



WWF

ANALYSIS

D

2014

Juruena Apuí Conservation Block Phase II: Consolidation of the block Evaluation brief

Project Facts

Project Name	Phase II: Consolidation of the Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block
Project Location	Brazil, Mato Grosso and Amazon State
Project volume and donor	~€1.5 M for Phase II (from internal WWF sources)
Project Duration (from start year)	Phase I: July 2007 – June 2010 Phase II: July 2010 – June 2013
Date of Evaluation	January 2013
Author of the report	Monika Röper

Background

WWF's vision for the Amazon is that, by 2050, at least 80% of the Brazilian Amazon Biome should be under conservation protection. In order to develop a compelling and integrated strategy for Amazon conservation, WWF Brazil's approach is organized in two spatial scales: a regional scale dealing with overarching drivers of degradation and other important elements for the Amazon conservation; and a sub-regional scale, aimed at "on-the-ground conservation" in 4 prioritized areas, here referred to as "conservation blocks." The Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block is one of these, now more frequently referred to as Amazonia Meridional Mosaic (Southern Amazonia Mosaic, a larger regional set of jointly managed protected areas).

The Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block covers approximately 9 million hectares, including parts on the north and northwest of Mato Grosso State and southeast of Amazonas State. It consists predominantly of flooded and non-flooded forests and patches of the Cerrado Savanna. The area harbors over 500 bird species and many mammals, including at least 14 primate species, tapirs, and jaguars. The rivers are home to endemic fish species, some of which scientists have yet to classify. There are eighteen protected areas in the block, covering over 5.88 million hectares, of which approx. 783,000 ha are located within four Indigenous Territories.

The block is located in an area within the Amazon region currently experiencing higher human population growth rates. Current threats to this block include unsustainable and illegal timber harvesting in indigenous lands and protected areas; a rapidly expanding cattle ranching industry; and increasing rates of public land-grabbing, deforestation, and mining. Recent changes to the Brazilian Forest Code as well as a new governmental program for the development of hydropower will also have a negative impact on the region. In phase I of the project, in partnership with WWF Germany, WWF Brazil's objectives were to support the existing protected areas in the region, to create two new protected areas with a combined area of about 1.0 million hectares, and to promote participation in conservation and sustainable economic activities.

The following were the phase II objectives of the project (2010 – 2013):

OBJECTIVE 1: Create and consolidate Protected Areas in the Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block and support integrated management of the Southern Amazon Mosaic.

OBJECTIVE 2: Identify and encourage sustainable economic alternatives in the Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block area with a view to generating income for local communities from activities that will recognize the value of a standing forest.

OBJECTIVE 3: Disseminate best practices and successful experiences regarding mitigation of production activities (environmentally conscious cattle ranching) and hydroelectric activities in the Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block area.

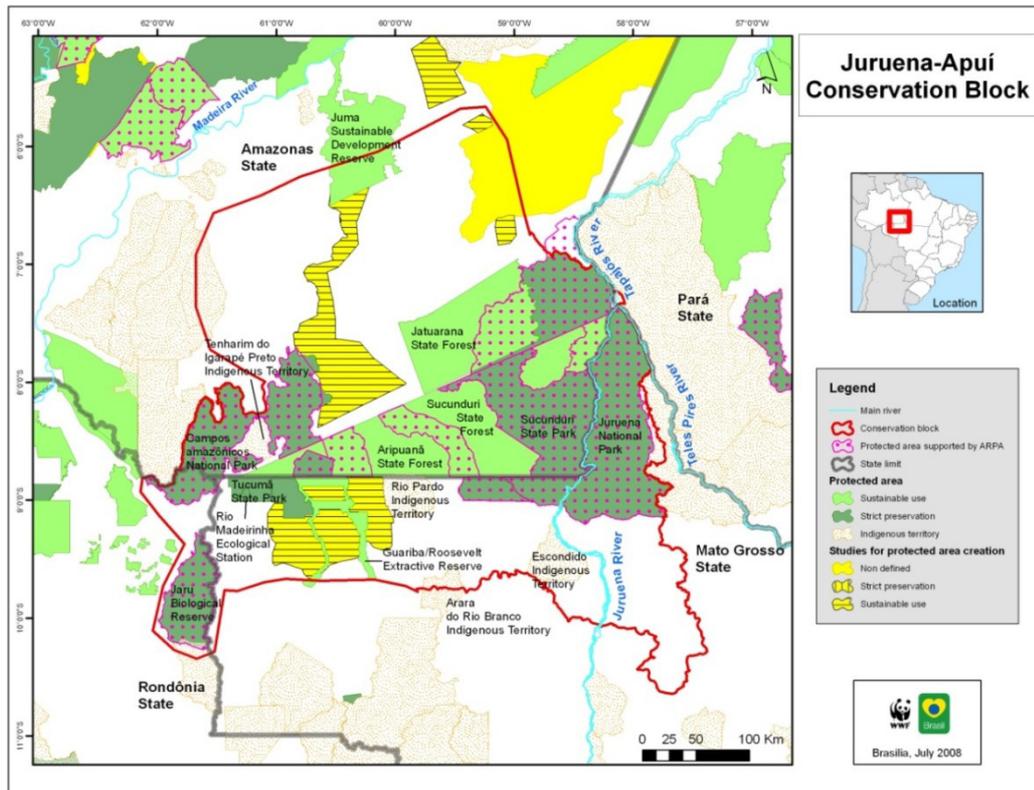


Figure: Protected areas and indigenous lands in the block.

Evaluation Summary

The program was evaluated in accordance with internal policies established in 2012. The following are the most significant results of the evaluation:

Relevance and design

- The overall objective is in line with WWF’s targets and goals for the Amazon and for the consolidation of the Juruena-Apuí Conservation Block.
- There is also alignment with the goals of WWF’s regional strategy for the Amazon (Living Amazon Initiative, LAI). However, there is no apparent evidence of effective monitoring of Project implementation by LAI, and it is not possible to measure the Project’s specific contribution to the achievement of LAI’s objectives on the basis of the indicators proposed.
- The project design combines regional scale interventions (e.g. the support to the institutionalization of the Southern Amazon Mosaic) with local scale interventions. Activities focus on the municipality of Apicás/Mato Grosso, in the southern portion of the mosaic, and the municipality of Apuí/Amazonas, in its northern part. While this combination of regional and local approaches is considered appropriate and consistent with the objectives and scope of the Project, it also introduces new challenges and the effects of implementation can be uneven. In the Mosaic, despite the regional scope, some of the conservation-related initiatives tend to have great-

er impact within certain areas and specific units. Even so, the geographically concentrated impacts achievable through small experimental projects are slight and thus should be associated with initiatives for knowledge systematization and management, as well as initiatives to identify and inform appropriate forums.

- The Jurueña-Apuí Conservation Block has been selected as the implementation area for this Project because many of the major environmental threats pertaining to the Amazon in general are concentrated here, and it's these threats that the Project is prioritizing. Maintaining the Block as a Project area is crucial for achieving the medium and long-term objectives and impacts associated with initiatives of this nature.
- Regarding the main partners of the Project, it is important to differentiate between public policy institutions and executing agencies, to which the Project contributes, and organizations that are Project implementation partners. The Project partners with these different organizations in order to bring their respective spheres of expertise to bear on the implementation of the Project's goals. Within this context, specific actions are aligned with the priorities of the various Project partners and are then planned and executed jointly and constructively. However, there are no Project planning or evaluation mechanisms in place that would enable it to address the overall Project or specific components of it in conjunction with its partners.

Efficiency

Since the project's inception, results have been periodically evaluated and activities adjusted accordingly. Several adjustments were made as a result of changing and broadening contexts (e.g., changes in ARPA's implementation dynamics). Other adjustments were necessary in order to adapt the initial proposal to the actual implementation possibilities in the region. The initial goals were just too ambitious in light of the scope of the Project. The remoteness of the areas of which the region is primarily comprised present considerable logistical difficulties. As a consequence of the isolated, often difficult to access nature of these areas, there is low institutional density and lesser capacity for implementation of actions in the field, both in terms of public policy and civil society initiatives. Thus, the several adjustments made throughout project implementation reflect both conceptual and operational learning.

Effectiveness

- The Project aims at a budget of 1.5 million euros for the 2010-2013 period. However, in fiscal year 2012, overall spending reached approximately 1.05 million euros. This value is below the amount initially planned, due to a slower execution pace in the first two years of the Project, but also due to exchange rate fluctuations.
- During implementation, several adjustments were made in the scope and budget of activities, rescaling the initially ambitious goals and re-planning the actions that, for various reasons, did not prove feasible. Overall, the design of measures and their adaptation to regional contexts and local implementation capacities has matured.
- Regarding the implementation schedule, initial project planning was fairly generic and did not provide specific targets for most activities. However, it is estimated that – except for activities canceled – the activities currently planned will be achieved by the end of this Project phase.
- As for human resources available, the Project currently relies primarily on the Amazon Program team for its implementation. The core team consists of three analysts, a communications specialist an administrative support person assigned to the Manaus office, and a manager based in Brasilia. The completion of on-site work involves considerable logistical efforts and is subject to the difficulties inherent to operation in the Amazon, such as extreme seasonal climate changes, infrastructure constraints, etc. As mentioned, there are difficulties in organizing cross-contributions that depend on inputs from other WWF Brazil programs.
- It is further difficult to maintain a consistent implementation strategy in areas where the governance of processes is only partially in WWF's hands.
- The development activity in partnership with GIZ allows for the maintenance of a person with a professional profile suited to the demands of the Project at the local level, thereby strengthening direct work. However, so far this strategy has limited duration, so it is important that it be used primarily to develop capacities and to strengthen the actors with a view to working on-site for a longer period of time.

Impact

- The Project constitutes the main mechanism to promote the agenda established by WWF to conserve the Southern Amazon Mosaic. From a strategic standpoint, the Mosaic should be a space for experimentation and testing of approaches intended for application to the Amazon as a whole.
- In addition to the challenge of promoting processes of change at an Amazonian scale, it should be noted that such change can only take place in the medium and long terms, i.e., to a large extent, beyond the Project implementation period.
- Several of the partners interviewed emphasized the importance of the Project for initiating and maintaining processes, as well as for triggering change. The Project enabled a series of activities planned under ARPA to be accomplished, despite the weaknesses faced by ARPA program implementation in that period.
- The Project does not have an impact monitoring system that would allow it to measure the progress that has been made. Even though a number of indicators had been proposed during the planning of the second phase, many of them are not suitable for measuring the impacts of Project operations. Furthermore, no baselines were established, and only few data was collected.

Sustainability

- Conservation-related projects generally require medium and long term investment and monitoring.
- As for activities that should be continued in a new phase of the Project, support for the consolidation and management of protected areas and of the Southern Amazon Mosaic ought to continue in such a way that the Project can be perceived as a tool for the implementation of conservation policies.
- Concerning local actions, especially those targeted at alternative production strategies, most activities are still incipient, and thus require the continuation and expansion of inputs in order to achieve the proposed results. Integration with relevant public policies is crucial. Considering these initiatives should entail experimentation and behavioral change, there is also the need to increase efforts to systematize information and inform discussion forums on relevant topics.
- Given that the Project operates in a region located far from regional centers and that has little experience in the implementation of projects and policies, organizational and institutional capacities are not to be considered completely reliable. The inclusion of sustainability strategies is of great importance to Project implementation, but they must be able to adapt to changing scenarios and uncertain regional dynamics.
- The greatest risks likely to affect the sustainability of the Project's actions are related to: recent challenges to environmental and conservation policies in Brazil; the weakness of public policies promoting sustainable production alternatives, policies that are incipient and still face significant barriers to implementation; and recently intensified efforts at policy-making for large infrastructure. Several public works directly affect the Southern Amazon Mosaic and its protected areas, putting at risk its integrity and consolidation, while conservation policies continue facing difficulties related to funding, availability of human resources, and institutional weakness.
- One strategy to mitigate these risks could be to better coordinate the implementation of joint activities by creating liaisons among partners and public policy-makers, mobilizing efforts to influence or even challenge the policies and development plans for the Amazon by emphasizing the threat to and the potential reversal of progress that has been achieved in recent years.

Project performance rating table

Criteria	Description of Strong Performance	Rating/Score	Evaluator Brief Justification
Relevance	The project/program addresses the necessary factors in the specific program context to bring about positive changes in conservation targets	4 (very good)	Although not specifically targeted at the examples mentioned, the relevance of the approaches of the Project within the regional context is present.
Quality of Design	The project/program has rigorously applied key design tools (e.g., the WWF PPMS).	not assessed	The consistency of the tools used in the Project with WWF's network standards was not an object of evaluation.
Efficiency	1. Most/all program activities have been delivered with efficient use of human & financial resources.	3 (good)	Although the various adjustments made have entailed delays and the need for budget adjustments, the financial execution can be considered satisfactory. This also extends to the use of human resources.
	2. Governance and management systems are appropriate, sufficient, and operate efficiently.	3 (good)	Internal management mechanisms can be considered satisfactory, however, they lack tools to promote the integration of partners and beneficiaries into Project management.
Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outcomes – stated objectives /intermediate results regarding key threats and other factors affecting project/program targets – were attained.	2 (fair)	Successive readjustments and reassignments, in addition to contextual factors beyond the team's governance, as well as some weaknesses in planning (lack of targets and monitoring of impacts), compromised the effectiveness of project implementation.
	2. There is strong evidence indicating that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or program	4 (very good)	
Impact	1. Most/all goals – stated desired changes in the status of species, ecosystems, and ecological processes – were realized.	data not sufficient	The objectives were not formulated in a sufficiently specific manner to allow for evaluation and are not monitored by the Project.
	2. Evidence indicates that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or program.	4 (very good)	
Sustainability	1. Most or all factors for ensuring sustainability of results/impacts are being or have been established.	2 (fair)	The Project has been seeking to confer sustainability to activities that were discontinued, but one cannot observe a consistent effort in this area for the actions as a whole
	2. Scaling up mechanism put in place with risks and assumptions re-assessed and addressed.	1 (poor)	The Project does not include risk analysis or the assumptions to support this action.
Adaptive Management	1. Project/program results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) are qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated through regular collection and analysis of monitoring data.	2 (fair)	The monitoring of outputs is established and is updated but there are no mechanisms for monitoring outcomes and impacts.
	2. The project/program team uses these findings, as well as those from related projects/efforts, to strengthen its work and performance	data not sufficient	In relation to performance monitoring it is observed that the information is used for management purposes; however, in light of the previous item, it is not possible to evaluate this item in general.
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project/program and organizational learning	1 (poor)	Despite the efforts of documenting and publicizing the actions of the Project, there is only incipient use of knowledge management mechanisms.

Adaptive management

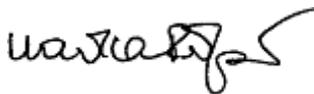
- Although a good portion of the strategic and operational adjustments made in the course of Project execution might be considered relevant and have led to some success, these measures were taken mostly in an ad hoc manner and intended to mitigate immediate issues and were not based on systematic reviews and assessments of Project execution.
- Efforts have been made to incorporate several of the recommendations that have been made as a result of lessons learned and information gathered in the evaluation of the previous phase, especially those of a thematic nature. However, those recommendations concerning the implementation of mechanisms for results-based management and improvement of indicators and monitoring processes are not reflected in the design and implementation of the current phase.
- No risk analysis is provided for in the documentation of the two phases of the project, nor is there any groundwork laid for an evaluation of adaptations made to the Project nor to monitoring of it. Analyses are maturing, and there is progress being made in the determination of what the logical framework should look like, as the first and second phases of the project are being compared; but the logical framework still needs greater consistency, and results and impacts still need to be more closely linked.
- The Project has tools and routines in place for yearly planning and evaluation, operational monitoring, as well as financial planning and monitoring.
- Among the team there is a growing concern about the need to systematize and document the experiences and lessons learned from the project. There is an awareness of the importance of these mechanisms for advancing knowledge internally and for feeding thematic debates with other parties involved, but there is as yet no evidence of specific knowledge management strategies employing documentation and systematization methodologies in a routine, everyday manner.

Disclaimer

I confirm that the above evaluation report is the result of an independent project evaluation process. The evaluation team has never had any relation to the project and its implementation. These results represent the process of a free assessment of project documentation and the results found on site.

This evaluation was an external evaluation; its focus was on giving an independent account of the program and its achievements in advance of planning for the next phase.

Brasília, 16.06.2014



Monika Röper
Independent Evaluation Expert

Contact person:

Uli Gräbener
Performance Controlling & Evaluation
WWF Deutschland
Reinhardtstr. 18
10117 Berlin