

ENABLING ACTIVITIES IN BIODIVERSITY

Country:	Republic of Yemen
Project Title:	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Report to the CBD
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country Eligibility:	Convention ratified in February 1996
GEF Financing:	US\$ 290,000
Government Contribution:	In-kind
UNDP Contribution:	-
Estimated Total Budget:	US\$ 290,000
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
National Executing Agency:	Environment Protection Council
GEF Focal Point:	Environmental Protection Council
CBD Focal Point:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Estimated starting date:	October 1996
Duration of project:	12 months

Background

Yemen covers an area of 550,000 sq. km with a population of 15.8 million. It is situated at the south western corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

Among the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen and Oman are the two richest in diversity of wild plants and animals. In Yemen this is combined with a high diversity of species and of ecosystems.

In simple terms, with respect to terrestrial eco-systems, on a west-east transect Yemen may be divided into the following major zones: (i) Tihama or coastal plain which covers about 16 % of the land and stretches inland about 65 kilometres to an elevation of 500 metres along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; (ii) the Yemen highlands, a volcanic region with elevations between 1,000 - 3,600 metres parallel to the Red Sea coast and with temperate climate and monsoon rains; (iii) the dissected region of the Yemen High Plateau and the Hadramauwt-Mahra Uplands, with altitudes up to 1,000 metres; (iv) the

al-Rub al-Khali ("the empty quarter") region which is the Yemeni part of the Arabian desert with hot and dry climate. (v) the islands, including the Socotran archipelago and the Red Sea islands (more than 112 small Yemeni islands in the Red Sea).

The vegetation of Yemen is a mixture of that found on the African continent (belonging to the tropical, Sudanian plant geographical region), and that found in the Afro-Asian desert regions (of the extratropical, Saharo-Arabian plant geographical region). The Saharo-Arabian element predominates in the regions with an arid climate (the Tihama coastal plain and the eastern plateau) while the Sudanian element predominates in the western escarpment with a semi-arid or semi-humid climate.

About 3% of the land can be used for agriculture (1.6 million ha.) and it is estimated that only 1 m. ha were actually under cultivation during 1990 - 1994. The main crops are grains, fruits, vegetables and khat. Rangelands, together with forests and woodlands comprise almost 40% of the land area. The land is grazed by about 3.5 million sheep, 3.2 million goats and 1.1 million cattle. Other land, mostly desert with limited use potential, constitutes almost 60% of the total land area¹.

The coastal eco-systems include the (i) Sabkha (bare saline mud with a crust) which occurs above the high tide line; (ii) freshwater dependent vegetation such as palm groves and reed beds; (iii) intertidal flats; (iv) mangroves and (v) coral reefs.

Fisheries are an important resources and the combined surface and deep water fish catch is about 80,000 tons/yr. The country's mineral resources include crude oil (75 m. barrels per year), natural gas, rock salt, gypsum, marble, and small deposits of coal, gold, nickel and copper².

Yemen has more than 2,500 species of plants, about 85 species of mammals, 370 species of birds and more than 115 species of amphibians and reptiles. More than 10% of the plant species and 25 bird species are considered endemic to Yemen. In Socotra islands alone, at least 274 of the 850 plant species recorded are endemic, and 8 bird species are listed as endangered in the IUCN Red Data Book.

Among the four species of gazelles found in Yemen, the most common is the Arabian mountain gazelles. The Arabian oryx is almost certainly extinct in the wild. There are reports of existence of Arabian Red Fox, Arabian wolf, Jackals, Arabian leopards and cheetahs.

Marine biodiversity is very rich in Yemen. A Pilot Phase funded GEF project "Protection of Marine Ecosystems of the Red Sea coast, Yemen", has begun to assist Yemen to protect its marine ecosystems on the Red Sea coast, including coral reefs and other critical habitats, and to develop sustainable use of its marine resources. These are achieved through inventory of marine habitats to determine their environmental states, creation of a database and GIS for data analyses and planning, establishment of a marine environmental monitoring programme, and training of national counterparts. An initial series of coastal surveys has recently been completed, during which counterparts have received substantial hands-on training needed for further environmental work. The results of these surveys will provide some

¹ Draft NEAP, (1996)

² Ibid

of the baseline information on marine biodiversity to be included into the proposed National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Conservation of biodiversity is vital in a country such as Yemen, where ecosystems are fragile and the renewable natural resources are scarce. The ecosystems of Yemen are deteriorating rapidly due to multiple interacting factors mostly due to socio-economic changes which result in excessive grazing, felling, soil erosion, over-fishing, over-hunting, land degradation and declining biological diversity. Limitation of legislation and law enforcement efforts which call for protection of biodiversity have led to improper utilization and misuse of natural resources and adversely affected the biota both at sea and land. Lack of clear policy and strategy for the conservation and management of resources has led to non-sustainable use of resources and irreversible loss of biota.

Yemen has recognized the necessity to protect natural resources and biodiversity as reflected by the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This is the basis for preparing and implementing a national policy for environment protection and developing standards and regulations to protect living resources from overexploitation.

A workshop on the Biodiversity Convention organized by Environment Protection Council (EPC), the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR), the Ministry of Local Administration, Universities with the technical support from IUCN was held in Sana'a from 5 to 9 March, 1996. This workshop reviewed major issues and problems related to biodiversity and highlighted the need for immediate action on the following: comprehensive biodiversity strategy and action plan, the establishment of seed banks, land use planning and awareness and preparation of criteria for a protected areas/system plan.

The workshop also took note of the draft report of the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) for Yemen. The NEAP is currently being finalized by the Environment Protection Council and concerned Ministries. The NEAP process was supported by financial resources from the World Bank and, in its early stages from UNDP. The NEAP covers an overview of Yemen's natural environment and measures for its protection. It highlights habitat degradation in a three and a half page section, thus providing the larger picture for biodiversity protection in the country. The NEAP is in its final stage of completion and is expected to be approved by the Government of Yemen shortly leading to its implementation.

The draft NEAP highlights the water scarcity issue in Yemen as one of the key environmental issues in Yemen and lays out a number of priority actions for water resource management. The implementation of these actions will clearly impact on the terrestrial biodiversity situation.

The ICBP report (USAID funded) entitled "Biological Diversity Assessment of the Republic of Yemen" was published in 1990. This report provides a good basis for further work and will therefore allow that original species inventories, etc. will not have to be done in northern Yemen. The report, however, was prepared as an externally driven study and was not designed to secure Government involvement in terms of policy and planning recommendations, decisions and actions and further, did not lead to the creation of capacity within Yemen for subsequent biodiversity conservation, policy and planning related work. Moreover, the report was prepared before the Biodiversity Convention came into force and most importantly before the reunification of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab

Republic. The report, therefore, only covers the Yemen Arab Republic ("North Yemen") and a more holistic approach is therefore required in view of the united Yemen's ratification of the convention. This more holistic approach will most importantly secure Government and popular endorsement of the priority actions which will be outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

The recent biodiversity workshop in Sana'a recommended that, in parallel to the implementation of the NEAP, an NBSAP should be elaborated which specifically will address the biodiversity related actions which should be taken in the country. The main reasons for this are:

- While the NEAP will be taken as the baseline and will further provide important policy underpinnings, the NBSAP will be necessary to provide biodiversity specific detail, stressing biodiversity issues and the implementation of the CBD which will allow wider range of activities relating to biodiversity;
- The NBSAP will provide an opportunity for further integration with other sectors (esp. fisheries, range & agriculture) as mandated by Article 6 of the CBD and to involve all relevant stakeholders in biodiversity prioritization processes; and
- The biodiversity specific NBSAP is viewed as a tool which will lead to fulfilment of CBD obligations, including reporting requirements.

For Yemen to fulfil its mandate "to protect and develop the natural environment", a biodiversity programme will be a key supporting element.

This would lead to the following: conservation and sustainable use and management of marine, coastal, range and agricultural resources, development of legislation, an access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, establishment of protected areas, programme for restoration of endangered species, technology development, sustainable use of biological resources and economic incentives.

The Government of Republic of Yemen is undergoing an important transition with respect to its overall development approach. Within this context, the Government would like to develop as early as possible a biodiversity strategy and action plan. The Government recognizes that this requires a locally driven and owned process implemented with some international consultation and technical assistance, such as training in biodiversity sustainable uses, conservation and planning.

Project objectives and process description

The main objective of the project is to define priority action to conserve and sustainably use Yemen's biodiversity in the context of its economic development. The project will initially assess existing knowledge, and then through a process of analyses and consultations identify and agree upon options for biodiversity management and benefit sharing in the country. Increased public awareness about the importance of protecting biological diversity is an additional objective of the project. At the end of the project, a report to the CoP will be prepared.

The national strategy and action plan will be prepared through multidisciplinary, integrated and participatory approaches. The project will involve public and private sector stakeholders from: finance,

agriculture, forestry, fisheries, protected areas, transport and energy and other as appropriate.

In line with the WRI/UNEP/IUCN Guidelines for National Biodiversity Planning, the project will follow the seven-step biodiversity planning process as is outlined in the Guidelines. (1. Establishment of focal point; 2. Assessment; 3. Development of strategy; 4. developing plan of action; 5. Implementation; 6. Monitoring and evaluation; 7. Ongoing Reporting. The activities which are outlined in the time plan, are therefore elaborated in line with the recommendations of the Guidelines.

The process will also allow for public awareness raising at different stages of the formulation of the strategy as a means to achieve further commitment and involvement of the population in the process. Representatives from different sectors will be invited to study and discuss the WRI/IUCN/UNEP Guidelines and the objectives of the National Strategy and Action Plan through local/regional working sessions and national workshops/seminars. As part of the process leading to the NBSAP, international technical expertise from the Arab region will be identified to ensure cross-fertilization with other countries with similar arid and semi-arid eco-systems and with other socio-economic similarities.

As can be gathered from the time plan, a national workshop will be held in month 4 of the project to ensure the formation of partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, the private sector and others for the work ahead with respect to the strategy and action plan development.

During the Strategy and Action Plan development an additional two national consultative workshops will be held to review findings and recommendations as these planning tools evolve. Throughout the project, the project team will ensure that there is an ongoing dialogue with the policy makers and stakeholders. This dialogue will be conducted through a great number of smaller meetings and sessions with relevant stakeholders. Towards the end of the project (months 10 or 11) a final national workshop will be held to review and endorse the NBSAP, subsequent to which the final documentation will be prepared. The national workshops will cover both marine and terrestrial issues, while the ongoing dialogue will be with the relevant groups/sectors on a group/sector specific basis. The project team will also ensure that they use to the maximum effect the newspaper, radio and TV for media exposure and grassroots outreach. As the news media is usually very keen on such coverage, it is not expected that this activity will involve any budgetary expenditures. Finally, a number of smaller orientation sessions will be held on an on-going basis during the project implementation. Participants will include the immediate project team, as well as counterparts in government institutions, NGOs and academic institutions who are likely to be associated with the biodiversity work. This on-going and on-the-job orientation will cover areas such as participatory processes, cross-sectoral planning and information management, biodiversity planning, biodiversity assessment methodology, and other areas, all of which are highlighted in the WRI/UNEP/IUCN Guidelines.

The preparation of the first national report will be based on the information gathered both through public outreach sessions, as well as report based information. The report will be disseminated in Yemen to allow for wider participation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Strengthening of national and local capacity will take place under the leadership of the Environment

Protection Council. This will be achieved through on-the-job orientation for the national consultants in association with the IUCN international consultants, and active involvement of the nationals in the organization and running of the workshops, and preparation of the NBSAP and National Report.

The enabling activities covered by the project are summarized in the activity matrix in Annex 1

Time Plan and Sequencing

The project will follow the sequence recommended in the WRI/IUCN/UNEP Guidelines. Activities will last for 12 months from October 1996. An interim National Report to the CoP will be available in June 1997. The project will be carried out according to the following time table:

Activity/Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1) Establishment of steering committee & interagency planning team	x	x										
2) Finalization of TORs for internal & external consultants	x	x										
3) Assessment of existing information by local consultants		x	x	x								
4) First national workshop, initiation of public participation process				x								
5) Orientation of planning team & consultants in BD analysis, planning & strategy writing				x			x	x				
6) Sensitization and public awareness/outreach to stakeholders					O	N	G	O	I	N	G	
7) Analysis and assessment of options, including discussions with stakeholders (2 workshops)				x	x	x	x					
8) Preparation of National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan								x	x			

9) Dialogue with national stakeholders on draft NBSAP									x	x	x	x	x
10) National workshop to review and endorse NBSAP											x	x	
11) Preparation of report to the CoP; dissemination of plan and report												x	x

Best Practice

The methodology for the implementation of the project will be based on the "Guidelines for Country Study on Biological Diversity (UNEP 1993), the "Guide to the Convention on Biological diversity (IUCN 1994) and the "Guidelines for Preparing National Biodiversity Planning " (WRI/IUCN/UNEP, 1995).

Assessment of existing information will be done in-country by local expertise. IUCN will be requested to be involved in backstopping this assessment.

As the priority of the Government of Yemen is sustainable development, the Government has already expressed to UNDP its interest in ensuring that environmental aspects (including those relating to sustainable use of biological diversity) are incorporated into mainstream development programmes and projects. For this to become an integral part of development planning, ad hoc orientation related to biodiversity management and sustainable uses might be a subsequent need which will have to be addressed in subsequent proposals.

The Government of Yemen is aware of the nine criteria for best practice contained in the Enabling Activities Operational Criteria document and will aim to follow these as closely as possible.

Project Financing (in US\$)

	PRODUCT	PROCESS	TOTAL
Stocktaking and Inventory	34,000		34,000
- National consultants, 12 person months	20,000		20,000
- International consultants	12,000		12,000
- Documentation, misc.	2,000		2,000
Identification of Options	27,000	75,000	102,000
- National consultants	15,000	25,000	40,000
- International consultants	10,000	10,000	20,000
- orientation		25,000	25,000
- 1 national workshop		15,000	15,000
- travel, miscellaneous	2,000		2,000
Strategy and Action Plan	27,000	80,000	107,000 ¹
- National consultants	15,000	20,000	35,000
- International consultants	12,000	10,000	22,000
- 2 national workshops		30,000	30,000
- Dissemination of draft		5,000	5,000
- Final national workshop		15,000	15,000
First National report	25,000		25,000 ²
- International consultant	10,000		10,000
- Publication and translation	10,000		10,000
- Promotion, misc.	5,000		5,000
Coordination and management costs	9,000	13,000	22,000
TOTAL	122,000	168,000	290,000

Deviation from criteria and Norms

The overall budget of the project lies within the overall cost norm. Minor deviations from the itemised cost norms can be explained as follows:

¹ Strategy and Action Plan - The high cost of this activity is due to the fact that international consultants are essential to ensure the technical integrity of the document and to enhance capacity building throughout the process. The need for international consultants is a result of the political complexity in Yemen society since the recent unification and ensuing civil war.

² First National report - The high cost for publication is necessary for document translations to ensure wide distribution of the documents which provide an important tool for consensus building and public awareness.

Institutional Framework and Project Implementation

With the overall monitoring and support by UNDP and with technical assistance from IUCN, the project will be developed and implemented by the Environment Protection Council. The Council will appoint a project Coordinator who will manage a multidisciplinary team under the supervision of an inter-institutional steering committee, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ministry of Local Administration, General Directorate of Forestry and Desertification Control, Ministry of Planning and Development, Universities of Sana'a and Aden, Research Institutes and principal NGOs (The Yemen Environmental protection Society and Friends of Environment Society). This broad based representation should assure that biodiversity planning becomes part of mainstream planning efforts to achieve sustainable development. The initial biodiversity assessments will be done by local consultants attached to the Environment Protection Council.

Working sessions and meetings will be held in various sub-regions and with the various stakeholders. Outcomes of these gatherings will be later discussed in national level workshops. The execution of the project will be subject to Tri-Partite Review (TPR) according to UNDP rules and procedures.

Preparation of the First National Report to CoP

An interim report will be prepared to CoP for June 1997. The final report will be produced at the end of this project, following the guidance provided by the CoP in November 1995.

ANNEX 1

Enabling Activity Commitment	Output	Capacity Building		Public Participation	Comments
		Inst. Strength	Training		
Stocktaking & Assessment based on existing information - biodiversity & biolog. resources - cross-sectoral framework - policy and regulatory framework - institutional & human capacity - analysis of root causes of BD loss - technologies for conserv. & sustainable use - activities with adverse impacts - existing measures and programmes - preliminary statement of objectives - identification of gaps - assessment of existing needs	 x x x x x x x x x x x x x				1, 2
Identification & analyses 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 a Strategy and Plan - national strategy - national action plan	 x x	 x x	 x x	 x x	
Preparation of the first National report - first national report	 x			 x	

X: Activity undertaken by the project

1. The 1990 ICPB report will be fully taken into account and new stocktaking exercises will therefore not be needed for the northern part of Yemen.
2. Findings on marine biodiversity of the Red Sea coast generated by the pilot phase GEF project will be channelled into the NBSAP.

ANNEX 2**References:**

- 1996: Draft NEAP Report for Yemen (EPC/World Bank)
- 1996: Biodiversity in Yemen (Dr. Nabil A. Obadi)
- 1995: Environmental Protection Law
- 1995: Guidelines for Preparing National Biodiversity Planning
- 1994: Marine Habitats of the Red Sea (Sana'a University/UNDP)
- 1994: Guide to the Convention on Biodiversity (IUCN)
- 1993: National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (UNEP)
- 1992: Yemen UNCED Report
- 1990: Biodiversity Assessment of the Republic of Yemen (ICPB)

جمهورية اليمن
Republic of Yemen
Ministers Council
 Environment Protection Council



2/2
 الجمهورية اليمنية
 رئاسة مجلس الوزراء
 مجلس حماية البيئة

Ref. (246) Date 7 / 5 / 1996

Date: 7 May 1996

Mr. Onder Yucer
 Resident Representative
 UNDP, Sana'a - ROY

Dear Mr. Yucer,

UNDP SANA'A RECEIVED				
ON 7 MAY 1996 التاريخ				
TO	INFO.	ACTION	DATE	INITIALS
FA				
OSR			7/5	Amr
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ACTION TAKEN: 96				
FILE NO. PRO/200/GEF				
FILED BY:				

Subject:- Bio-diversity Strategy and Action Plan for the Republic of Yemen

Reference made to letter No. 15435 of 14 April 1996 from the Ministry of Planning and Development regarding the above-mentioned subject.

In view of Yemen's recent ratification of the Bio-diversity Convention, and in line with the recent Bio-diversity workshop held in March 1996 in Sana'a, the Government of Yemen would like to request UNDP assistance in securing GEF funding for a project addressing Bio-diversity "enabling" activities, thereby enabling the Government of Yemen to respond to its obligations under the Bio-diversity Convention.

Therefore, it would be appreciated if necessary action could be taken on this regard.

Best regards.

Eng. Mohsin Al-Hamadani
 Chairman, EPC

