state functions that started in 1988. The Ministry of Environment (MARNR) has regional offices and plans to create a National Water Institute with state offices. Furthermore, many of its General Directorates have become autonomous institutes, for example, the Autonomous Service for the Sustainable Development of the Amazon State (SADA-AMAZONAS) and the Institute for the Conservation of Lake Maracaibo (ICLAM). The autonomous National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) already has regional offices and is actively attempting to decentralise most management functions to this level with funds from the World Bank.

Despite these advances, the impacts of debt servicing and economic crisis have not allowed the State to adequately harness the highly qualified personnel available in the country in the environmental area and institutions are understaffed resulting in poor law enforcement further exacerbated by a lack of awareness of environmental law within the judiciary system. These problems are compounded by the scant provision for mainstreaming biodiversity in areas outside protected areas system, including most of the coastal, marine and insular areas, and the lack of an effective institutional mechanism to ensure that public and private sectors incorporate biodiversity concerns into decision-making and sectoral planning.

The Government of Venezuela (GoV) faces a complex task to conserve the nations outstanding biodiversity. The high regional disparities in population and development levels, the valuable non-renewable natural resource assets, the numerous different eco-regions each with its own characteristics and the present institutional weaknesses must be carefully balanced in a comprehensive and coherent strategy which will address different regional needs whilst remaining within national development plans and goals. In view of this the GoV is seeking to develop a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan through a process that will recognise these

challenges, address regional differences and allow ample participation of stakeholders from both public and private sectors to identify concrete actions and shared responsibilities to conserve and sustainably use the nations biodiversity and implement the CBD in the country.

2. Project Objectives and Brief Summary

The main objectives of this project are (i) to prepare a National Biodiversity Strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from this, within the context of nations economic development whilst incorporating regional differences and priorities; (ii) to define priority actions at the regional and national level for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy with specific plans, programmes and projects together with resources and responsibilities defined for their implementation. (iii) to prepare the First Report to the Conference of Parties of the CBD. Subsidiary objectives will include a greater knowledge amongst decision-makers and heightened national awareness with respect to biodiversity issues and fulfilment of obligations acquired under the CBD.

This will be achieved through a multisectoral and highly participatory process that reflects the current decentralisation of government functions, and centres on the definition of regional needs and priorities through an extensive consultation process and the subsequent co-ordination and alignment with national-level priorities and policies. The evaluation of existing information on a series of biodiversity issues (see Standard Activity Matrix), will be undertaken at the regional level by national consultants under the guidance of an Executive Commission that will be at the operational level for the project development. Regional stocktaking reports will be used as the basis for a first round of regional consultations to be held in nine regions: Zulian; Andes and SW Andes; centre-west; central & capital; Los Llanos; north-eastern; Guayana; Insular (Nueva Esparta); and coastal-marine and submarine, to confirm gaps and identify options and strategies for the region and priority areas for action. These consultations will be as broad as possible counting on the participation of biodiversity experts as well as those from economic and social fields and members of state government, sector authorities, private sector academic institutions and NGOs.

A second round of consultations will be held in each region to define specific programmes and plans to be undertaken within the priority areas defined in the first round. This level of consultations will include decision-makers that can designate responsibilities for the implementation of the actions defined. In parallel to these two rounds of regional consultations a preliminary national workshop will use the results from all the regional stocktaking exercises to define a series of options and strategies at the national level. Findings from the two rounds of regional consultations (regional strategies and action plans) and the national level workshop will be used to prepare a first draft of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which will consist of both national and regional level components. A final round of regional consultations will be held to review this draft.

The Executive Commission will consolidate these findings into a final draft which circulated to a small group of biodiversity, and national and sectoral planning experts for revision and disseminated to the public through a national meeting with the participation of a broader range of participants that have not necessarily been part of the earlier consultations. This broader participation will increase awareness of the BSAP higher commitment for its implementation.

The first report to the CBD will be developed by the Executive Commission and selected consultants. In view of the 30th June, 1997, deadline for submitting this report, the Venezuelan Report will be based on existing information and on the progress achieved by then in preparing the BSAP.

3. Operational Criteria:

Coverage without Duplication: The project will build on information available from several related on-going initiatives the most relevant of which are shown in the Standard Activity Matrix. It will provide an important framework for these and others to start in the near future including two World Bank Project under formulation, "The National Environment Programme" and the complementary GEF "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Biodiversity". These will promote biodiversity protection through the strengthening of environmental management in public and private sectors including the participation and co-responsibility of industries. It will also build on and contribute to the process of the formulation of the National Biodiversity Law that is presently underway. In view of this no duplication is envisaged.

Appropriate Sequencing of Activities:

<i>Month</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>
Setting-up of organisational structure, and definition of methodology and project team	X	X										
Regional Stocktaking and Assessment Reports		X	X	X	X							
Regional consultations for confirming gaps and identifying options and priority areas for action				X	X							
Regional workshops for defining actions plans						X	X					
National workshop for defining general options					X		X					
First draft of BSAP								X	X	X		
Regional Meetings to review draft BSAP										X		
Preparation of final version BSAP										X	X	
Selected review of final version											X	X
National meeting to dissemination final BSAP												X
First National Report							X	X				

Best Practice: The methodology for the project will be based on the "Guidelines for Country Studies on Biological Diversity (UNEP 1993), the Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity (IUCN 1994) and the "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early

Country Experiences" prepared by WRI, IUCN and UNEP (1995). It will be country-driven and depend heavily on national expertise. A multi-sector Consultative Committee with representatives from public and private sectors, NGOs, universities and general public will oversee the project and facilitate the incorporation of results into sectoral planning.

Deviations from Cost Norms: There are no deviations from the cost norms as stipulated in the operational criteria, however the cost falls at the upper end of these norms as a result of the great emphasis the GoV is placing on the definition of regional needs and options in line with the considerable demographic, developmental and ecological differences throughout the country and the decentralisation of government functions to state and municipal levels. This requires a more complex process of consultation and the preparation of a much more extensive set of documents and reports than in a more homogenous and less biodiversity-rich country.

4. Institutional Framework

The Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (MARNR) has the main responsibility over environmental issues. This is currently undergoing restructuring expected to be completed by the end of 1996. In the new structure, a Directorate of Biological Diversity is provided for within a new General Directorate of Renewable Natural Resources.

The development of the project will be co-ordinated by a Co-ordinating Committee headed by the Minister of MARNR, that will be the maximum authority of the project and will be responsible for policy and strategy decisions during the formulation of the BSAP. An Executive Commission composed of the new Directorate of Biodiversity, together with consultants contracted to complete the project team, will be responsible for the project at the operational and technical level. International expertise will be required to complement national capacities particularly in the area of biodiversity-planning instruction, information management and development of the first draft of the BSAP.

In order to ensure that the results are incorporated into sectoral planning and that the process is democratic, participatory, multidisciplinary and has the broadest socio-political support, a Consultative Committee will be set-up to oversee the whole process. This Committee will include representatives from government departments, NGOs, the private sector, universities and the general public.

5. Budget

	Product	Proces	Total
Stocktaking and Inventory Existing Information	27,120		27,120
National Consultants (collation, review and processing per region (16 PM)	24,000		
Travel, documentation, misc.	3,120		
Identification and Analysis of Options	65,500	73,000	138,500
National Consultants (regional reports, strategies, priority areas)	53,000		
Regional consultations to confirm gaps and identify options, and priority areas for action (9)		27,000	→
Regional Consultations to define action plans for priority areas (9)		27,000	→
International consultants	8,000	5,000	
National workshops to define generic strategic options and priority areas (2)		12,000	→
Travel, misc	4,500	2,000	
Preparation of a Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)	58,000	48,000	106,000
			0
First draft BSAP (National consultants, dissemination etc)	36,000	5,000	
Regional Consultations on first draft		27,000	→
Preparation of final BSAP consultants, editing, printing, distribution	22,000	3,000	
Selected review of BSAP		3,000	
National Meeting for dissemination of BSAP		10,000	→
First National Report	12,000	2,500	14,500
I. Preparation, publication, translation and dissemination	12,000	2,500	
Co-ordination	1,500	30,000	31,500
TOTAL	164,120	153,500	317,620

120

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~~22,680~~

STANDARD ACTIVITY MATRIX

ENABLING ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	CAPACITY BUILDING		PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	COMMENTS
		Institutional Strengthening	Training		
Commitment	Execution				
1. Stocktaking and Assessment, based on Existing Information					
1.1. Biodiversity and biological resources	MARNR/ Var/ X				1
1.2. Cross-sectoral Issues	X				2
1.3. Policy and Regulatory Framework	MARNR / X				3
1.4. Institutional and Human Capacity	WWF-HIID/ X				4
1.5. Analysis of root causes of BD loss	WWF-HIID/ X				5
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	GP / NBL/MP				6
1.10. Identification of Gaps	X				7
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 <i>in situ, ex situ</i>	X		X	X	8, 9
2.2. Strategies for Sustainable Use	X		X	X	8, 9
2.3. Strategies for Benefit Sharing	X		X	X	8, 9
3. Planning and Preparation of a Strategy and Plan					
3.1. National Strategy	X			X	10
3.2. National Action Plan	X			X	10
4. Preparation of First National Report to CBD					
4.1. First National Report	X				

X = Activity Undertaken Within Enabling Activities Proposal

MARNR = Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources; WWF-HIID = Structural Adjustment and the Environment: a Country Study of Venezuela; GP = IX National Plan; BL = Biodiversity Law under preparation; MP = World Bank Project "National Park Management".

Footnotes:

1. A considerable amount of primary information is available on biological resources in the form of maps, publications and grey literature, however this is scattered in a variety of institutions. Little has been synthesised at a national level, although there are several regional initiatives (eg the CVG-EDELCA, UNEG and BioGuyana Programmes in Guayana, the UNELLEZ in the Llanos and Caura River Basin. It will not be possible for this project to collate all the available data but rather summarise what is strictly necessary for the production of the BSAP and at the same time achieve a first step in national biodiversity data management. The first state-of-the-environment report was published in 1995 (MARNR) and a revised version is in production but the biodiversity component is not complete and will be strengthened with the results of this project.

2. Sectoral plans exist for several sectors (eg forestry, agriculture, tourism) but do not cover impacts on

biodiversity *pre se*. An evaluation of this and other cross-sectoral issues will be undertaken in this project. The Multi-sectoral Consultative Committee set up for this project will facilitate the incorporation of the BSAP into sectoral plans.

3. *Several directories of environmental legislation* exist for example MARNR "Indice de Legislacion Vigente" (1993). In addition a National Biodiversity Law is being formulated by two working groups, a Legal and Technical group, funded by the National Science Council (CONICIT). This should be complete in March 1997 and will provide a valuable input to this project. Despite this available information however, this project will complement existing efforts with an evaluation of sectoral legislation and policies that impinge on biodiversity and any relevant regional and local decrees.

4. *A recent assessment of government and NGO capacity in biodiversity management* was undertaken in the WWF-HID project. The MARNR restructuring process is also taking into account institutional and human capacity, however, Venezuela has a high capacity spread widely across a variety of organisations in the NGO, university, private sectors and different regions of the country. A more complete assessment of this capacity at the regional level will be necessary.

5. *Recent studies exist covering different causes of environmental degradation* with some information on biodiversity loss eg the WWF-HIID project with macroeconomic factors. However the studies are partial or regional and will be fully reviewed in this project.

6. *Objectives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity* are partially covered in the governments IXth National Plan. The Biodiversity Law may expand on these objectives. This project will work closely with the development of this law and within the guidelines provided in the National Plan, it will also coordinate with the other on-going WB Project "National Park Management" in preliminary objectives related to protected areas and conservation in-situ.

7. *An initial identification of gaps* will be made by the project team on the basis of the regional collation of information. These reports will form the basis of the first round of regional consultations (see footnote 9).

8. *The initial identification of gaps* will be confirmed in a first round of regional consultations, to be held in nine regions, that will identify options, preliminary strategies and priority areas for action in each region. A second round of consultations will develop these priorities into specific action plans. At the national level generic strategic options and approaches will be identified in a workshop using the stocktaking reports from all nine regions.

9. *Members of the project team will take part in a biodiversity- planning instruction session* at the start of the project to become more familiar with the procedures outlined in the "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Country Experiences" prepared by WRI, IUCN and UNEP (1995) to ensure that the process follows standardised practices and procedures and to has a stronger cohesion.

10. *The results of the two rounds of regional consultations and the national workshop* will provide the basis for the first draft of BSAP. This will be reviewed through a third and final round of regional consultations and a second National workshop. The final version of the BSAP will be reviewed by a small group of experts in biodiversity-related issues and disseminated to the broad public through a national meeting.

REPÚBLICA DE VENEZUELA



El Ministerio del Ambiente
y de los Recursos
Naturales Renovables

00383

30 ABR 1996

Doctora
Seyrl Siegel
Representante Residente
Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD).
Caracas.

Por medio de la presente me es grato dirigirme a usted a fin de solicitarle sus buenos oficios para la formalización de una solicitud de apoyo técnico y asistencia financiera no reembolsable, por parte del PNUD y del Fondo Mundial para el Medio Ambiente (Global Environment Facility), para el Ministerio del Ambiente y de los Recursos Naturales Renovables, para el desarrollo de la Estrategia Nacional de Biodiversidad.

Al respecto deseo destacar el interés del Gobierno de Venezuela en el desarrollo de la mencionada estrategia, por lo que mucho sabré agradecerle la pronta gestión que pueda hacer a favor de la misma.

Sin otro particular, hago propicia la ocasión para reiterarle mi estima y consideración.

Atentamente

Roberto Pérez Lecuna

P.N.U.D.
CARACAS - VENEZUELA

URBENTE

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