


Please provide to following details on the origin of this report

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Date of submission:	22/9/2001

*Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report*

This thematic report was prepared by the CBD Focal Point (Ms. Lara Samaha, Ministry of Environment). The preparation of the report was preceded by interviews with several stakeholders from the government sector (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute, the National Center for Scientific Research), NGOs, International Organisations (Environment Unit at UNDP, UNDP and the World Bank projects) and finally national scientists. The report was as well based on the information available in other related reports.

**Decision IV/7 on Forest biological Diversity**

1. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this decision by your country?

a) High	X	b) Medium		c) Low	
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2. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?

a) Good		b) Adequate		c) Limiting	X	d) Severely limiting	
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3. Has your country assessed the status and trends of its forest biological diversity and identified options for its conservation and sustainable use? (Decision IV/7, paragraph 12)

<u>a) no</u>	
b) assessment underway (please give details below)	
c) assessment completed (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

***If a developing country Party or a Party with economy in transition -***

4. Has your country requested assistance through the financial mechanism for projects that promote the implementation of the focused work programme on forest biological diversity? (Decision IV/7, paragraph 7)

a) no	
<u>b) yes</u> (please give details below)	

Lebanon has received a financial assistance from the GEF for the establishment and management of two forest nature reserves through the Protected Areas project entitled "Strengthening of national capacity and grassroots in-situ conservation for sustainable biodiversity protection" (The project is executed by the Ministry of Environment and UNDP and has started in 1996 and will last until November 2001)

**Programme element 1: Holistic and inter-sectoral ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking account of social and cultural and economic considerations**

5. Has your country identified methodologies for enhancing the integration of forest biological diversity conservation and sustainable use into an holistic approach to sustainable forest management at the national level? (Work Programme, paragraph 13)	
a) <u>no</u>	
b) yes - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not applicable	

6. Has your country developed methodologies to advance the integration of traditional forest-related knowledge into sustainable forest management, in accordance with Article 8(j)? (Work Programme, paragraph 14)	
a) no	
b) <u>yes</u> - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not applicable	

7. Has your country promoted cooperation on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological resources at all levels in accordance with Articles 5 and 16 of the Convention? (Work Programme, paragraph 15)	
a) no	
b) <u>yes</u> - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not applicable	

8. Has your country promoted the sharing of relevant technical and scientific information on networks at all levels of protected forest areas and networking modalities in all types of forest ecosystems? (Work Programme, paragraph 17)	
a) no	
b) <u>yes</u> - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not applicable	

**Programme element 2: Comprehensive analysis of the ways in which human activities, in particular forest-management practices, influence biological diversity and assessment of ways to minimize or mitigate negative influences**

9. Has your country promoted activities for an enhanced understanding of positive and negative human influences on forest ecosystems by land-use managers, policy makers, scientists and other relevant stakeholders ) (Work Programme, paragraph 29)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) <u>yes</u> - significant extent (please give details below)	

d) not relevant	
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10. Has your country promoted activities to assemble management experiences and scientific, indigenous and local information at the national and local levels to provide for the sharing of approaches and tools that lead to improved forest practices with regard to forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 30)	
a) minimal activity	
<b>b) yes</b> - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

11. Has your country promoted activities with the aim of providing options to minimize or mitigate negative and to promote positive human influences on forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 31)	
a) minimal activity	
<b>b) yes</b> - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

12. Has your country promoted activities to minimize the impact of harmful alien species on forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 32)	
<b>a) minimal activity</b>	
b) yes - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

13. Has your country identified means and mechanisms to improve the identification and prioritisation of research activities related to influences of human activities, in particular forest management practices, on forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 33)	
<b>a) minimal activity</b>	
b) yes - limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes - significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

14. Does your country hold research results and syntheses of reports of relevant scientific and traditional knowledge on key forest biological diversity issues and, if so, have these been disseminated as widely as possible? (Work Programme, paragraph 34)	
a) not relevant	
<b>b) some relevant material, but not widely disseminated</b>	
c) significant material that could be more widely disseminated (please give details below)	
d) yes - already widely disseminated (please give details below)	

15. Has your country prepared case-studies on assessing impacts of fires and alien species on forest biological diversity and their influences on the management of forest ecosystems and savannahs? (Work Programme, paragraph 35)	
a) <u>no</u> - please indicate below whether this is due to a lack of available case-studies or for other reasons	
b) <u>yes</u> - please give below any views you may have on the usefulness of the preparation of case-studies for developing a better biological understanding of the problem and/or better management responses.	

**Programme element 3: Methodologies necessary to advance the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators for forest biological diversity**

16. Has your country assessed experiences gained in national and regional processes, identifying common elements and gaps in existing initiatives and improving indicators for forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 43)	
a) minimal activity	
b) <u>yes</u> - limited assessment made (please give details below)	
c) <u>yes</u> - significant assessment made (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	
17. Has your country carried out taxonomic studies and inventories at the national level which provide for a basic assessment of forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 43)	
a) <u>minimal activity</u>	
b) <u>yes</u> - limited assessment made (please give details below)	
c) <u>yes</u> - significant assessment made (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

***If you have ticked any of the boxes in questions 5 to 17 above which invite you to provide further details, please do so here.***

***(Information can include descriptions of methodologies and of activities undertaken, reasons for success or failure, outcomes and lessons learned)***

The Ministry of Agriculture's mandate is to protect the forest ecosystem and manage it.

The first forest legislation was written in 1949. Decrees and laws were added. The law enforcement is in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture through the forest service that includes engineers and forest guards who are in charge of the implementation of the laws related to hunting and forest exploitation.

The Ministry of Agriculture has executed a project with the collaboration of the French Forest Office for a period of three years (from 1997 until 2000). The project was co-financed by the French and Lebanese governments and aimed at providing equipment for forest fire control and primary interventions as

well as capacity building on the levels of both engineers, forest guards through training in France and Lebanon.

A national committee for combating forests fires was established and includes representatives from all concerned ministries. The committee has prepared a national strategy to combat forests fires; the strategy was endorsed by the council of ministers. The next step will be to secure funds for implementing the strategy.

The Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute (LARI) has prepared in 1996 a strategy for agriculture development including protection and development of forests. At the present, LARI is executing a project to identify the problems and threats of the Lebanese forests.

The European Union has financed a project for the sustainable management of forests in Lebanon through the establishment of three separate pilot projects in Bekaa, Northern Lebanon and Mount Lebanon. The project was executed by the Ministry of Agriculture with the collaboration of the French National Office of forestry for a period of three years (from 1996 until 1999).

Having signed and ratified the UNCCD, Lebanon with the assistance of UNDP and UNSO is developing a National Action Plan to combat desertification; this will include strategizing the forest sector as one of the major aspects of desertification.

The Lebanese government has secured funds for five years (starting 2001) for the reforestation of Lebanon and has delegated the Ministry of Environment to prepare a five years Strategy and Action Plan for Reforestation. This Strategy and Action Plan was recently finalized (August 2001) and includes a description of the current status of lands and forests and defines the problems of desertification and erosion, a description of the basis and the criteria of reforestation, an identification of the priority areas for reforestation, an agenda of activities for each reforestation campaigns and finally the mechanism of execution which involved the municipalities, the NGOs and the local population.

**Major obstacles:**

An immediate assistance is required for the preparation of a "Forestry National Action Plan". As a matter of fact, one of the major weaknesses in our forestry system is the lack of a forest inventory and action plan.

Further assistance is required at the present in the field of forest fires prevention and control to improve the system.

As water resources are becoming scarce, the introduction of water saving material and techniques both in forests and the grazing lands is necessary. An assistance is required to promote these techniques and start using them.

The forest legislation became very obsolete, with inconsistent penalties. It is being amended and updated. Several difficulties are encountered during the enforcement of the laws.

Q 6: The management teams of the two forest nature reserves mentioned in question 4, have benefited from the traditional knowledge of the local community and local harvesters to determine some plant species within the nature reserves in order to have the necessary information which could help them to manage the nature reserves in a sustainable manner.

During the implementation of the EU project mentioned above; many inquests, interviews and meetings were conducted with the local community in the project pilot areas.

Q7: A bilateral agreement was made between Lebanon (through the Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute/ LARI) and the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, United Kingdom (RBG KEW). According to this agreement, RBG Key and LARI will work together to ensure collection, study and conservation of Lebanese flora. Furthermore the two institutions will share the benefits arising out of such collaboration fairly and equitably thereby creating incentives and providing resources for the conservation of the biological diversity in Lebanon.

IPIGRI (The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute) is executing plant studies, germplasm exchange and germplasm evaluation.

Q8: All the information related to forest nature reserves will be shared with all the stakeholders and decision makers through the dissemination of the management plan of the nature reserves.

Regional workshops were organised to share information about under-utilised species in the Middle East that could have social and economic impacts.

Q9: Such activities were conducted through the organisation of workshops and through the exchange of experiences and information at the national and regional levels. On the other hand, many awareness campaigns are being conducted on biodiversity conservation in the nature reserves to enhance people understanding and appreciation to nature conservation, these campaigns are targeting the medias, the farmers, the municipalities, the universities, the local community and other stakeholders.

The Ministry of Environment with the collaboration of METAP/ Mediterranean Environmental and Technical Assistance Programme (funding agency) and the world Bank (managing agency) has conducted several training courses on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for various sectors/projects including impacts of these sectors/projects on the biological diversity, these training courses (total 12) targeted the public and private sectors and the NGOs.

Awareness campaigns were conducted for the municipalities on their role in the EIA process (18 conferences), and other awareness campaigns (total 12) will be conducted soon for the associations and syndicates on their role in the EIA process and the consequences of the implementation of EIA process on their field of work.

Q10: Within the framework of the GEF/UNDP protected areas project executed by the Ministry of Environment, Management Plans for nature reserves were established in a full participatory approach with the NGOs and the local communities. These Management Plans have been officially endorsed by the Ministry of Environment and disseminated, they are considered as a model for the management of other nature reserves. Technical experiences about the

management of the nature reserves are shared with all the concerned people on regular basis through the organisation of workshops and meetings.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Agriculture and the European Union (within the EU project mentioned above) have published booklets about the sustainable management of forests (how to prepare a sustainable management plan for the forests, conservation of forest seeds and reforestation, the main forest trees in Lebanon), these booklets were disseminated to all concerned institutions in Lebanon. Within the same project, Management Plans for three forest pilot areas were prepared and were submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture for implementation and for the lands' owners; the project established as well plant nursery for different local species and conducted experimental reforestation in these pilot areas.

Q11: Forests are protected by several laws and legislation that prohibit or organize human activities. Ecotourism is being promoted in the nature reserves so as to minimize visitors' negative impact on biodiversity and to enhance their understanding and appreciation to nature conservation, on the other hand laws of establishing nature reserves prohibit any harmful activities to the biodiversity within the nature reserves. The EU project has promoted such activities at the local level in the three pilot areas.

Although EIA is not yet required by the Lebanese legislation (project EIA decree has been submitted to the council of state for their review) nevertheless EIA are being conducted for several projects because the Ministry of Environment is requesting the submittal of an EIA before giving its approval on the projects; and due to the extensive environmental campaigns that is being organized by the Ministry of Environment, line ministries and public agencies are requesting EIA before granting permits, NGOs are exercising sufficient pressure to convince proponents to conduct EIA and the proponents are becoming aware of the economical benefits of conducting EIA.

Q12: A decision issued by the Ministry of Agriculture forbids the import of cedar trees, seedlings and seeds. (Decision 1/108 date:12/9/95)

Q13: The National Center for Scientific Research (NCSR) is providing fellowships for Ph.D. programs and the priority is given to the field of forestry, the NCSR is providing as well fellowships to many scientists who wish to execute research activities in the field of their interest.

Monitoring programs are being conducted to measure visitors' impacts on the trails in the nature reserves. Many students in the universities were encouraged to prepare studies about forest management practices.

The Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute (LARI) has recruited forest specialists in order to conduct research projects and studies related to forestry; LARI is in the process of creating a department for forestry.

Q14: The biodiversity country study was prepared in 1996 (Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/UNEP) and was disseminated at the national and international level and is available through the Internet.

The National Center for Scientific Research (NCSR) is publishing a scientist journal three or four times a year, this journal includes research results in many fields (including forest biological diversity issues) and is disseminated to all concerned academic institutions and ministries in Lebanon and to other research centers and universities in the Arab region and in the world. The NCSR is publishing as well a monthly newsletter that includes a summary of the research studies and is disseminated to public institutions and to university



professors and the scientific researchers. Both the scientific journal and the newsletter are available at the NCSR for all interested people.

Academic Institutions- the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Environment- are publishing many research studies and are available in their library.

The EU project has prepared three Management Plans (mentioned in Q10) for the three forest pilot areas including studies about the current status, the history, the phyto-ecology, the socio-economic conditions of the areas; but these Management Plans were submitted only to the Ministry of Agriculture and to the lands' owners. However, three booklets about the sustainable management of forests were prepared by the same project with the Ministry of Agriculture (mentioned in Q10) and were widely disseminated at the national level.

Many scientific studies on the fauna and flora in the nature reserves were executed and many reports were prepared. These studies were disseminated to the managers of the nature reserves and local NGOs and are available at the Ministry of Environment for all those who are interested.

The Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute/ LARI is executing many research activities in the field of forestry: a research project on the valorization of forest species considered as secondary (*Laurus nobilis*, *Myrtus communis*...), experiments on the germination of *Juniperus excelsa* and seedlings production and finally different works related to medicinal and aromatic plants.

Q15: No case- studies were prepared due to a lack of money.

Q16: In the process of identifying the indicators for Lebanon, Lebanon was inspired from the Blue Plan indicators for the Mediterranean region and has adopted some of these indicators but others were specific to Lebanon. Lebanon has identified the following indicators for forest biological diversity: burned forests area (it was calculated), the forests area (not calculated yet because the work to update the land cover map is being executed at the present to be able to determine the forests area) and the forest protection rate (not calculated yet due to a lack of data).

Q17: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has executed in 1959 a study about the plant species in the Lebanese forests according to the bioclimatic regions. There is a need to update this study in order to execute a forest inventory at the national level, in this regard the Top Up Biodiversity Enabling Activity Project (funded by the GEF and will start in September 2001 and will be executed by the Ministry of Environment and the UNDP) has selected three priorities for capacity building needs, one of which is the assessment of capacity building needs to improve coordination between national institutions and scientists and determine national taxonomic priorities.

Inventory of the species were executed recently in some forest areas: Inventories about the plants and animals species in the forest nature reserves were executed; these species were evaluated according to their level of significance at the national, regional and international level (rare, threatened, endangered and endemic species). On the other hand, inventories about the plants species in the three pilot forest areas were executed through the EU project mentioned above (1996-1999).