Rain Forest Corridors: A Promising Alternative for Protecting Biodiversity

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Brazil is an enormous reservoir of biodiversity. Within the Brazilian Amazon and along much of its Atlantic coast lies about one third of the world's remaining tropical rain forests, which contain an extraordinary variety of plant and animal life. Recent tallies show that Brazil's diversity of flowering plants, fishes, amphibians, birds and primates is unsurpassed, placing it among a select group of countries notable for their megadiversity.

Yet efforts to protect this rich biological heritage have been haphazard, at best. Brazil's network of parks and reserves cover about 4.5% of the country. Many of these areas were selected in an ad hoc fashion based on availability and ease of appropriation rather than biological criteria. In the Amazon region, parks and reserves are widely scattered in remote locations, and with an average of one park ranger per 15,000 km², virtually all are understaffed. Populations living in and around protected areas are generally treated as interlopers rather than potential allies, which undermines local support for these areas. As a result, parks and reserves throughout Brazil have become prime targets for hunting, logging, agriculture and mining.

In an effort to address these problems, the Pilot Program has contracted a team of prominent Brazilian biologists to design a more integrated system of protected areas as part of the Program's Parks and Reserves Project, currently under preparation. Under this proposed new system, protected areas would be concentrated in seven rain forest corridors located in the Amazon and Atlantic forest regions. These corridors include areas of exceptional biodiversity and encompass many of the existing protected areas, as well as indigenous lands. The five corridors proposed in the Amazon, for example, contain 34% of the region's total forest yet concentrate at least 75% of its total biodiversity, and they link 73 protected areas and 116 indigenous lands.

The linkage of existing protected areas and indigenous lands within larger rain forest corridors (Continued on page 4)
DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

A participatory planning seminar was held in November 1996 to review the Demonstration Projects (PD/A) timetable through the year 2000. Attending the seminar were representatives of the Amazon Working Group (GTA), the Atlantic Forest Network (RMA), the Bank of Brazil, the Technical Secretariat of PD/A, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the World Bank. Under the revised PD/A workplan, greater emphasis will be placed on monitoring project performance and communicating the results and lessons learned from PD/A activities to a wider audience.

In December 1996, representatives of the PD/A Technical Secretariat, the Bank of Brazil, Germany's Bank for Reconstruction (KfW), GTZ and the World Bank made a field visit to subprojects in the states of Maranhão and Pará to review implementation progress and possible problems. The mission confirmed that the subprojects had gotten off to a good start, with good response and participation from the local beneficiary groups. The problems identified by the mission relate to the technical and financial management of the subprojects and difficulties with commercial arrangements for marketing new production. They concluded that more attention should be paid to the managerial and economic aspects of the subprojects during their preparation, review and approval, and recommended steps to be taken to address these problems.

A mid-term review of the PD/A project is tentatively planned for May or June 1997.

EXTRACTION RESERVES

From January 20-31, 1997, there will be a supervision visit to evaluate the implementation of the Extractive Reserves Project, which will include a field visit to Extractive Reserve Rio Ouro Preto in Rondónia. A summary of the evaluation will appear in the next issue of the Pilot Program Update.

FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Negotiations of the grant agreement for the Forest Resources Management Project were completed on October 11, 1996, and the project was approved by the World Bank on December 10, 1996. Signing of the grant agreement is expected to take place in early February 1997.

The primary objective of the five-year project is to support the adoption of sustainable forest management systems in the Amazon through a combination of strategic actions and pilot experiments in priority areas. To this end, the project will support the following four components: (1) a strategic analysis of public policy and incentives systems that affect the forestry sector; (2) the testing of promising forest resource management initiatives; (3) a monitoring and control program for logging activities in two pilot areas in the region; and (4) the development and implementation of a participatory management and conservation plan for the Tapajós National Forest, located in the Amazonian state of Pará.

The project as agreed at negotiations will cost US$20 million, to be financed by Germany through KfW (US$12.5 million) and GTZ (US$2.2 million); the Rain Forest Trust (US$2 million); the United Kingdom through the Overseas Development Agency (US$1.9 million); and the Federative Republic of Brazil (US$1.4 million).

INDIGENOUS LANDS

By the end of 1996, the Indigenous Lands Project had five identification teams completing the identification and delimitation of twelve indigenous lands. Nine demarcations were nearing completion, and Brazil's National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) was finalizing the bidding and contracting arrangements so work could begin in early 1997 on another twelve areas. Indigenous lands scheduled to be identified or demarcated in 1996 which were not begun have been transferred to the 1997 work program. A supervision
Indigenous Lands (Cont. from page 2)

visit to evaluate the project is planned for January 13-17, 1997 in Brasília. It is expected that the 1997 annual work program will be reviewed and approved at that time. ♦

NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

Special training courses in the preparation and implementation of subprojects under the Natural Resources Policy Project (NRPP) will take place in February and March 1997 throughout the Amazon region. Participants in the courses will include staff from the executing agencies of all participating states. These courses are an important step towards preparing consistent integrated subprojects.

Progress in NRPP implementation was commended by the International Advisory Group (IAG) during its December 1996 meeting. The IAG praised the advances made by some states on zoning, and emphasized that zoning in a given area should begin only after local public hearings have been held. The IAG also recommended the creation of a Sustainable Development Fund to help finance small scale projects, and stressed the importance of providing institutional strengthening activities on a competitive basis to agencies involved in carrying out the integrated subprojects.

NRPP Mission to Rondonia

A mission led by the Technical Secretariat of the NRPP visited Rondonia in December 1996 to review potential areas for the development of integrated subprojects. Members of the mission team included local and national staff from both the NRPP and the Rondonia Natural Resources (PLANAFLORO) projects, as well as one IAG member. The NRPP—PLANAFLORO partnership was created in an effort to coordinate the activities of both projects in the state and to build upon the valuable lessons learned throughout the implementation of PLANAFLORO.

Based on the eight-year PLANAFLORO experience in Rondonia, the mission was able to identify two groups of five municipalities (municípios) which satisfy the necessary conditions for the development of integrated subprojects under NRPP—namely, the existence of acute environmental problems and the local capacity to solve them, with the active participation of local stakeholders in project preparation. According to the mission's report, if a serious effort is made to "conciliate the interests of the various stakeholders, and the real problems are tackled first in real partnership," then "the selection of prospective projects in Rondônia could open interesting perspectives for the rest of the Amazon region." ♦

SCIENCE CENTERS & DIRECTED RESEARCH

The mid-term review for the Science Centers and Directed Research Project was conducted in Brazil in December 1996. A summary of the results of the review will appear in the next issue of the Pilot Program Update. ♦

International Advisory Group Meets

The International Advisory Group (IAG) of the G-7 Pilot Program to Conserve the Brazilian Rain Forest held its seventh meeting on December 2-6, 1996 in Brasília. The IAG is composed of international experts who meet twice a year to provide independent advice and evaluation of the Pilot Program. The IAG welcomed two new members, Mr. Derk de Groot (Dutch National Reference Center for Nature Management) and Mr. Roberto Smeraldi (Friends of the Earth).

The IAG observed that since its last meeting, there has been steady progress in the preparation and implementation of projects. In evaluating the overall program, the IAG made four recommendations.

First, given the fact that the Pilot Program is now "up and running," the IAG noted that the main Pilot Program organizations, including the World Bank and the Government of Brazil, should discuss possible refinements to operational responsibilities and improved collaboration in several areas, including the preparation and dissemination of Pilot Program publications. The IAG stressed once again the importance of ensuring greater consistency and integration of Pilot Program projects with Associated Bilateral Projects, a category of projects that have similar aims to Pilot Program projects but which are funded directly by bilateral agencies of other governments or the European Union.

The second IAG recommendation focused on the participation of state governments in the design and implementation of Pilot Program activities—in particular, the Natural Resources Policy Project. While recognizing the continued importance of state representation and participation, the IAG stressed the need to balance federal, state and municipal roles in Pilot Program activities.

Third, the IAG urged that more work be done to enhance the "synergy" and internal integration of Pilot (Continued on page 4)
Rain Forest Corridors (Cont. from page 1) could provide a compelling alternative for biodiversity protection in Brazil. From a biological perspective, this linkage would enhance the protection of large mammals, such as jaguars, which require extensive hunting ranges. Within a rain forest corridor, currently isolated populations of the same species would have greater opportunities for breeding and thus increase the genetic variability. In addition, concentrating widely scattered parks and reserves into a few rain forest corridors could strengthen the effectiveness of understaffed environmental agencies. Finally, by seeking the participation and support of local populations for their establishment, these corridors could help build new constituencies for biodiversity protection in Brazil’s Amazon and Atlantic forest regions.

As part of the preparation for this project, two planning workshops for the Amazon and Atlantic forest corridors took place in November 1996, as well as a seminar on the human presence in protected areas (see related article below). Based on these meetings, the consultancy team has produced a revised project proposal, which is scheduled for appraisal later in the year. Germany’s Bank for Reconstruction (KfW), the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom’s Overseas Development Agency (ODA) and the Rain Forest Trust Fund have indicated support for this project, which is currently budgeted at US$44.7 million.

Results of Seminar on Human Presence in Protected Areas

With support from the Pilot Program, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the British Council, the Brazilian Congress hosted a seminar November 26-29, 1996 on the human presence in protected areas. Over 200 participants examined options for reconciling the needs of local populations with environmental conservation. Despite a wide range of viewpoints, the need for maintaining some protected areas without human presence was generally acknowledged.

Much of the debate focused on two competing legislative proposals before Congress aimed at establishing a national system of protected areas. The seminar participants overwhelmingly supported the proposal by Representative Fernando Gabeira (Green Party, PV), which defined a more decentralized and participatory system than that proposed by the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA). During the seminar, the President of IBAMA, Mr. Eduardo Martins, indicated IBAMA’s willingness to support Gabeira’s proposal with minor modifications, bringing to an end nearly five years of legislative deadlock on this issue. Legislation to establish a national protected areas system (Sistema de Unidades de Conservação—SNUC) is expected to be passed by the Brazilian Congress in early 1997.

Letters to the Editor:
We Want to Hear From You!

Starting in the April 1997 issue, the Rain Forest Pilot Program Update will include a “Letters to the Editor” section. Therefore, we are asking you to send us your comments on previously published articles, the Pilot Program, environmental topics and other issues. Letters to the editor should be brief (one to two pages or less) and may be edited. Please send your letter to us at one of the newsletter addresses in Brazil or the U.S. listed in the box on page two. Please be sure to include the following information: your name, affiliation, address, telephone number(s) and, when pertinent, fax number and e-mail address. We look forward to hearing from you!

IAG Meeting (Cont. from page 3)

Program projects. One example of this would be to include in the next competition for research funds under the Directed Research Project the concept of “ecological corridors” being used in the Parks and Reserves Project, which is currently under preparation. Furthermore, the IAG noted that the issue of spatial and thematic overlap and complimentarity among projects is one which should be addressed in the project to establish a Monitoring and Analysis Unit, also under preparation.

Finally, the IAG emphasized the importance of efforts to ensure that the Pilot Program is integrated and consistent with other government initiatives for the Amazon, such as the government’s “Brazil in Action” strategy for infrastructural investments in the region, the agrarian reform program, which includes “Extractive Settlement Projects” (PAEs), and proposed legislation currently being considered by the Brazilian Congress to revise and expand Brazil’s system of biodiversity conservation units.

Copies of the IAG report are available from the World Bank Rain Forest Unit in Brasilia and Washington, D.C. (see box on page two for contact information). The next meeting of the IAG is tentatively set for July 1997.