Enabling Activity:

Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

INCEPTION REPORT

April 2013, Skopje
Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

Project Information Sheet:

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<td>Daniela Rendevska, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning</td>
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<td>The Inception Report summarizes the project management arrangements, methodology for implementation and outputs, as well as provides detailed Work Plan of activities with timetable of their implementation through the entire project cycle.</td>
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Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

ABBREVIATIONS

CBD  Convention on Biological Diversity
CHM  Clearing House Mechanism
GEF  Global Environment Facility
MoEPP Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
SCBD  CBD Secretariat
UNEP  United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFCCC  United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Executive summary

The project “Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity” is financed by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by United Nations Environmental Programme Office in Vienna. The execution of the project objectives, activities and delivery of outputs is also a responsibility of the Macedonian Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

Republic of Macedonia became a party to the CBD on the 2nd December 1997 and is therefore obliged and committed to implement the requirements of the Convention. Article 26 of the Convention states that the objective of national reporting is to provide information on measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and the effectiveness of these measures. So far, Macedonia has completed four National Reports to the CBD and therefore is eligible to receive funds for the Fifth National Report. The project is also consistent with the GEF Results chain and Biodiversity focal area as well as with UNEP programme of Work (accomplishments).

The main objective of this project is to enable Macedonia to revise its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and to develop the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project activities are focused in 5 components: (1) stocktaking and assessment, (2) setting national targets, principles and main priorities, (3) development of strategy and action plan, (4) development of implementation plans and related activities, and (5) Institutional, monitoring and reporting activities.

The purpose of the Inception Report is to provide a short overview of initial activities (kick-off meeting, nomination and establishment of Project Steering Committee members and agreement on the planned activities), and to update and finalize project implementation arrangements, based on the framework described in the Project Identification Form. This report also includes the project background, project goals and objectives, description of project activities and updated work plan.
Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) managed project “Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)” (the Project) started in January 2013 and will be implemented in the period of 30 months. The project is designed to assist the Macedonian Government, as a country party to the CBD, to revise the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in line with national priorities and international obligations, as well as to prepare the Fifth National Report to the CBD. Thus, the project will contribute not only to fulfill the requirements under the Convention on Biological Diversity, but also to fulfill the requirements for harmonisation with EU nature legislation.

The primary beneficiary of the project is the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP). The office for coordination of the project implementation is based in the MoEPP.

The Inception report is structured as follows:

- Chapter I - project planning
- Chapter II – project overview
- Chapter III – project inception activities
- Chapter IV – expected cost-effectiveness of the project
- Annexes
I Project Planning

1.1 Balancing planning and implementation

Good planning is essential at this important stage in the country’s pre-accession, particularly as a number of donors are currently providing assistance in the biodiversity relative issues. Effective planning and consultation with these organizations in the early stage of project implementation will help to coordinate their work and prepare a good strategic action plan, leading to more effective implementation. Such planning should be based on a thorough understanding of existing institutional structures responsible for biodiversity protection issues, problems and priorities in the sector, resources and goals of different institutions/organizations etc, requiring a lot of time and effort at the beginning stage.

On the other hand, project partners expect the Project to help make a real contribution to the advancement of biodiversity conservation in the country. Well established national targets and developed action plan should serve as a communication tool for attracting attention of all stakeholders and thereby facilitating the mainstreaming of biodiversity issues into broader policies, strategies and action plans as well as incentive structures in the country.

1.2 Achieving ownership

This project is scheduled to last 30 months and due to the long official procedure for adoption of the Strategy, project official lifetime is narrowed to 24 months. Primary responsibility for implementation of the revised NBSAP will rest with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, as well as the other governmental and public institutions and other relevant stakeholders. Hence, it is essential that the strategy and activities should be “owned” by the relevant institutions, so that they are totally committed to implementation. This obviously requires a high degree of consultation at every stage.

Furthermore, drawing up a strategy is not a one-off task, but rather the start of a continuous process in which policy is developed and repeatedly reviewed in the light of experience and changing circumstances. This project will provide support for revision of the NBSAP in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Those who will be involved in drawing up and implementing the biodiversity strategy must be aware of the five strategic goals of the Global Strategic Plan but also the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and prepared to use this new approach in the updating process. Thus, the consultation process should be designed so as to encourage the development, refinement and propagation of new ideas.

A final element in the balancing act of constructive consultation is that of vested interests. Every policy change brings winners and losers, and it is natural for interest groups to lobby for policies that most
favour them. Western European models of consultation deliberately foster such inputs, and it is important that the final strategy be drawn up by a group that takes account of all relevant interests.

The approach proposed in this report is that the strategy and activities should be developed by national experts, working alongside their counterparts in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and in consultation with wider interest groups, using a range of mechanisms, including targeted small group meetings, workshops and discussion papers.

1.3 Synergies with other projects

A number of projects related to biodiversity conservation are in phase of implementation or planned to start recently supported by different international donors. It is therefore important that the Project’s activities complement rather that duplicate the activities of these other donors. On the other hand, results from other projects would contribute to the more comprehensive strategic document. The most important one are the following:

“Third National communication to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)” project – implemented by UNDP and MoEPP (period of realization 2012 – 2013) aims to strengthen the information base, analytical and institutional capacity of the key national institutions to integrate climate change priorities into country development strategies and relevant sector programs. During the preparation of the TNC, analyses within biodiversity sector will be upgraded and improved, utilizing data, results, findings and recommendations from completed or ongoing relevant studies thus obtaining more accurate assessment on a national level. Particularly vulnerable regions of the country (e.g. South-Eastern region) will be subject to more detailed analysis, specifically highlighting critical areas for conservation. This study shall focus on biodiversity from the standpoint of both ecosystems and the species which inhabit them, particularly terrestrial amphibians, birds, and mammals, keeping in mind how climatic factors will potentially threaten or impact them.

GEF financed project “Support the implementation of the national biosafety framework “, implemented by UNEP and MoEPP, started in April 2011 and is designed to assist the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to the legal and institutional development of the biosafety system of the country, in compliance to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and EU Acquis. The Project focuses on five principal components relating to the biosafety system, namely biosafety policy, regulatory regime, system for handling requests, monitoring system and raising public awareness and participation.

National Nature Strategy is planned to be prepared as part of the Nature Conservation Programme financed by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This Strategy is an obligation arising from the Law on Nature Protection. Aiming to avoid overlapping of projects, a contact with Farmahem (responsible national organisation for implementation of the programme) and the team leader is established and the content of the Nature Strategy will be developed in coordination with NBSAP revision team. Its starting date is foreseen for the second half of 2013.

The purpose of the EU funded project “Strengthening the administrative capacities for conservation and monitoring of biodiversity and natural heritage (IPA TAIB 2009)” is to strengthen the administrative capacities on central and local levels for implementation of nature protection legislation,
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in particular requirements of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The project will include assistance for: harmonization of the implementing legislation in the area of nature protection; assessment and development plan for strengthening the administrative capacity for implementation of the nature protection legislation; implementation of the most priority measures of the plan as training plans, training, coordination mechanisms for inter institutional cooperation, stakeholders' involvement, etc.; development of valorization studies and management plans for 2 proposed areas for protection with the relevant public consultation and development of pilot biodiversity monitoring system. It is planned to start in the second half of 2013.

II Project overview

2.1 Introduction

The Republic of Macedonia is characterized by rich diversity of species, habitats and ecosystems as well as genetic diversity that has been influenced by a unique process of bedrock formation, the types of soil, the relief, the eco-climate and the water regime. Vegetation is represented by 260 plant associations; more than 3700 higher plant species are known, including 117 endemic species. A significant number of plant species are considered to be at some level of threat. However, a threat status of species has not been assessed, i.e. the Red Lists and Red Data Book of species have not been prepared yet. In addition, 1580 species of lower plants have been described of which at least 72 are considered endemic. At present, around 9340 animal species have been recorded in Macedonia with almost 700 Macedonian endemics. Macedonian flora, fungi and fauna contain more than 100 species of global or European importance (MoEPP, 2003).

The characteristics of biological diversity and landscapes that needs to be addressed under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) are the following:

- High level of species and ecosystem diversity as well as genetic diversity;
- Well-preserved landscape diversity units important on a European and global scale;
- Significant degree of change in terms of the distribution and composition of climax ecosystems;
- Trend towards loss of biological and landscape diversity, caused by a wide spectrum of anthropogenic factors (unplanned development);
- Nature management in Macedonia (as prescribed with the Law on Nature protection) prioritizes the protection of the biological and landscape diversity in protected areas and outside of protected areas, establishment of a system of protected areas and their interconnection with corridors as part of the ecological network.
2.2 Project goals and objectives

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia has ratified the CBD and is therefore obliged and committed to implementing the requirements of the Convention and the Decisions of the CBD Conference of Parties (COP). The Convention requires countries to prepare a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and to ensure that this strategy is mainstreamed into the planning and activities of all those sectors whose activities can have an impact (positive and negative) on biodiversity. A summary of Enabling Activities supported in Macedonia is given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reports</th>
<th>Date of submission to CBD Secretariat or completion of project</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st National Report</td>
<td>19.11.2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Capacity needs self-assessment under the global environmental conventions pertaining biodiversity (CBD), climate change (UNFCCC) and land degradation and desertification (UNCCD)</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
<td>National Capacity needs self-assessment report comprising also the Strategy and Action Plan for capacity development was produced in 2005.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd National Report</td>
<td>02.06.2005</td>
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<td>3rd National Report</td>
<td>04.11.2005</td>
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<td>4th National Report</td>
<td>26.03.2010</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Action plan for implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the CBD</td>
<td>12.06.2012</td>
<td></td>
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The project is also consistent with the GEF 5 Results chain and Biodiversity focal area as well as with UNEP Programme of Work.

**GEF strategies**

1) **GEF Strategic Goal**: This project is aligned to the GEF 5 Strategic Goal 4 - Build national and regional capacities and enabling conditions for global environmental protection and sustainable development.

2) **Focal Area Goal**: Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services.

3) **Focal Area Objective**: The project addresses focal area Objective Five: Integrate CBD Obligations into National Planning Processes through Enabling Activities.

4) **Project Objective**: To enable Macedonia to revise its NBSAP and to develop the Fifth National Report to the CBD.

**UNEP Programme of Work (accomplishments)**

**Expected accomplishment 1**: The United Nations system demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements.

**Expected accomplishment 2**: Enhanced capacity of States to implement their environmental obligations and achieve their environmental goals, targets and objectives through strengthened institutions and the implementation of laws.

**Expected accomplishment 3**: National development processes and United Nations common country programming processes increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability into the implementation of their programmes of work.

**Expected accomplishment 4**: Improved access by national and international stakeholders to sound science and policy advice for decision-making.

**2.3 Project activities**

The main objective of this project is to enable Macedonia to revise its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and to develop the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The project has five components with expected outcomes and outputs described in the following text.
COMPONENT 1: Stocktaking and Assessment

This component includes: (a) Rapid stocktaking and review of relevant plans, policies and reports which will be done by national consultants before it is discussed by the stakeholders; (b) Identification of stakeholders and raising awareness; and (c) rapid assessment of the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss, highlighting the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their contribution to human well-being. Parts (b) and (c) will be done in a consultative manner in multi-sectoral meetings.

Expected outcome: Improved and more realistic decision making on biodiversity conservation in Macedonian Ministries resulting from knowing the current baseline.

Expected outputs:

- **Stakeholders Inventory**: Comprehensive stakeholder inventory and elaboration of best consultation modalities
- **Biodiversity National Plans**: Completed reports from reviews on national plans and policies on biodiversity conservation
- **Assessment reports**: Reports emanating from review of causes and consequences of BD loss, and value of biodiversity to human well-being.

COMPONENT 2: National Targets, Principles & Priorities of the Strategy

Before setting the new national targets and priorities, gap analyses of the first NBSAP will be undertaken, analyzing the percentage of implementation and reasons for incompletion of the other actions. Then, the country will determine its targets and priorities, taking into account the guiding results from Component 1. Small multi-sectoral committees will do the groundwork, which will then be discussed by all stakeholders. This component will be further guided by the instructions given by the CBD COP, and assisted by an international consultant (if necessary) based on the many emerging issues which will be updated in the NBSAP and which will add different dimensions to the consultations. These emerging issues include:

- The recently adopted Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and its associated goals, the Aichi Targets, and indicators which require fresh consultations by countries;
- Integration of biodiversity into national poverty eradication and development policies;
- Human Rights and Indigenous peoples;
- Gender considerations and social and environmental safeguards (i.e. utilization of biodiversity by various social groups, etc.).

Expected outcome: National implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity is improved and enhanced, and measurable targets for conservation and sustainable use are operationalized in Macedonia at national level, and mainstreamed into sectors and development plans.
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**Expected output:**

- **Targets & Priorities:** Country specific targets, principles and priorities of biodiversity conservation compiled.

**COMPONENT 3: Strategy and action plan development**

This Component will entail development of the strategy and the action plan in order to implement the agreed targets through national consultations. Results will be presented and discussed with stakeholders at workshops, at each stage of the project. Based on results from consultations with relevant sectors (including mainstreaming into development, poverty reduction and climate change plans) national experts will be used to draft the Strategy and Action Plan, which will later be discussed on a stakeholder’s workshop, and finalized after the consultation process. Coordination with relevant processes/projects (as described in chapter 1.3) is necessary.

**Expected outcome:** Macedonian Government and other stakeholders commence to use country specific indicators and targets.

**Expected output:**

- **NBSAP Reports:** integrated into sectoral development, poverty reduction, and climate change plans in Macedonia.

**COMPONENT 4: Development of Implementation Plans**

Once there is a revised draft strategy and action plans – further consultations will be required to develop implementation plans and related activities. Component 4 addresses the supporting systems for the NBSAP process and will have several areas including: (a) Development of a plan for capacity building for NBSAP implementation; (b) Technology needs assessment; (c) Development of a communication and outreach strategy for the NBSAP; and (d) Development of a plan for resource mobilization for NBSAP implementation.

**Expected outcomes:** Macedonian biodiversity budgets adjusted as a result of knowing capacity, technology, and conservation gaps.

**Expected outputs:**

- **Capacity Development Plan** for NBSAP Implementation,
- **Technology Needs Assessment Report.**
- **Communication Strategy**,
- **Resource Mobilisation Plan** for NBSAP implementation.
Component 5: Institutional, monitoring, reporting and exchange

This component will address establishment and/or strengthening of national coordination structures such as a Biodiversity Unit at the Executing Agency (Administration of Environment), development of the CHM, development of indicators and monitoring approach. The National committee for biodiversity was established in 1999, but is not functional. Re-establishment of the coordination structure will be proposed.

The component will also develop the Fifth National Report to the CBD which will be prepared following the guidelines given by the COP and the CBD Secretariat. Using the framework for goals and targets adopted by the CBD COP in its Decision 10, as well as the Guidelines for the Fifth National Report to the CBD, the development of the report will use data already gathered during consultations for the NBSAP process and data gathered by various experts. This means the development of the national report and the revision of the NBSAP is one process resulting with two different products. A portal to assist the preparation of the Fifth National Report and revision of the NBSAP will be developed by the SCBD and will be constantly updated, permitting on-line status reporting in real-time to the CBD, the implementing agencies, the GEF, countries and interested audience, as well as allowing countries to exchange experiences. UNEP will assist in facilitating this inter-country knowledge exchange and a communication for the process will be developed in this Component for the general public, media and policy makers.

The Fifth National Report will address the following three areas:

- **Part I** - An update on biodiversity status, trends, and threats and implications for human well-being,
- **Part II** - The national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP), its implementation, and the mainstreaming of biodiversity,
- **Part III** - Progress towards the 2015 and 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributions to the relevant 2015 Targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

**Expected outcomes:** Professional entities (and the general public) are better informed about conservation of biodiversity and how to enhance it. The CBD Conference of the Parties uses results of the project for decision making to improve biodiversity conservation actions in Macedonia

**Expected outputs:**

- **National Coordination Structure**: Operational biodiversity coordination structure,
- **CHM**: National CHM Operational,
- **Biodiversity Indicators**: a set of biodiversity Indicators to follow the new national targets will be proposed and developed (depending on the available dataset),
- **Fifth National Report** submitted to the SCBD by the recommended COP 10 deadline.
III Project Inception Activities

The following activities have been performed aiming to establish mechanisms for project implementation and coordination:

1. Organisation of the kick-off meeting
2. Determination of methodology and general approach
3. Organisation of the Inception meeting
4. Determination of work plan
5. Establishment of the Project Steering Committee

3.1 Organization of the Kick-off Meeting

With the purpose of initializing the activities of this Project, a kick-off meeting (i.e. several consultation meetings) were organized on the 15-16 January 2013 in Skopje between UNEP and national counterparts - representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) and national experts.

The purpose of these meetings was to present the project, determine methodology, and discuss the work plan and budget lines, establishment of Steering Committee as well as organization of the Inception meeting.

Based on the discussion of the methodology and the work plan, it was agreed that some adjustments are necessary aiming to prepare a good quality biodiversity assessment report and coordination with other relevant on-going projects in the country (climate change, biosafety and Nature Strategy) for setting national targets and indicators. It was also agreed that the MoEPP will perform the whole organization for the first stakeholders workshop - Inception meeting, that will take place in Skopje, mid of February 2013.

3.2 Determination of methodology and general approach

Experts Involvement

The identification of relevant experts is very important step for the project. A Core Expert Group and a Team Leader will be chosen according to their experience, knowledge and other requirements necessary to develop the documents. Core Group of Experts has the responsibility to support and develop the NBSAP and the Fifth National Report, and will meet on the regular basis as necessary (usually once a month). Additional experts will be engaged for specific issues/topics on a short term basis. Experts will also attend all the stakeholder workshops and make sure that all relevant comments and suggestions from the stakeholders are input into the draft document.
Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

Stakeholder Approach and Meetings

The revision of the NBSAP and the Fifth National report will focus on the direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders’ representatives of the relevant Ministries, members of the Project Steering Committee, resource-using public institutions, business and industries, NGOs, local institutions, protected areas management authorities, research and academic institutions, scientists, experts and other interested parties. Relevant faculties, institutes and Natural History Museum will be included in the consultative meetings (including all institutions for researching and documentation of biological diversity).

Four main stakeholder consultations are foreseen:

- first stakeholder workshop (Inception meeting) – organized on 19 February 2013;
- second stakeholder workshop (Indicators & Targets) – planned for September 2013;
- third stakeholder workshop (Strategy and Action Plan development) – planned to be organized in December 2013;
- fourth stakeholder workshop (Implementation plans and related activities) – planned to be organized in March/April 2014.

3.3 Organisation of the Inception meeting

The Inception meeting took place in Skopje on 19th of February 2013 with an aim to launch the NBSAP Project in the Republic of Macedonia and to present the project objectives, work plan and methodology of work to all relevant stakeholders as well as to discuss relevant issues for more efficient project implementation. Two main topics were presented: (1) Obligations of the Republic of Macedonia under the Convention on Biological Diversity and (2) project activities in details. A total of 112 participants from different institutions and organizations participated the meeting and gave valuable contribution in the discussion. The minutes of the Inception meeting are given in Annex 1, photo documentation (Annex 2) and the costs for its organization are given in Annex 3.

3.4 Determination of work plan

A project’s Inception Phase provides an opportunity to review the Project Document against the situation faced at the start of the project and to propose any changes that are necessary.

During the Inception Phase we have uncovered some issues that need to be addressed. For ex. undertaking gap analyses of the first NBSAP before setting the new national targets and priorities, or extension of the period for assessment of the current state of biodiversity, or earlier start of implementation of certain activity (for ex. preparation of communication strategy, development of biodiversity indicators etc.). Proposed adjustments are put in the revised work plan given in Annex 4.
3.5 Establishment of the Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) for this project consists of:

1. Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning;
2. GEF Operational Focal point and CBD Focal Point for Macedonia;
4. UNEP Programme Officer, Office in Vienna;
5. National consultant for coordination of NBSAP.

Decision on establishing the PSC are given in Annex 5.

The role of the PSC is to assist in planning and implementation of project activities. More specifically, its functions are to:

- Provide strategic and technical directions during the implementation of the Project,
- Monitor the implementation of the Project,
- Assist in overcoming possible obstacles in the implementation of the Project,
- Provide governmental inputs when requested,
- States its opinion/comments on project reports and outputs drafted by the consultants,
- Confirm that the project reports and outputs contribute to the overall project goals
- Act as direct liaison with the involved ministries concerning provision/access to requested data, internal relevant documents, or availability of ministerial staff for contacts.

The PSC will meet every six months in accordance with the Procedure Rules for PSC.
IV Expected cost-effectiveness of the project

This project will be highly cost effective in that it lays the foundational planning for conservation, which if well implemented, has great gains for the country as all conservation efforts will depend on it in the future. In addition, this project is an intervention in alignment with the GEF’s mandate to generate global benefits by paying for the incremental costs of planning and foundational enabling activities that countries implement to generate global biodiversity benefits. Specifically, the project will concentrate on overarching themes that touch upon protected area systems, biodiversity hot spots, endemic and threatened species, as well as biomes and ecosystems of global significance.

If GEF funds are not provided, Republic of Macedonia would have to self-finance for the preparation of its Fifth National Report and revision of the NBSAP. However, due to socio economic circumstances in the country there might be delays in project development and implementation and that would hamper the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 Strategic Plans for Biodiversity and Aichi Targets for biodiversity.
Annex 1: Minutes of the Inception meeting

The Inception meeting took place in Skopje, on 19th of February 2013, and was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) and chaired by Mrs. Daniela Rendevska, GEF and CBD focal point for the Republic of Macedonia. The aim of the meeting was to launch the NBSAP Project in Macedonia and to present the project objectives, work plan and methodology of work to all relevant stakeholders as well as to discuss relevant issues for more efficient project implementation.

Based on the meeting agenda (Annex I), two main topics were presented:

1. Macedonian obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity
2. Detailed presentation of the project activities.

Identification of relevant stakeholders was done as part of the preparatory activities for the meeting based on the recommended criteria explained in CEPA guidelines. A total of 112 participants from different institutions and organizations participated the meeting: relevant governmental institutions (Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Customs Administration, Secretariat for European Affairs), Slovenian embassy, international organizations (UNDP, SDC, GIZ, REC Macedonia, GEF SGP Macedonia), other agencies/sectors (Agency for spatial planning, Food and Veterinary Agency, Roads Agency, PE Macedonian Forests, PE Pastures Management), scientific institutions (Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Forestry Faculty, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, Institute of Agriculture, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Institute of stockbreeding, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Economy, as well as Faculty of natural and technical sciences-Shtip University, Museum of Natural History-Skopje, Hydrobilogical Insitute-Ohrid), management authorities of protected areas (Galicica and Pelister national parks, Jasen Multipurpose area and Kuklica Monument of Nature), Prilep and Skopje municipalities, non-governmental sector (Macedonian Ecological Society, Rural Development Network, Izvor-Kratovo, Society for Nature Protection in Macedonia, CeProSard, ORT, Dijalog), relevant projects (Third National Communication for Climate Change, UNEP/GEF Biosafety project, Farmahem-responsible for implementation of Swiss Nature Conservation Programme in Macedonia) and UNEP Vienna Office. The list of participants including media representatives (4) is given in Annex II.

Opening of the meeting

Mrs. Daniela Rendevska opened the meeting by welcoming all the participants and by inviting Mr. Stevo Temelkovski, Deputy Minister of Environment and Physical planning to continue the opening. Mr. Temelkovski welcomed the participants and media and announced the official start of the project for
revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and development of the Fifth National Report to the CBD. He explained that Macedonia is implementing its obligations rooting from CBD Convention since its ratification – especially with the preparation of the Country Study for Biodiversity in Macedonia in 2003 and adoption of the first National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in 2004. However, newly adopted global targets (known as Aichi targets) are imposing obligations for revision of NBSAP. This GEF funded project will help the country to develop new national targets until year 2020 and revise the NBSAP, with the help of UNEP Vienna office as implementing agency.

Ms. Deirdre Boyd, UN Permanent coordinator in Macedonia, explained that preventing further depletion of biodiversity is an important issue of UN and countries around the world that can be proved by the fact that 193 countries has ratified the CBD in the twenty-years period. In 2010, Parties adopted the new Global Strategic plan for 2011-2020 with 20 specific targets- ambitious but achievable. Further, to support this Strategic plan, UN declared the period 2011-2020 as decade on biodiversity. On the national level strategies are effective, only if they involve all relevant stakeholders in the design and in the implementation. Conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits deriving from biodiversity can sometimes evolve complicated choices resulting from negotiations, trades-off among different groups, different relations with biodiversity, different economic, social and cultural needs, interests and aspirations. At the end, Ms. Boyd stressed that in Macedonia over the previous years, UN agencies had provided support to the efforts of the Government to maintain and conserve the rich biodiversity and assured of continuous support from UN. Through GEF funds they have been able to support development of representative network of protected areas, national biodiversity information system, preparation of several management plans, different activities for protection of Prespa Park, protection and sustainable development of mountain regions, climate change and biodiversity particularly in mountain areas, etc. and revision of NBSAP is another important project.

Mr. Igor Trajkovski, Director of the Administration of Environment within MoEPP explained that the Republic of Macedonia is a biodiversity hot spot with about 17000 known species. CBD and other international agreements for nature conservation ratified by the Republic of Macedonia are giving the legal basis for nature conservation. At the same time, Following the EU approximation process, Macedonia transposed the Habitats and Birds Directives in national legislation. Mr. Trajkovski stressed that Aichi targets should be transferred not only in the national biodiversity strategy but also in other sectoral policies like: forestry, agriculture, transport, energy etc., because of their influence to biodiversity. Thus, early involvement of relevant sectors in the process of preparation of NBSAP is crucial, and will help the process of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in future.

Mr. Pier Carlo Sandei, UNEP project officer, impressed by the level of interest for this process, introduced the project to the meeting participants and explained that the purpose of the project is not to start from the beginning but to revise the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan within next two years. UNEP Office in Vienna will only assist the process that will be run by national experts and the Ministry, and shall stimulate the national ownership of the project as much as possible. The process of revision of NBSAPs is ongoing in most other countries in the Region, and is supported either by UNEP or UNDP Offices. Mr. Sandei is also hoping for a joint presentation next year on CBD/COP in Korea. Mr. Sandei pointed out that this is the first project of UNEP at the country level in Macedonia, however he believes this is just the beginning of further cooperation with the country.

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After welcome speeches, a short break for media interviews with high officials was organized.

Presentations

(1) **Obligations of the Republic of Macedonia under the Convention on Biological Diversity** was presented by Daniela Rendevska. Mrs. Rendevska presented the milestones for implementation of CBD in the Republic of Macedonia (preparation and submission of national and thematic reports), Aichi targets in details and EU Biodiversity strategy to 2020 as well as further steps related to nature conservation on a national level.

(2) Ms. Robertina Brajanoska, National consultant for coordination of NBSAP presented the project main objective and activities, expected outcomes and outputs for each component, work plan of activities, the content of the Fifth National Report to CBD, project inception activities and methodology of work.

Discussion

Many participants took part in the discussion presenting their views on the project activities, commenting different actions and asking more details about certain activities, i.e.

- **Ms. Teodora Grncarova Obradovic** asked for more details about assessment of technology needs, which technologies would be assessed, and explanation of the process of mainstreaming of biodiversity issues into the climate change, in absence of biodiversity monitoring and lack of data on a national level. In relation to development of biodiversity indicators Ms. Grncarova recommended a measurable indicators to be selected.

- **Jasmina Boshevska** from NGO “Dijalog” commented that development of Biodiversity strategy is important process, but more important part is implementation of the proposed actions in the NBSAP and asked if there are some funds available on EU level for these activities.

- **Menka Spirovska**, former CBD focal point, responsible for coordination of the process of development of the first NBSAP recommended all available biodiversity data (from different projects realized within the last 10 years) to be collected and used to design real actions and develop good measurable indicators to monitor progress in implementation of new targets and actions.

- **Vasil Anastasovski**, NGO “Society for Nature Conservation in Macedonia”, stressed the lack of biodiversity data in Macedonia and proposed establishment of a national expert body – Institute for nature conservation, and allocation of national funds for research and conservation of biodiversity. Ms. Grncarova proposed to consider the possibility of creating public-private partnership and establishing private institute for nature conservation.

- **Prof. Ljupco Melovski** recommended Communication strategy to be prepared early in the beginning of the project (not in the second year, as it was presented in the time frame) in order to reach the best project visibility through different promotion materials.

- **Katerina Georgievska**, REC recommended that it is important to make a gap analysis of the implemented actions from the first Biodiversity Action plan.
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- Kaja Shukova, MoEPP, recommended cross-cutting analyses to be prepared with other strategic documents (Environment Investment Strategy, State of Environment Report, etc.)
- Marjana Suslevska, Farmahem, coordinator of the Swiss Programme for Nature Conservation explained that preparation of Nature Strategy is one of the components within their project and asked for coordinated action between both projects aiming to avoid overlapping.
- Trajce Talevski, Hydrobiological Institute-Ohrid commented about the lack of financial resources allocated for scientific research of biodiversity on a national level.
- Sasko Jordanov, MoEPP informed about the new IPA project for establishing national monitoring of biodiversity is expected to start in few months.
- Despina Kitanova, MES commented that involvement of relevant sectors is a long process that requires communication with stakeholders for much longer period then 2 months foreseen for this activity in the presented work plan, and recommended more time to be allocated for this important issue.

Daniela Rendevska and Robertina Brajanoska thanked the participants for the valuable comments and suggestions and promised they will be taken into account in the process of implementation of the project.

The Inception meeting finished at 16:00 with lunch.
Annex 2: Inception meeting – photo documentation
Annex 3: Inception meeting organisational costs

| Travel costs |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| DATE | Number of travelers | FROM | TO | distance in KM | Mode | USD/km | TOTAL MKD | Total USD |
| 19.фев.13 | 26.992,00 ден. | $585,00 |

Total: 26.992,00 ден. $585,00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other/Miscellaneous Costs</th>
<th>actual costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Rate MKD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering: Coffee</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch/Dinner</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing: folders/booklets/CD</td>
<td>549,00</td>
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Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

| Consultants: | | | | | | |
| Translation costs | 460,00 | 9.97 | reading materials | Elena Mihajlova | 15 | 6900,00 | 0,00 | 6.900,00 ден. | $149,54 |
| Interpreters | 6920,00 | 149,98 | Elena Mihajlova | 1 | 6920,00 | 0,00 | 6.920,00 ден. | $149,98 |
| Equipment for simultaneous translation | 15000,00 | 325,10 | ERA City | 1 | 15000,00 | 2700,00 | 17.700,00 ден. | $383,62 |
| Rental of the business hall with LCD projector | 18000,00 | 390,12 | ERA City | 1 | 18000,00 | 3240,00 | 21.240,00 ден. | $460,34 |
| Total: | 310.844,00 ден. | | | | | | $6.736,97 |
| Grand total | 337.836,00 ден. | | | | | | $7.321,97 |
Annex 4: Work plan

An overview of the work plan for implementation of the project activities is given in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPONENT 1. Stocktaking and Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Rapid stocktaking and review of relevant plans, policies and reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Identification of stakeholders with special emphasis on economic sectors; consultations and awareness raising</td>
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<tr>
<td>First stakeholder workshop – Inception workshop (19th February 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Rapid assessment of the current state of biodiversity (assess ecosystem services); assessment of the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss highlighting the impact on value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their contribution to human-well being</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPONENT 2. Setting National targets, principles &amp; main priorities of the Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Gap analysis of the First NBSAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Setting National targets, principles &amp; main priorities of the Strategy through national consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second stakeholder workshop – Indicators &amp; Targets (end of September 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPONENT 3. Strategy and action plan development</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Developing the strategy and actions to implement the agreed targets through national consultations</td>
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Support to Macedonia for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Development of the Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

| Third stakeholder workshop – Development of Strategy and Action Plan (first week of December 2013) |
| c. Sectoral integration including mainstreaming into development, poverty reduction and climate change plans through sectoral consultations |

**COMPONENT 4. Development of implementation plans and related activities**

| a. Development of a plan for capacity development for NBSAP implementation |
| b. Technology needs assessment |
| c. Development of a communication and outreach strategy for the NBSAP |
| d. Development of a plan for resource mobilization for NBSAP implementation |

**Fourth stakeholder workshop – Implementation plans and related activities (March/April 2014)**

**COMPONENT 5. Institutional, monitoring, reporting and exchange**

| a. Establishment / strengthening of national coordination structures |
| b. CHM Development |
| c. Development of indicators and monitoring approach |
| d. Fifth national reports |

**COMPONENT 6. UNEP Finalization of the Project**

| a. Final inventory of non-expendable equipment |

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<tr>
<td>b. Equipment transfer letter</td>
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<td>c. Final expenditure statement</td>
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<td>d. Mid-term review or Mid-term evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Independent terminal evaluation report</td>
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Врз основа на член 55 став 1 од Законот за организација и работа на органите на државната управа (Службен вестник на РМ бр. 58/00, 44/02, 82/08, 167/10 и 51/11), а во согласност со проектот "Поддршка на Република Македонија за ревизија на Националната стратегија за биолошка разновидност со акционен план и изработка на петтиот национален извештај кон Конвенцијата за биолошка разновидност", министерот за животна средина и просторно планирање донесе

РЕШЕНИЕ
за формирање Управен комитет
на проектот "Поддршка на Република Македонија за ревизија на Националната стратегија за биолошка разновидност со акционен план и изработка на петтиот национален извештај кон Конвенцијата за биолошка разновидност"

Член 1
Се формира Управен комитет за реализација на проектот "Поддршка на Република Македонија за ревизија на Националната стратегија за биолошка разновидност со акционен план и изработка на петтиот национален извештај кон Конвенцијата за биолошка разновидност" (во понатамошниот текст: проектот).

Член 2
(1) Управниот комитет од член 1 се состои од следните членови со право на глас:
1. Игор Трајковски, директор на Управа за животна средина при Министерство за животна средина и просторно планирање;
2. Даниела Рендеевска, национално контакт лице за Глобалниот еколошки фонд и Конвенцијата за биолошка разновидност, Министерство за животна средина и просторно планирање;
3. Смиља Тенева, советник во Сектор за природа, Управа за животна средина при Министерството за животна средина и просторно планирање;
4. Пиер Карло Сандеи, проектен раководител од Канцеларијата на УНЕП во Виена.
(2) Член на Комитетот без право на глас е:
1. Робертина Брајаноска, национален координатор на проектот.
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Член 3
Управниот комитет ја има следната улога:
- Да обезбеди стратешки и технички насоки во текот на реализацијата на проектот;
- Да го следи напредокот на спроведувањето на проектот;
- Да помога во надминување на евентуалните пречки при спроведувањето на проектот;
- Да обезбеди вливни придонес кога е потребно;
- Да дава мислења/коментари по начин извештаите кои се подготвуваат во рамките на проектот;
- Да потврди дека проектните извештаи и резултати се во насока на постигнување на генералните цели на проектот и
- Да обезбеди непрекината соработка со релевантните институции во однос на обезбедување на податоци, интерни документи, како и обезбедување на контакти со надлежни лица во истите.

Член 4
(1) Претседател на Управниот комитет е директорот на Управата за животна средина.
(2) Претседателот именува свој заменик во случај на спреченост да претседава со состанците на Управниот комитет.
(3) Работата и задачите на Управниот комитет се подетално уредени со Деловникот за работа на Управниот комитет.

Член 5
Решението станува на сила со денот на потписувањето.

Изработил: Даниела Рендевска
Одобрил: д.ф. Соня Лепнина

Доставено до:
- Архива
- Членовите на Управниот комитет

2
Annex 6: Minutes from the first expert group meeting

First expert group meeting took place on 25th of April 2013 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Institute of Biology in Skopje.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss activities on the project, organize future work, and to initiate preparation of the state of biodiversity assessment, as the first output of the NBSAP Project in the Republic of Macedonia.

Participants:
- Acad. Vlado Matevski, team leader.
- Dr. Mitko Kostadinovski, Faculty of Natural Sciences-Skopje, habitats expert,
- Dr. Ljupco Melovski, Faculty of Natural Sciences-Skopje, plant ecology,
- Dr. Slavco Hristovski, Faculty of Natural Sciences-Skopje, ecology,
- Dr. Nikolco Velkovski, Faculty of Forestry-Skopje, forests expert,
- Metodija Velevski, Macedonian Ecological Society, birds expert,
- Dr. Oliver Avramovski, Galicica National park, expert for ecosystem services,
- M.Sc. Natalija Melovska, Macedonian Ecological Society, junior expert for ecosystem services.

Main points for discussion and outcomes of the meeting:
Robertina Brajanoska, National consultant for coordination of NBSAP briefly introduced the project, and explained the aim of the meeting.

Main points and outcomes of discussion:

1. Functioning of the project team

- The core project team for revision of NBSAP was established - including 9 experts (8 were present on the first project team meeting, while hydrobiology expert Dr. Zlatko Levkov was not able to participate);
- The core project team will meet every month in order to discuss the progress of the work, draft documents, gaps and any other needs identified;
- Additional short term experts will be contacted for specific issues;
- Meeting of the team leader and other core team experts with the project manager Pier Carlo Sandei will be organized during his mission in Skopje in May (15-17);
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- The 3rd project team meeting is scheduled to take place in Ljuboten, Shara Mt (21-23 June 2013), the team will work on the GAP analyses of the First Biodiversity Action Plan (details in point 5);
- The first results of the status of biodiversity assessment will be discussed during the 4th project team meeting scheduled in end of August / beginning of September as preparation for the second stakeholder workshop;
- The 5th project team meeting will be organized in October, after the second stakeholder workshop in order to finalize the work on setting national targets and indicators;
- The 6th project team meeting is scheduled in end of November/beginning of December 2013, as preparatory work of the third stakeholder workshop for Biodiversity Action Plan development;
- All relevant national documents and reports/documents from other countries that might help the project implementation to be stored in one folder and available to all experts (preferably on web, we’ll explore the possibility to create drop box account).

2. NBSAP content

- Draft content of NBSAP (in accordance with global Aichi targets) was presented and discussed (see Annex I). Additional experts were proposed to be contracted for specific issues such as agro-biodiversity, pollution, relevant sectors etc.

3. Expert ToRs

- ToRs for experts with deadlines for preparation of different reports/documents were discussed. Brajanoska explained that it’s important all experts to write coherently, and all collected data should be compiled in one report with the same style (background, intro, data, analysis, conclusions). The ToRs and contracts will be finalized once the contract with implementing organization is signed.

4. Fifth National Report to CBD

- The content of the Fifth National Report to CBD was presented consisting of the following components:
  - Part I - An update on biodiversity status, trends, and threats and implications for human well-being
  - Part II - The national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP), its implementation, and the mainstreaming of biodiversity
  - Part III - Progress towards the 2015 and 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and contributions to the relevant 2015 Targets of the Millennium Development Goals
- In accordance with the project timeframe, the first part should be drafted by December 2013 and the deadline for preparation of the 5th National report is March 2014.
- The previous 4 national reports to be provided to all experts by Ms. Brajanoska.
5. GAP analyses of the first NBSAP

Before starting with NBSAP revision it is important to conduct a Gap analyses for percentage of realization of the First Biodiversity Action Plan and provide explanation/reasons for the actions that failed to be implemented or were partly implemented. This will be discussed by the core project team on a plenary meeting at the 3rd meeting scheduled to take place in Ljuboten, Shar Mountain in June 2013. The project team decided to organize this meeting in a remote place (for most effective work) and also to combine it with one day field work.

Annex I: Draft Content of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

I. Introduction
- Biodiversity and its values to human well-being (1 page)
- CBD Strategic plan 2011-2020 and Aichi targets - obligations for revision of NBSAPs
- Country context – geographic, climate, hydrographic and demographic characteristics (max 5 pages)
- Principles of biodiversity conservation
II. Status of biodiversity in the country
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1. Species diversity (algae, fungi, lichens, higher plants, fauna - species richness; rare, endemic, relict species; threatened species, main threats) - (8 pages)
2. Ecosystem diversity (key ecosystems: forest, wetland, grassland and mountain), vegetation types, habitat types (EUNIS) – (6 pages)
3. Genetic diversity (1) plant and domestic animal genetic resources (2) other genetic resources (3 pages)

III. Biodiversity loss – problem analyses
1. Key threats to biodiversity (conceptual model of stresses, threats and causes)
2. Elaboration of stresses and direct threats (ex. IUCN threat categories)
3. Key sectors affecting biodiversity
   - agriculture
   - forestry
   - water management
   - transport
   - energy
   - mining
   - hunting
   - fishery
   - collection of wild species
4. Indirect threats to biodiversity

IV. The Economics of Ecosystems and biodiversity (ecosystem services, economic importance of ecosystems and biodiversity) (5-7 pages)

V. Institutional, legal/policy and financial framework for conservation of biodiversity

VI. Protection of biodiversity: protected species, protected areas, ecological networks

VII. Knowledge base – research, collection of data and monitoring system, NBIS

VIII. Education and public awareness

IX. Strategy
1. Long-term vision, mission
2. Strategic goals and National targets
3. Action plan
4. Implementation of the action plan
5. Indicators

Annexes: