

Interim Assessment of Biodiversity Enabling Activities



Global Environment Facility

INTERIM ASSESSMENT OF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

CORE TEAM

Michael Wells
Delfin Ganapin
Jarle Harstad
Ramesh Ramankutty
Mario Ramos
Avani Vaish
Gonzalo Castro
Jamison Suter
John Hough
Ajay Gupta
Carmen Tavera

LOCAL CONSULTANTS

Maria Onestini
Rachel Graham
Orlando Ray Santos
David Nzuango
Abdel Hamid Zakaria
Woldeslassie Ogbazghi
Annacle Bissielo
Isabella Masinde
Monica Herzig
Piotr Paschalis
Sergei Mosyakin
Langford Chitsike

COMMISSIONED REVIEWS

Hani Daraghma
Shekhar Singh
Nandita Jain
Bruce Watson
Conchita Ragragio

The views expressed in this study are those of the core team members and do not necessarily represent the views of all the team members, nor the GEF.

FOREWORD

At its meeting on October 14–6, 1998, the GEF Council recommended that the GEF carry out a comprehensive review of enabling activities to “determine how successful the projects have been, analyze the reasons for those that have failed, and consider policy and programmatic responses to the problem.”

The main audience for this assessment, in addition to the GEF Council, consists of the cooperating countries, the Secretariat for the Convention for Biological Diversity, implementing and executing agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private enterprises.

The terms of reference for the study was prepared by the GEF Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator in consultation with the three Implementing Agencies and the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity in June–August 1998. The Terms of Reference constitutes Annex 2.

The Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator assembled the core team, composed of Michael Wells (independent consultant and team leader), Delfin Ganapin (independent consultant), and staff from the GEF Secretariat, and the three Implementing Agencies. The team was assisted by local consultants in the preparation of country and regional case studies. The team is listed in Annex 4.

From November 1998 to April 1999, the team members collected data from a variety of sources, and meetings were held with the Implementing Agencies, the Secretariat for the

Convention on Biological Diversity, and other international organizations, including NGOs. Supported by local consultants, the team gathered data and had discussions in 12 countries: Argentina, Belize, Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Kenya, Mexico, Poland, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. Additional case studies were prepared by national consultants in India, Nepal and the Philippines. Broader reviews were commissioned for the Arab States, and the South Pacific Islands regions.

During May–September 1999, the two independent consultants synthesized the findings from the countries and other data. The team leader prepared draft reports which were refined with further inputs from the team, the GEF Secretariat and the three Implementing Agencies. Advanced drafts of the report were sent to the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the GEF operational and political focal points in the above-mentioned countries, and some internationally-recognized experts on biodiversity conservation. The final report was dispatched to the GEF Council for discussion at the December 1999 Council Meeting.

The views expressed in the final document are those of the core team members. These views do not necessarily represent the views of all team members, nor the GEF. I am truly grateful to all those who participated and contributed to the study, especially in the countries from where data was gathered.

Jarle Harstad
Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

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ACRONYMS

BPSP	Biodiversity Planning Support Program
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
CONABIO	Comisión Nacional Para El Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad
COP	Conference of the Parties to the CBD
EA	Enabling Activity
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF Sec	Global Environment Facility Secretariat
IA	Implementing Agency
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
OpCrit	Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities in Biodiversity
RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. This report describes the findings of an assessment of GEF-financed enabling activity (EA) projects for biodiversity conservation. These projects are mainly assisting recipient countries (1) to develop national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) as required by Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and (2) to complete their first national reports to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the CBD. The biodiversity EAs were among the very first GEF-supported activities carried out under the guidance of the COP in GEF's role as the CBD's interim financial mechanism. As such, the GEF acts under the guidance of and is accountable to the COP on policies, program priorities, and eligibility criteria for the purposes of the convention.

2. The GEF Operational Strategy defines biodiversity EAs as activities that "prepare the foundation for design and implementation of effective response measures required to achieve Convention objectives... [and]...to assist a recipient country to gain a better understanding of the nature and scope of its biodiversity assets and issues as well as a clearer sense of the options for the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity." The term "enabling activities" was originally defined by the GEF in the context of climate change and

then extended to biodiversity; it does not appear in the CBD and has not been formally adopted by the COP.

3. The GEF Operational Strategy goes on to specify that biodiversity EAs should include "supporting country-driven activities for taking stock of or inventorying biodiversity based on national programs and relying on studies, without new primary research; identifying options and establishing priorities to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity; preparing and developing biodiversity planning exercises, such as national strategies, action plans and sectoral plans; and disseminating information through national communications to the CBD."

PROGRESS TO DATE

4. GEF had approved funding of \$24.8 million for biodiversity EAs in 121 countries by March 31, 1999 (compared to overall support for biodiversity projects of about \$800 million by the same date). This included \$21.7 million for projects in 117 countries that were reviewed and approved using expedited procedures introduced by the GEF in 1996 for projects up to \$350,000 (Tables 1.1 and 1.2). The median size of the 117 expedited biodiversity EA projects has been slightly under \$200,000. UNDP is the GEF implementing agency (IA) for biodiversity EAs in 77

TABLE 1.1. GEF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES BY IMPLEMENTING AGENCY (EXPEDITED PROCEDURES ONLY)

	World Bank	UNDP	UNEP	Total
Number of Projects	17	73	27	117
Total Cost	\$2,320,000	\$14,466,000	\$4,924,000	\$21,709,000
Share of Funds	11%	67%	23%	100%
Average Project	\$136,471	\$198,161	\$182,358	\$185,550
Median Project	\$112,000	\$197,925	\$205,000	\$192,832

**TABLE 1.2. GEF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION
(EXPEDITED PROCEDURES ONLY)**

Region (World Bank basis)	No. of Projects	Total GEF Allocation (\$)	Average Allocation (\$)	Median Allocation (\$)
Africa	38	8,733,384	223,933	232,200
East Asia & Pacific	15	2,464,483	164,299	182,000
Europe & Central Asia	20	2,482,025	124,101	116,000
Latin America & Caribbean	30	5,595,219	186,507	194,266
Middle East & North Africa	9	2,103,700	233,744	230,500
South Asia	4	330,626	82,657	77,493
Total	117	21,709,437	185,550	192,832

countries (63%), UNEP in 27 (23%), and World Bank in 17 (14%).

5. The norms for GEF financing through the fast-track expedited procedures are set out in the document, *Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities in Biodiversity* (OpCrit). The OpCrit was prepared by the GEF Secretariat (GEF Sec) at the instruction of the GEF Council, following a request from the COP 2 meeting (November 1995, Jakarta), and in consultation with the IAs and the CBD Secretariat. The OpCrit first became effective in April 1996. Cost Benchmarks in the OpCrit limited the total EA project budgets to \$350,000 and established itemized cost norms. Countries could only go above these cost norms by following the normal procedures applicable to larger GEF project proposals, a path only two of 121 countries (India and Brazil) have chosen so far (the other larger EA projects pre-date the expedited procedures). The OpCrit document was revised and reissued in June 1997 to reflect guidance from the COP 3 meeting (November 1996, Buenos Aires).

6. Of the 121 countries that have received biodiversity EA grants, 28 reported having finalized their NBSAPs and 20 having their NBSAP in draft form as of March 31, 1999. The CBD Secretariat reported that 33 countries had submitted their final first national reports on Convention implementation and 32 countries had submitted interim or draft reports by March 31, 1999. This means that slightly

less than half of the countries implementing EAs had yet to submit a report. While no formal deadlines were set for completing NBSAPs, the COP had originally requested first national reports by the end of 1997, then extended this to the end of 1998.

7. The preparation of NBSAPs and national reports to the CBD is the responsibility of national governments. The IA's role is to assist the countries in accessing GEF funding, to provide technical assistance as and when required by the governments, and to help ensure GEF funding is used as agreed in the project document and conforms with the EA objectives. The role of GEF Sec is to ensure that project proposals conform with the agreed operational criteria and to approve the funding expeditiously.

8. Two other GEF-supported initiatives are closely linked to biodiversity EAs. First, between 1993 and 1997, 26 developing countries each received a grant for a Biodiversity Country Study (BCS) through UNEP, averaging \$210,000 per country. The BCS objectives included compiling data to provide inputs to national biodiversity planning processes. Second, the \$4 million Biodiversity Planning Support Programme (BPSP) approved by the GEF Council in July 1998 is now being implemented by UNDP and UNEP. The purpose of the BPSP is to strengthen countries' ability to develop and implement NBSAPs in accordance with their obligations under Article 6 of the CBD.

KEY DATES AND EVENTS

9. These were as follows:

December 1993	The Convention on Biological Diversity became effective.
August 1995-April 1996	Approval for all GEF projects with biodiversity planning components was suspended. GEF Sec began developing the OpCrit.
November 1995	COP 2 requested the GEF (as the CBD's interim financial mechanism) to facilitate urgent implementation of Articles 6 and 8 by providing developing country Parties with financial resources for projects in a flexible and expeditious manner. COP 2 also requested GEF to assist Parties in preparation of their first National Reports to the CBD.
February 1996	The GEF Operational Strategy was issued, defining EAs as one of three GEF operational programming categories. The OpCrit document was finalized by GEF Sec and the IAs in consultation with the CBD Secretariat.
April 1996	The GEF Council approved expedited procedures for biodiversity and climate change EAs up to \$350,000 that conform to the OpCrit. The expedited procedures came into effect immediately.
April-July 96	The Biodiversity Task Force (i.e., GEF Sec, the IAs, and the CBD Secretariat) reviewed the accumulated backlog of proposals.
July 1996	The expedited biodiversity EA approval process was streamlined.
November 1996	COP 3 provided additional guidance to the GEF. GEF Sec began drafting a revised version of the OpCrit in consultation with the IAs to reflect the guidance.
April 1996-July 1997	GEF approved 66 biodiversity EA projects through expedited procedures, plus one over \$350,000 (Brazil) as a regular GEF project.
July 1997	Revised OpCrits were issued to reflect the COP 3 guidance. These state that EA projects should support basic capacity building for planning purposes and may emphasize biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities, and ex-situ conservation.
July 1997-March 1999	GEF approved 51 biodiversity EA projects through expedited procedures, plus one over \$350,000 (India) as a regular GEF project.
May 1999	GEF Council approved additional funding for expedited procedures of up to \$100,000 for each EA project (not included in the scope of this assessment).
June-September 1999	Further revisions to the OpCrit were discussed (not included in the scope of this assessment).

THIS ASSESSMENT

10. The assessment began in November 1998, by which time most eligible countries had begun working on GEF-financed biodiversity EAs but very few had completed them. It was therefore too early to assess the impact of EAs. The GEF Operational Strategy describes the desired result of EAs in general (i.e., not just for biodiversity) as follows:

“Countries thus enabled will have the ability to formulate and direct sectoral and economy-wide programs to address global environmental problems through a cost effective approach within the context of national sustainable development efforts.” The main purpose of this study was to assess progress towards these objectives and to assist countries in meeting their related obligations under the CBD (see TOR, Annex 2).

11. The assessment was based on interviews and reviews of key documents as well as visits to 12 countries that had received EA grants under the GEF's expedited procedures: Argentina, Belize, Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Kenya, Mexico, Poland, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. These visits, each of about one week, were made from January to March 1999. Additional reports were commissioned on the biodiversity EAs in India, Nepal, and the Philippines. Broader reviews were commissioned for EAs in two regions, the Arab States (as defined by the UN) and the Pacific Island States. NBSAP documents in draft or final form for each of the countries included in the study were reviewed but not examined in detail. The study methodology and criteria for selection of countries are described in Annex 3.

12. All visits were arranged with the cooperation of the countries' GEF Focal Points. Country visit teams met with key stakeholders and local IA staff to share preliminary findings, and in some cases circulated draft reports for comments.

13. The study team consisted of two international consultants, two staff members from the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, two staff members from GEF Sec (including the GEF's enabling activities task manager), one staff member and one consultant from World Bank, one staff member and one consultant from UNDP, and one UNEP staff member. A local consultant participated fully in each country visit. The IA and GEF staff and consultants all supported the development of the study plan and methodology, as well as the selection of countries to be visited. They also facilitated interviews and data gathering within their respective agencies and took part in at least one country visit. Most participated in a two-day workshop for the preliminary analysis of findings. The international consultants carried out most of the technical work and drafted the report.

MAJOR FINDINGS

14. The findings reported here refer mainly to the countries visited or included in broader regional reviews for the purposes of this study.

Overall Achievements

15. The progress made towards completing national biodiversity planning efforts varies significantly. Some countries have moved fairly quickly and, by early 1999, were about to finalize impressive NBSAPs based on in-depth consultations with key stakeholders, solid technical analysis of major issues, and careful development of a plan consisting of clearly defined and prioritized activities. In contrast, other countries have experienced significant start-up delays, have not managed to consult widely, and seem to be developing action plans consisting mainly of projects requiring international funding. Very few countries have started implementing their action plans.

16. The overall findings of this assessment are that most countries seem to have undertaken a worthwhile and cost-effective national biodiversity planning process, or are in the process of doing so. Most of the national biodiversity strategies reviewed during this assessment were well-informed and impressive documents, containing what appeared to be reasonable assessments of the current biodiversity status and trends. In several countries, it was clear that the NBSAP process had moved significantly further in building consensus and awareness than any other comparable national planning initiative. NBSAPs were exciting and new in some parts of the world and have generated considerable enthusiasm. Preparation of NBSAPs has helped bring home to countries the implications and commitment of the CBD, which had previously been limited to relatively few people. The EAs also encouraged countries to continue thinking about their CBD obligations. All three IAs have played major, positive roles in supporting the planning and implementation

of EAs, often under difficult circumstances and despite diverse views on objectives and methods. The biodiversity EAs appear to represent a worthwhile and cost-effective use of GEF resources that is compatible with the existing capacities of most, but not all, countries.

17. The stated objectives of EAs are extremely ambitious and set a very high standard for any country to try to meet. It may be more realistic to think of the EA projects as setting the stage for starting national biodiversity planning, rather than achieving the goals set out in the GEF Operational Strategy and echoed in the OpCrit, i.e., "Countries thus enabled will have the ability to formulate and direct sectoral and economywide programs to address global environmental problems through a cost effective approach within the context of national sustainable development efforts." In most countries—developing or otherwise—this simply cannot be done in a couple of years with \$200,000–350,000. It will take decades and require much stronger political willpower than is now evident. The awkward terminology used here is perhaps unfortunate, but it is difficult to see how countries can be "enabled" to conserve biodiversity by their current EA projects. It may be better to consider the present set of EA projects as the first step in what will be more than a single GEF-financed activity supporting national biodiversity strategies and plans. Additional activities have been approved in two major areas: the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme and additional expedited EA funding of up to \$100,000 per country. These measures are considered further below.

18. The GEF has asserted that the NBSAPs currently being prepared are "comprehensive" and that EAs will provide countries with "the ability to formulate and direct sectoral and economywide programs ... within the context of national sustainable development efforts."¹ The results of this assessment indicate that the

current set of EA projects has taken no more than preliminary steps towards accomplishing this. Notable and significant progress in biodiversity planning has indeed been made by many countries implementing EAs, but the development and implementation of national biodiversity plans that can make a real difference to current rates of biodiversity loss, and the commitment and capacity to implement such plans, are still some way in the future. Thus, continued follow-up action by the countries and the GEF is critical.

19. EAs can only be expected to prepare the foundation for encouraging countries to address the hard political decisions that are vital if continuing declines in biodiversity are to be seriously addressed. The comprehensive implementation of effective biodiversity conservation as articulated by the CBD is still a long way from being realized, and the idea that biodiversity conservation can only be done with external support remains firmly established in many countries. Measures that require good planning and political will rather than additional resources are often being ignored, including institutional and fiscal reform, improved concession and extraction policies and regulations, and removal of market distortions.

Country Motivation

20. The assessment team received a consistently strong message that the executing agencies in most countries took the preparation of NBSAPs seriously. The agencies elicited a significant amount of interest and participation during the preparation process from a range of stakeholders, through workshops and consultations as well as awareness-raising activities. However, other motivations were also observed in some countries as they started the preparations of their NBSAPs. Some of these had less to do with any conviction that NBSAPs were an important step towards more effective biodiversity conservation and more

¹ 'Relations with Conventions,' GEF/C.13/12, April 7, 1999.

to do with the availability of funds, encouragement from the IAs, and the perception that future GEF funding depended on having completed an NBSAP.

Stakeholder Involvement

21. Despite budget constraints, the extent of participation by key stakeholders in the NBSAP process compares favorably with previous environmental planning initiatives in most countries. Steering committees and consultation processes often encouraged cooperation between key stakeholders not accustomed to working together, thus helping to build foundations for future collaboration. Many IA staff have been admirably persistent in encouraging governments to adopt a more participatory approach rather than restricting the planning process to government officials and scientific elites, although they were not always successful. Many other countries would have considerably expanded their local consultations with additional resources. There was a lack of involvement from local communities, indigenous groups, or the private sector, and the absence of consideration of gender issues was noted in several countries.

Public Support

22. Public awareness of the biodiversity planning process can also be compared favorably with previous efforts, with several recipient countries including effective media campaigns within their EAs. Preparing NBSAPs and first national reports seems to have deepened governments' awareness of their obligations under the CBD and helped more key officials understand some of the most significant biodiversity issues. However, the constituency supporting biodiversity conservation or other global environmental issues remains too narrow in most countries, and is only very rarely able to have a significant impact on key decisions affecting biodiversity.

Links with Related Initiatives

23. Productive links were established between NBSAP preparation and larger GEF projects in several countries, often through overlapping steering committees or working groups. EAs also benefited to some extent from previous environmental or biodiversity planning efforts within their own countries. The Biodiversity Country Studies previously funded by GEF through UNEP generally proved very useful for EA stocktaking in the countries visited by the study.

24. Earlier environmental plans such as Tropical Forest Action Plans, Reports to UNCED, National Conservation Strategies, and so on seemed to provide useful organizational experience more than substantive content in many countries (with a few exceptions). Some countries that had already prepared many such documents seem to be suffering from environmental planning fatigue, but with little to show in terms of implementation. More seriously, it was evident in several countries that NBSAP preparation has not been linked or coordinated effectively with other, concurrent donor-sponsored planning initiatives, with the different donors' needs and priorities simply proving incompatible. The prospects for effective implementation of such NBSAPs would most likely be poor.

Action Plans

25. Connections between the major threats analyzed in the strategies and the proposals for action plans often seemed tenuous, suggesting that action plans are not addressing the politically sensitive root causes of biodiversity loss. Key international causes of biodiversity loss such as the trade in endangered species or the impacts of international trade regimes on biodiversity have generally not been considered. Many action plans are little more than unprioritized lists of projects for

international funding, apparently aimed more at international donors than a national audience. Very few action plans emphasize domestic resource mobilization. While a few action plans propose national policy and institutional changes, the majority seem to be aiming to conserve biodiversity through a project-based approach. In some countries where there were significant transboundary issues, e.g., involving regional seas and biological corridors, these were not given much attention in the NBSAPs.

26. NBSAPs were a complex undertaking for most countries. The teams mobilized to prepare NBSAPs, consisting mainly of consultants, have usually been well-qualified and competent. The leadership of these teams in several of the countries visited was outstanding. But the temporary nature of these teams raises doubts about the sustainability of any learning or capacity building that occurs during the projects. Many countries seem likely to end up with a document, but little more in terms of enhanced institutional capacity. Ways need to be found to embed biodiversity planning efforts more firmly within permanent government structures and decision-making processes.

27. The responsibility for biodiversity within governments is not always clear, and it is not always evident how NBSAPs should fit into overall government structures and policies. This is especially true when intersectoral integration is weak or absent in the NBSAP process. Some EAs have promoted the establishment of new institutional arrangements and raised the profile of biodiversity within government. Most EAs were executed by ministries or departments of environment, although many of these agencies are relatively new, lack a convincing field presence, and have modest implementation capacities. These agencies are not often in a strong position to address intersectoral issues without very high-level political support. Such support has only been evident in a few countries.

Issues Emphasized by the COP

28. The strategies and plans have so far focused on biodiversity conservation. The other two major objectives of the CBD—sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing—have received much less attention. The emerging issues highlighted at COP 3 and incorporated as optional EA project components in the revised OpCrit have also received relatively little attention. These include biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities, and ex-situ conservation.

Intersectoral Issues

29. Only tentative progress has been made in elaborating intersectoral issues and working out how to address them. These issues have not been seriously addressed in most countries' EAs. There has been relatively little substantive involvement in NBSAP preparation of the key agencies responsible for land use decision making in agriculture, forestry, mining, transportation, energy and so on. The main reasons seemed to be (1) lack of biodiversity knowledge and awareness outside the traditional biodiversity constituency, (2) institutional arrangements and instability which do not encourage biodiversity or other environmental concerns to be taken into consideration by decision makers, (3) a lack of methodologies or guidelines for incorporating biodiversity into other sectors in ways that are meaningful to planners and, most seriously, (4) an unwillingness to identify and start to address the real and politically difficult tradeoffs that will be necessary if current rates of biodiversity loss are to be reduced.

Homogeneity of Approach

30. As implemented, the EAs have been relatively homogenous in terms of the amounts of time and resources devoted to them.

Countries that were ready to move ahead with NBSAPs when the EAs were launched have benefited considerably from doing so. Others, which lacked the capacity to begin preparing serious NBSAPs at this stage, seem unlikely to derive long-lasting benefits from the process.

31. There is little obvious correlation between the individual EA project budgets and the country context or capacity. GEF Sec staff argue that the most important criteria determining grant size was the amount of work already done in each country which was relevant to national biodiversity planning. But some smaller countries seem to have received disproportionately high budgets in comparison to the more challenging requirements evident in certain larger countries.

THE GEF RESPONSE TO COP GUIDANCE

32. The introduction of expedited procedures as defined by the OpCrit was the GEF's response to the COP's November 1995 request "to provide developing country Parties with financial resources for projects in a flexible and expeditious manner." The OpCrit defined a fast-track mechanism for funding biodiversity EAs that evolved into a fairly routine review and approval process after resolution of some differences in approach between GEF Sec and the IAs. Once the OpCrit was in place, projects could be prepared that responded directly to the criteria, and IA staff and consultants were able to explain what information was required, what countries could and could not do, and how to present the proposals. Subsequent streamlining of the review and approval procedures allowed 15% of EA budgets to be released immediately after CEO approval, although this was not as effective in accelerating project start-up as intended.

33. The breadth and generality of the COP 3 guidance was considerably more difficult to respond to within the context of the existing and planned EA project portfolio, and put the

GEF in a very difficult situation. The GEF response to the COP 3 guidance consisted mainly of revising the OpCrit to state that future EA projects should support basic capacity building for planning purposes and may emphasize biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities, and ex-situ conservation. The cost norms for EA project funding were not increased as a result of these scope expansions (although the CHM received additional funding of up to \$14,000 per country and a global pilot biosafety project has been launched). Countries that had already received EA support were offered supplementary assistance of up to \$30,000 to help them respond to the new guidance.

34. This study found that many countries have experienced difficulties in addressing the COP 3 guidance in a comprehensive manner and most have little idea how to do so. Existing guidelines do not provide this information. Not one of the 66 eligible countries with EAs approved prior to the November 1996 COP 3 meeting has yet applied for the supplementary assistance specifically offered by the OpCrit in April 1997 to address the issues that emerged from this meeting.

35. Prior to COP 3, a considerable amount of time and effort had already gone into setting up the framework for biodiversity EAs as well as helping recipient countries plan and implement EA projects. The type and quality of output from the EAs was essentially shaped by the GEF decision to limit financial support to a range of \$200,000–350,000 for projects approved under expedited procedures. This level of inputs over one to two years was not consistent with the dramatic expansion of the thematic and technical scope of the national biodiversity planning processes that a serious response to the COP 3 guidance would have required. With many of the EA projects already under implementation or approaching advanced stages of planning, the complex and wide-ranging set of issues implicit in the COP 3

guidance were simply too broad and general in scope to expect the current portfolio of biodiversity EA projects to react adequately. With hindsight, the study team finds that neither the COP nor the GEF has developed clear policies or guidelines on these issues.

36. The time and effort required to develop clear criteria, proposal formats and cost norms when biodiversity EAs were first introduced had resulted in uncertainty and wasted effort early on. This resulted in considerable delay in project review and processing, and caused some resentment in countries at what was perceived as GEF's excessive red tape and bureaucracy, even though the review and approval process subsequently became routine and much more efficient. An analysis carried out by the study team shows that the time taken to process biodiversity EA proposals has lessened significantly over time.

The Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities

37. The OpCrit document was issued in 1996, and then revised in 1997. It is a lengthy and technical document that was mainly used as a basis for GEF Sec and the IAs to review and approve EA proposals. Once the IAs and the GEF Sec agreed on the criteria and procedures that were codified in the OpCrit, EA proposals became standardized to the extent that they became very similar to one another.

38. Development and initial implementation of the Operational Criteria was slowed by debate between the IAs and GEF Sec over the exact purpose, appropriate content of, and resources needed for, biodiversity EAs. The debate centered around the relative emphasis to be put on building the capacity for biodiversity planning versus treating NBSAPs as a more modest stepping stone towards on-the-ground investment programs in conservation. UNDP and UNEP proposed greater emphasis on national capacity building components in EA projects, while Bank and GEF Sec staff argued that countries had already

prepared many environmental or biodiversity plans and the methodologies for NBSAPs were well known. These differences were eventually resolved by agreement on a set of Activity Norms and Cost Benchmarks specified in the OpCrit.

39. While the OpCrit document does provide some guidance for EA planning and implementation—and commends existing guidelines—it probably falls short of one of its declared objectives, i.e., “to outline recommended processes to prepare, discuss and implement EAs.” In practice, the OpCrit is unknown to many key government officials in recipient countries, although it was distributed to the GEF focal points.

ROLES OF IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

40. UNDP is implementing 73 or about two-thirds of the projects. UNEP is implementing 27 and the World Bank 17. The average and median values of the UNDP and UNEP projects are close to \$200,000, while the median Bank project is \$112,000 (the average is \$136,471). The relatively small size of the Bank's EAs seems largely due to ten of the 17 Bank projects being concentrated in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with average/median values of about \$100,000. The 10 UN agency EAs in this region average around \$150,000. The Bank's seven projects outside Eastern Europe and Central Asia are comparable in size to those of the two UN agencies.

41. All three IAs have played an important and constructive role in supporting the preparation of NBSAPs, though their emphasis has differed slightly. The two UN agencies have continued to emphasize process and capacity building, while the World Bank has encouraged recipient countries to produce a biodiversity strategy and action plan relatively quickly and at low cost, building on existing information.

42. EAs represented a significant management challenge to the IAs. UNDP, which managed most of the projects, took on several additional staff and consultants to help implement EAs. This was due to the large number of EAs taken on by the agency as well as the additional work undertaken to address capacity building and other process-related tasks. UNDP set up an effective system of regional and sub-regional coordinators to provide technical support for the national execution of EAs and to complement the managerial and administrative support provided by the UNDP country offices. UNEP also established a separate and effective program on a much smaller scale under a single task manager, while the World Bank managed its smaller portfolio of projects without significant organizational changes.

43. Including all fees and budget allocations to the IAs, the resources made available to implement the biodiversity EAs averaged 10% of project budgets: 8% for UNDP (including UNOPS), 9% for World Bank, and 15% for UNEP. These rates include estimated GEF corporate budget allocations in addition to specific project support costs, while only the latter are included in EA project budgets. The exact corporate budget allocation to EAs could not be determined exactly prior to the introduction of activity-based budgeting in 1999.

ROLE OF THE GEF SECRETARIAT

44. The role of the GEF Secretariat has been to actively support the expeditious development and implementation of EAs through coordinating the development and revision of the Operational Criteria, establishing the expedited procedures, and monitoring implementation.

BIODIVERSITY PLANNING SUPPORT PROGRAM

45. The \$4 million Biodiversity Planning Support Program (BPSP) recently launched by UNDP and UNEP with GEF funding is now the only international mechanism providing national biodiversity planning support to developing countries, including helping these countries interpret and respond to the new CBD issues being emphasized by the COP (although international NGOs have targeted some specific NBSAP issues). The BPSP has the potential to play a key support role through the network of regional support organizations it is supporting.

46. The BPSP will focus on undertaking case studies, identifying best practices, and providing guidance on newly emerging issues as these are identified by the COP. The program aims to address the needs identified by countries, mainly working through sub-regional, non-governmental institutions, by using people within their own regions and by drawing on the regional technical capacity developed during the EAs carried out so far. The emphasis of future BPSP workshops and information dissemination is expected to shift towards prioritizing action plans and, eventually, towards implementation of these plans as more countries near completion of their NBSAPs.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR ENABLING ACTIVITIES

47. The GEF Council approved the document "Relations with Conventions" in May 1999. The Council thereby authorized the CEO of the GEF to increase the budget for ongoing EA projects by \$100,000 per country (up to a total of \$450,000) to help recipient countries respond

to the guidance from the COP 3 and COP 4 meetings. The OpCrits are to be revised and new cost norms developed for the new “add-ons.” This document also states that GEF Sec and the IAs, in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, will “continue to collaborate on the further elaboration of a strategic and focused operational response” to COP guidance, and that GEF Sec will seek STAP involvement in operationalizing COP guidance.

48. These seem sensible approaches, and should provide a good opportunity for countries to start addressing the most recent COP issues. It may cause some logistical challenges in those recipient countries that have completed or are near to completing their EA projects without having included the key COP 3 or 4 issues, however. These problems seem likely to be compounded by any additional guidance which could emerge from COP 5, 6, etc., at which point most countries will presumably have completed their existing EA projects.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

49. The more effective NBSAP processes have aroused a reasonable amount of interest, even enthusiasm, among certain – if by no means all – government agencies, conservation NGOs, academics, local groups, and the media. Increasing numbers of draft NBSAPs have been circulated, commented on and improved, and await government endorsement. As a result, expectations have been raised that there is a real prospect of more effective action being taken to support biodiversity conservation. But is there?

50. In those countries which have completed or are close to completing NBSAPs, the “what next?” question is already causing frustration and uncertainty, with the enthusiasm and momentum built up during the consultations starting to leak away. Most governments do not seem to be taking significant steps to

maintain or build on the momentum that had gathered. Environment ministries or departments were often the EA executing agency. This can complicate the shift from planning to implementation, since many environmental ministries have limited implementation mandates or experience. Bringing about more effective conservation usually requires the active commitment and participation of other sectoral agencies. Many NBSAP processes did not manage to involve these key partners and are therefore struggling to come up with viable approaches to implementation.

51. Some governments are considering or have adopted institutional arrangements to provide continuity after the NBSAP project teams disband, but most of these appear tentative at best, lacking clear direction or commitments of long-term financial support. In a few cases, domestic resources may be mobilized to support a networking function that can at least maintain contact with the stakeholders who were drawn into the NBSAP participation and consultation process. But even this minimal form of continuity has not been planned or provided for in most countries.

52. The fact is there are high expectations that external financing will step in and support the priority proposals identified by the NBSAP, and especially that GEF will make significant additional funding available. When government officials responsible for conservation are confronted with the reality of the GEF's limited resources and the need to access other sources of funding, they acknowledge the situation but usually have no alternative pathway or strategy in mind. As a result, there is now a danger that NBSAPs could join other environmental planning reports on the shelf, matching the disappointing implementation records of many TFAPs, National Conservation Strategies, NEAPs, and so on.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Role of the GEF

53. There is a need for the GEF to further clarify its role in supporting the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. It does not have the resources to support NBSAP implementation on a large scale, and may be better suited to facilitating partnerships between countries and other donors, bilateral and multilateral. This role is hampered at present by the poor level of understanding of the GEF's role and capacity in many recipient countries as well as some donor nations. Outreach seminars have recently been planned in a few countries to help provide a fuller appreciation of the GEF's role.

54. Although the May 1999 Council decision provides for an important extension of existing EA projects to address COP 3 and 4 issues, there is uncertainty regarding the future of enabling activities. This report suggests that considerable additional efforts are likely to be required in key areas if EAs are to achieve their stated objectives.

55. A more proactive approach, requested in some countries during this assessment, would be to encourage national-level capacity building on how GEF policies, programs, and procedures can support countries in fulfilling their obligations under the CBD. Such efforts could also help to develop a clearer understanding of these obligations as well as COP guidance. This task could be approached in a number of complementary ways: (1) by training national experts familiar with the CBD in GEF matters (including GEF Focal Points or their staff if appropriate), (2) by training GEF Focal points in CBD matters, and (3) by establishing a national-level coordination committee for GEF projects, most likely to be led by the GEF Focal Points and including the CBD focal points, IAs, relevant government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders. (This would also support the Operational Strategy

recommendation to address further capacity building within the context of operational programs as well as strengthen the GEF system of Focal Points.)

Responding to the COP

56. COP guidance could still be improved to avoid GEF being forced into a reactive mode. Without some change in the way guidance is made, GEF will presumably continue to struggle to react to fresh and wide-ranging COP guidance every year or two while trying to maintain the longer term strategic direction and balance of its operational programs in biodiversity. There is an obvious logistical challenge insofar as COP guidance continues to emerge and be expanded regularly over time while EA projects are, at least so far, a single activity in each country covering a fixed time period. Additional guidance from future COPs will presumably appear after most countries have completed their existing EA projects. The long-term potential for effective implementation of the CBD is unlikely to be enhanced by continuation of this pattern, which seems destined to accentuate the dichotomy between the language used to describe the lofty goals and ambitions for biodiversity conservation on one hand and a practical reality that is considerably more modest on the other.

57. There is no easy answer to this problem. The recent GEF document 'Relations with Conventions' states that GEF Sec and the IAs, in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, will "continue to collaborate on the further elaboration of a strategic and focused operational response" to COP guidance, and that GEF Sec will seek STAP involvement in operationalizing COP guidance. This study simply reinforces the critical importance of this approach and the need for urgency in completing such tasks, particularly with regard to issues brought up under guidance from COP 3.

58. As a matter of urgency, mechanisms need to be established to further develop or adjust

NBSAPs to reflect important commitment of the Parties to the CBD on a timely basis. Participatory processes and capacity building activities related to the development of NBSAPs in each country should include a review of the CBD, clearly identifying all key concerns and commitments to be met. Although this was not always an explicit EA project objective, the finalization of NBSAPs should also include a review to assess whether all the key concerns and commitments required under the CBD have been adequately considered and matched with appropriate strategies and action plans.

59. In support of the previous recommendation, renewed efforts should be made to develop and maintain up-to-date information materials and other resources that clearly identify the key issues emerging from the COP, including an expert discussion on the implications for national biodiversity planning. This task is likely to be carried out at least partially by the BPSP, but may also be a priority for the CBD Secretariat.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity

60. Most of the biodiversity EA projects are proving or have proven to be worthwhile and cost-effective exercises given the time and resource constraints under which they operate. But if these projects are to come closer to attaining the ambitions set out for them by the GEF, then virtually all of them will need to be developed beyond a documented set of strategies (in the case of the NBSAPs) or a compiled report (in the case of the National Report) or a set of facilities (in the case of the CHM). The elements of "mainstreaming," i.e., mechanisms by which biodiversity conservation becomes an influential consideration in existing planning and decision-making processes, need to be introduced more convincingly early on in the process. Intersectoral integration from the technical as well as institutional perspective is vital. Political will at the highest level is an essential ingredient, to inculcate the NBSAP's

institutional home with the appropriate legal and political mandate. Where necessary, approvals and commitments of support should also be sought from relevant local government authorities. Increasing public awareness of biodiversity conservation and the NBSAPs are also vital, as well as supportive commitments from key stakeholders of biodiversity resources.

61. Linkages between the ecological aspects of biodiversity conservation and the economic benefits and goals of countries should be more clearly enunciated. Complementary agreements should be developed for policies and sector agency operations, both central and in the field, noting the importance not only of similar programs but of other agencies that influence biodiversity conservation, such as economic planning, finance, public works, tourism, and so on. Such agreements should be formalized and backed up by appropriate shifts of personnel, material and financial resources to match the implementation needs of the NBSAP priorities. Achieving genuine intersectoral integration, and later joint implementation, will require additional capacity building efforts that could be identified as a part of the EA projects' finalization phases, to make sure that the activities initiating full NBSAP implementation and/or CHM operation can proceed effectively.

62. Government approval of an NBSAP implies a country commitment to provide financial, institutional, and other support to its priority action plans. GEF should be seen as one among many possible sources of support. It is therefore important that the approving body (Cabinet, Parliament, or other) ensure that practical financing mechanisms are in place for the NBSAP. Such mechanisms as executive or legislative policies allow the use of market-based instruments like user fees and tax incentives, the proceeds of which are directed to an appropriate fund management mechanism (e.g., trust fund) for NBSAP implementation. Where country experience and capacity for designing and/or implementing such financing

mechanisms are weak, the GEF could provide support under the recently approved additional funding for EAs aimed at capacity building and intersectoral integration.

Next Steps for National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

63. The completion of GEF-financed NBSAPs should be viewed as the starting point for a series of biodiversity conservation planning activities that maintain the momentum established by the current set of EA projects. These activities cannot take place within the framework of the current EA project portfolio, since the available resources have already been spent or committed. Additional resources will be required, whether domestic or international. In cases where NBSAPs have mainly been developed at a strategic level, selecting key priorities and planning at the operational level will be critical, taking note of the need to integrate key activities into ongoing economic and other sectoral programs. In cases where initial arrangements have already been agreed upon, such institutional arrangements must be made to work, starting with organizational meetings, capacity building, and practical engagement in critical follow-up activities, including more effective policy development. This could include developing supportive market and fiscal incentives; improving regulations governing biodiversity use, such as concessions; reforming relevant legal codes; and strengthening the mandates for intra-governmental cooperation and intersectoral participation. Systematic fund raising should also be launched as a priority. This could involve proposal development and donor meetings, establishment of linkages with the private business sector for contributions and joint implementation, and employing measures at the executive and legislative levels for additional budgetary support.

64. The substantive content of some already-approved NBSAPs may need updating, especially where some of the key concerns and

commitments under the CBD have yet to be fully addressed. But even relatively complete NBSAPs would benefit from the establishment of a mechanism for regular updates as new calls for action and guidance emerge from future COP meetings. Such a mechanism could be incorporated within a monitoring and evaluation system that should be part of NBSAP implementation. The role of CHMs could be reinforced by establishing closer links with the CBD Secretariat, the IAs, the GEF Sec, and other countries for regular updates on biodiversity issues and concerns.

Priority Actions Within Countries

65. The results of this study suggest that the main priorities for follow up within countries as they complete their NBSAPs are now to:

- Obtain formal government approval or adoption of NBSAP, and re-emphasize the critical importance of moving towards the eventual integration or mainstreaming of biodiversity action plans with other national development and environment plans
- Prioritize and assign responsibilities and obtain commitments to the major biodiversity action plan components from key stakeholders officially representing key institutional partners (rather than individual expert opinions)
- Confirm or establish permanent institutional arrangements for the coordination and monitoring of NBSAP implementation
- Coordinate NBSAP execution with other national environmental planning exercises, including NEAPs, NEMPs, and TFAPs
- Develop a plan to mobilize financial resources, including the use of market and fiscal policies, and organize donor workshops and other coordination mechanisms

- Clarify the role and importance of the CHM as a functional scientific and information network rather than simply a computer system within a biodiversity unit
- Re-focus on emerging COP 3 and 4 issues and consider seeking the supplementary GEF support now available for EA projects in these areas.
- Deepen the NBSAP in weak areas, such as intersectoral analysis, awareness raising, local consultation, policy development, institutional reforms, sustainable use, and so on.

66. The last of these recommendations is one of the most important if EA projects are to have a lasting impact on catalyzing more effective biodiversity conservation. The relatively weak NBSAP areas referred to here are likely to require additional time, resources, and political commitment if they are to be effectively addressed. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the GEF should assist countries to prioritize through future GEF-financed EA projects.

Recommendations to the GEF

67. Both the GEF Sec and the IAs should give priority to the vigorous implementation of the BPSP. The BPSP is already giving particular attention to regional workshops, or in some cases even national workshops. As obvious resources for sharing best practices, resource people from countries that had relatively successful EA projects are being involved in these efforts. Regional organizations that are willing and capable of supporting these efforts are also being tapped. The various guidelines recommended by GEF for NBSAP development are also being updated, including more detailed sets of guidelines for the CHM. Best practice experience has shown the usefulness of going beyond the distribution of printed guidelines. In practice, there may be an inverse relationship between the clear understanding of guidelines and the volume of

materials distributed. The translation and/or interpretation of standard guidelines into operational terms at the national, or at least regional, level has been correctly identified as a priority need.

68. Both IAs and the GEFSec should closely monitor the progress of EAs. This is critical since most EAs are pioneering efforts planned for two years or less. Also IAs often have the knowledge and expertise to help countries overcome some of the weaknesses apparent in many NBSAPs, including lack of prioritization within action plans and lack of a realistic plan for funding biodiversity conservation. IAs should therefore be prepared to provide more intensive and sustained technical guidance to at least some of the EA projects.

69. The IAs also need to intensify efforts to strengthen coordination among themselves and to integrate NBSAPs more aggressively with their own regular operational activities in individual countries. The World Bank is perhaps best equipped to help draw the attention of economic development planners to biodiversity conservation issues, but UNDP as the major IA for EA projects should explore ways to support more effective intersectoral integration of biodiversity conservation within countries over the longer term.

70. A more proactive communication program should be implemented in support of EAs. This means fuller clarification between the GEF Sec and the IAs on interpretations of new or still outstanding issues related to the Operational Criteria and the various guidelines, and on placing these interpretations within the regional and national contexts. The purpose is to ensure that the GEF fully understands country needs, and that countries fully understand what the GEF can and cannot support. GEF Sec staff should participate with the IAs in consultations with countries not just to create unity in interpretation but also to build a strong understanding of the varying local context for biodiversity conservation.

2. COP GUIDANCE AND GEF RESPONSIVENESS

71. The GEF is the interim institutional structure managing the financial mechanism for the CBD. As such, the GEF acts under the guidance of and is accountable to the COP on policies, program priorities, and eligibility criteria for the purposes of the convention.² This chapter explores the GEF's responses to COP guidance specifically in the context of EAs, while recognizing that the COP's relationship with the GEF covers a broader range of issues.

COP GUIDANCE

Second Meeting Of The COP

72. The November 1995 COP 2 meeting requested the GEF to facilitate urgent implementation of Articles 6 and 8 of the CBD by making financial resources for projects available to developing country Parties in a flexible and expeditious manner (Decision II/7).³ Article 6 of the CBD requires each contracting party "...in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities, to:

1. Develop national strategies, plans or programs for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programs which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and
2. Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs and policies."

73. COP 2 also urged the GEF to provide financial resources for the preparation of their first national reports to the CBD (Decision II/17), focusing mainly on measures taken to implement CBD Article 6, and requested the GEF to explore modalities for capacity building related to the CHM (Decision II/3).

Third Meeting of the COP

74. The COP 3 meeting provided further guidance on support for national activities and programs in biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, the CHM, incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities and ex-situ conservation (Decision III/5). COP 3 also urged Parties to include measures for the following in their NBSAPs:

1. The conservation of both in situ and ex situ biodiversity
2. The integration of biodiversity objectives in relevant sectoral policies in order to achieve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
3. The equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources (Decision III/9).

GEF RESPONSE

75. GEF responded to the COP 2 guidance by preparing the Operational Criteria for Enabling Activities (OpCrit) at the instruction of the GEF Council. The OpCrit defined the "expedited procedures," a fast-track mechanism for funding biodiversity EAs in

² Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility (1996).

³ Article 6 is the main focus of EA projects, while Article 8 is expected to be addressed through GEF operation programs (Operational Criteria 1997, para 4) and will not be considered further here.

response to the COP's request to provide developing country Parties with financial resources for projects in a flexible and expeditious manner. The OpCrit was prepared by GEF Sec in consultation with the IAs and the CBD. The OpCrit first became effective in April 1996. Cost Benchmarks in the OpCrit limited the total EA project budgets to \$350,000 and established itemized cost norms totaling \$200,000–350,000. Countries could only go above these cost norms by following the normal procedures applicable to larger GEF project proposals, a path only two of 121 countries (India and Brazil) have chosen so far (the other larger projects pre-date the expedited procedures). The OpCrit document was revised and reissued in June 1997 to reflect guidance from the COP 3 meeting (November 1996, Buenos Aires).

76. GEF Sec staff have provided three reasons for introducing expedited procedures for approving biodiversity EA proposals. First, there was increasing pressure from countries that wanted to move faster with biodiversity planning than existing GEF project review and approval procedures could accommodate. Second, GEF wanted to respond to the widespread perception that the early EAs for climate change were driven by the interests of the IAs rather than the needs of the recipient countries. Third, the GEF Council was not ready to relinquish its supervisory role by delegating EAs to one or more of the IAs and wanted to ensure that a consistent approach was adopted by all recipient countries.

77. Were there alternatives? In 1995, UNEP had proposed a \$4 million "umbrella" GEF project to support biodiversity planning, including capacity building, with 10 countries identified for the first phase.⁴ This suggestion was not acceptable to GEF, which wanted biodiversity planning to be explicitly country driven. Furthermore, neither GEF Sec nor the

other two IAs were convinced that UNEP had the capacity to implement such a project. The result, in UNEP's view, is that GEF then had to respond to the difficult challenge of more than 100 individual country requests one to two years later.

78. The GEF responded to the COP 3 guidance mainly by revising the OpCrit to state that EAs "may" emphasize the following (with key words emphasized by the authors of this report):

1. *Capacity building* for conservation and sustainable use and in-situ conservation
2. Identification of *threats*
3. Capacity building in *biosafety*
4. Capacity building for assessment and monitoring, including *taxonomy*
5. Protecting biodiversity important to *agriculture*
6. Capacity building for purposes of the *CHM*
7. Support for *incentive measures*
8. Capacity building to on access to *genetic resources*
9. Assessment of capacity building needs for *indigenous and local communities*
10. Identifying measures for *ex-situ conservation*

79. Point 1 above responds to the strong emphasis on capacity building throughout the relevant COP 3 decisions and point 2 is a reaffirmation of CBD Article 7c related to the

⁴ "Support to Developing Countries for the Development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans." UNEP proposal to GEF.

identification of threats.⁵ Points 3 through 10 reflect the COP guidance to the GEF requesting additional support for national activities and programs in biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, the CHM, incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities, and ex-situ conservation.⁶ With hindsight, the study team finds that neither the COP nor the GEF has developed clear policies or guidelines on these issues.

OPERATIONAL CRITERIA FOR ENABLING ACTIVITIES

Objectives

80. According to the GEF Operational Strategy, the purpose of the OpCrit was to: (1) set out the scope, sequence, depth, and typical cost norms for biodiversity EAs; (2) outline recommended processes to prepare, discuss, and implement EAs; and (3) set out the requirements for GEF support for EAs. In other words the OpCrit defined the norms under which the GEF would fund EA projects through expedited procedures.

81. The revised OpCrit states that EAs *should*:⁷

1. Assess the current situation and take stock (without new primary research or field work)
2. Assess needs and identify options and priorities for further action
3. Prepare specific components of NBSAPs to be included in the national report to the COP

4. Provide basic information and raise awareness within the countries including information concerning the relevant technical issues mentioned in the guidance of the COP
5. Provide basic capacity building for planning purposes for activities identified as priorities in the guidance approved by the COP
6. Identify country-driven priority actions based on national strategies that may be developed.

Activity Norms and Cost Benchmarks

82. The sections of the OpCrit with the most significant practical implications are the Activity Norms and Cost Benchmarks included in Annex B. The Activity Norms describe the set of activities “that would typically be included” in an EA, while the Cost Benchmarks are “indicators of reasonable cost ranges for individual activities [to] ensure cost-effectiveness.” The Cost Benchmarks from the revised OpCrit are shown in Table 2.1 (the addition of up to \$14,000 for the Clearing-House Mechanism [CHM] is the only change from the original OpCrit). Table 2.1 also shows the OpCrit suggestions for allocating the total EA budgets of up to \$350,000 among the project components.

Adequacy of Cost Norms

83. Some key budget issues that arose during the drafting of the OpCrit and the approval of EA proposals are reviewed here. Country experiences with the adequacy of EA project budgets are reviewed in chapter 4.

⁵ CBD Article 7(c) calls on Parties to “Identify processes and categories of activities which have or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and monitor their effects....”

⁶ OpCrit 1997, page 5. COP Decision III/5 (page 38 in 1997 Op Crit).

⁷ OpCrit 1997, page 4.

TABLE 2.1. OPERATIONAL CRITERIA COST BENCHMARKS⁸

All figures in thousands of \$US	<u>PRODUCT</u> Preparation and execution of an activity	<u>PROCESS</u> Stakeholder consultation, consensus building	<u>TOTAL</u> (including overheads)
Stocktaking and inventory of existing information, including social assessment	20-35		20-35
Identification and analysis of options	30-40	80-160	110-200
Preparation of a strategy and action plan	20-30	40-60	60-90
First national report to the CBD	10-15	0-10	10-25
TOTAL	80-120	120-230	200-350
Clearing-house mechanism			1.5-14

84. UNDP and UNEP staff, based on their experience, expressed the view that the cost norms were inadequate for many countries, and that considerably more resources should have been allocated to “process” activities such as stakeholder consultations and capacity building. In contrast, World Bank staff, especially those working on Eastern Europe, found the cost norms adequate, and argued that the methodologies for preparing such plans were readily available and that adequate NBSAPs could be produced at a lower cost by building on previous planning initiatives and making good use of available information. Debates on issues such as these were virtually inevitable at the launch of the EA project portfolio as GEF Sec, and each of the IAs ascended a steep learning curve with their national project partners.

85. The Cost Benchmarks do not explicitly provide funding for certain key tasks. While the OpCrit states that EA projects “should”

include components for information dissemination, awareness raising, and capacity building, these activities are not included as separate items in the Activity Norms and Cost Benchmarks. While these activities were not specifically excluded from consideration and did receive EA funding, it is arguable they could have attracted more systematic attention within NBSAPs with separate line item status in the OpCrit cost norms.

86. The adequacy of the cost norms for stocktaking was also strongly debated. The OpCrit includes a rather formidable list of stocktaking tasks to be achieved with \$20-35,000, although GEF Sec has emphasized that many countries had already carried out stocktaking measures for other purposes which covered much of the same ground and did not need to be repeated. UNEP has argued that the amounts allocated for stocktaking are inadequate in comparison to the \$210,000 average amount previously allocated to 26

⁸ GEF Operational Criteria 1997, Annex B, Table B2, p 24.

countries for Biodiversity Country Studies. UNEP and UNDP further argued that previous biodiversity-related planning initiatives often were not particularly helpful to the preparation of NBSAPs seeking to address the breadth of issues included in the CBD.

Revised Operational Criteria Following COP 3

87. Compared to the guidance from earlier COPs, the breadth and generality of the COP 3 guidance was considerably more difficult to respond to within the context of the existing and planned EA project portfolio, and placed the GEF in a very difficult situation. The GEF response to the COP 3 guidance consisted mainly of revising the OpCrit to state that future EA projects should support basic capacity building for planning purposes and may emphasize biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities, and ex-situ conservation. The cost norms for EA project funding were not increased as a result of these scope expansions (although CHM received additional funding of up to \$14,000 per country and a global pilot biosafety project has been launched). Countries that had already received EA support were offered supplementary assistance of up to \$30,000 to help them respond to the new guidance.

88. Prior to COP 3, a considerable amount of time and effort had already gone into setting up the framework for biodiversity EAs as well as helping recipient countries plan and implement EA projects. The type and quality of output from the EAs was essentially shaped by the GEF decision to limit financial support to a range of \$200,000–350,000. This level of inputs over one to two years was not consistent with the dramatic expansion of the thematic and technical scope of the national biodiversity

planning processes that a serious response to the COP 3 guidance would have required. With many of the EA projects already under implementation or approaching advanced stages of planning, the complex and wide-ranging set of issues implicit in the COP 3 guidance were simply too broad and general in scope to expect the current portfolio of biodiversity EA projects to react adequately.

Guidance to Countries

89. The OpCrit technical guidance to recipient countries consists of reference to three documents: UNEP's Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies (UNEP 1993); the NBSAP guidelines produced by WRI, UNEP, and IUCN (Miller & Lanou 1995); as compared to the guidance from the earlier COPs as well as the COP's suggested guidelines for national reports on CBD implementation, all reviewed below. The OpCrit also lists nine elements of best practice that closely follow the program priorities listed by COP 1 for EAs⁹ (country adoption of these best practices is discussed in chapter 4). While the OpCrit does provide some guidance for EA planning and implementation, it probably falls short of one of its declared objectives, i.e., "to outline recommended processes to prepare, discuss and implement EAs." If the justification for this is that the methodologies were already available through published material, this does not seem applicable to the issues related to the COP 3 guidance.

Country Response to COP 3 Guidance

90. This study found that many countries have experienced difficulties in addressing the COP 3 guidance reflected in the revised OpCrit in a comprehensive manner, and most have little idea how to do so. The country visits and regional reviews for this assessment indicate

⁹ UNEP/CBD/COP/1/17, Annex 1.

that most countries have given little attention to points 3–10 in paragraph 77 within their EA projects, apart from the CHM. Several factors seem to have contributed to this:

- Government representatives on the COP have apparently not initiated the steps needed to launch such initiatives.
- Most countries have limited awareness, knowledge, or experience related to these issues, and there is relatively little written information available to help them work out how to proceed.
- Activity Norms and Cost Benchmarks for these activities had not been developed and were not included in the revised OpCrit (except for the CHM), making it difficult for financial resources to be re-allocated to them within existing EA projects without reducing the level of effort in other areas.
- Of the issues raised in points 3-10 in paragraph 77, only the CHM has been operationalized by the GEF, although there is a biosafety pilot project.

GEF Sec staff make the point that the COP 3 guidelines were introduced into the OpCrit at a point (April 1997) when most EAs had already been approved or were in advanced stages of preparation prior to approval, making the prospect of major adjustments unattractive to both the countries and the IAs.

91. The OpCrit specifically provides for those countries that had already received EA support to request additional funds of up to \$30,000 to help them respond to the new guidance from COP 3.¹⁰ Not one of the 66 eligible countries has so far requested supplementary assistance,

however. It is not totally clear why this is, although the country visits suggest contributory factors such as: (1) there was a lack of awareness and limited readership for the OpCrit and the CBD itself, (2) the amounts were too small for the IAs or countries to be particularly interested, and (3) many countries may have felt they had already “done enough” national biodiversity planning in relation to CBD Article 6 to qualify for further GEF funding.

Overall Impact of the OpCrit

92. The OpCrit is a lengthy, technical document that was mainly used as a basis for GEF Sec and the IAs to review and approve EA proposals. In practice, the OpCrit is unknown to many key government officials in recipient countries, although it was distributed to the GEF focal points.

93. Once the OpCrit was in place, projects could be prepared that responded directly to the criteria, and IA staff and consultants were able to explain what information was required, what countries could and could not do, and how to present the proposals. Subsequent streamlining of the review and approval procedures allowed 15% of EA budgets to be released immediately after CEO approval to accelerate project start up, though it was not as effective as hoped given that IAs could not disburse funds until project documents had been signed by the government. After the IAs and the GEFSEC had agreed upon the interpretation of the criteria and procedures identified in the OpCrit, EA proposals became standardized to the extent that they became very similar to one another.

94. The time and effort required to develop clear criteria, proposal formats, and cost norms when biodiversity EAs were first introduced resulted in uncertainty and wasted effort early on. This resulted in considerable delay in

¹⁰ Such supplementary assistance could be approved by GEF Sec when the additional amount requested does not exceed \$30,000 and where the new total cost of the project does not exceed \$350,000.

project review and processing, and caused some resentment in countries at what was perceived as GEF's excessive red tape and bureaucracy, even though the review and approval process subsequently became routine and much more efficient.

AVAILABLE GUIDELINES

95. This section briefly reviews some of the key publications and information sources available to guide biodiversity EAs.

*UNEP Guidelines for Biodiversity Country Studies*¹¹

96. The UNEP guidelines for BCS preparation were a notable first attempt to provide usable practical advice to support national biodiversity planning efforts. They proved very useful in helping at least some countries plan and organize the information gathering and stocktaking phase of EA projects. By today's standards, these guidelines are understandably thin on lessons from experience, socio-economic issues and the emerging CBD issues that the COP has emphasized.

*WRI/UNEP/IUCN Guidelines*¹²

97. The WRI/UNEP/IUCN guidelines written by K. Miller and S. Lanou provide an excellent overview of the NBSAP process and include 17 case studies on countries that had already carried out a national biodiversity planning exercise (11 are developing countries). Many countries found these guidelines very useful in developing and designing their EA projects,

especially in setting up appropriate institutional arrangements. The guidelines persistently emphasize the importance of broad stakeholder consultations and local involvement in national biodiversity planning.

98. These guidelines focus mainly on biodiversity conservation and include relatively little on the two other key CBD objectives – sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable benefit sharing. Neither do they cover the sets of issues emphasized more recently by the COP. To be fair to the authors, however, they did expect their report to be followed by a series of publications treating key biodiversity planning topics such as these in more depth.

99. Some countries have argued that the WRI/UNEP/IUCN guidelines do not provide enough detail. They describe what to do in general terms but not how to go about doing it, and more specific guidance was and is needed (e.g., see Box 3.1). UNDP eventually developed its own guidelines in response to "repeated demands for more specific how-to instructions."

UNDP Guidelines

100. UNDP circulated drafts of two further documents in late 1998 that were drafted by consultants and are still being finalized: "Draft Guide for Countries Preparing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans" by Roy Hagen and "Guide for the Preparation of Action Plans Within the Framework of the Biodiversity Convention" by Juan Javier García Fernández. Relatively few countries have had an opportunity to test these so far.

¹¹ "Guidelines for Biodiversity Country Studies," UNEP 1993.

¹² "National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experiences Around the World," WRI, UNEP, and IUCN 1995.

Distribution of Guidelines

101. The strengths of all of these documents were somewhat undermined by periodic failures to deliver them to the right people at the right time. The assessment found a surprisingly high number of cases where country teams preparing NBSAPs were either not aware of or had been unable to obtain copies of the key documents reviewed here. In some cases, it was evident that at least some government officials had indeed received key guidelines and other useful publications related to NBSAPs, but that the documents had been overlooked among the high volume of materials constantly arriving. Various reasons were given to account for these problems, but a more careful effort to disseminate key information to the most important users would have been justified, perhaps through the GEF focal point in each country.

KEY EVENTS IN THE INTRODUCTION OF EXPEDITED PROCEDURES

102. This section reviews the sequence of events leading to the current procedures for reviewing and approving biodiversity EA project proposals. The key dates and events were as follows:

August 1995	Approval for all GEF proposals with biodiversity planning components was suspended while the operational criteria for EA expedited procedures were developed and discussed at a series of Biodiversity Task Force meetings. These included representatives from GEF Sec, the IAs, the CBD Secretariat, and the GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP).
November 1995	COP 2 requested the GEF to facilitate urgent implementation of Articles 6 and 8 by providing developing country Parties with financial resources for projects in a flexible and expeditious manner.
April 1996	The GEF Council approved the expedited procedures for biodiversity EAs, which became effective immediately based on the operational criteria.
April to July 1996	The Biodiversity Task Force reviewed each biodiversity EA proposal, including the considerable backlog that had accumulated.
July 1996	The procedures for reviewing and approving proposals were streamlined (i.e., the "streamlined" approval of "expedited" procedures).
November 1996	The COP 3 meeting in Buenos Aires issued additional guidance to the GEF. GEF decided to revise the OpCrit to attempt to accommodate the revised guidance through EAs.
July 1997	Revised OpCrit were issued to reflect COP 3 guidance.
May 1999	GEF Council approved additional funding for expedited procedures of up to \$100,000 for each EA project (not included in the scope of this assessment).
June-September 1999	Further revisions to OpCrit discussed (not included in the scope of this assessment).

Pressure for New Procedures

103. During 1995 and early 1996, the GEF was under considerable pressure to accelerate its support for national biodiversity planning initiatives consistent with Article 6 of the CBD. The view of the CBD Secretariat, UNEP, and some countries was that the GEF had been slow to react after it became evident that Article 6 was the key to CBD implementation and that expedited procedures and a workable review process should have been launched before 1996. The IAs did make a significant effort to maximize the number of national reports submitted in time for both the November 1996 COP 3 meeting and the extended January 1998 deadline.

104. COP members were also critical of both GEF Sec and the IAs at this stage. Beyond the perception of the GEF being slow to support national biodiversity planning, these criticisms seem to have been fueled by other factors. First, at least some COP members expected to have been given more discretion in the use of what they regarded as “their” funds for EAs, rather than being required to follow the procedures and meet the requirements of the GEF. Second, the national executing agencies of EA projects are often the environment ministries, which are visible COP members (in contrast to the GEF Council). Because many of these ministries are relatively new, do not have sophisticated project implementation capacities, and do not receive significant resources from GEF or other international agencies, they attach great importance to EAs. As a result, the EAs have attracted considerable more international scrutiny than might have been expected given the relatively small amounts of money involved relative to other GEF biodiversity programs.

RESPONSIVENESS TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

105. The OpCrit defined a fast-track mechanism for funding biodiversity EAs that evolved into a fairly routine review and approval process after resolution of some initial difficulties. In this sense, the OpCrit responded adequately to COP 2.

106. GEF responded to COP 3 by revising the OpCrit document to include in NBSAPs the broad list of emerging issues specified in the COP 3 guidance. The revised OpCrit states that countries *should* provide “basic capacity building for planning purposes for activities identified as priorities in the guidance approved by the COP” (paragraph 14e) and *may* emphasize biosafety, taxonomy, agriculture, the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), incentive measures, genetic resources, indigenous communities, and ex-situ conservation. While CHM received additional funding of up to \$14,000 per country and a global pilot biosafety project has been launched, none of the other COP 3 issues received specific line item funding or guidance.

107. The scope of the COP 3 guidance was so wide-ranging that it proved virtually impossible for the GEF to translate these into practical, operational steps within the existing framework of the EA projects, especially when many of these projects were already in a relatively advanced state of planning and there was an acute shortage of international expertise in the areas introduced by the COP 3 guidance. The revised OpCrit did give countries the opportunity to introduce the COP 3 issues to their EAs but provided little guidance on what precise steps countries should take. As a result, the country adoption of the COP 3 guidance has so far been quite limited.

3. MAJOR PROGRAM AND INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

108. This chapter begins with an overall review of the GEF's biodiversity EA project portfolio, then discusses the procedures for reviewing and approving EA proposals. The roles of the three IAs are also considered, including the project support costs they received from GEF for implementing EAs.

BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES PORTFOLIO

109. The GEF had provided \$24.8 million for biodiversity EAs in 121 countries by March 31, 1999. This included \$21.7 million to 117 countries under expedited procedures. Detailed information by country is shown in

Annex 1 and summarized in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Of the countries with EA projects, 28 report having finalized their NBSAPs, and 20 report having the NSBAP in draft form as of March 31, 1999. The CBD Secretariat reports that 33 countries have submitted final first national reports on Convention implementation, and 32 countries have submitted interim or draft reports.

110. UNDP is implementing 73 or about two-thirds of the projects. UNEP is implementing 27 and the World Bank 17. The average and median values of the UNDP and UNEP projects are close to \$200,000, while the median Bank project is about \$112,000 (the average is \$136,471). The Bank is thus only managing 11% of the portfolio.

TABLE 3.1. GEF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES BY IMPLEMENTING AGENCY (EXPEDITED PROCEDURES ONLY)

	World Bank	UNDP	UNEP	Total
Number of Projects	17	73	27	117
Total Cost	\$2,320,000	\$14,466,000	\$4,924,000 ¹	\$21,709,000
Share of Funds	11%	67%	23%	100%
Average Project	\$136,471	\$198,161	\$182,358	\$185,550
Median Project	\$112,000	\$197,925	\$205,000	\$192,832

¹ Excludes \$207,130 for the Clearing House Mechanism.

TABLE 3.2. GEF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Region (World Bank basis)	No. of Projects	Total GEF Allocation (\$)	Average Allocation (\$)	Median Allocation (\$)
Africa	38	8,733,384	223,933	232,200
East Asia & Pacific	15	2,464,483	164,299	182,000
Europe & Central Asia	20	2,482,025	124,101	116,000
Latin America & Caribbean	30	5,595,219	186,507	194,266
Middle East & North Africa	9	2,103,700	233,744	230,500
South Asia	4	330,626	82,657	77,493
Total	117	21,709,437	185,550	192,832

111. The Africa region accounts for 38 or about one-third of the projects, with another 9 in the Middle East and North Africa. The average grant size in these two regions is the largest, reflecting the additional needs for capacity building in these regions. Average project costs in Europe and Central Asia were relatively low. The low average cost for South Asia projects excludes Nepal and India, which had larger projects outside the expedited procedures. The 15 projects in the East Asia and Pacific region include 8 Pacific Island States.

112. A review of the list of countries receiving expedited grants (Annex 1) shows that countries seem to have been treated relatively homogeneously, with little or no obvious correlation between the grant size and the country context. GEF Sec staff argue that the most important criteria determining grant size was the amount of work already done in each country relevant to national biodiversity planning. Factors such as population size, relative importance for biodiversity, and income levels appear to have played little role in determining grant size. This approach seems to have penalized the larger countries that were not prepared to take the non-expedited route in pursuit of higher funding levels. For example, while Argentina received \$348,000 and Peru \$217,900, eight small Pacific Island States with a combined land area of about 60,000 km² and population of less than two million received a total of \$1.5 million.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS

113. The EA projects were completely new for the GEF Sec and the IAs. As a result, there were problems early on in resolving the different views and experiences of the agencies and in developing appropriate procedures. When expedited procedures were first introduced in April 1996, each and every EA proposal was considered in turn by the Biodiversity Task Force. Large amounts of time and energy were spent developing

proposals that were subsequently modified numerous times, often with little substantive change. The initial lack of clear eligibility criteria, proposal formats, and cost norms resulted in considerable uncertainty and wasted effort.

114. UNDP, in particular, was often forced to return to countries with the news that their carefully negotiated proposals were unacceptable and would have to be reduced in scope, usually by cutting the budgets for consultations, capacity building, and analysis of the causes of biodiversity loss. In some cases, this was an inevitable but very unfortunate byproduct of the overall timing of the introduction of the expedited procedures.

115. Eventually, it became clear that adherence to the Cost Benchmarks would expedite funding, irrespective of these apparently irreconcilable differences of opinion. But frustration levels within the IAs and the countries had continued to build, and there was a need to accelerate and improve the efficiency of EA preparation, approval, and implementation.

Streamlined Procedures

116. The GEF Chief Executive Officer and the heads of the IA GEF Units agreed in July 1996 to adopt streamlined procedures for EA review and approval. These procedures removed the review of proposals from the Biodiversity Task Force meetings. Instead, the IAs were required to provide written comments directly to GEF Sec within seven days of receiving a proposal. GEF Sec would then compile these and send them on with its own comments to the IA concerned. The IA is expected to take these comments into account, revise the proposal as appropriate, and send the final version back to GEF Sec. GEF Sec would then inform the IAs within 48 hours if the project proposal was approved by the GEF CEO. It was also agreed that up to 15% of the total proposal budget could be advanced as soon as this approval was obtained. The current procedures within the

IAs and GEF Sec are described in detail in Annex 6.

117. This streamlining sped up the review and approval of EA proposals, which also became much less contentious. IA staff had become exhausted by the time, effort and conflict related to biodiversity EAs to secure small amounts of money. By this time, the IAs had also learned what the proposal documents needed to look like for rapid GEF approval. As a result, the proposals started to look very similar, if not virtually identical. While this might imply a stifling of innovation and creativity, the country visits found that considerable flexibility was shown during EA implementation, worked out between the IA task managers and their national counterparts. Creativity and innovation were thus shifted downstream in the project cycle where the agencies worked with the individual countries to ensure a fit with the national context and capacity.

118. Some problems persist. The principle of having the IAs comment on each other's EA proposals may be sound, helping to ensure consistency and making each agency aware of

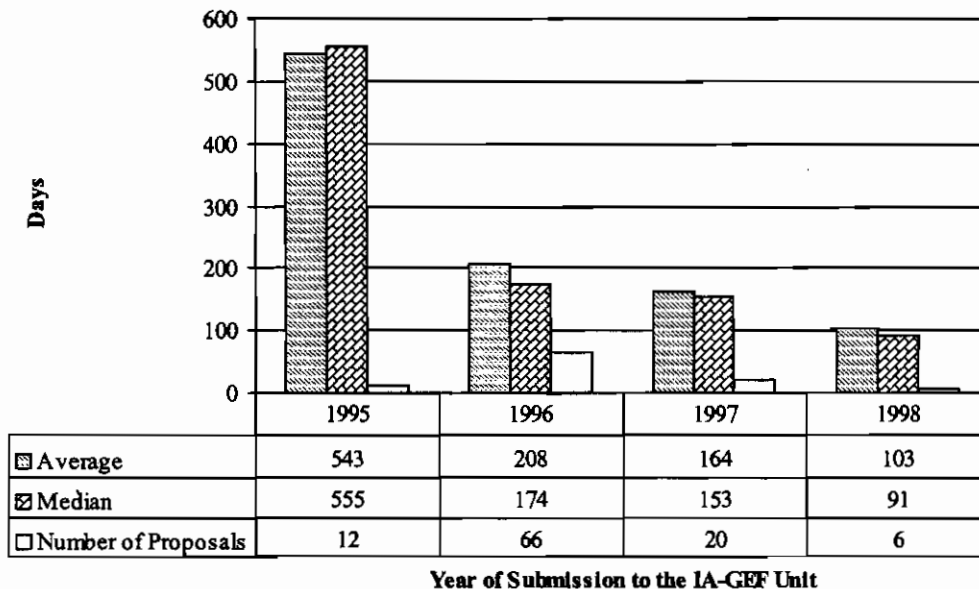
what the others are doing. But in practice, it imposed a burden by requiring each IA to review and respond to large numbers of proposals for relatively small amounts at short notice.

119. The EA proposal review process has occasionally become mired in details. The assessment country visits and reviews of IA correspondence files revealed examples of lengthy and not always constructive exchanges. These exchanges sometimes led to significant and seemingly avoidable delays in processing and approving EA proposals. Recent steps taken to reduce these incidences appear to be having a positive effect.

Time Taken To Prepare and Approve Proposals

120. An analysis carried out by the study team shows that the time taken to prepare and approve biodiversity EAs proposals has become significantly less over time (Annex 5). The median elapsed time fell from over 500 days in 1995 to around 100 days by 1998 (Figure 3.1).

FIGURE 3.1. TOTAL ELAPSED TIMES (FROM DATE OF SUBMISSION TO IA-GEF TO DATE OF APPROVAL BY IA)



ROLES OF IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

121. This section describes the IAs' interpretations of the objectives of biodiversity EA projects and how they organized themselves to manage the projects. As described above, UNDP has a dominant role among the three IAs, with 78 (63%) of the 122 biodiversity EA projects, while UNEP has 27 (23%) and the World Bank 17 (14%).

122. The preparation of NBSAPs and national reports to the CBD is the responsibility of national governments. The IA's role is to assist the countries in accessing GEF funding, to provide technical assistance as and when required by the governments, and to help ensure GEF funding is used as agreed in the project document and in line with the EA objectives. The role of GEF Sec is to ensure that project proposals conform with the agreed operational criteria and approve the funding expeditiously.

(1) World Bank

123. World Bank staff have viewed NBSAPs as a brief and necessary step for countries to take before proceeding to an investment program or projects (irrespective of whether these were to be Bank-financed). Bank staff have encouraged recipient countries to mobilize experts to produce a biodiversity strategy and action plan relatively quickly and at low cost, building on existing information and the outputs of related environmental planning initiatives. Biodiversity EAs have been described by Bank staff as "cost-effective exercises to achieve initial consensus on biodiversity problems and priorities so that further GEF resources could be allocated to address these issues." The experience of supporting the 1994 preparation of a widely respected National Biodiversity Action Plan in Indonesia for less than \$50,000 was an early but important precedent for the Bank.

124. Ten of the Bank's 17 EA countries are in Eastern Europe. GEF biodiversity projects were among the Bank's first investment activities in several of these countries following the breakup of the former Soviet Union. The biodiversity EAs were an important entry point for the Bank to begin an environmental policy dialogue with the Eastern European governments. This dialogue provided a significant opportunity to start building intersectoral considerations into Eastern European biodiversity planning from the outset (the lack of attention to intersectoral issues in most NBSAPs is discussed in chapter 4). The other seven EAs—three of which are in East Africa—are all in countries where the Bank considered it had a comparative advantage and/or a strong interest in linking the preparation of an NBSAP with a future investment program. Outside of the former Soviet block, the World Bank supported NBSAPs in countries where it was already active.

125. The World Bank's task managers for EA projects were all based in Washington at the project proposal development and approval stage. Three task managers are responsible for nine of the Bank's 17 biodiversity EAs, so relatively few people are involved. Task managers were given three weeks to supervise EA projects and no travel funds. They were encouraged to find administrative savings by overseeing EA preparation in combination with other operational missions.

126. The Bank's 10 Eastern European countries received an average of \$100,000 for biodiversity EAs. Most of these projects have completed—or appear to be making reasonable progress towards completing—NBSAPs. The average size of the Bank's seven projects outside Eastern Europe (three are in East Africa) is \$188,000, which is close to the average size of UNDP's and UNEP's EAs. The Bank's task managers for the EAs in the former communist states have argued that limited project budgets increased the need for local contributions and thereby increased national project ownership.

(2) UNDP and UNEP

127. The two UN agencies have emphasized the need for considerable capacity building and technical support for most countries simply to be able to undertake and implement NBSAPs. UNDP and UNEP have both encouraged a more participatory and consultative process within each country, requiring more time and more financial resources.

128. UNDP and UNEP staff have argued that most recipient countries' knowledge and expertise related to biodiversity planning was extremely limited, at least initially. Countries were unclear what they were supposed to do in response to CBD Article 6 and did not know how to go about doing an NBSAP. This problem was compounded by a lack of adequate written information (such as guidelines), a lack of international experts who could provide help, and the fact that many of the issues raised by the COP and the GEF's Operational Criteria in relation to NBSAPs are not only technically sophisticated but also new to most countries. Hence, the urgent need for national capacity building and international technical support.

129. UNDP staff also argue that they have been constrained from supporting necessary capacity building and providing badly needed technical support by the rigidity and cost norms of the Operational Criteria and their interpretation. They also argue that financial resources and time constraints have not allowed sufficient consultation or participation in NBSAP preparation within the countries, thereby undermining the prospects for effective implementation.

UNDP Management and Supervision

130. UNDP has so far taken on more than four times as many EAs as the Bank. Specialized consultants were hired as regional or sub-regional coordinators to provide technical support and help manage biodiversity EAs: one

for the Arab States, one for Latin America and the Caribbean, one for West and Central Africa, and one (50% time) for East and Southern Africa. These individuals have generally played major roles in catalyzing the EAs, providing technical support, and sharing information and experiences within their regions.

131. EA projects are administered through the UNDP Country Offices. The program managers for each EA (equivalent to the Bank's task managers) are based locally. Most of the project officers have very broad areas of responsibility, are overstretched, and have limited time to backstop any biodiversity activities, not just biodiversity EAs. However, as well as establishing sub-regional technical biodiversity specialists, UNDP has increased its in-country capacity in environment during the last two years, including capacity to provide in-country technical assistance for NBSAPs. Among the countries visited, particularly solid technical input and project support was provided by local UNDP staff in Belize and Zimbabwe.

132. In addition to managing country projects, UNDP organized a regional workshop for African and Arab States, EAs and several national workshops to support biodiversity planning, and commissioned the preparation of guidelines for both strategies and action plans. UNDP has also commissioned and distributed guidelines in support of biodiversity EAs, although these had not reached the key participants in all countries by early 1999.

UNEP Management and Supervision

133. According to UNEP, five of its 27 EAs are just starting, 10 are progressing satisfactorily, 10 are advanced, and two are significantly behind schedule. Three EAs are being implemented with UNDP Country Office support for disbursements. The other IAs and GEF Sec were initially skeptical about UNEP's

TABLE 3.3. BUDGET SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES FOR ENABLING ACTIVITIES

	World Bank	UNDP	UNEP	Total
a. GEF Corporate Budget (\$)	218,909	758,689	193,428	1,171,026
b. Agency Project Support Costs (\$)	0	451,473	522,118	973,591
c. Total Support provided to IAs (\$)	218,909	1,210,162	715,546	2,144,617
d. Number of biodiversity EAs	17	73	27	117
e. Average Project Support provided (\$) (a ÷ d)	12,877	16,578	26,502	18,330
f. Average Enabling Activity (\$) (from Table 3.1)	136,471	198,161	182,358	185,550
g. Average Admin Support rate provided (e ÷ f)	9%	8%	15%	10%
h. Actual amount spent by IAs from Corporate Budget (\$)	305,000	-	100,910	-
i. Actual spending per project (\$) (b + h)	17,941	-	23,075	-
j. Actual average admin support rate (i ÷ f)	13%	-	13%	-

capacity to manage 27 EAs and point out that the agency originally said they had the capacity to take on 12–15 EAs.

134. UNEP's EAs are managed as a single project by a task manager based in Nairobi. The task manager maintains contact with the countries through visits, regional workshops, workshops arranged at COP meetings, visits of NBSAP coordinators to Nairobi, plus email, phone, and fax. Although not ideal in its heavy dependence on one key individual, this arrangement seems to work satisfactorily, and UNEP's contribution has been valued in most of the countries visited by the study.

BUDGET FOR ADMINISTRATION COSTS

135. The components of budget support received by the IAs from the GEF for managing

biodiversity EAs are summarized in Table 3.3. Information on amounts provided through the GEF Corporate Budget was provided by GEF Sec and the IAs, while the fees charged by the IAs on a per project basis was supplied by the IAs. The former amounts are recovered by the IAs directly from GEF Sec while the latter are included in the countries' EA grants.

Project Cost Reimbursement from the Corporate Budget

136. It was not possible to obtain a clear estimate of the financial resources provided through the Corporate Budget for Biodiversity Enabling Activities. Biodiversity enabling activities entered the GEF portfolio in fiscal year 1997. The GEF did not follow full activity-based budgeting until fiscal year 1999, when 4.6 staffweeks (costed at \$5,382 per staffweek) per enabling activity were provided. There was only partial activity-based budgeting

during fiscal year 1998.¹³ These resources were provided to support the development, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of EAs, including hiring the regional coordinators and consultants (not consultants within countries, however, which were funded from the EA grants). The estimates for GEF corporate budget resources in Table 3.4 are thus only partial as no activity-based resource provisions could be estimated from the FY97 budget (the estimates in Table 3.3, although very rough, can be interpreted as lower estimates). The study team was therefore unable to determine the exact agency support costs for EA projects. This lack of data is expected to be overcome by the adoption of activity-based budgeting from July 1, 1999.

137. Some of the agencies provided estimates of actual expenditures incurred on the corporate budget. UNEP estimates that \$100,910 has been spent from the corporate budget on enabling activities in fiscal years 1998 and 1999 (nothing was spent during FY97), about half the provisions estimated from the GEF corporate budget.¹⁴ The World Bank has provided an estimate that about \$305,000 was spent on biodiversity enabling activities during fiscal years 1997, 1998, and 1999.

Executing Agency Fees/Agency Support Costs

138. Each IA charges a different amount for "executing agency fees/agency support costs" (It is unclear why the implementing agencies are referred to as executing agencies here

versus the governmental executing agencies in the countries.):

- The World Bank does not charge any fee.
- In the case of the UNDP, where the project is under national execution, up to 3% of support costs is charged by the UNDP local office. If the project is executed by UNOPS (one case only), 8% is charged.
- UNEP charges 8% per enabling activity as project support costs. When disbursements are effected through UNDP field offices (at the request of countries), UNDP charges an additional 3% (only 3 countries assisted by UNEP involve UNDP field offices).

139. Neither UNDP nor UNEP charged any direct project support costs in cases with a small EA, such as Madagascar, and UNEP has not charged direct project support costs for CHM projects. This study was unable to determine or estimate the actual costs incurred by the IAs in managing EAs.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

140. This section considers technical support to the recipient countries at various stages of EA implementation, concentrating on technical support needs, the support provided, and the support planned. Generalization in this area is

¹³ According to the GEF Corporate Budget for FY98, UNDP provided 1.5 staffweeks per enabling activity project processing, UNEP estimated 2 staffweeks for the same activity, and there are no coefficients for the World Bank-implemented enabling activities. UNDP data shows that a total of 103.5 staffweeks (costed at \$4724) and 216.2 staffweeks (costed at \$5382) were provided for enabling activities (both biodiversity and climate change) in FY 98 and 99 respectively.

¹⁴ Provisions are only for budgetary purposes and should not prejudice the basis on which IAs may make internal transfers to their operational divisions—referring to para 75 of the FY99 budget. According to UNEP, \$100,910 was spent out of the corporate budget to hire a short-term consultant for six months to act as task manager of BEAs pending the establishment of the post in accordance with the UNEP umbrella project adopted subsequently by the UNEP Project Approval Committee. Hiring a consultant pending the establishment of the post seems to have facilitated the start of EA activities.

hampered by striking differences between the technical capacities of many of the recipient countries and, once again, the divergence of views among the IAs and GEF Sec on the need for technical support.

Need For Technical Support

141. UNDP became increasingly concerned with the number of countries lacking the capacity to begin preparing NBSAPs. UNDP and UNEP staff then drafted a PDF B proposal "Global Support Program for Enabling Activities in Biodiversity," which was approved by the GEF in 1997. The PDF B grant provided resources to prepare the proposal for the BPSP, which was approved by the GEF Council in 1998 (described below).

142. GEF Sec has been skeptical about these UNDP and UNEP initiatives for additional support. GEF Sec staff argued that models of how to write national plans for biodiversity had already been widely circulated and that the enabling activities already included adequate provision for building the capacity to prepare NBSAPs and write the national reports. The perspective of UNDP and UNEP seems to be based on the much greater capacity needed to prepare and implement NBSAPs in a participatory and comprehensive way, while the perspective of the Bank and GEF Sec seems to be based on the capacity to prepare a satisfactory NBSAP in a cost-effective and efficient way.

143. In addition to the IAs, IUCN has also provided technical assistance to help countries prepare NBSAPs. Most of this support was on an individual country basis, although IUCN played a key regional role in supporting national biodiversity planning throughout the Middle East and Arab States. Strong NBSAP support to the Pacific Island states has been provided by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and WWF.

Biodiversity Planning Support Programme

144. The \$4 million BPSP will focus on undertaking case studies, identifying best practices, and providing guidance on newly emerging issues as these are identified by the COP. The program aims to address the needs identified by countries, mainly working through sub-regional, non-governmental institutions; using people within their own regions; and drawing on the regional technical capacity developed during the EAs carried out so far. As more countries near completion of their NBSAPs phase, the emphasis of future BPSP workshops and information dissemination is expected to shift towards prioritizing action plans and, eventually, towards implementation of these plans. Preparation of the BPSP by UNDP and UNEP staff involved several workshops, a questionnaire, and many informal discussions. These early workshops showed that participants had some genuine concerns about preparation of NBSAPs (Box 3.1).

145. The priorities facing the BPSP are clearly different from what they would have been at an earlier stage in the EA process. The continuing relevance of the BPSP is therefore a valid concern. Most countries have at least launched their NBSAP preparation efforts, and a significant number are approaching the final stages. This means that an increasing number of people have hands-on experience with various aspects of the NBSAP process and are thus well-equipped to support the process in neighboring countries. The kind of start-up help that might have been critically important two to four years ago is no longer as relevant. Sharing acquired expertise and best practice examples with those countries still working on the NBSAP preparation process now seems more important, and the BPSP has refocused towards these objectives.

Box 3.1. FINDINGS OF REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES

Several BPSP preparatory regional workshops brought together a wide range of people involved in EAs. The purpose of the workshops was to assess the need for support to GEF enabling activities and to discuss problems and possible solutions to improve the NBSAP process within a global support program. There was broad agreement that the NBSAP process was weaker than it should be, particularly in Africa.

Key constraints were summarized as follows by the workshops in Nairobi, November 1997, and the Dominican Republic, January 1998:

- Inadequate political support
- Inadequate funding and time allotted
- Uncertainty about how to mainstream biodiversity into other sectors
- Uncertainty as to type and level of output required
- Uncertainty about how to prioritize strategies and actions
- Uncertainty and lack of expertise in economic analysis/valuation, biosafety, agro-biodiversity, intellectual property rights, and benefit sharing
- Problems with institutional location of NBSAP
- Difficulty moving from planning to action
- Perceived donor preferences for planning rather than action (not GEF)
- Difficulty in getting, analyzing and storing information
- Difficult institutional issues around unclear mandates for biodiversity management
- Lack of awareness on biodiversity issues at all levels
- Little experience with conflict resolution, participatory methodologies, team planning and leadership & process management
- Problems of ownership and avoiding being donor driven.

Some participants considered the available guidelines unclear, imprecise, and sometimes contradictory. Planning teams felt they may be reinventing the wheel when they could be benefiting from best practices in other countries which they were unaware of. Countries were unclear on how the equitable sharing of benefits should be addressed.

146. The principle of focusing on regional groupings of countries with shared attributes and experiences seems particularly promising. The proposed BPSP activities seem well justified in the context of this EA assessment, particularly with the realization that there is no other mechanism with the capacity to support national biodiversity planning while incorporating emerging COP issues. IUCN plans a series of workshops on key CBD issues,

including intersectoral issues, but this has so far not been linked explicitly with GEF-financed EAs. Without such an effort, the gap between the global level outputs of the COP as it strives to implement the CBD and the practical reality of country capacities to respond would seem destined to grow. Very few developing countries have experience or expertise in the emerging CBD issues, most of which were only treated superficially—if at all—in the NBSAPs.

4. COUNTRY-LEVEL PROJECT ISSUES

147. This chapter considers the motivation for recipient countries to undertake EAs and assesses key aspects of the implementation experience, including timing, financing, institutional arrangements, links to related planning initiatives, intersectoral issues, consultation and participation, communications, and awareness building.

COUNTRY OWNERSHIP AND MOTIVATION

148. The official position of countries for undertaking EAs was that NBSAPs and National Reports were national obligations under the CBD, while some countries highlighted the contribution that EAs could make to the conservation and sustainable use of their national biodiversity. NBSAPs were prepared with a variety of motivations, however. Some of these had less to do with any conviction that NBSAPs were an important step towards more effective biodiversity conservation and more to do with the availability of funds, encouragement from the IAs, and the perception that future GEF funding depended on having completed an NBSAP. The COP's call for submission of National Reports within a particular timeframe provided further motivation. Encouragement from the IAs was certainly a key factor. The pressure to demonstrate results by successive COP meetings made it unavoidable that most EAs were pushed forward by the IAs. Had this not been the case, the overall progress made to date would undoubtedly have been much less.

149. Despite the range of motivations for launching EA projects, the assessment team received a consistently strong message that the executing agencies in most countries took the preparation of NBSAPs seriously and that a significant amount of interest and participation

was elicited during the preparation process from a range of stakeholders, through workshops and consultations as well as awareness-raising activities. The country visits for this study noted a significant increase in country ownership during the execution of the EA projects as national stakeholders became more engaged in the process.

TIMING AND DURATION

150. An informal norm of 12–18 months was adopted for planning biodiversity EAs. This required a hectic and demanding schedule in most countries, and experience has now shown that at least another year is usually needed. Awareness raising, stakeholder consultations, and a measured transition towards NBSAP implementation were the main activities that needed more time. Some countries and IA staff have been under the impression that timely completion of EAs was a condition of further GEF funding, although GEF Sec denies this. For example, Belize government officials told World Bank task managers that all preparation work on other GEF biodiversity projects would have to be suspended until the NBSAP was completed. In several cases, the pressure to meet deadlines for submitting first national reports to the COP led to these reports being developed hastily and with limited consultation.

151. A variety of factors have caused delays in completing EAs. Argentina decided to put additional emphasis on consultations and did not finalize its strategy document or develop an action plan during the EA project. Mexico has made plans for an intensive public information and education campaign, then local consultations, before completing an action plan. Kenya had considerable start-up problems, further compounded by weak supervision by the World Bank. This project then fell further behind schedule, partly because the new

Ministry of Environment had not worked out how to access the EA funds from its central bank, and was closed in June 1999 having spent \$57,000. Poland expects to take three years after experiencing long delays due to a change in government. Delays in Eritrea can also be attributed to ministerial reorganizations plus the difficulty in finding people with appropriate technical skills. Obtaining ministerial approvals and letters from GEF focal points in support of proposals, as well as changes in proposals, often slowed the process for months. Delays in completing projects put considerable pressure on budgets, especially where project staff salaries were paid from project funds, as in Gabon, the Philippines, and several Pacific Island states.

152. Most of the delays do not seem unusual considering the lack of previous experience with national biodiversity planning. Some delays were clearly beneficial, such as those just mentioned in Mexico and Argentina. Several countries have deliberately slowed NBSAP preparation to improve the quality of stakeholder consultations, to coordinate with other environmental planning initiatives (e.g., those planned in Gabon), to allow an incoming government to assume ownership of the process (Belize), or to negotiate policy changes (Fiji).

ADEQUACY OF FINANCING

153. Recipient countries almost universally argued that they would have liked more financial resources for EAs, mainly for stakeholder consultations and local workshops. These were the items most often eliminated from original budget proposals after comparison with the OpCrit Cost Benchmarks (see chapter 2). In addition, nearly all of the countries nearing NBSAP completion are realizing that inadequate financial provision has been made for transition into an implementation phase. Zimbabwe was an exception, having received a funding windfall from a timely local currency devaluation which was invested in NBSAP follow-up workshops.

National coordinators generally worked effectively with the IA task managers and project officers to reallocate funds between different project activities as needed. Very few funds for EAs have been raised from other sources.

154. Of the countries visited, Poland and Zimbabwe considered the resources for stocktaking insufficient, in contrast to Mexico and Egypt which were already well advanced in biodiversity data collection and management. Several countries underestimated the costs of printing and distributing reports. Argentina has used most of the project funds on extensive stakeholder consultations without having developed a final strategy or draft action plan, and will need to mobilize other funding to complete the NBSAP process. Funds for awareness raising and constituency building were found insufficient across the Arab States, in Gabon, Ukraine, and several other countries.

155. Very few countries applied for EAs as full projects. India, which did so, received \$1 million for biodiversity EAs even though it had previously prepared a variety of biodiversity plans—although none were explicitly referred to as an NBSAP.

156. Some funding shortfalls resulted from inadequate planning or misfortune. Key project activities in Gabon had to be reconsidered because their costs had been underestimated. Some EA funds for Cameroon were deposited in a bank which folded, losing \$51,000. UNEP subsequently resumed disbursements for Cameroon through the UNDP country office.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

157. Working out which government entity should coordinate biodiversity planning is a critical early step in national biodiversity planning. This is not self-evident in most countries. One or more agencies may have

traditionally taken the lead on issues related to protected areas, for example, but the policies and activities of a variety of government agencies have an impact on biodiversity conservation. As emphasized in the WRI/UNEP/IUCN guidelines, establishment of an appropriate institutional framework is fundamentally important to the biodiversity planning process.

Lead Agencies

158. The lead institution for EAs in most of the countries examined in this study was the ministry or department responsible for environment. There were a few interesting exceptions, including the prime minister's office of the Palestinian Authority, the president's office in the Cook Islands, and the national commission for biodiversity in Mexico. Environment ministries or departments are not always well-equipped to lead NBSAP preparation. They tend to be recent in origin, with relatively few qualified staff, modest resources, and less influence than other natural resource management agencies. They often lack experience in project implementation and have only a limited field presence.

159. This combination of factors has made it difficult for many environment ministries or departments to convincingly take the lead in national biodiversity planning. Few of these agencies have the authority or means to credibly address the intersectoral issues that lie at the heart of national biodiversity planning. Several Arab States set up new institutional arrangements for the EA projects, each a complex and time-consuming process. Several South Pacific Island states have very small environment departments, often not even a handful of people, making it almost impossible for them to take on additional activities. Agencies in these situations may have no choice but to rely extensively on international consultants and international funding. Changes in government and ministerial or departmental

reorganizations have further complicated EA execution in Poland, Eritrea, Kenya, Belize, and Gabon.

160. Zimbabwe and Kenya provide an interesting contrast. Zimbabwe's Ministry of Mining, Environment, and Tourism (MMET) is an influential ministry that—as its title suggests—combines responsibility for several sectors of key significance to biodiversity, including wildlife conservation, national parks, forestry, tourism, mining, and environmental protection. This makes MMET a natural leader for biodiversity planning, complementing an articulate and well-organized NGO sector. MMET was able to appoint an experienced and capable NBSAP coordinator from one of its own departments and to set up an EA project unit with good access to senior officials. In contrast, Kenya's relatively new Ministry of Environment (MOE) consists mainly of a small National Environment Secretariat. Key land use decisions in Kenya affecting biodiversity are made elsewhere. MOE assembled a competent consulting team to prepare the NBSAP but there was little substantive participation from the major agencies responsible for wildlife conservation or natural resource management. This EA project fell behind schedule and was eventually closed by World Bank with its objectives unrealized.

161. Four of the countries examined found creative and effective ways of strengthening the institutions responsible for national biodiversity planning. Mexico's National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity is strongly supported by the Ministry for the Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries and works through an interagency committee established with support from NGOs and donors to strengthen GEF project preparation and implementation. Argentina's EA has been strongly supported by the national IUCN committee, which is composed of 17 NGOs, three universities, four key national government agencies, and four provincial governments, thus creating a solid

institutional foundation for national biodiversity planning. The Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau in the Philippines has been strengthened by its connection to the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, which is under the Office of the President. The institutional arrangements for NBSAP preparation in Egypt were greatly strengthened by an endorsement from the country's First Lady and explicit recognition from the national planning authority.

Organization of Biodiversity Planning and NBSAP Preparation

162. Biodiversity planning is not often delegated below the national level, although the importance of involving state or provincial levels of government are becoming more evident in larger countries such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Philippines, and especially in those countries where political power has been decentralized. Although there has been little substantial role for subordinate levels of government so far in the EA process, this seems likely to emerge as a high priority for future biodiversity planning efforts, and especially for the implementation of action plans.

163. EAs were delegated to national NGOs in two of the countries examined, Nepal and Poland. Some problems were experienced in both cases. In Poland, the decision had implications for the political steering of the planning efforts, especially as a change in government caused the NGO to have difficulties integrating the process into government institutions and efforts. In Nepal, the NGO and a senior government official differed in their expectations of the coverage of the Nepal Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP). The former made a concerted effort to consider sites outside of protected areas (i.e., rangelands) and non-traditional topics (i.e., livestock genetics) and the latter disagreed. The Nepal NBSAP, which was funded as a component of a larger GEF Pilot Phase project, is still incomplete after 5 years.

164. Organization of the NBSAPs followed a fairly similar pattern in most countries. NBSAP preparation was usually directed by a steering committee or task force appointed by the government. This committee provided strategic direction to a project preparation team, usually consultants. This team usually included experts on different aspects of biodiversity and was led by a national coordinator responsible for report writing. The work program usually consisted of a series of national and local workshops, with the number of these determined by the project budget, plus additional programs in communications and awareness building. Additional experts, some national and some international, were sometimes engaged to advise on overall planning, provide training, and draft reports. IA staff usually worked closely with the projects throughout the NBSAP preparation. Most countries prepared their strategies and action plans as part of the same process, although Mexico and Ukraine were exceptions.

Sustainability Issues

165. The broad participation of various stakeholders that started with the formation of multisectoral coordination committees or task forces has helped bring new information and ideas into the NBSAPs, thereby increasing their relevance and the prospects for support from various sectors. In many countries where broad participatory processes were implemented such as in Argentina, Belize, Cuba, Mexico, and Zimbabwe, a sense of ownership has developed. But it should be noted that the contribution of these participatory processes to sustainability depends on the extent and depth of participation by key stakeholders. Participation sometimes did not extend beyond the coordination committees and task forces. A significant number of countries, however, had difficulties in their participatory processes. Thus, the effect of participatory processes on sustainability also depends on continuing these processes and ensuring they complement other factors that would support full implementation of the NBSAP.

166. Hiring the right person as national coordinator has been critical to the successful execution of NBSAPs. Notably effective coordinators contributed leadership, diplomacy, and organization to the consulting teams preparing NBSAPs in Belize, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Egypt, Vanuatu, and Mexico, among others. While contributing to successful completion of the EA project, however, this raises questions related to sustainability. Most learning or capacity building during the implementation of the NBSAP takes place within a team of consultants that will be disbanded once the EA project has been completed. The executing agency will often end up with a document but little more in terms of enhanced institutional capacity.

167. The integration of the NBSAP into key policies and institutions, especially those that influence the country's development planning, was deemed important. Most countries established links between the executing agencies, and whenever relevant, with other government agencies, related programs and projects at the national and regional levels, and NEAPs. However, the extent and strength of these links varied. In some cases, there were not enough consultations with other government agencies whose decisions and activities also affect biodiversity. In others, the private business sector, local governments, or donors were left out of the process. Raising the consultative process from the sharing of expert opinion to that of making clear, formal, and long-term agreements also is needed. An approval process that develops such formal agreements is critical to building sustainability.

168. Some countries have responded to such concerns by empowering their biodiversity agencies. The Philippines' Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, which prepared the NBSAP, will also lead the implementation process. This agency's role as proponent and coordinator of the NBSAP has enhanced its position as the focal agency for biodiversity concerns, and it has, as a result, been designated as the National

Biodiversity Unit for high-profile regional and international projects. A new Department of Nature Protection was set up in Ukraine to lead the NBSAP, and then became responsible for coordinating all biodiversity activities among national ministries and state committees. Egypt plans a multi-agency Supreme Council led by the country's First Lady, responding to a task force concern that such national plans usually "come to nothing" without very strong political backing. Zimbabwe set up a joint government and NGO committee to coordinate all national CBD issues as a result of their EA project experience.

169. Belize established a National Biodiversity Office (NBO) in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to coordinate preparation of the NBSAP, which is now complete and awaiting cabinet approval. This two-person unit aims to continue the NBSAP process by networking with key stakeholders and perhaps coordinate the implementation of the biodiversity action plan. But this depends on the government formally adopting the NBSAP and earmarking funds for the NBO. The government is in a difficult situation, however. The activities identified as action plan priorities for the next five years will cost over \$40 million. While some of the top priorities are being addressed by current projects, there is no realistic possibility of Belize mobilizing significant domestic resources, and even the funding for the tiny NBO to continue its coordination role is not assured. So sustainability and follow up to the NBSAP is uncertain. This problem is faced by virtually all countries undertaking EAs.

170. Experience indicates that institutions with the capacity to link the NBSAP with national and sectoral development planning are effective. In certain cases, such institutions have such capacity because they have both the mandate and financial resources to support an appropriate unit for developing the NBSAP and to retain the enhanced capacity obtained during NBSAP development. Some countries also

felt the need for such institutions to have a high-level "champion" to mobilize support and resolve contentious issues. These considerations are important since NBSAPs need institutional homes that can continue interagency coordination after NBSAP committees are phased out and be able to start the implementation of the action plan.

STOCKTAKING

171. The requirement that stocktaking be based on available information without new primary research meant that the resources available were limited. Some countries had already undertaken stocktaking exercises with their own resources (e.g., Mexico) or through a GEF-financed BCS implemented through UNEP. Stocktaking activities within NBSAPs or the earlier BCSs were mainly led by scientists and academics, either as consultants or through research institutes, government agencies, or NGOs. Participation of experts on the social, economic, or cultural aspects of biodiversity was more limited, contributing to these areas receiving relatively less emphasis in national biodiversity strategies and plans. The requirement to rely on previous studies simply reinforced this trend, since relatively few studies in developing countries have focused on these issues.

172. Various approaches were used in stocktaking. Experts contacted stakeholders by mail and traveled across the country to collect information (e.g., Cameroon) or sent out questionnaire surveys (Eritrea). Countries where the biodiversity data is documented rather well (such as Egypt, Mexico, and Ukraine) worked on consolidating already-published or archived data. Mexico emphasized the repatriation of biodiversity data from other countries, especially the USA, where many studies originated and where most data is archived. Egypt and Cuba each used their BCS for scientists to systematize, consolidate, and update decades of accumulated information found in their

archives, with Egypt's BCS eventually producing 65 volumes of information.

173. Other environmental plans were occasionally useful data sources. Stocktaking in Cameroon drew on data from the National Environmental Management Plan and the Forestry Action Plan. Ukraine used the data available from its Red Data Book that identified threatened species and priority action, as well as from the "Green Data Book of Ukraine," a unique legal document on the conservation and protection of rare plant communities.

174. Information gaps and problems were highlighted in some countries. The scientific and academic community were often convinced of the need for more studies, even in those countries that received BCS support (e.g., Egypt, Cuba). Several Arab States where little previous work had been done wanted to undertake basic flora and fauna inventories. Some stocktaking components of EA projects appeared not to take full account of data and information available elsewhere (e.g., Poland). The authentication and compilation of fragmented datasets appears a urgent priority in some countries, especially India.

175. The BCSs were generally found to provide useful inputs, particularly in helping develop a comprehensive database and bibliography (with the potential to provide data inputs to the Biodiversity Data Management and CHM projects); in facilitating data sharing and networking among scientists, universities, and research agencies; and in identifying gaps in research and in the analysis of new thematic areas. Some countries without a BCS (e.g., Yemen, Palestinian Authority, and Sudan) had difficulty proceeding with the NBSAP, while countries with strong BCS efforts (e.g., Egypt, Cuba, and Philippines) were easily able to build on this for their NBSAP stocktaking. In cases where there was wide publication of the results (e.g. Egypt and Mexico), access to information previously limited to groups of experts or scattered in different archives became more widely available, a major benefit in terms of dissemination of knowledge.

LINKS TO RELATED PLANNING INITIATIVES

176. Most countries already have a variety of environmental plans or are in the process of developing such plans. The WRI/UNEP/IUCN national biodiversity planning guidelines point out that, although “nations may find it useful to prepare separate biodiversity reports, they can find value in, and save steps by associating the biodiversity [planning] process with other national and sectoral planning efforts, thereby minimizing overlap and integrating biodiversity considerations into sector plans, programs and budgets.” This is reinforced by Article 6(b) of the CBD as well as the OpCrit’s list of best practice criteria, which emphasize that EAs should be “integrated into larger sustainable development initiatives, whenever possible” and should “become part of the country’s normal decision making systems.”¹⁵ This section explores linkages between the EAs and three categories of related national initiatives: (1) ongoing plans and projects, (2) previous environmental plans, and (3) intersectoral environmental plans.

177. NBSAP preparation has been linked productively with other GEF projects, including transboundary and medium-sized projects, in Argentina, several Arab States, Belize, the Cook Islands, Mexico, and Ukraine. Such links included regular communications as well as joint representation on steering committees and working groups. Other links were less successful. Nepal’s NBSAP was prepared as part of a larger GEF project, but was significantly delayed by other project components being completed late and having different outputs from those expected. The opportunity to link the NBSAP with a larger GEF project was missed in Poland and Egypt, and Cameroon’s UNEP-implemented NBSAP

was delayed as an attempt to incorporate the EA into a larger Bank-implemented project was resolved first.

178. Synergies between NBSAPs and other complementary donor-financed programs were either present or being discussed in Egypt (with an EU project) and Zimbabwe (a UNDP project). Ukraine and several Eastern European countries benefited substantially from contacts and exchanges of ideas and information through their participation in the “Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy,” a regional biodiversity planning initiative of the Council of Europe, the European Center for Nature Conservation, and UNEP. An opportunity to link the NBSAP with a larger World Bank-funded biodiversity project was overlooked in Egypt.

179. Previous national conservation strategies provided useful inputs in Nepal and Zimbabwe, and earlier national environmental action plans proved useful in Belize, Cameroon, Eritrea, and Mexico. Lessons for organizing and managing the preparation of such earlier plans often proved at least as useful as any technical analyses. Efforts have been made in Zimbabwe to ensure that the NBSAP is reflected adequately in the national environmental action plan currently under preparation, and to link the NBSAP with local communities through the UNDP-financed District Environmental Action Plan Programme. In contrast, preparation of the Kenyan NBSAP seems to have taken little account of the plans of the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS)—one of the world’s best-funded conservation agencies—or KWS’ own National Protected Area Management Strategy. In a different context, a recent, comprehensive Regional Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the South Pacific appears to be having little influence on the NBSAPs being prepared by eight of the nations now implementing biodiversity EAs.

¹⁵ Article 6(b) of the CBD requires Parties to “Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.”

180. Linking or coordinating related environmental planning initiatives can be extremely difficult. An informal Environmental Working Group was assembled in Gabon to bring together the following planning efforts being carried out concurrently with NBSAP: the National Environmental Action Plan, the Tropical Forest Action Plan, the Forest and Environment Project, the Regional Environmental Information Management Programme, plus a variety of NGO and other initiatives. This coordination effort has proved moderately successful over the period the BSAP has been under implementation. However, coordinating these planning efforts has been plagued by the isolationist culture among key programs, ministries, departments, and individuals and compounded by frequent institutional reorganizations and personnel changes. Each of these initiatives felt the need to be responsive to its own donor, terms of reference, and timetables, even if this led to duplication, inefficient use of resources, and incompatible outcomes. In these circumstances, the prospects for generating an implementable NBSAP coordinated with related strategies are obviously limited. Such problems are not limited to Gabon, however. National administrations aware of the need for better collaboration are not likely to refuse donor assistance simply because inter-agency coordination mechanisms are ineffective or because the timing is suboptimal.

181. India has carried out a wide variety of biodiversity planning activities, some of which are still in progress. National experts have observed that these plans suffer from a number of important weaknesses, including only limited involvement of state governments, key sectoral ministries, and departments and a focus on defining priority sites for conservation rather than working out how to conserve such sites. Little effort has been made to reconciling and authenticating diverse biodiversity datasets or to the socio-economic aspects of conservation. It is not clear that the parties about to begin implementing the EA project have a clear concept of how to avoid perpetu-

ating these weaknesses. Such issues are not limited to India.

INTERSECTORAL ISSUES

182. The importance of integrating biodiversity conservation with relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs, and policies is emphasized by the WRI/UNEP/IUCN national biodiversity planning guidelines, the GEF's OpCrit, and CBD Article 6(b). This is a response to the increasing evidence that conservation efforts are unlikely to be successful unless they address the root causes of biodiversity loss. These underlying causes often originate in laws, policies, and incentives in economic development sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining, transportation, hydropower, irrigation, and even in international trade agreements and the export and import subsidy policies of other countries. Modifying such root causes in favor of biodiversity often involve contentious and politically controversial topics, such as land use and the environmental impacts of large-scale infrastructure and other development projects, which can involve real trade-offs between conservation and economic development options. Addressing such issues seriously usually requires the involvement of senior levels of government as well as private interests that may have given little or no previous attention to biodiversity considerations.

183. Some progress has been made in getting other sectoral agencies to participate in NBSAP consultations and occasionally to participate in steering committees. There has been also some progress in raising biodiversity awareness in other sectors. But this study found that intersectoral issues were not seriously addressed in most countries' NBSAPs. There are few signs that key sectoral agencies are actually prepared to commit to actions supporting conservation. The key agencies responsible for land use decision making in such areas as agriculture, forestry, mining,

transportation, and energy have been relatively uninvolved in NBSAP preparation. The main reasons seemed to be (1) lack of biodiversity knowledge and awareness outside the traditional biodiversity constituency, (2) institutional arrangements that do not encourage biodiversity or other environmental concerns to be considered by decision makers, (3) a lack of methodologies or guidelines for incorporating biodiversity into other sectors in ways that are meaningful to planners and, most seriously, (4) a lack of support to pursue sector-specific pilot enabling activities through the EA window, and (5) an unwillingness to identify and begin addressing the real and politically difficult tradeoffs required in countries if current rates of biodiversity loss are to be reduced. Key international issues such as those related to trade were generally ignored.

184. Officials from key sectoral agencies—such as those responsible for forestry, wildlife, agriculture, and fisheries—often took part in the NBSAP consultations and preparation process. Very few participated as official representatives ready to set out the position of their home agency or negotiate on its behalf, however. It was often not clear whether the issues or messages emerging from the NBSAP preparation were being transmitted to, let alone seriously considered by, senior officials in these other sectoral agencies. Cuba and Ukraine went further than many countries in attempting to incorporate all relevant sectors, including industry, mining, and energy.

185. The NBSAP task forces were usually composed of technical experts from a variety of ministries and other institutions, but these individuals did not officially represent their home institutions. Their contributions mainly involved preparing reports on their particular areas of expertise. The decision to select experts for the task forces rather than seek politically empowered representatives left the project with no real mechanism for ensuring interministerial coordination or wider

consultation and consensus building. In most of the countries examined, officials from a variety of ministries participated but without a clear mandate.

186. Although not strictly an intersectoral issue, the attention given to economic and financial aspects of biodiversity conservation was superficial in most of the countries examined, with only rare mention of economic policies or instruments having a key role to play in conservation. While IUCN did provide some economic inputs through international consultants in some African countries such as Eritrea, there was little discussion otherwise of economic incentives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and little sign that the importance of incentives was recognized. For example, Belize's otherwise exemplary NBSAP gave relatively little attention to the generation of revenues from conservation and did not seem to recognize the potential synergy between tourism and conservation exemplified by nearby Costa Rica.

187. Other countries seemed to give less emphasis to socio-economic issues as a result of having divided up the NBSAP tasks by ecosystem (forests, wetlands, savannas, etc.) and then taken a primarily biological perspective. Cameroon and Kenya did give explicit attention to socio-economic issues, to the extent of including a specialist on the NBSAP preparation team. Ukraine's NBSAP process had very little participation from social scientists and legal, institutional, or economic specialists. This lack of in-depth consideration of the economic aspects of biodiversity conservation mechanisms seems to have contributed to many of the biodiversity action plans appearing heavily dependent on funding from international donors—and to the economic value of biodiversity not being emphasized sufficiently to help biodiversity be appreciated by ministries dealing with overall economic planning.

188. These results show clearly that the practical reality of enlisting serious intersectoral support for biodiversity conservation from agencies that may only recently have become aware of biodiversity is likely to require a level of time and sustained effort which goes well beyond the scope of a one to two-year planning process. Most countries are barely getting started on the process of making other sectors aware of biodiversity. Making them capable, responsible, and accountable for biodiversity conservation is going to be a huge task.

CAPACITY BUILDING

189. Capacity building was not a separate component of EA projects, and no funds were provided specifically for this purpose (the debate among GEF Sec and the IAs on this issue is discussed in chapter 3). Capacity building did take place, however, as the projects were implemented.

190. There were substantial disparities in national capacities for biodiversity planning as the EA projects began. Some countries had already developed sophisticated capacities in their government agencies, NGOs, and research communities (e.g., Argentina, Egypt, Mexico, and Zimbabwe). Other countries had real problems finding people with the knowledge and experience needed to get started, and had to rely extensively on international consultants, many of whom provided training and supported capacity building as part of their terms of reference (this was notably effective in the Arab States and the South Pacific). UNDP, in particular, reported an acute lack of appropriately skilled international consultants, especially early on in the EA process. Existing capacities in most countries were mostly on the biological aspects of conservation and much less on the socio-economic and policy aspects. It was also apparent that while some countries' national experts had a good theoretical or academic grounding, they had less practical conservation experience.

191. A variety of capacity building activities targeted countries and regions where biodiversity planning capacities were weakest. Workshops were conducted in project management and in participatory tools and methodologies. NBSAP team members participated in regional workshops such as that organized by UNDP for the Arab Region, as well as the BPSP workshops organized by UNDP and UNEP, and the South Pacific workshop organized by SPREP. In the South Pacific, there was considerable support for personnel exchanges between projects, to enable countries just getting started to learn from the experiences of others.

192. Members of the core planning team in Eritrea were sent to the United Kingdom for training, although those sent for training were not actually involved in the NBSAP due to staff changes and governmental reorganizations. In other cases, the training given to NBSAP teams had limited long-term benefits when the training involved consultants without a long-term involvement in national biodiversity conservation. In the Arab region, a serious lack of knowledge about the CBD and NBSAPs among key stakeholders led project managers to design specific training courses.

193. Mexico developed capacity building efforts to address the need for capacity building on GEF policies, programs, and procedures amongst government agencies, NGOs, and even local offices of implementing agencies. This followed growing concern over the costs in time, funds, personnel, and goodwill with proposals prepared inappropriately and requiring extensive revision.

LOCAL CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

194. All plans and guidelines for national biodiversity planning emphasize the importance of local participation and consultation, and these areas are allocated more than half of

the budget norms for EA projects. But it is not easy to define the optimal extent of local participation or consultations for NBSAPs, even within an individual country. While the WRI/UNEP/IUCN guidelines call for the representation of "all relevant stakeholders" on steering committees, including "women, minorities and indigenous peoples...[plus]...constituent groups without representatives in the capital city," this does present certain practical difficulties. Most NBSAP steering committees and task forces did include a variety of government agencies, research institutions, and leading NGOs, especially those active at the national level. There was little participation by indigenous peoples or the private sector, however, although Belize and Zimbabwe did consult indigenous peoples. Explicit efforts to address gender issues were rare. Some community-based organizations and local resource-user groups were able to present their views at local workshops.

195. Most countries held consultative workshops, although the breadth and depth of genuine consultation and participation that actually took place varied considerably. Smaller countries such as Belize and the Pacific Islands were able to consult on a much more widespread and representative basis simply as a result of having received so much more funding per capita than larger countries. The types of important biodiversity user groups often left out included the private sector, farmers and fisherfolk organizations, farm and forestry workers' unions, angling and hunting associations, women, and youth groups. Nevertheless, the country visits revealed serious attempts to consult with a range of key stakeholders within the time and financial resources available. Key stakeholders in this sense usually meant government agencies, national and some local NGOs, research institutions, some local governments, and a few community leaders.

196. Most workshops were organized on a geographic basis. Kenya and Zimbabwe, for

example, each had sufficient funding for six local workshops, so they divided their country into six somewhat artificial regions and held one in each. Egypt and Nepal followed similar approaches, while Mexico held four separate workshops for the public sector, NGOs, academics, and the private sector. While it could be argued that some of processes were little more than token consultations, many of the country visits reported that NGOs, for example, did feel their views had been heard and were reflected in NBSAP reports. It was also clear in most countries visited that the level of consultation and local participation for the NBSAPs compared favorably with any previous, national planning exercise. Some countries went further. Mexico and Argentina deliberately expanded local consultations to include the provinces and districts that would be involved in NBSAP implementation. In many of these cases, a foundation has been laid for future dialogue and cooperation among groups not used to working together. This should significantly improve the prospects for collaboration during the actual implementation of action plans.

197. Consultative workshops also played important roles in raising biodiversity awareness and helping develop a broader constituency of support for conservation, as well as engendering a sense of pride in local and national biodiversity. These effects were all magnified by media coverage. Given the technical complexity of many biodiversity issues and the lack of consensus even among specialists, eliciting meaningful, participatory inputs from a few scattered workshops is obviously a challenging task.

198. Participation in some countries is limited by tradition, culture, or recent history. Local participation in Ukraine, several of the Eastern European countries, and Cuba, for example, was fairly limited. In contrast, there have been cases of "participation fatigue," notably in Gabon and the South Pacific, where relatively small, heavily stretched organizations— both

governmental and NGOs—are being exhausted by opportunities to contribute inputs to internationally driven planning projects. In other countries, there is growing sense of frustration, especially in the NGO sector, with discussing well-understood issues yet again without any tangible commitments of political willpower or resources for effective action. It is a constant challenge to find the appropriate balance between the level and type of participation needed to achieve consensus and attract broad commitment on one side, with the urgent need for less talk and more action on the other.

199. Bilateral donor agencies have had little involvement in NBSAP processes. While understandable from the perspective that representatives of foreign agencies should not be involved in internal affairs, the implementation of most action plans now being developed will depend largely on international funding. This suggests that key donors should be consulted, or at least briefed, at a reasonably early stage in action plan development.

COMMUNICATIONS AND AWARENESS BUILDING

200. Awareness building is not explicitly emphasized as best practice either by the OpCrit or the WRI/UNEP/IUCN guidelines, and the cost norms do not include any specific line item for this purpose. Many countries were convinced of the vital importance of awareness raising as a component of national biodiversity planning, however, and found ways to use at least a part of their NBSAP budget to support this. Awareness raising, in this sense, means the transfer of usable knowledge and targets the general public as well as decision makers.

201. The EA project experience already shows that awareness raising is important at two stages of the NBSAP preparation process. Initially, the stakeholders—especially those from the grassroots—often had so little understanding of the issues that they were unable to make a

meaningful contribution or gain anything from consultations without more information in a form they could use. Such information had to be provided in a complete but simplified manner simply for people to be able to participate meaningfully. Later in the process, successful efforts to maintain NBSAPs' high visibility helped to begin establishing a larger constituency for biodiversity as well as mobilize some much-needed political support for conservation. Both are considered essential if the NBSAPs are to have any realistic chance of implementation.

202. Public information initiatives were used effectively in several countries concurrent with NBSAP preparation. Zimbabwe produced a simplified, comic-strip version of the CBD for local audiences, while Belize developed an accessible glossary of key terms for participatory workshops. Belize's public awareness program included TV, radio, field trips for journalists, commissioned newspaper articles, flyers, flags, and essay and logo competitions. Gabon held monthly radio broadcasts. Zimbabwe started their NBSAP with an explicit and well-thought-out media strategy, including a media workshop and a newsletter. Mexico and Poland set up Web sites for biodiversity-related information. Other approaches included courses related to the CBD and the NBSAP (e.g., several Arab countries), dissemination of experiences from other countries (Belize), and briefing papers distributed prior to workshops (Nepal).

203. Participatory workshops, as already mentioned, also contributed to awareness raising. In fact, workshops and consultations also created expectations for continuing information flows to participants that EA project units were often unable to satisfy. Stakeholders in several countries expressed concern about the lack of follow-up information after workshops. Mexico's commitment to providing printed outputs immediately after workshops through a sophisticated computer system used by all workshop participants was highly appreciated.

204. Some countries became acutely aware that they were not doing enough to raise awareness of biodiversity planning issues. Mexico eventually decided to postpone preparation of an action plan and, instead, to use remaining EA funds for a large-scale awareness building effort targeting rural areas and other sectors. Gabon, Egypt, and several Arab States expressed frustration that they had insufficient resources for building public awareness. This was an important issue in the many countries where key stakeholders have little knowledge about biodiversity, the CBD, and the GEF.

USE OF CONSULTANTS

205. The issues that arose from the use of national and international consultants in NBSAP projects mirror those encountered in other internationally financed conservation and development projects. Consultants were used where government departments lacked the capacity to prepare NBSAPs themselves. National consultants were, not surprisingly, more knowledgeable of their country's particular situation and needs than international consultants but often had less policy and planning experience and tended to be less conversant with the CBD.

206. Several countries used international consultants to their advantage in working out a strategy and approach for the NBSAP, although consultants with appropriate qualifications and experience were difficult to locate early on in the EA process. International consultants with comparable expertise to national experts were considered more effective in certain situations in Nepal because of their status as independent outsiders and easier access to senior officials. Belize effectively hired national consultants for each of seven focus areas and used two international consultants very selectively, to help draft the preparation team's TORs, to edit and improve key project documents, and to provide strategic guidance and planning support throughout the NBSAP process. Those

countries that relied heavily on international consultants often needed to allocate a significant proportion of their EA budget for this purpose. Eritrea, for example, had limited technical capacity and relied heavily on international consultants. In Gabon and the South Pacific, the relatively high rates paid to international consultants were resented by other fellow NBSAP team members.

207. Some countries, notably Egypt, Mexico, Zimbabwe, Poland, Ukraine, and Philippines, have plenty of national experts and only needed to hire international consultants for the most specialized tasks. These countries tend to regard international consultants as expensive and preferred to use EA funds for national capacity building or other activities. Some countries hired relatively large numbers of national consultants. More than 40 scientists in both Poland and Ukraine were contracted to prepare background materials for the NBSAP. Many of these further subcontracted parts of their tasks to several colleagues.

BEST PRACTICES

208. Several examples of best practices have already been mentioned, and more detailed examples are provided in Annex 7. These can be summarized in operational terms as follows:

- Follow an iterative approach to project preparation in order to develop a workable project implementation plan
- Organize a committed professional team to lead and coordinate implementation
- Implement with flexibility to adapt to local situations and needs
- Aim for broad representation in the selection of sites for workshops and the participation of stakeholders

- Conduct the process in a highly participatory manner and be innovative in introducing mechanisms to enhance participation
- Provide creative mechanisms to foster the sharing of scientific data and expertise
- Include capacity building in the process of implementation
- Develop effective communications to broaden awareness, including use of the media
- Build linkages and coordinate effectively with other relevant initiatives
- Make effective use of local and regional expertise
- Integrate at the highest levels into larger overall development activities
- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience with other institutions and countries.

209. These best practices were derived from the study findings and match, to a large degree, the best practice criteria recommended in the OpCrit.¹⁶ However, while certain best practices such as the use of participatory processes were implemented by most of the countries involved in the study, others were adopted only rarely. Using the language of the OpCrit, there were few convincing EA project examples of “integration into larger sustainable development initiatives,” “becoming part of the country’s normal decision making systems and integration into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs and policies,” “promoting sustainability...through sustainable use,” or “making use of the facilities provided by the CHM.” Countries either did not know how to or were unable to implement these best practices. There is broad recognition of the need to “address the social issues of affected populations” but strong examples of how to do this were lacking. Progress on “facilitating access to other international, national and private sector funds” was also limited, although this could improve as action plans are completed and presented to donors.

¹⁶ OpCrit 1997, para 28 lists best practices for EA projects.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

LIST OF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITY PROJECTS

Enabling Activities Supported Under Expedited Procedures

No	Country	Implementing Agency	GEF Grant (US \$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO	Status of National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan as of 03/31/99	Amount (US \$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO	National Report Submitted to CBD as of 03/31/99	Participation in Regional/Global Projects
1	Albania	World Bank	96,000	05-Aug-96					
2	Algeria	UNDP	230,500	03-Mar-97		14,000	Nov-98	Interim	
3	Antigua-Barbuda	UNDP	139,000	25-Mar-97					
4	Argentina	UNDP	348,890	25-Sep-96	Final			Final	
5	Armenia	UNDP	174,800	28-Apr-97				Interim	
6	Bahamas	UNEP	150,000	16-Sep-96	Draft	14,000	Apr-98	Draft	BCS I + BDM
7	Barbados	UNEP	143,640	27-Mar-97					
8	Belarus	UNEP	81,300	15-Jan-98	Final	Included		Final	
9	Belize	UNDP	184,500	28-Jan-97	Draft			Interim	
10	Benin	UNDP	233,820	29-Sep-97		13,950	Jun-98	Final	
11	Bhutan	UNDP	116,546	12-Sep-96	Final			Draft	
12	Bolivia	UNDP	253,752	29-Sep-97		Included		Final	PBS
13	Bulgaria	UNDP	154,706	14-Sep-98	Final	Included		Final	PBS
14	Burkina Faso	UNDP	230,977	16-Dec-96		13,984	Apr-98	Interim	BCS II
15	Burundi	UNDP	229,950	05-Aug-98					
16	Cambodia	UNDP	350,000	04-Mar-98		Not incl			
17	Cameroon	UNEP	300,000	16-Sep-96	Draft	13,000	Feb-98	Interim	PBS
18	Cape Verde	UNDP	208,151	16-Dec-96	Draft	14,000	Mar-98	Interim	
19	Central African Rep	UNDP	164,700	16-Oct-96					
20	Chad	UNDP	218,160	23-Sep-96	Draft			Interim	
21	China	UNEP	59,400	20-Feb-97	Final			Final	BCS I + BDM + PBS
22	Colombia	UNEP	253,000	21-May-97	Draft			Final	BCS II
23	Comoros	UNDP	131,760	28-May-97				Interim	
24	Congo	UNDP	247,860	06-Mar-97		13,500	Oct-98	Interim	BCS II
25	Cook Island	UNDP	204,218	21-Aug-98					
26	Costa Rica	UNDP	195,700	21-Aug-96					BDM
27	Côte d'Ivoire	UNEP	237,600	24-Apr-97		13,800	May-98		
28	Croatia	World Bank	102,000	30-Jan-97					
29	Cuba	UNEP	206,280	16-Dec-96	Draft			Draft	BCS I + PBS
30	Czech Republic	World Bank	101,000	15-Dec-97		Included			
31	Dominica	UNDP	96,500	25-Jul-97					
32	Dominican Rep	World Bank	230,000	08-Apr-98	Final	Included		Final	

No.	Country	Implementing Agencies	GEF Grant (US\$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO	Status of National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan as of 03/31/99	Clearing House Mechanism		National Report Submitted to CBD as of 03/31/99	Participation in Regional/Global Projects
						Amount (US\$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO		
33	DPR Korea	UNDP	299,250	13-Jan-97	Draft				
34	Ecuador	UNDP	289,300	27-Apr-98	Final	Included		Final	
35	Egypt	UNEP	288,000	16-Sep-96	Final	14,000	Jan-98	Final	BCS I + BDM + PBS
36	El Salvador	UNDP	197,900	28-Jan-97	Draft			Interim	
37	EQ. Guinea	UNDP	296,000	23-Sep-96				Interim	
38	Eritrea	World Bank	275,000	16-Oct-96	Final			Final	
39	Estonia	UNEP	166,000	25-Oct-96	Draft			Final	BCS II
40	Ethiopia	UNDP	331,930	27-Jan-99		Included			
41	Fiji	UNDP	197,925	25-Mar-97	Draft	11,500	Jul-98	Interim	
42	Gabon	UNDP	232,200	30-Oct-97		12,750	May-98	Interim	
43	Gambia	UNEP	243,000	17-Oct-96	Draft	13,950	Apr-98	Draft	
44	Georgia	World Bank	120,000	05-Aug-96					BCS II
45	Grenada	UNDP	132,520	16-Apr-98		Included			
46	Guatemala	UNDP	214,700	24-Jan-97					
47	Guinea	UNDP	223,020	21-Jul-97		13,450	Dec-97		BCS I
48	Guinea Bissau	UNDP	195,480	28-Jan-97					
49	Guyana	UNDP	82,600	16-Dec-97		Not incl			
50	Haiti	World Bank	262,000	24-Feb-98		Included		Interim	
51	Honduras	UNDP	250,000	17-Mar-98		Included			
52	Hungary	UNEP	166,320	27-Mar-97		7,000	Oct-98	Interim	PBS
53	India	UNDP	25,000	27-Oct-97					
54	Iran	UNDP	350,000	06-Mar-97					
55	Jamaica	UNDP	192,832	16-Apr-98		Included		Interim	
56	Jordan/Pal.Auth.	UNDP	350,000	08-May-97	Draft	12,500	Jul-98		BCS I
57	Kazakhstan	UNDP	132,664	02-Oct-96	Final			Interim	
58	Kenya	World Bank	157,000	16-Apr-97				Draft	BDM + PBS
59	Kiribati	UNDP	198,790	19-Mar-98					
60	Kyrgyz Republic	World Bank	108,000	27-Feb-97					
61	Latvia	UNDP	165,315	23-Sep-97	Final			Final	
62	Lebanon	UNDP	145,000	27-Feb-97	Final	9,500	Jul-98	Final	BCS I
63	Lesotho	UNDP	114,480	12-Aug-96	Final			Interim	
64	Lithuania	World Bank	70,000	05-Aug-96					
65	Madagascar	UNEP	25,000	22-May-97	Final	10,000	Oct-97	Final	BCS II
66	Malawi	UNEP	289,000	16-Sep-96	Draft	11,000	Nov-97	Interim	PBS
67	Malaysia	UNDP	36,750	03-Jan-97	Draft			Final	BCS I
68	Maldives	UNDP	150,680	22-Jan-97				Interim	
69	Mali	UNDP	252,180	20-Feb-97		13,140	May-98	Interim	
70	Marshall Islands	UNDP	230,000	07-Mar-97				Interim	
71	Mauritania	UNEP	233,000	06-Mar-97		14,000	Apr-98		PBS
72	Mauritius	UNEP	235,440	08-May-97		12,300	Apr-98		PBS
73	Mexico	UNDP	198,000	30-Jan-97	Draft			Final	
74	Moldova	World Bank	125,000	12-Mar-98		Included			

No.	Country	Implementing Agency	GEF Grant (US\$)	Date of approval by GEF CEO	Status of National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan as of 03/31/99	Clearing House Mechanism		National Report Submitted to CBD as of 03/31/99	Participation in Regional/Global Projects
						Amount (US\$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO		
75	Mongolia	UNDP	32,550	30-Jan-97	Final	8,050	Nov-98	Final	
76	Morocco	UNEP	191,200	24-Apr-97		14,000	Jun-98		BCS I
77	Mozambique	UNEP	216,000	17-Sep-96	Draft	13,300	Nov-97	Final	BCS I
78	Namibia	UNEP	242,200	14-Jul-98				Final	BCS II + PBS
79	Niger	UNDP	229,500	06-Mar-97	Final	11,338	Nov-97	Interim	
80	Nigeria	UNDP	313,740	11-Jun-98					BCS I
81	Niue	UNDP	134,930	26-May-98					
82	Oman	UNDP	266,000	27-Aug-97		Included		Final	
83	Pakistan	UNEP	38,400	11-Feb-98		Included			PBS
84	Panama	UNEP	215,000	08-Aug-96	Draft	14,000	Jan-98	Final	
85	Papua N Guinea	World Bank	182,000	23-Nov-98		Included			BCS I + BDM
86	Paraguay	UNDP	136,935	26-Aug-98		Included			
87	Peru	UNDP	217,900	16-Jul-97	Draft	9,250	Jun-98	Final	BCS I
88	Philippines	UNDP	36,300	18-Feb-98	Final	Included		Final	BCS I
89	Poland	UNEP	205,000	17-Sep-96	Draft	11,500	Jan-98	Final	BDM + PBS
90	Russian Fed	UNEP	52,920	23-May-97	Final			Final	PBS
91	Rwanda	UNDP	170,640	28-Aug-96		13,950	Jun-98	Interim	
92	Samoa	UNDP	172,010	19-Mar-98					
93	Senegal	UNDP	205,200	16-Dec-96	Final	11,300	Feb-98	Final	
94	Seychelles	UNEP	186,000	08-Aug-96	Final	10,100	Oct-97	Final	
95	Slovak Republic	World Bank	77,000	08-Aug-96				Draft	
96	Slovenia	World Bank	39,000	02-Mar-98	Final	Included		Final	
97	Solomon Islands	UNEP	123,000	08-Aug-96		8,580	Sep-98		
98	South Africa	UNDP	25,380	06-Aug-97		13,500	Aug-98	Final	
99	St Kitts & Nevis	UNDP	104,000	16-Jul-97					
100	St Lucia	UNEP	169,600	03-Feb-98		Included		Interim	
101	St Vincent & Gren	UNDP	117,000	22-May-97					
102	Sudan	UNDP	334,000	08-Oct-97		14,000	Aug-98		
103	Suriname	UNDP	92,000	13-May-97					
104	Swaziland	UNDP	169,560	23-Dec-96	Draft			Interim	
105	Syria	UNDP	194,000	20-Feb-97					BCS I
106	Trinidad & Tobago	UNDP	127,000	30-May-97				Interim	
107	Tunisia	World Bank	89,000	08-Aug-96	Final			Final	BCS I + PBS
108	Uganda	World Bank	125,000	04-Aug-97	Final			Final	PBS
109	Ukraine	World Bank	112,000	05-Aug-96	Final	14,000	May-98	Final	
110	Uruguay	UNDP	121,300	12-Aug-96	Draft			Interim	
111	Uzbekistan	UNDP	183,000	12-Aug-96	Final			Interim	
112	Vanuatu	UNEP	207,360	15-Jan-97	Draft	13,100	Jun-98	Interim	

No.	Country	Implementing Agency	GEF Grant (US \$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO	Status of National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan as of 03/31/99	Clearing House Mechanism		National Report Submitted to CBD as of 03/31/99	Participation in Regional/Global Projects
						Amount (US \$)	Date of Approval by GEF CEO		
113	Venezuela	UNDP	273,370	28-Jan-97					
114	Yemen	UNDP	290,000	19-Sep-96		14,000	Jun-98		
115	Zaire	UNDP	331,560	23-Sep-96		12,710	Nov-98		
116	Zambia	UNDP	289,440	24-Mar-97				Draft	PBS
117	Zimbabwe	UNDP	299,456	25-Nov-96	Final				
Total - expedited procedures			\$21,709,437						

Enabling Activities That Were Not Funded Under Expedited Procedures

118	Brazil	UNDP	942,500	01-Mar-97				Draft	Adv. Draft
119	Djibouti	UNDP	558,200	01-Feb-95	1-Feb-96	1-Jun-98		Final	Final
*	India	UNDP	968,200	01-Jan-98	28-Oct-98				
120	Nepal	UNDP	380,000	01-Dec-91	1-Jun-93	1-Nov-98			
121	Vietnam #	UNDP	250,000	01-Jan-92		1-Mar-97		Final	Final

Total - non expedited procedures \$3,098,900

Total - Enabling Activities \$24,808,337

* also received funding under expedited procedures

was part of a full project amounting to US\$ 3.0 million

Regional Projects

No	Project	Implementing Agency	GEF Grant (US Dollars)	Date of Entry into Work Program	Completion Date
1	BCS I	UNEP	5,000,000	Mar-92	Dec-98
2	BCS II	UNEP	2,000,000	Jun-94	Dec-98
3	BDM	UNEP	4,000,000	Jun-94	Dec-98
4	PBS	UNEP	2,744,000	Nov-97	Jun-99

Total - Regional projects \$13,744,000.00

BCS I = Biodiversity Country Studies - Phase I

BCS II = Biodiversity Country Studies - Phase II

BDM = Biodiversity Data Management Capacitation in Developing Countries and Networking Biodiversity Information

PBS = Pilot Biosafety Enabling Activity

ANNEX 2

STUDY OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITY TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

1. **Enabling activities.** Enabling activities—which include inventories, compilation of information, policy analysis, and strategies and action plans—represent a basic building block of GEF assistance to countries. They either fulfill essential communications requirements to a Convention, provide a basic and essential level of information to enable policy and strategic decisions to be made, or assist planning that identifies priority activities within a country. Countries thus enabled will have the ability to formulate and direct sectoral and economywide programs to address global environmental problems through a cost-effective approach within the context of national sustainable development efforts.¹

2. **Biodiversity enabling activities.** The GEF Operational Strategy defines enabling activities in biodiversity as: “[Activities] that prepare the foundation for design and implementation of effective response measures required to achieve Convention² objectives.

They will assist recipient countries to develop national strategies, plans, or programs referred to in Article 6³ of the CBD, and to identify components of biodiversity together with processes and activities likely to have significant adverse impacts on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. They will normally involve the review and assessment of information and will assist a recipient country to gain a better understanding of the nature and scope of its biodiversity assets and issues as well as a clearer sense of the options for the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity. Enabling activities include supporting country-driven activities for taking stock of or inventorying biodiversity based on national programs and relying on studies, without new primary research; identifying options and establishing priorities to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity; preparing and developing biodiversity planning exercises, such as national strategies, action plans and sectoral plans; and disseminating of information through national communications to the CBD.”⁴

1 GEF Operational Strategy, 1996, page 9.

2 The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted by an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention on Biological Diversity during its Fifth Session, held in Nairobi during May 11-12, 1992. The Convention entered into force on December 29, 1993. Currently, there are 168 signatories and 174 parties to the Convention.

3 Article 6 of the Convention states that “each contracting party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities: (a) develop national strategies, plans or programs for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programs which reflect, *inter alia*, the measures set out in this convention relevant to the contracting party concerned; and (b) integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs and policies.” (The Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).

4 GEF Operational Strategy, 1996, chapter 2.

3. Guidance from the Conference of Parties. At its second meeting in Jakarta in November 1995, the Conference of Parties requested the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the interim financial mechanism under the Convention, to facilitate urgent implementation of Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention by availing to developing country Parties financial resources for projects in a flexible and expeditious manner.⁵ The Conference of Parties also urged the GEF to make available resources to developing country Parties to assist in the preparation of their first national reports.⁶ At this meeting, the Conference of Parties also requested the GEF to explore the modalities of providing support to developing country parties for capacity building in relation to the operation of the clearing-house mechanism.⁷

4. GEF response to guidance from the Conference of Parties. Reference is specifically made to Article 6 of the Convention in the definition of enabling activities in the GEF Operational Strategy. Activities under Article 8, although the subject of consideration in any enabling activity, are largely addressed through GEF operational programs. A modular approach was developed to support capacity building related to the clearing-house mechanism.⁸

5. Operational criteria and expedited procedures. In response to a request from the Conference of Parties that financial resources be provided in a flexible and expeditious manner, the GEF Council decided that operational criteria should be developed in order to facilitate review and approval of enabling activities. The GEF Council has approved⁹ streamlined procedures and operational criteria.¹⁰ These procedures, while incorporating the key elements of the GEF project cycle, have contributed to shortening the time required for project development and approval. In addition to the general operational principles set forth in the GEF Operational Strategy, there are five general operational criteria for biodiversity enabling activities:¹¹

- *Coverage without duplication.* In assessing a country's need for enabling activities, existing planning capacity, as well as ongoing, planned and committed enabling activities, will be fully taken into account. To avoid duplication, GEF projects will draw on existing capacity and will make use of existing information whenever possible. GEF enabling activities will complement parallel activities by concentrating on filling remaining gaps

⁵ UNEP/CBD/COP/2/19. decision II/7.

⁶ UNEP/CDB/COP/2/19. decision II/17.

⁷ UNEP/CBD/COP/2/19. decision II/3. The Convention provides for the participating countries to promote scientific and technical cooperation, to be facilitated through a clearing house mechanism.

⁸ In response to decision II/3, the GEF submitted a paper, *Modalities for GEF Assistance for Capacity-Building in Relation to the Operation of the Clearing-House Mechanism*, proposing a modular approach to the Third Meeting of the Conference of Parties, Buenos Aires, Nov 1996. This approach was endorsed by the Conference of Parties (Decision III/5, 2(d)(i)) and included by the GEF in the operational criteria.

⁹ GEF Council Meeting, April 1996.

¹⁰ The criteria and procedures were developed by an informal task force comprised of representatives from the IAs and the Secretariat, in consultation with the Secretariat of the CBD.

¹¹ Enabling activity proposals that are not consistent with the criteria and cost benchmarks described in the criteria are normally prepared and approved under the regular GEF project cycle.

or, where justified, contributing to more in-depth work.

- *Appropriate overall sequencing of activities.* Enabling activities in biodiversity should initiate a *planning and consultative process* that results in a national strategy and action plan. Biodiversity planning is a process that is both adaptive and cyclical. As the main components are reiterated over several years, the process is expected to evolve and appropriate changes may be made to these operational criteria.
- *Best practices.* Enabling activity projects will be fully consistent with the guidance of the Conference of Parties and will follow established and widely accepted guidelines and methodologies. For example, the Conference of Parties commended the guidance provided in the document *Guidelines for Preparation of Biodiversity Country Studies*, prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme. It also commended the *National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experiences Around the World*, prepared by the World Resources Institute, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Conservation Union and its relevance to assisting Parties to implement Article 6 of the Convention and to prepare national reports. The Conference of Parties has also approved suggested guidelines for

national reporting on the implementation of Article 6.¹²

- *Cost-effectiveness.* Enabling activity projects should adopt the least-cost means of providing assistance to countries. Enabling activities will be subject to the same operational guidelines on eligible expenditures and administrative costs as those that apply in the case of project development.¹³ To ensure their cost-effectiveness, projects are expected to follow two types of norms: (i) activity norms describing the list of activities that may comprise an enabling activity; and (ii) cost benchmarks that describe the typical cost associated with each of these activities.
- *Consistency of approach and procedures.* The operational criteria norms and benchmarks apply to all biodiversity enabling activities financed by the GEF, whether they are financed through a free-standing, one-country activity; a multicountry (regional) activity; or an enabling activity component attached to a larger project (such as capacity building or an investment project).

6. **Status of enabling activities.** By May 1998, the GEF had supported about 115 biodiversity enabling activities covering 120 countries, for a total of over \$37 million. This also includes a few global biodiversity enabling activity programs — primarily two Biodiversity Country Studies¹⁴ covering 26 countries, and a

¹² See UNEP/CBD/COP/2/19; decision II/17.

¹³ See GEF/C.3/6

¹⁴ The primary objective of the Biodiversity Country Studies is to gather and analyze the data required to drive forward the process of developing national strategies, plans, or programs for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and to integrate these activities with other relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs, or policies.

Biodiversity Data Management Project¹⁵ covering 10 countries — supported by the GEF in its pilot phase. These will be covered in part by the study. A pilot Biosafety Enabling Activity¹⁶ covering 18 countries was only approved recently and will not be included in the study.

7. **Other complementary activities.** Recently, the GEF Council approved the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme (BPSP) being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Environment Programme. This program has been designed to address a number of general problems identified by the two agencies through questionnaire surveys and two regional workshops. The problems include: inadequacy of existing information, materials, and guidelines; a scarcity of appropriate expertise and experience; and difficulties in dealing with the complex and multisectoral nature of biodiversity planning. The BPSP will draw on the full range of national and global experience to develop and provide the information, tools, training, and communication needed to develop and implement comprehensive, multisectoral, and timely national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and to ensure a smooth transition between the development and implementation stages. This study will not cover the BPSP, but will extensively use the materials collected during the preparation of the BPSP.

Rationale for study

8. Even though GEF-financed enabling activities are not the only capacity building initiatives that have been underway, they were

specifically targeted to respond to guidance from the Conference of Parties. This is a new activity in the GEF that was established and has expanded rather quickly. As of April 30, 1998, 86 countries (65 of them were developing countries) have completed their first national reports and 22 (including 10 developing countries) have completed national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Most countries are still in an early phase of this work. While it is too early to assess the impact of enabling activities, an assessment of experience will provide useful insights on the design, implementation, and approval processes, including expedited procedures, pioneered for enabling activities and how such procedures might be applied to similar GEF activities in the future. This study will consider actions already undertaken by IAs to improve implementation of enabling activities and draw lessons that could usefully be applied to further strengthen the biodiversity enabling activity portfolio.

Scope of study

9. The study will be limited to a formative assessment of biodiversity enabling activities with primary focus on: (i) the responsiveness of GEF operational criteria to COP guidance and (ii) the process. A summative evaluation will be different in that it will assess the impacts of GEF-supported biodiversity enabling activities. The elements that comprise a formative study and a summative evaluation are shown in Annex 1. It is expected that a summative evaluation will be conducted once activities under the current portfolio of biodiversity enabling activities are implemented.

¹⁵ The overall objective of the Biodiversity Data Management Project is to enhance the capacity of developing countries in data and biodiversity information management to support the implementation of the CBD. It will conduct a national "institutional survey," which will report on the existing national capacity; prepare a "national plan" for the management and application of biodiversity data; develop a series of "basic guidelines" to support efficient information management; and create a "resource inventory" of available methods and technologies that can be drawn upon to assist data management.

¹⁶ The primary objective is to carry out country-level needs assessments and a global program on awareness building on issues arising from the UNEP's International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology.

10. **Objective.** This study will assess progress to date by the GEF-supported enabling activities in assisting countries to meet the relevant obligations under the CBD. It will focus on two major questions:

- How well do the GEF operational criteria for biodiversity enabling activities respond to guidance from the Conference of Parties?
- How well do GEF-supported enabling activities measure up against the GEF operational criteria for biodiversity enabling activities and other GEF guidelines?

11. The exercise will comprise of: (i) a desk review of documentation available at GEF Secretariat, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and United Nations Environment Programme on enabling activities, and national reports submitted to the CBD Secretariat and (ii) case studies on selected countries. The study will be limited to the portfolio approved as of June 30, 1998. The team will:

RESPONSE OF GEF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITY CRITERIA TO CONFERENCE OF PARTIES GUIDANCE

- assess the responsiveness of the GEF's operational criteria for biodiversity enabling activities to the relevant guidance from the Conference of Parties.

GEF-SUPPORTED ENABLING ACTIVITIES

Portfolio Overview

- identify the types of activities that have been supported in all the countries and their status of implementation; identify the status of various countries' preparation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national reports.

Project Design

- identify the generic types of needs identified by countries that are eligible for support under GEF enabling activities;
- examine how the enabling activities complemented existing inventories, strategies, plans, and information systems for conservation of biological diversity that existed in countries prior to the GEF support, and addressed the needs and priorities of the countries, in relation to the CBD;
- review how well various biodiversity planning resources, referenced in para 5(c), have served the countries in their efforts at drafting strategies, action plans, and national reports.

Implementation

- within the broad objectives of the enabling activities, consider whether the expenditures on various project activities concur with the objectives and priorities of the country and the GEF operational criteria;

- assess the roles and level of participation of different stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) at different stages of the project cycle with regard to the operational criteria;
 - assess the roles and performance of the external consultants (national/regional and international) and other actors at different stages of design and implementation with regard to GEF policy;
 - assess the contribution (as complements or supplements) of the global biodiversity enabling activities' projects (Biodiversity Country Studies, Biodiversity Data Management Project) on country-level enabling activities;
 - assess whether the global projects (ref. para above) have yielded results and outputs that have been relevant and useful for follow-up of the CBD, both for the countries participating in the global projects as well as others.
- b. the establishment of national institutional arrangements
 - c. the enhancement of local human resources on a sustainable basis
 - d. the strengthening of public awareness and development of network of constituencies on global environmental issues.

Budget and Project Approval Processes

Lead Indications of Achievement

- examine the division of roles and tasks between the countries, the IAs, and the Secretariat;
 - assess the reporting procedures on implementation of enabling activities;
 - identify the elapsed time (average and ranges) for different stages of the project approval process;
 - assess the effectiveness of the expedited procedures and criteria for speeding up the project approval process;
 - assess whether the expedited procedures have had an effect on the quality of project designs;
 - in view of the GEF operational criteria and objectives for enabling activities, assess whether the budgets provided for different components, including the clearing-house mechanism, are appropriate.
- in countries where implementation started a relatively long time ago, assess, if possible, whether the contributions of enabling activities are progressing towards meeting objectives set forth in project design, and in the operational criteria;
 - in countries where this is relevant, assess the contribution of enabling activities to preparation of national reports;
 - assess the extent to which the enabling activities are progressing towards contributing to:
 - a. increased accessibility of relevant data

Best Practices

- describe remedial actions taken by IAs to address problems identified with design and implementation of enabling activities;

- for selected countries, identify the best practices and lessons learned in terms of design and implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- recommend improvements in the operational criteria of enabling activities, if required, to make enabling activities more responsive to guidance from the Conference of Parties, and country needs and priorities;
- recommend desirable changes in design, budgeting, appraisal and approval procedures, participation, and other relevant elements of enabling activities.

STUDY TEAM

12. The study will be carried out by a team as follows:

- One staff member from the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation team;
- One staff member each from the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, and the GEF Secretariat (other than the M&E team).
- Two international consultants (who will be assisted by national or regional consultants).

13. The team will participate in all stages of the study, including developing a detailed implementation plan and methodology for the study and participate in initial synthesis discussions on findings and conclusions

following the field visits. However, given the demands on time of the staff of the GEFSEC and the IAs, the bulk of work will be done by two international consultants, one of whom will be the team leader, together with national consultants who will prepare case studies of selected countries. Team members of the GEF Secretariat and the IAs will accompany the consultants on visits to countries.

14. The team leader (consultant) will have a high international competence in evaluation, good knowledge of global environmental issues, particularly biodiversity, and be able to give independent assessments. He/she will be responsible for drafting the final report, based on inputs and suggestions provided by the other members of the team.

Mode of Work

15. The team members will familiarize themselves with the documents related to biodiversity enabling activities, available at GEF Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and the CBD Secretariat. While adhering to its terms of reference, the team will strive for complementarity between this study and enabling activities' development work being undertaken as part of the UNDP/UNEP Biodiversity Planning Support Program, which was recently approved.

16. The consultants (with inputs from the team) will prepare an Inception Report, which will contain an overview of the data sources, plans for how to address the various issues, outlines of questionnaires or structured interview guides, a list of countries proposed for reviews, as well as a generic or specific list of interviewees and modes and schedules for the implementation of the study.

17. The team members will visit a selected number of countries.¹⁷ The countries will be selected on the following criteria:

- relative long time since enabling activities were started;
- different stages of completion of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
- size of the enabling activity — project size and contribution by the countries;

- difference in ecosystem types, biodiversity richness, and endemism; and
- geographical representation.

The sample will include some countries that have participated in the global biodiversity enabling activity projects.

Output

18. The final report will consist of 30-50 pages plus appendices, including, *inter alia*, a list of all interviewees and data sources.

Proposed Timetable

Activity	Staffweeks (for two international consultants)	IA Staff weeks	Proposed Schedule
Finalization of Terms of Reference			Oct 23, 1998
Identification and appointment of consultants and GEF participants			Oct 15, 1998
Initial briefing meeting			Nov 9, 1998
Desk review and visits to Agencies	6	2	Nov 10–Dec 4, 1998
Inception Report	2	1	Dec 7, 1998
Field visits (and Country Case Studies by local consultants)	10	10	Jan–Feb 1999
Draft Report	8	3	March 31, 1999
Final Report	4	1	April 30, 1999
Total	30	17	

¹⁷ Initial suggestions are that the team visit five countries and prepare case studies with the help of national consultants on five other countries.

SCOPE OF FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE STUDIES OF BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES

←Formative Study (scope of current study)→		
←-----Summative Evaluation-----→		
Response to COP Guidance	Process Study	Impact Evaluation
Development of GEF operational criteria, policies, and procedures as a response to COP guidance	<u>Design</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of types of activities • Complementarity with existing inventories, strategies, and plans, and response to needs and priorities of countries • Adequacy of various biodiversity planning resources 	
	<u>Implementation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditures on various components and concurrence with objectives of country and GEF operational criteria • Roles of stakeholder and external consultants • Contribution and inputs from global biodiversity projects 	<u>Implementation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder and institutional participation in implementation • Effectiveness of disbursement mechanisms
	<u>Budget and approval process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of roles and responsibilities between IAs and Secretariat • Reporting procedures • Effectiveness of expedited procedures, and impact, if any, on quality of enabling activity • Appropriateness of budgets 	<u>Budget and Approval process</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of supervision, reporting, monitoring and evaluation procedures, and their effectiveness to direct remedial action, if required, during implementation
	<u>Achievements (lead indications)</u> In countries where implementation is well advanced, lead indicators of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions towards aims of enabling activities • Contributions towards national reports • Contributions to accessibility of data, national institutional arrangements, local human resources, public awareness 	<u>Achievements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions to objectives • Contributions to preparation of national reports • Contributions to accessibility of data, national institutional arrangements, local human resources, public awareness • Influence on national conservation policies and investments
	<u>Best Practices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remedial actions taken by IAs to problems identified with design and implementation • In selected countries, best practices in design and implementation of enabling activities 	<u>Best Practices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices in design and implementation • Lessons for future capacity building activities
	<u>Recommendations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements, if any, to make operational criteria more responsive to COP, country needs and priorities • Desirable changes in design, budgeting, appraisal and approval procedures. 	<u>Results</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have biodiversity enabling activities met their objectives?

ANNEX 3

STUDY METHODOLOGY AND SELECTION OF COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

METHODOLOGY

1. The study was based on interviews and reviews of key documents as well as visits to 12 countries that received EA grants under the GEF's expedited procedures. These visits were made during January-March 1999. Additional country reports were commissioned on the biodiversity EAs in India, Nepal, and the Philippines. Reviews were also commissioned for EAs within two regions, the Arab States (as defined by the UN) and the Pacific Island States. NBSAP documents in draft or final form for each of the countries included in the study were reviewed but not examined in detail.
2. The selection of countries and regions for visits and commissioned reports was based on multiple criteria, including geographic representation, balance between IAs, and diversity of experiences. To maximize the value of the country visits, countries and regions that had already reported significant progress through their IAs were generally selected ahead of countries reporting less progress. Additional inquiries helped clarify why some other countries had reported less progress. Country visits were organized through the respective GEF focal points. At the conclusion of the visits, country visit teams generally met with key stakeholders and local IA staff to share preliminary findings and circulated draft reports for comment.
3. The country visits and the commissioned studies followed guidelines prepared by the study team in advance (Annex 6). Either one or two team members visited each country for about one week with support from a local consultant. Individual reports on these country visits were a key input to this assessment, and these have been shared with the IAs and GEF Sec and discussed informally with the country concerned. This report analyzes and draws from this body of information but does not attempt to summarize it.
4. The study team consisted of two international consultants, two staff members from the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, two staff members from GEF Sec (including the GEF's enabling activities task manager), one staff member and one consultant from World Bank, one staff member and one consultant from UNDP, and one UNEP staff member. A local consultant participated fully in each country visit. The IA and GEF staff and consultants all supported the development of the study plan and methodology, as well as the selection of countries to be visited. They also facilitated interviews and data gathering within their respective agencies and took part in at least one country visit. Most participated in a two-day workshop for the preliminary analysis of findings. The international consultants carried out most of the technical work and drafted the report.

COUNTRY VISITS

5. Twelve countries were visited by the study team, with support from local consultants (GEF Implementing Agency in parentheses):

Africa

Cameroon (UNDP), Eritrea (WB), Gabon (UNDP), Kenya (UNEP/WB), Zimbabwe (UNDP)

Arab States

Egypt (UNEP)

Latin America & Caribbean

Argentina (UNDP), Belize (UNDP), Cuba (UNEP), Mexico (UNDP)

Eastern Europe & Former Soviet Union

Poland (UNEP) and Ukraine (WB)

Malaysia was originally selected for a country visit but logistical arrangements could not be put in place within the requisite time frame. Coverage of Asian countries was supplemented by four commissioned reviews, see below.

COMMISSIONED STUDIES

6. Five additional country and regional studies were commissioned from consultants, covering the Arab States (UN definition), India, Nepal, Philippines, and the South Pacific Island States.

SELECTION CRITERIA

7. The selection of countries and regions for visits or commissioned reviews was based on attempting to achieve a balance between:

- geographic regions;
- Implementing Agencies;
- EA activities close to completion vs. those still under implementation;
- EA activities that had progressed rapidly vs. those that had moved more slowly;
- EAs preceded by UNEP-managed Biodiversity Country Studies vs. those that were not;
- relatively large vs. relatively small EA grants.

8. To maximize the value of the country visits, countries and regions that had already reported significant progress through their IAs were generally selected ahead of countries reporting less progress. Additional inquiries helped clarify why some other countries had reported less progress.

ANNEX 4

ASSESSMENT TEAM

Independent Consultants	
Michael Wells Delfin Ganapin	Team Leader
GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Team	
Jarle Harstad Ramesh Ramankutty	
GEF Secretariat	
Mario Ramos Avani Vaish	
Implementing Agency Staff and Consultants	
Gonzalo Castro Jamison Suter John Hough Ajay Gupta Carmen Tavera	World Bank World Bank UNDP UNDP UNEP
Local Consultants	
Local Consultants were recruited through Chemonics International, Washington, DC	
Maria Onestini Rachel Graham Orlando Ray Santos David Nzuango Abdel Hamid Zakaria Woldeslassie Ogbazghi Annacle Bissielo Isabella Masinde Monica Herzig Piotr Paschalis Sergei Mosyakin Langford Chitsike	Argentina Belize Cuba Cameroon Egypt Eritrea Gabon Kenya Mexico Poland Ukraine Zimbabwe
Commissioned Reviews	
Hani Daraghma Shekhar Singh Nandita Jain Bruce Watson Conchita Rraggio	Arab States India Nepal Pacific Islands Philippines

ANNEX 5

ANALYSIS OF PROJECT PROCESSING TIME

The total elapsed time—from date of submission of the proposal at the GEF unit of the Implementing Agency to date of signature of the project document by the Implementing Agency—varies from a high of 1,003 working days to a low of 20 working days. The elapsed times seem to have been very high for proposals submitted in 1995 and then diminished rapidly for proposals submitted in 1996, 1997, and 1998.

A regression analysis was conducted to examine whether there is strong statistical evidence for learning. A linear model was estimated with 105 data points (or 105 BEA proposals for which complete data was available) as follows:

$$Y = A + BX + \text{Error}$$

Where Y = total elapsed time in days is the dependent variable

X = time elapsed in days from Jan 1, 1993, to date of submission of the proposal at the GEF-IA unit. Jan 1, 1993, was used as a reference point for the date of submission.

The results of the regression are shown in Table A.1.

Both the intercept and the X variable have significant explanatory power at 95% confidence level as shown by the p-values. The fact that the estimate of coefficient B is negative indicates that the larger the value of variable X, the lower the estimate of the dependent variable Y.

TABLE A. 1. REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR TOTAL ELAPSED TIME

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	810.56504	61.3704744	13.20774	6.77E-24
No of days from start	-0.435998	0.04575102	-9.5298	8.22E-16

Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.68452252
R Square	0.46857108
Adjusted R Square	0.46341157
Standard Error	133.454919
Observations	105

The estimate of the coefficient A is 810.57.
The estimate of coefficient B is -0.435

TABLE A.2 . REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR TOTAL ELAPSED TIME WITHOUT CAPE VERDE

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	755.8072	67.56533	11.18632	1.95E-19
X Variable 1	-0.39619	0.050129	-7.90339	3.31E-12

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.616281
R Square	0.379802
Adjusted R Square	0.373721
Standard Error	131.9323
Observations	104

The regression also has an adjusted R-square value of 0.46, and an F-test shows that the model has significant explanatory power. According to the model, the elapsed times are expected to decline as the date of submission to the GEF-IA unit is farther away from Jan 1, 1993, or as the dates of submission fall in 1995, 1996, and other later years. This is indeed a strong evidence for learning and for influence of the expedited procedures.

However, one of the data points, Cape Verde, is an outlier having taken 1,003 days to process.

Eliminating data associated with Cape Verde from the data set, the regression was run again with 104 data points to arrive at results shown in Table A.2, which again shows that the model has statistical significance.

As shown in the above tables, the regression is fairly robust, and the total elapsed time is quite strongly explained by the date of receipt of the proposal at the GEF-IA unit; proposals received more recently exhibited lower total elapsed time compared to proposals received earlier.

ANNEX 6

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY PROCEDURES FOR BIODIVERSITY ENABLING ACTIVITIES

World Bank	UNDP	UNEP
Information Dissemination	Information Dissemination	Information Dissemination
a. Countries informed about the EA window via regular Bank-country dialogue through task managers (TM) on mission or based at HQ.	a. Countries informed about EA window through UNDP Country Offices. Copies of EA Operational Criteria sent to all countries.	a. Countries informed about the GEF Operational Criteria for Enabling activities. Priority given to countries for which previous planning activities such as biodiversity country studies were supported by UNEP.
b. Countries expressing interest are sent examples of proposals and may be requested to submit an official letter asking for Bank assistance.	b. Countries expressing interest are sent examples of proposals and requested to submit an official letter asking the UNDP to provide assistance.	b. Official letters received from countries interested in requesting support for developing the GEF/EA project proposal.
Preparation of Proposal	Preparation of Proposal	Preparation of Proposal
a. Initial proposal prepared in collaboration between the in-country lead agency and the TM, based upon BEA Guidelines and upon pre-existing proposals. On occasion, in-country proposal development workshops are held.	a. Initial proposal prepared by country in association with UNDP Country Office, or skeleton put together by UNDP Regional Bureau with suggestions for methodology, blank budget, additional information needs identified, or consultant sent to country to prepare proposal.	a. Participating countries received templates of EA project proposals as well as the basic documents/guidelines for biodiversity planning. ¹
b. TM passes initial proposal to the Bank's GEF Unit (ENV), where it is reviewed and clarifications and revisions are requested of the in-country agency via the TM. ENV usually does final editing and ensures that all norms (cost, eligible activities) are adhered to. Advice on specific eligibility questions may be sought informally by ENV from GEFSEC.	b. Consultations between UNDP Regional Bureau, UNDP Country Office, and Government to finalize EA proposal.	b. Draft proposals were prepared by the designated national executing agencies and reviewed by the Biodiversity Senior Programme Officer in the UNEP/GEF Coordination office and the Task Manager for the NBSAPs. Information on earlier related activities such as Biodiversity Country Studies was provided by the Task Manager, BCS.

¹ Guidelines for Country Studies on Biological Diversity and National Biodiversity Planning – Guidelines Based on Early Experiences from Around the World.

<p>c. After final clearance by ENV, the proposal is submitted with official GEF Focal Point letter of endorsement to GEFSEC.</p>	<p>c. Proposal submitted by the UNDP Regional Bureau to the UNDP/GEF Central Unit for Technical Review. Proposal either cleared for onward submission to the GEFSEC or revisions asked to be made, in which case back to step b.</p>	<p>c. Consultations for finalization of the project proposal were undertaken by phone, mail/fax, and email. A few country visits by Task Manager took place to assist in finalization of project documents.</p>
	<p>d. After final clearance by UNDP/GEF Central Unit, submission of proposal to GEFSEC.</p>	<p>d. Proposal then cleared by the UNEP/GEF Executive Coordinator and submitted to the GEF Secretariat.</p>
<p>Review (and approval) of proposal at GEF Secretariat</p>		
<p>Once the project brief is received at the GEFSEC, it is copied to other IAs, STAP Chairman, and CBD Secretariat, together with a note fixing a deadline for their review of the proposal. The norm is 8 business days for the review. STAP comments are expected only in very exceptional cases. The proposal is also circulated within the GEFSEC to the biodiversity team and the social scientists requesting comments in the same timeframe. During the review period, some obvious lapses (such as lack of an endorsement letter from the GEF focal point, missing tables, calculation errors) are informally communicated to the sponsoring IA to give it a head start on corrective action.</p> <p>At the end of the review period, if there are no major comments, the proposal is recommended to the CEO for approval.</p> <p>If there are major comments, then all the appropriate comments are compiled by the Program Manager, and with his/her own comments, forwarded to the sponsoring IA for consideration.</p> <p>Revised project briefs, when received from the IAs, are subject to a 48-hour turnaround for CEO approval. If the revised brief does not adequately address earlier comments, the IA's attention is drawn to it and attempts made by the Program Manager, in as informal a manner as possible, to reach agreement on further changes. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter is brought to the attention of the CEO/Asst CEO and guidance sought on further steps.²</p>		
<p>Disbursements of Funds/Implementation</p>	<p>Disbursements of Funds/Implementation</p>	<p>Disbursements of Funds/Implementation</p>
<p>a. Once the project document is finalized, a standard enabling activity contract between the Bank and the executing agency is prepared and signed first by the Bank (country manager) and then by the executing agency. The contract generally follows simplified Bank procurement guidelines. An advance of the total grant is made upon receipt of the countersigned contract and once a special account is established for the initiative. The project document, or an extract thereof, is a technical annex to the contract.</p>	<p>a. UNDP Regional Bureau and Country Office prepare a brief preparatory assistance document to advance 15% of approved funds to a country. Funds disbursed upon approval of the preparatory assistance document by the UNDP/GEF Central Unit and signature by government. Funds typically used to initiate the project and hire project staff, including international consultant. Or skip step a. and go directly to step b.</p>	<p>a. After approval of GEFSEC, countries receive copies of approved project document and information on following steps (UNEP internal approval process).</p>

² CHM add-on proposals are not circulated for comments, but examined by the Program Manager alone in the light of agreed cost norms; in almost all cases, CEO approval is issued within a day of receipt of the proposal.

<p>b. Disbursements are made upon receipt of proof of expenditures or as agreed in advance of large periods of expenditure.</p>	<p>b. Preparation of a UNDP Project Document (prodoc) by the UNDP Country Office and Regional Bureau, approval by the UNDP/GEF Central Unit. The prodoc details project activities, budget, work plan, and implementation responsibilities. The prodoc functions as a legal agreement between UNDP and the government once it is signed, 100% of the approved project funds can be released.</p>	<p>b. GEF/EA projects integrated in UNEP's internal format for approval by in-house bodies – Project Approval Group, Fund Management Branch.</p>
<p>c. Financial and technical reporting is done as set out in the contract. When the TM is based in Washington, field visits are undertaken usually in conjunction with supervision missions for related investment projects (2-3 times per year on average). Regular contact is maintained through e-mail and fax with the project implementation unit.</p>	<p>c. Project execution by government in accordance with the UNDP National Execution Guidelines (NEX).</p>	<p>c. After UNEP's approval of the project, National Executing Agencies (NEAs) receive 2 original copies of project document for signature, including financial and progress reporting formats.</p>
<p>d. The Bank frequently advises the executing agency on international TA.</p>	<p>d. UNDP Country Office provides administrative and technical support, helps contract international consultants, reviews all expenditures and sub-contracts.</p>	<p>d. In order to allow for expedited implementation of project, a portion of the agreed first cash advance of 15% is released after receiving fax copy of project document signed by government authorities.</p>
<p>e. Technical expertise from Bank staff and written information (IUCN and UNDP and other guidelines) on biodiversity planning are provided to countries by the Bank. Administrative support frequently supplied by Resident Mission if there is one.</p>	<p>e. Technical expertise and information on biodiversity planning provided to countries from UNDP Regional Bureaus in New York – through the UNDP Country Offices.</p>	<p>e. The remaining amount for the 15% first cash advance is disbursed as soon as the original project document with signature is received. Cash advances typically take 10 working days for actual deposit in the recipient's bank account.</p>
<p>f. Wide dissemination of the final strategy and action plan is pursued by the executing agency, Bank Country Team, Resident Mission, ENV, international TA, and the Bank's partner organisations like other GEF IAs, WRI, IUCN, etc.</p>	<p>f. National Project Manager submits Quarterly Reports to the UNDP Country Office detailing work conducted in the previous quarter and expenditures made. Funds are advanced for the following quarter upon receipt of a workplan and budget for ensuing quarter.</p>	<p>f. Project execution by NEA in accordance with project document.</p>

	<p>g. Project undergoes independent terminal review upon completion.</p>	<p>g. Standard reporting procedures: NEAs submit quarterly financial reports (expenditure statement and cash advance statement) and half-yearly progress reports. The last quarter expenditure report for each year as well as the final expenditure account at the end of the project should be reported in an opinion by an independent auditor. Terms of reference of national and international consultants are sent to UNEP along with progress report. NEAs submit annual inventory of non-expendable equipment purchased with project funds.</p>
		<p>h. Cash advances are released based on expenditures reported and progress achieved.</p>
		<p>i. Administrative support and follow-up is provided by the Fund Management Officer assigned to the project. Such support ranges from assistance in preparing financial reports to undertaking payments on behalf of NEAs to suppliers or sub-contracted institutions or consultants.</p>
		<p>j. Technical assistance is provided by the Task Manager, NBSAP. Such assistance is provided through missions to the country (subject to fund availability) and by regular correspondence with EA National Project Coordinator. All draft outputs are reviewed by the Task Manager, and comments and suggestions are provided. Progress reports are reviewed by the TM. A number of workshops for experience exchange are organized, back to back with CBD-related regional meetings and COPs. NEAs receive examples of good practice and outputs of other countries.</p>
		<p>k. The task manager submits half-yearly progress reports to UNEP management. Project document revisions are done at least once a year to record actual expenditures and to allow for flexibility in project execution, as requested and justified by the NEA.</p>
		<p>l. Project undergoes a desk evaluation after completion of all outputs.</p>

ANNEX 7

BEST PRACTICES

The following best practices were derived from observations made during this study's country visits and commissioned studies. These best practices should be seen from the context of the country situation in which they have been successful. They show the creativity and range of flexibility in the implementation of BEAs at the country level. They are also here presented so that other countries or future efforts can have examples of what can be appropriately adapted as similar needs arise.

1. Implement an iterative project preparation approach to develop a workable project implementation design.

In Gabon, there were budgetary constraints and an over-concentrated schedule of activities. Iterative exchanges between UNDP and Gabon's DGE (General Directorate for Environment), mediated by the local UNDP office, revised activities and budget lines such that budgetary allocations and time frames became workable. In the Arab Region, UNDP's GEF/RBAS implemented such an iterative approach through country visits and regular communication that publicized the EA program to all counterpart agencies in the region.

2. Organize a committed professional team to coordinate implementation.

The observations in Cuba, Gabon, and Mexico show that a committed professional team that understands project objectives and methodologies, knows to access resource materials, and implements a participatory approach is important for the success of enabling activities.

In Cuba, each of the team members had personal commitment to the project. In Mexico, the recruitment of a Coordinator who is an expert in the field and who has high credibility, good experience, and good contacts was an important factor for effective implementation. Gabon's Biodiversity Coordination Unit also had good personal contacts with which it was able to give good project visibility among nearly all key stakeholders.

3. Implement with flexibility to adapt to local situations and needs.

The best use of the planning guidelines provided by WRI/UNEP/IUCN was made by those who were able to adapt it to the particular situation of their countries. Mexico and Egypt decided not to consider the guidelines as a "straitjacket." For Mexico, the process of NBSAP development was allowed to evolve into a "Mexican approach." This was the same with Egypt.

In Gabon, cash flow has never been a problem, despite the juggling of the budget that the Biodiversity Coordination Unit had to do. The reason is that the DGE (General Directorate for Environment) has given the BCU a high level of autonomy and complete budgetary freedom to manage its affairs. In the Ukraine, the World Bank showed flexibility so that the implementation would not be tied down by bureaucratic requirements. An expedited model for procurement and hiring of consultants using environmental NGOs was utilized. Staff in the MEPNS (Ministry of Environment Protection and Nuclear Safety)

stated that they were quite pleased to work with the World Bank since it was quite flexible and took into account the national situation.

In the Arab region, flexibility was shown in the expansion of the representation of the steering committee members especially after completion of stocktaking and beginning of option identification. This allowed the inclusion of new agencies and sectors entrusted with development, economy, finance, infrastructure, and public works. This was used to influence these agencies to integrate biodiversity conservation into their own sectoral strategies and plans.

4. Aim for representativeness in selection of sites and participation of stakeholders.

The organization of work such that ecological, biogeographical, and political zones are taken into account (e.g., Argentina, Eritrea, Egypt) assured completeness of stocktaking and appropriateness of the assessment of options and strategies.

The flexible expansion of representation in the steering committees in the Arab region, as discussed in item 3 above, is another example. In addition, the participation of the GEF Focal Points and those who have been involved in the international biodiversity arenas (e.g., Convention negotiations, international meetings such as COPs of the CBD, Agenda 21) has been a great help as they were able to bring in the global context to the work being done.

In Argentina, the process of bringing together stakeholders beyond those from the academic community and NGOs to also actively include central, provincial, and local governments and some of the productive sectors has produced a document that enjoys a high degree of support. Cuba also showed the value of good coordination with the provincial governments.

Representativeness could also ensure sustainability. In Cuba, while there was a core of national experts, one to two experts from each region participated in all of the workshops in order to ensure continuity and an integrative line of thought.

5. Conduct the process in a highly participatory manner and use innovative mechanisms to enhance such participation.

Belize had active participation by stakeholders and demonstrated a way by which issues could be made more relevant. Consultants presented the salient features of their report at each of the day-long district consultations but with each district area having a thematic twist related to locally perceived threats (e.g., Orange Walk focused on timber and livestock, and Mango Creek incorporated bananas, aquaculture, and tourism into its discussion).

Where the academic community is strong, the selection of universities as lead in local consultations had several advantages. This is the experience of Egypt, where universities are regarded as centers of knowledge, have very high credibility, and the word of a university President is "heard." If the lead to such consultations is given to politically powerful local leaders, there is the potential disadvantage that when they issue invitations, people would come because they were "obliged." With universities inviting, people came voluntarily.

The stakeholders' participation process in Mexico utilized an innovative computerized system where participants were guided to input their ideas and priorities. The use of the system was deemed to have the advantage of being more democratic as it allowed each participant to put in ideas without fear of censure or ridicule. In addition, no participant could monopolize the "discussion" or initiate long debates. The results could also be analyzed and consolidated fast. Participants appreciated the fact that they could go home with the results and decisions in their hands.

6. Provide creative mechanisms to foster sharing of scientific data and expertise.

Mexico had a way of making experts shared data. CONABIO was able to develop agreements of mutual interest between itself and experts. If the experts shared their data, CONABIO published the information under the expert's authorship. This allowed the sharing of data nationally as well as the "repatriation" of data held by experts in other countries. This approach enabled the production of a rich Biodiversity Country Study and Biodiversity Data Management System.

7. Build capacity building into the process of implementation.

In Egypt, the "next generation" of experts was prepared by involving graduate students in the Biodiversity Country Study. Instead of hiring consultants for all the work, graduate students were also involved. The resources from the BCS were used to allow graduate students to conduct inventories, consolidate archival material, and help in the assessment of biodiversity within their fields of study, which they would not have been able to do had they been limited to using existing resources.

8. Develop effective communications to build wider awareness.

In Egypt, the 65 volumes of its Biodiversity Country Study were published in both Arabic and English with colored pictures and illustrations that could be appreciated by the layman. The Arabic editions were deliberately "meant to serve users from sectors which are unrelated to research such as politicians and other decision makers."

The Marshall Islands plans the publication of the NBSAP as a book that can be used by organizations and schools for future reference.

The Philippines has published its Biodiversity Country Study as a book, *Philippine Biodiversity: An Assessment and Action Plan* for use as a sourcebook for educators and as reference material for the preparation of operational projects and their implementation. To create wider distribution, a joint venture for commercial publication with Bookmark Inc., a publishing company, was established. The books were sold and a part of the proceeds was utilized for additional publication.

9. Build linkages and integrate with other relevant initiatives.

The creation of complementarity between related projects was demonstrated in Zimbabwe where linkage between the NBSAP and the DEAP (District Environmental Action Plan, a UNDP-financed project implemented by the Ministry of Local Government) was established. The linkage made use of the differing but complementary nature of the two projects: the NBSAP starts at the macro-policy level and then reaches down through local consultations while the DEAP is a bottom-up approach with local issues requiring attention at the macro-policy level. Complementarity is created with DEAP identifying NBSAP issues not raised in the DEAP by the local communities and then assisting in bringing awareness among local communities on these issues.

Ukraine also benefited from the linkage of its BSAP to preceding World Bank-implemented GEF projects in the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube Delta, both in terms of provision of data and the training of local experts. Ukraine also benefited from the *Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy* (a regional initiative of the Council of Europe, the European Centre for Nature Conservation, and UNEP) in terms of the professional and personal contacts and exchange of ideas and information that this initiative allowed with other countries in Central and Western Europe.

The UNDP in Belize initiated linkages with other relevant organizations through its established processes. In addition to its usual tripartite reviews, it organized and hosted a well-received and effective end-of-project evaluation review that included the active participation of many organizations and projects not pertaining to the Government of Belize or the UN (e.g., BACONGO, ANDA, CZMP, TIDE, Fishermen, and Wildtracks).

10. Make effective use of local and regional expertise.

The use of experienced consultants in the design and implementation process has helped advance the enabling activities in Fiji, the Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu. These consultants have the confidence of both the countries and the IAs concerned. Each has extensive national and regional experience and was involved in previous environmental planning processes (i.e., NEMS) in the countries concerned.

In both Egypt and the Philippines, the active participation of national experts and consultants generated among the local academic and scientific community a lot of interest in and enthusiasm for biodiversity concerns. Their participation also strengthened networking among themselves. It should be noted though that where the expertise from the academe is focused on particular biological fields but lacking in the use of planning guidelines and in-depth understanding of the provisions of the CBD, it is useful to hold orientation workshops that enable these experts from the academic community to develop a common and more comprehensive understanding of the work to be done.

In Mexico, the use of external expert evaluators to assure coherence of consolidated documents helped improve the quality of the final product. An iterative process where technical accuracy

and consistency is added to grassroots inputs combined the advantages one could derive from a highly participatory process with those that come from expert-led approaches.

11. Integrate at the highest levels into larger overall development activities.

In Egypt, efforts were made to have the NBSAP recognized as integral to the country's economic and development plan. The approved organizational set-up for implementation also established a Supreme Council to be led by the First Lady. This high level of involvement ensured a buy-in from all the major government departments and ministries concerned.

In the Philippines, the NBSAP development had support from the very start from the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, which is under the Office of the President. The NBSAP was also based on national priorities that have been clearly outlined by preceding and approved sustainable development frameworks. Finally, the approved NBSAP was supported by a Presidential Executive Order requiring all government agencies to integrate appropriate elements of the NBSAP into their sectoral plans and programs.

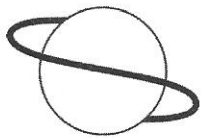
In Ukraine, the information gathered and proposals developed during the preparation of the "Concept" were examined by an expert group who coordinated its work with the Ministry of Finance. Approval of the Ministry of Finance was mandatory, even where the figures were "educated guesses" at best. This imprimatur eventually led to increased probability for higher level approval as well as the financing of the implementation of the "Concept." Approval by the Cabinet of Ministers and the signature by the Prime Minister were eventually acquired.

12. Facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience with other institutions and countries.

A workshop for NBSAP national coordinators and project managers organized by SPREP and WWF in the South Pacific was found useful. Those countries in the early stages of their NBSAP development were able to learn from the experience of others while those in advanced stages were able to address the shape of the final stages of their projects and also discuss the “what next” question. Similarly, a workshop for Arab countries organized by

UNDP’s GEF/RBAS also provided participating coordinators to explore the experiences in the region and assist each other in identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing options for biodiversity and in preparing their BSAPs.

The provision of “models” or “examples” have been well appreciated by country executing agencies. In the Ukraine, the World Bank provided documents with “model approaches” from other countries, which were translated and then used as a basis for NBSAP work. In Egypt, the provision of examples by UNEP was found at times to be more useful than guidelines.



Global Environment Facility
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433 USA
Telephone: 1(202)473-0508
Fax: 1(202)522-3240
Internet: www.gefweb.org

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