

Protected Areas at Local Government Level

Supporting cities and municipalities in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru in conserving biodiversity

Context

The biological diversity found in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru is of global significance. That there is a clear political will on the part of these four countries to preserve this diversity is evident in their ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and in their designation and management of protected areas, mainly at national level. These countries have placed between 10 and 25 per cent of their respective national territories under protection.

As part of a comprehensive system, protected areas and other area-based conservation measures at local government level help to preserve natural habitats on a sustainable basis.

Local governments in these four countries have already implemented site-based conservation mechanisms. However, the legal status of local protected areas varies from country to country. In Brazil and Ecuador, protected areas that are designated and managed by the local governments can be recognised as part of the national protected area system. In Peru and Colombia, this is not yet the case.

The contribution made by cities and municipalities to biodiversity conservation is often not readily apparent. Financial resources for the conservation of biodiversity are limited. The initiatives are rarely integrated into planning processes or spatial development strategies. There is also a lack of knowledge and awareness of the importance of protected areas and conservation mechanisms for local sustainable development. This is particularly true for the provision of key ecosystem services such as drinking water, recreation and protection against disasters arising from climate change.

Objective

Better conditions are in place for local governments in Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru to conserve biodiversity through the effective and equitable management of protected areas and other area-based conservation measures.

Approach

Project name	Protected areas and other area-based conservation measures at local government level
Commissioned by	The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of Germany
Implementing partners	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
Countries	Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru
Implementing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Political partners	Brazilian Ministry of Environment (MMA), Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (Minambiente), Equatorian Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) and Peruvian Ministry of Environment (MINAM)
Budget	7.7 million Euros, including 2 million Euros in partners' contributions
Duration	December 2016 to January 2022

The project has been deployed by *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*. Partners in the deployment are ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global association of local governments dedicated to the sustainable development, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a non-governmental organization made up of civil society groups and governments. The sponsored political counterparts are the ministries of environment in participating countries. The project operates in close collaboration with local governments and their associates and networks in other countries.

The measures build on the experience gained from existing initiatives and they entail a multilevel approach:



Effective management of protected areas and other area-based conservation measures at local government level is a valuable contribution to ensure ecosystem services, such as water, recreation and protection against natural disasters.



Left: Exchange of experiences between countries is a fundamental part of the project.

Right: Pituacu Metropolitan Park in Salvador, Bahia, in Brazil.

● Strengthening the capabilities of local governments

The learning experiences and currently existing financial and management instruments which structure and are used to develop, adapt and implement appropriate capacity-building tools for actors in local governments.

● Promote the acknowledgement of local governments in the protection of biodiversity in institutional and regulatory frameworks

Based on an assessment of the conditions in the institutional framework, appropriate political recommendations are structured so that local government representatives and their institutions participate actively in nation-wide working groups and, consequently, in the planning and execution of steps in the project.

● Communicating the challenges and benefits of local protected areas and other conservation mechanisms

The importance or preservation measures enforced by local governments is communicated to target audiences. Lessons learned are disseminated at national and international events and key sector forums.

Results and Impacts

The voice and experiences of local governments have been heard and shared in regional conferences of the project in São Paulo (2017), Quito (2018), Lima (2019) and in a virtual edition (2020). The efforts made by the Ministries of Environment in the four countries to improve the legal and institutional framework have gained visibility and have been acknowledged.

In **Brazil**, six municipalities have been trained on "Integrating Ecosystem Services (IES)" into management of local protected areas. Florianópolis has enforced this methodology in its municipal planning for the protection and recovery of the Atlantic rainforest.

Brazilian municipalities are already using guidance and directives on priority topics supported by the project, such as the "Roteiro para Criação de Unidades de Conservação Municipais" (a step-by-step educational process which facilitates the creation and management of local protected areas), the Portal Proteja [Protect Portal] (containing information on "ICMS Ecológico") and the Portuguese versions of "Urban Protected Areas" and "Tourism and visitor management in protected areas".

In **Colombia**, the working group of the project has contributed to the acknowledgement of the "Complimentary Strategies of Conservation" and supported the publishing of "Voces de la gestión territorial". For the first time, municipalities have been included in the dialogue about the configuration of regional systems of protected areas. The existing urban protected area systems have been listed. The experiences have been made available to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development for the drafting of the new policy on protected areas.

In **Ecuador**, the provisions of the new legislation on the environment, which regulates the legal status of protected areas and other local conservation measures, have been drafted. The Decentralised Autonomous Governments hold better conditions for establishing and managing their own subsystems for protected areas. The municipalities have reported that the acknowledgement – supported by the project – of the Pichincha Chocó Andino Biosphere Reserve facilitates the dialogue between different interest groups and alliances and the collaboration amongst themselves.

In **Peru**, guidelines have been produced on identifying other local conservation measures as part of sustainable land-use planning. A Task Force of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas is incorporating the lessons learned into CBD discussions on the systematisation and recognition of other effective area-based conservation measures.

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GIZ Agência Brasília
SCN Quadra 01 Bloco C Sala 903
Ed. Brasília Trade Center
70.711-902 Brasília/DF – Brazil
T +55 61 2101-2170
giz-brasilien@giz.de

www.giz.de/brasil

Project Director Jens Brüggemann and María Olatz Cases

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Partners

Ministry of Environment (MMA)
Secretary of Protected Areas (SAP)
Department of Protected Areas (DAP)
Esplanada dos Ministérios – Bloco B
70.068-900 Brasília/DF – Brazil
www.mma.gov.br

IUCN/UICN - South America
Av. República de El Salvador
N34-127 y Suiza
170515 Quito, Ecuador
T +593 2 3330 684
www.iucn.org

ICLEI SAMS - Brazil
Rua Marquês de Itu, 70 - 14º andar
Vila Buarque
01.223-903 São Paulo/SP – Brazil
T +55 11 5084-3079
americadosul.iclei.org

Commissioned by

The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) of Germany

Addresses BMU

BMU Bonn
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn, Germany
T +49 (0) 228 99 305-0
F +49 (0) 228 99 305-3225

BMU Berlin
Stresemannstraße 128 - 130
10117 Berlin, Germany
T +49 (0)30 18 305-0
F +49 (0)30 18 305-4375

poststelle@bmu.bund.de

www.bmu.de