# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FACILITY
## REQUEST FOR PDF BLOCK A FOR MSP

GEF



**AGENCY'S PROJECT ID:** PIMS 1019
**GEFSEC PROJECT ID:**
**COUNTRY:** India
**COUNTRY ELIGIBILITY:** CBD RATIFIED 18 FEB1994
**PROJECT TITLE:** Conservation and Sustainable Use of Globally Significant and Threatened Wetlands in India (IND/98/G44)
**GEF AGENCY:** UNDP
**OTHER EXECUTING AGENCY:** n/a
**DURATION:**
**GEF FOCAL AREA(S):** Biodiversity
**GEF OPERATIONAL PROGRAM(S):** OP 2 Coastal Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems
**GEF STRATEGIC PRIORITY(IES):** BD 2 – Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes and Sectors
**ESTIMATED STARTING DATE:**

**RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT:**

Abbhas K. Jha
Under Secretary (FB)
Department of Economic Affairs
Ministry of Finance

Date: June 5, 1998

This proposal has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies and procedures and meets the standards of the GEF Project Review Criteria for PDF Block A approval.

Deputy Executive Coordinator
Date:

Regional Coordinator
Tel: +60 16 3322 875
Email: sultana.bashir@undp.org

## 1. Global Significance + Problem Statement

Globally aquatic biodiversity is the most threatened kind of biodiversity and wetlands are facing rapid and high levels of degradation and habitat loss. The status of Indian wetlands very closely mirrors this global scenario. The recently concluded Government of India-UNDP supported initiative on Inland Wetlands of India: Conservation Priorities (2004) has recommended a number of proactive measures for stemming these losses. The report, among other things, has highlighted the need for taking up a broad suite of conservation and management interventions in wetlands. It is crucial that the proper management of wetlands is not confined to the few protected areas but instead extends to landscapes where wetlands are important components of globally significant biodiversity mosaics. For this to happen it is essential for biodiversity concerns to be mainstreamed into government sectoral plans and programmes. One approach to this is the extensive involvement of all stakeholders in conservation and management of wetlands. This project proposes to complement baseline national wetland management and conservation activities by demonstrating community-based sustainable resource utilization strategies and production practices for two globally significant wetland sites in India by mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the agriculture, tourism and fisheries sectors.

The two proposed sites are unique natural wetlands characteristic of the respective biogeograhic regions in which they occur. The wetlands of Mainpuri rank among the top ten potential Ramsar candidate sites of Uttar Pradesh according to the Inland Wetlands of India: Conservation Priorities (2004).These wetlands are extremely important to winter migrants and as the last citadels for large populations of the only resident crane of India, viz., Sarus crane. In fact, the wetlands of Mainpuri are estimated to hold one third of the global populations of Sarus. The second proposed site, Kolleru in Andhra Pradesh, is the largest freshwater natural lake of India and a designated Ramsar site of exceptional importance from hydrological, ecological and biodiversity perspectives. The threats to the two sites stem from unsustainable land use and water use practices in the catchment and within the site, cultivation of water chestnut (Mainpuri), pesticide use in the catchment (Kolleru), excessive commercial fishing, conflicts among different stakeholders, and lack of policy and management interventions for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the agriculture, fisheries, and tourism sectors.

## 2. Project Linkage to National Priorities, Action Plan and Programmes and CP/GCF/RCF, CCA and UNDAF situation analysis

Wetland conservation has been identified as a priority in the Environment Action Programme (1993) and also in the proposed draft National Environment Plan of 2004. The GoI has taken a number of proactive measures for the conservation of wetland habitats in the country. A National Committee on Wetlands has been constituted to advise the government on appropriate policies and programmes for the conservation of these ecosystems, identify specific sites as well as research and training priorities. The National Wetland Programme developed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) outlined the following priority areas: survey and mapping of wetland resources in the country using remote sensing technology; evolving wetland evaluation techniques to facilitate quick appraisal of specific wetland ecosystems and environmental impacts of developmental projects; control of exotic species; siltation control and fisheries development. The Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Action Plan 2004-2020 of the 'Inland Wetlands of India: Conservation Priorities' (2004) has drawn up an overarching framework in which the competing line agencies of government are to mainstream biodiversity as a permanent institutional initiative. The

proposed wetland action plan has drawn up a detailed charter for developing a policy framework for conservation and sustainable use of identified wetlands; integrating wetland management in the overall context of watershed development; and developing economic valuation of wetlands and integration in the National Natural Resource Accounting .( Sorry there is no natuaral resources accounting act)

**3. Stakeholders and Beneficiaries involved in Project**

Stakeholders involved in this project would include local communities, CBOs, village level institutions, State Governments, particularly of Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, MoEF, National NGOs, Wildlife Institute of India, International Crane Foundation, World Wildlife Fund-India and Wetlands International South Asia. The stakeholders will be consulted at all stages of project brief preparation. The government agencies to be involved include the following departments and institutions: Irrigation; Fisheries; Agriculture; Water Resources; Rural Development; Tourism; Forest and Wildlife; Pollution Control Board; Revenue; Panchayati Raj Institutions and State Water and Land management institutes. The project will be implemented through a partnership between capable conservation and research institutions, CBOs and government departments.

**4. Rationale for GEF Involvement and Fit with GEF Operational Programmes and Strategic Priorities**

In India wetlands which have been designated as protected areas are under state control and the existing conservation legislation does not facilitate the active conservation and management interventions especially those that are experimental and innovative or activities analogous to Joint Forest Management in the terrestrial biome. The Biological Diversity Act (2002), however, has proposed a new class of biodiversity rich areas, called Community Reserves to be managed by local communities. The recently concluded GoI-UNDP Project on Inland Wetlands has listed 199 potential sites for designation under the Ramsar Convention.

Limited protection is currently afforded to wetland habitats, and their representation in the protected area system is weak and inconsistent. Programmes to conserve wetlands that gather data and encourage their sustainable use are few. Currently Government policies for the conservation of wetlands do not facilitate the involvement of local communities in the management of wetlands due to the complexity involved in adopting a management system that incorporates issues related to sustainable use. The direct threats to wetlands in India include:

- Large scale changes in land use/land cover, burgeoning development projects and improper use of watersheds
- Drainage of lowlands and conversion into agricultural lands and other uses for short term gains, destroying critical habitats of global significance
- Intensive agriculture in upland areas around natural wetlands leading to reduced surface run-off into the lowlands (therefore drying-up of wetlands)
- Mono cultivation of crops and agrochemicals use (eutrophication) and other aquatic pollution, thereby degrading water quality
- Land degradation (erosion) of surrounding catchment areas, thus causing siltation in downstream wetlands
- Introduction and invasion of alien weed species making wetlands unsuitable for migratory species like waterfowl

- Unsustainable exploitation of wetland biological resources, threatening globally significant species and habitats

The rationale for the selection of the two sites, briefly referred to in Section 1, emanates from the following:

The Mainpuri sites are some of the exceptionally bio-diverse areas of Indo-Gangetic plains of northern India. For over a decade, there have been ecological investigations on the wetlands of Mainpuri using modern spatial technology tools as well as extensive ground studies. Therefore, there is a rich documentation of baseline information, against which the impact of the proposed interventions can be assessed. Needless to emphasize that the lessons learnt from such interventions would be extremely important for extending the site based sustainable management plans to other sites. The line agencies of the government of Uttar Pradesh have evinced a keen interest in the better management of these wetlands. These agencies include tourism, agriculture, fisheries and wildlife. These agencies are amongst the potential co-financing and operational partners.

Kolleru Lake is situated in Krishna and West Godavari districts, 50 km east of Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. The wetland has an area of 90,000 ha at maximum flooding. It is entirely dependent on the volume of monsoon run-off. Over 30 canals and streams enter the lake from the surrounding, intensively cultivated farmland. The lake drains into the Bay of Bengal through the Upputeru River, which flows for a distance of 42 km. The principal threat is the continued expansion of agricultural activities in the area and aquaculture. Large areas of the lake have been reclaimed for agriculture in recent years and the agricultural encroachment and industrial effluents entering the lake are causing rapid eutrophication and pollution with pesticides is becoming a serious problem. Fish ponds are being created and a large volume of water is extracted for irrigation purposes. The rapid intensification of agriculture in the region is resulting in increased rates of sedimentation. Uncontrolled fishing, pollution, agricultural encroachment and construction of fish ponds have all led to declining fish catch. The lake remains a very important wetland for both resident and migratory waterfowl. Legally the lake is state owned and a part of it is within the Kolleru Sanctuary established in September 1976 and managed by the Divisional Forest Officer, Eluru Division.

In 1994, the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution devolved powers to local institutions with respect to inter-alia, the usage and management of watersheds, water bodies and community assets. The Biological Diversity Act has explicitly recognized the creation of community reserves to facilitate the participation of local communities in the management of biodiversity. Thus the policy environment is very conducive for the proposed project. This project will demonstrate community based sustainable use and promote *in situ* conservation of threatened wetland ecosystems through a small network of sites containing globally significant (endemic and endangered) species of flora and fauna. This project will serve as a model to guide future wetland policy and administrative measures.

## 5. Expected Goal, Objectives and Outcomes of Final Project and Relevance to Outcomes of CPD and UNDAF

The expected goal of the project is to integrate biodiversity conservation in agriculture fisheries and tourism sectors and in land-use and water-use management in globally significant wetlands. In order to achieve this goal, the planned objectives are to systematically remove or substantially mitigate threats to globally significant biodiversity in wetlands at two demonstrations sites and to ensure that biodiversity conservation is mainstreamed in state land and water management plans and sectors plans in agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Specifically, the project will: (1) demonstrate removal of threats, barriers and root causes of wetlands biodiversity loss at two demonstration sites; (2) demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable production practices in Mainpuri district in the Indo-Gangetic plains of Uttar Pradesh, and in Kolleru, Andhra Pradesh; and (3) integrate biodiversity conservation in the State (Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh) land and water management plans as well as in sectoral plans (agriculture, fisheries, tourism).

In each of the sites, multi-sectoral and participatory management for the conservation and wise use of wetlands will result in: (1) Enhancing capacity of the key stakeholders at the relevant levels (i.e., national, state and community/site levels); and (2) Supporting the development and implementation of an integrated policy and legal framework for wetland management, demonstrating effective multi-sectoral and participatory planning and management approaches at two sites. Specifically, at the two chosen sites Mainpuri and Kolleru, the objectives would be to integrate biodiversity conservation into sectoral plans and programmes, in the management of these sites. Accordingly the sub objectives would be to:

1. Conserve and protect the biodiversity of these two wetlands in India, while utilizing their bio-resources
2. Develop and implement a well defined land and water management programme for two globally significant wetland sites.
3. Provide a foundation for sustainable utilization and conservation of wetlands in the country with the involvement of local community and sectoral agencies right from the formulation through implementation and project completion. The project aims to mainstream biodiversity concerns in production sectors (i.e., fisheries, forestry and tourism).

Under each of these sub-objectives, this project will undertake various activities designed to remove threats and the underlying root causes. Specific project activities will be formulated during the preparation of the MSP.

These expected outcomes, objectives and activities of the proposed MSP will contribute to the achievement of the India Country Cooperation Framework (2003-2007), in particular in achieving the UNDAF Outcome 5 "Global environmental concerns, and commitments influenced, and addressed at the national level through the mainstream national development planning machinery". The multi-sectoral and participatory planning and management approaches envisioned in the MSP will input into the national development planning. Likewise, the development and implementation of a national integrated policy and legal framework for wetland management will help the GoI fulfill its commitments to global environmental conventions like CBD and Ramsar. Furthermore the capacity development component of the proposed MSP will contribute to the CCF Output National capacity for addressing global environmental concerns strengthened, including the Sub-Output on Community-led initiatives supported.

## 6. Description of Preparatory Inception Stage

### 6.1 Expected Outcomes and Completion Date of PDF A project

The PDF-A project will prepare a Medium Sized Project proposal through a process which involves:

- Stakeholder consultations at the national and site levels, including involvement of NGOs, CBOs, national government agencies other than MoEF, such as agriculture, tourism, water resources, animal husbandry, fisheries and irrigation.
- Wetland assessments, including GIS surveys, database development, and specific site assessment for Mainpuri and Kolleru wetlands as well as socio-economic study and PRA
- Review of existing national and local policies, programmes and plans on wetland conservation and management, including the Inland Fisheries Act
- Institutional capacity assessment of wetlands management-related agencies, local authorities and other organizations (NGOs, etc.)

The PDF-A is expected to be completed by end of July 2005 with a draft final MSP proposal submitted to UNDP-GEF by end of June 2005.