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# CONCAUSA In Action



Central American Commission for  
Environment and Development  
CCAD



USAID/G-CAP

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALIDES	Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development
BSP	Biodiversity Support Program
CAPAS	Central American Protected Areas System (PROARCA Program implemented by IRG/TNC/Winrock International)
CAPRE	Regional Committee for Water and Environmental Sanitation (Central America, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Canada and United States)
CATIE	Tropical Agricultural Center for Research and Study
CCAD	Central American Commission for the Environment and Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CITES	International Convention for Control of Illegal Traffic of Endangered Species
CONAP	National Council of Protected Areas (Guatemala)
CONCAUSA	The Central America-US Joint Accord on Biodiversity, Energy, Environmental Legislation and Trade and Investment
Costas	Coastal Zone Management (PROARCA Program implemented by TNC/WWF/University of Rhode Island)
COSUDE	Swiss Development Agency
DOE	U S Department of Energy
DOI	U S Department of Interior
EEC	European Economic Commission
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEMICA	Central American Municipal Federation

FOCADES	Central American Fund for Sustainable Development
GCC	Global Climate Change
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GIS	Geographical Information System
GTZ	German International Technical Assistance Agency
HEFTE	Hemispheric Free Trade Expansion
IBRD	International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IITF	International Institute for Tropical Forestry
IRG	International Resource Group
INRENARE	National Institute of Renewable Natural Resources
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
JI	Joint Implementation
LEPPI	Local Environmental Policy and Program Initiative (Cooperative Housing Foundation)
LUPE	Land Use Productivity Enhancement Project (Honduras)
MAB	Man and the Biosphere
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NGO	Non Government Organization
OIRSA	International-Regional Organization for Agricultural-Livestock Health
OFDA	Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance
PASA	Participating Agency Service Agreement

PROARCA	Central American Regional Environmental Program
PROECO	Swiss NGO working with air quality
PROMESA	USAID/EI Salvador Environmental Project
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RENARM	Regional Environmental and Natural Resources Management Project
RODA	Network of Environmental Law Organizations
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIECA	Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USDA/FS	U S Department of Agriculture Forest Service
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## CONCAUSA in Action July 1998

### *Executive Summary*

This report documents the progress that the USG and Central American Governments have made together in fulfilling their commitments in Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Legislation under the Central America-US Joint Accord (CONCAUSA). It represents our continuing effort to provide annual updates on progress toward objectives stated under the CONCAUSA partnership. We appreciate the collaboration of our colleagues in USAID/W and Bilateral Missions, the EPA, DOI, DOL, USDA/IS and others in this effort.

The report draws on and combines information from many sources. We have modified the format of the original CONCAUSA Action Plan matrix but continue to track in detail the progress of the myriad regional environmental initiatives. The often overlapping nature of the commitments and involvement of partners leads to some repetition of stated results but allows for a clearer view of the status of each commitment.

A comprehensive series of ongoing and integrated efforts have been taken by the U.S. and Central American governments, working together with other international donors under the Central American Commission for the Environment and Development (CCAD), to significantly advance the causes of biodiversity conservation and environmental legislation in Central America, in fulfillment of their respective commitments established in the December 1994 CONCAUSA accord.

The most notable joint initiative is the Regional Environmental Program for Central America (PROARCA), designed specifically in response to CONCAUSA, in which USAID provides strategic support to the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development through a major agreement with the CCAD to further empower the Commission as the regional leader in promoting and establishing a common regional agenda. Under PROARCA, agreements between USAID and U.S. PVOs are improving terrestrial and coastal resources management and promoting municipal empowerment. A USAID/EPA agreement provides technical assistance and training in pollution prevention and environmental legislation.

These programs coordinate closely with the PROARCA/CCAD Biodiversity and Environmental Legislation programs that provide direction and demand-driven training and assistance to government institutions and NGOs throughout the region. PROARCA complements USAID Bilateral Mission environment and natural resources management programs in five of the seven Central American countries. In addition, USAID/Washington and other United States Government institutions, including the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, and NASA, are providing key information and technical assistance as appropriate, usually in conjunction with the aforementioned USAID regional and bilateral initiatives.

The Central American Governments, through their support of the CCAD mandate and vision, and the coordinated actions they are taking together and with the U S Government at the regional and national levels, are demonstrating the strong political will required to make these programs effective and sustainable

July '98

**CONCAUSA ACTION PLAN  
USAID Central America Regional Program**

***I. CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY  
A United States Government Commitments***

**1. Support the consolidation of national systems of protected areas**

Institution Responsible      PROARCA/CCAD (1/96 through 12/00)

***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

*The Regional Environmental Project for Central America (PROARCA) was authorized in June 1995 for \$25 million over 5 years. A major focus is the development and consolidation of a Central American Protected Areas system based on existing, expanded and strengthened national systems and buffer zones, carried out under the auspices and in coordination with the regional counterpart Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) through its PROARCA-supported Biodiversity and Environmental Legislation programs, and integrating efforts with other international donor-backed environmental initiatives.*

Guidelines for the definition of the Central American Protected Areas System were approved by the region's Presidents during their April 1997 summit. All of these efforts support the establishment and strengthening of the "Mesoamerican Biological Corridor" (see "Central American Government Commitments, #4, below) that has been jointly endorsed by the Central American Presidents under the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (ALIDES). The PROARCA Coastal Zone Management program "*Costas*"<sup>1</sup> and terrestrial-based Protected Areas component "*CAPAS*"<sup>2</sup> are helping to consolidate the Protected Areas systems through strengthened policy frameworks on compatible use policies and incentives, development of sustainable best practices, protection of biodiversity, and strengthened

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<sup>1</sup>Cooperative Agreement with The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund and University of Rhode Island

<sup>2</sup> Performance-based contract with International Resources Group, TNC and Winrock International



The *MABNet Americas* initiative (part of the *Man and the Biosphere* program) has supported the development of standardized biological inventory data in software formats which allow the sharing of important scientific information on nature preserves, including key areas in Central America

### **3 Support the exploration of opportunities to strengthen national ex-situ conservation**

Institution Responsible      not originally determined

#### ***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

Ex-situ conservation is partially addressed in ALIDES through the mandated establishment (or strengthening) of "biodiversity centers and botanical gardens to promote research on the use and conservation of biodiversity"

*USAID Bilateral initiatives*      At the national level, USG funding is provided to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centers and similar programs      For instance, the Initiative of the Americas Fund in *El Salvador* (FIAES) supports the activities of the Zoological Foundation in that country      USAID/Honduras has provided support to the Lancetilla Botanical Garden in northern *Honduras*

### **4 Promote the participation of indigenous people in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity**

Institution Responsible      PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00)

#### ***a Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

PROARCA activities promote direct involvement of indigenous people in program areas      Examples include

- \* Guatemala (*LEPPI*) - Maya Ixil
- \* Guatemala (*CCAD*) - Maya Ixil
- \* Gulf of Honduras (*Costas, CAPAS*) - Kekchi and Garifuna in Belize/Guatemala, Garifuna in Honduras
- \* Honduras (*Costas, CAPAS*) - Miskito/Tawaka Sumo

- \* Nicaragua (*Costas*) - Miskito
- \* Costa Rica and Panama (*Costas, LEPPi*) - Guaymí, Bribrí, Teribe, Kekebar

*Costas* has been especially active in providing grants to indigenous NGOs in the region. *CAPAS* has conducted a study on indigenous land tenure concerns in the Rio Platano area of Honduras.

The issue of indigenous rights receives priority attention in the establishment of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. The Central American Presidents officially promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources by grass-roots groups, many of which are indigenous.

***b USG Institutional Support***

The *Biodiversity Support Program* (USAID/W and The Nature Conservancy) supports the mapping of indigenous lands and provides grants to indigenous-based NGOs in Central America.

**5 Support the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and other coastal and marine ecosystems**

Institution Responsible      PROARCA/CCAD (1/96 through 12/00)

***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The PROARCA *Costas* program (\$5.9 million cooperative agreement) promotes beneficial changes in ecosystem management, resource use patterns and investment decisions in selected protected and managed coastal areas in the Gulf of Honduras (Belize, Guatemala and Honduras), Miskito Coast (Nicaragua), Gulf of Fonseca and Gandoca/Bocas del Toro (Costa Rica and Panama). The program is building capacity at the local level to establish effective decision-making processes, and is helping decision-makers to change and implement policies for effective stewardship of coastal zone ecosystems. Major achievements include the establishment of a small grants program to local NGOs and community groups, the development of a methodology for policy gap analysis at the local level (see #13), the development and utilization by local NGOs of methodologies for specific integrated coastal management practices, regional initiatives on behalf of sea turtle management, and the discovery by Smithsonian Foundation of new coral reefs of significant biological value in Bocas de Toro (Panama). *Costas* was also instrumental in helping to found the Trinational Alliance of NGOs for the Gulf of Honduras, which has begun implementation of a joint

work plan for fisheries management, protected areas management and manatee conservation

In June 1997, with strong promotion from the *CCAD*, the governments of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico signed the "Tulum Agreement" to promote the protection of their shared coral reef system that extends from Mexico through the Gulf of Honduras. The November 1997 Mesoamerican Reef Congress resulted in the development of a preliminary action plan to be implemented among the four countries

**6. Provide support for improvement and coordination of geographical information systems (GIS)**

Institution Responsible      PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00)

*a Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

Under PROARCA the *CCAD Regional Information Center and CAPAS* have worked with government organizations, NGOs, universities, etc to establish a regional strategy and corresponding institutional network to foster the access to/sharing of biodiversity-related GIS information gathered and maintained through the varied and disparate systems operative in the isthmus. A Central American Technical Advisory Committee has been established for this purpose

*CAPAS* is furnishing maps it has developed on C A land-use and vegetation cover (to identify "gaps" in the coverage of protected areas) to regional institutions involved in sustainable development and biodiversity conservation activities

*Costas* has provided GIS training, and introduced GIS for resource use planning and management, to NGO counterparts

*b USG Institutional Support*

The USAID/W Hemispheric Free Trade Expansion (HEFTE) program and the U S Geological Society has provided technical assistance in GIS to Central American institutions and programs

**7. Facilitate improved access to existing biodiversity information networks in the U.S.**

Institutions Responsible      Department of Interior  
PROARCA/CCAD (1/96 through 12/00)  
USAID/W

*a Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

The CCAD Regional Information Center has established links with U S biodiversity conservation organizations through an Internet "home page" as well as the Latin American Data Base Network (Univ of New Mexico) and the Sustainable Development Network (UNDP)

*b USG Institutional Support*

The Inter-American Commission on Biodiversity and Sustainable Development, facilitated by USAID/BSP (and in which the CCAD is co-sponsor), has established the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network to promote improved collection, compatibility, management and dissemination of information on biodiversity in the Americas relevant to decision-making, education and dialogue The MABNet Americas initiative (see #2, above) has been instrumental in the formation of the network

**8. Support institutional strengthening of governmental and non-governmental agencies responsible for the management of biodiversity**

Institution Responsible      PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00)  
USAID Bilateral Missions (ongoing)

*Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

PROARCA *Costas and CAPAS* have small grants components that are supporting local environmental NGOs and building capacities in participating agencies As of April 1998 *Costas* has provided grants totaling \$627,000 (plus \$268,000 in counterpart contributions) to 8 Central American NGOs *CAPAS* has provided grants totaling \$350,000 to 10 local organizations, and is furnishing skills improvement training in strategic planning and conflict resolution to the directors and managers of national protected areas



ecotourism, etc

The *CAPAS* small grants to local NGOs in Honduras (indigenous NGO MOPAWD), Guatemala, Panama and Nicaragua promote environmental awareness among the general populace with special consideration of biological corridors and protected areas

The CCAD and the Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration (SIECA) have signed an agreement to promote linkages between trade and environmental concerns throughout the region. Along with various Central American and international organizations (including USAID), they are sponsoring regional symposiums and workshops to educate the public and private sectors on the importance of this relationship to sustainable development and the multitude of new market opportunities presented. The conferences, which bring together government commercial and environmental institutions, business associations, environmental NGOs, etc., provide insights into the appropriate treatment of such issues as the relationship between trade liberalization and environmental policy, eco-labeling, and the ISO 14000 environmental management standards. The *PROARCA/CAPAS* studies on forest certification, eco-tourism and land uses compatible with biodiversity (see also #s 14 and 17, below) are especially relevant to this area. In addition, *PROARCA* is looking at providing technical assistance and training to Central American businesses and industries in the use of clean technologies.

Education programs in environment and sustainable production constitute a major emphasis of *USAID Bilateral* programs throughout Central America. Significant examples occur in the Green Project in *El Salvador*, the Maya Biosphere, Community Natural Resource Management and Small Coffee Improvement Programs in *Guatemala*, the LUPE Program, Fundacion Vida and several parks/protected area initiatives in *Honduras*, the Natural Resource Management program in *Nicaragua*, and programs with INRENARE and Fundacion Natura in *Panama*.





American Regional Workshop on Environmental Safety in which USAID environmental review regulations were discussed. National follow-up workshops to address environmental analysis at the national level are anticipated, with assistance from the USDA Forest Service and the USAID Forest Resource Management II Project.

\* The upcoming IITF-sponsored participation of a Guatemalan forester (currently working with the USAID-funded Maya Biosphere Project) to the 14th International Seminar on Forest Administration and Management in September 1998.

## **12 Support the development and implementation of programs to fight and prevent forest fires**

Institution Responsible      U S Forest Service

### *USG Institutional Support*

The USAID/W Global Bureau Forest Resource Management II Project works with the U S Forest Service and Central American governmental organizations and NGOs to develop fire prevention and control programs. Activities

\* Forest Service fire trainers gave a basic fire suppression and management course (March 23-27, 1998) in the Guatemalan Peten for the USAID-supported National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP). Fire fighting equipment valued at \$13,000 was ordered through the Forest Service.

\* In response to forest fires in the Guatemala Peten and at the request of USAID, the aforementioned U S Forest Service fire specialists returned in May-June 1998 to work with CONAP and the government of Guatemala on fire response and coordination.

\* A USFS fire specialist joined a team from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to address the catastrophic fires of May/June 1998 in Honduras.

\* The U S Forest Service coordinated the attendance of representatives from the National Interagency Fire Center (Boise, Idaho) and the OFDA (San Jose, Costa Rica office) at the June 17-20, 1998 *Workshop for Advancing BioRegional Policy Institutional Coordination Mechanisms in the Maya Forest*.

\* The USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Response and the OFDA granted \$5 million for regional fire suppression support to the USFS. 1998 activities include 1) supporting

operations of the specialized firefighting, heavy-lift helicopter, 2) providing firefighting and safety equipment for up to 3,000 firefighters, 3) providing communications equipment to support the field operations of firefighting teams, 4) supporting the deployment of USFS fire suppression experts to provide technical assistance, 5) providing water pumps, kits and 4,000 feet of hose, and 6) supporting operations of one fixed wing aircraft with infrared fire detection capabilities. In addition, a 41-member Forest Service firefighting team was deployed to Mexico, at least 30 additional firefighters are scheduled as replacements.

\* Follow-up activities are currently being planned throughout Central America and in Mexico. This could include an additional \$500,000 for fire prevention, mitigation, and preparedness initiatives. A series of after-action fire trainings are being planned by the U.S. Forest Service and the OFDA/San Jose office.

### **13. Work with the Central American countries in the analysis of national policies affecting natural resources**

Institution Responsible      PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00)

#### ***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

*CAPAS* and *Costas* (in coordination with *CCAD*) are building on the comprehensive "Green Book" Policy Analysis tools (addressing tradeoffs among economic growth, social welfare and conservation objectives) that were developed and applied throughout Central America under the USAID/G-CAP RENARM Program (1989-95).

With the Central American Network of Environmental Law Organizations (RODA), *CAPAS* and *Costas* have developed a methodology for the identification and analysis of gaps in implementation of coastal-marine and protected areas policies at the local level. Key results of this initiative will include the establishment of a legal and policy framework to manage protected areas systems, the development of a regional agenda on compatible-use policies and incentives, and the transfer of policy analysis skills to Central American counterparts.

*The CCAD* is providing specific demand-driven assistance to national governments in the analysis, development, adoption and enforcement of environmental legislation. Recently-approved (*El Salvador*) and pending (*Panama*) comprehensive environmental laws were drafted with significant input from the *CCAD* Environmental Legislation program. Pesticide legislation in *Guatemala* and *Nicaragua* have likewise benefitted from *CCAD* technical assistance.





*USAID Bilateral Missions* are already conducting environmental monitoring and tracking progress through their corresponding performance indicators. Key examples include *Guatemala* through the Maya Biosphere Program, and *Panama*, where the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute is assisting the mission in forest/erosion control and monitoring in the Panama Canal watershed.

***b USG Institutional Support***

The IITF is currently considering a proposal from FAO/Rome to support the completion of the Forest Assessment 2000. IITF's assistance would support development of ecological potential maps and land use change maps for the Caribbean, including Belize.

**16 a Provide technical training in the analysis of satellite information and support for the establishment of satellite imagery networks among U S and Central American centers**

Institution Responsible      NASA

***a Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

USAID regional-supported initiatives, including the *CATIE GIS* department (under the prior RENARM project) and *PROARCA Costas* (through WWF and TNC) and *CCAD* are training Central American counterparts and/or utilizing satellite imagery, data sets, etc. obtained from NASA and other U S sources.

***b USG Institutional Support***

*The CCAD and NASA* have signed a memorandum of understanding that provides for the gathering and transfer by NASA laboratories of existing satellite information on Central America. The CCAD is also interested in collaborating with NASA in the evaluation and processing of relevant data gathered by the space program through the "Shuttle Radar Topography Missions".

The U S Forest Service's International Institute of Tropical Forestry is engaged in the following training activities for Central American organizations and experts:

\* In 1997 the IITF GIS/GPS lab trained GIS professionals at CATIE, Costa Rica. Follow-up training of CATIE personnel at IITF/Puerto Rico is currently being considered.



## 18 Support programs investigating the impact of global change on the region's biodiversity

Institutions Responsible      PROARCA/CCAD (1/96 through 12/00)  
Department of Energy

### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

*The CCAD* has taken the regional lead in the preparation and promotion (through the national biodiversity commissions formed with CCAD assistance) of a common position among the Central American countries that was presented to the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change "Conferences of the Parties" in Kyoto in December 1997

*CAPAS* is helping to map the carbon fixation potential of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor

### *USG Institutional Support*

Central America has been designated a priority area for Global Climate Change partnerships with the U S. The U S inter-agency "Country Studies Program" conducts inventories of greenhouse gases, vulnerability and adaptability assessments (to examine potential impacts on biodiversity) and is assisting governments in the development of national climate action plans required under the UN Framework Convention. Country-specific vulnerability assessments have been prepared in all seven Central American countries, as follows

- \* *Belize* - vulnerability of Belize's coastline to sea level rise, impact of Climate Change (CC) on maize
- \* *Costa Rica* - vulnerability of Pacific coastline to sea level rise, potential impacts of CC on forest protection in humid tropics, effects of global warming on dry-season rice in northern Costa Rica
- \* *El Salvador* - vulnerability of coastline to sea level rise, simulation model for corn cultivation
- \* *Guatemala* - vulnerability of Pacific coastline to sea level rise
- \* *Honduras* - vulnerability of coastlines to sea level rise, vulnerability of corn in different regions to potential climate change
- \* *Nicaragua* - impact of CC on corn, bean and sorghum cultivation, vulnerability of marine-coastal resources on Pacific Coast
- \* *Panama* - vulnerability of coastlines to sea level change, impact of CC on agricultural resources

In addition, the U S Initiative on Joint Implementation (through DOE/EPA/USAID) is providing technical assistance to the region, including the investigating of opportunities for clean development technologies *Costa Rica* has taken the regional lead in developing and implementing several JI projects, and a JI offices have recently been opened in *El Salvador and Guatemala*

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***I CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY***  
***B. Central American Government Commitments***

**1 Support the active participation of Central American scientists and natural resource managers in data sharing, training, and information exchange**

Institution Responsible            PROARCA/CCAD (1/96 through 12/00)

***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The *CCAD* Regional Information Center has helped to establish information systems in all seven Central American countries to provide access, exchange and analysis of a comprehensive range of environmentally-related data among C A regional, national and local governmental agencies, NGOs, universities and other training centers, etc Training and information exchange are also carried out through specialized electronic networks, regional fora, and direct technical assistance

(See USG Commitments, #2 above, for additional information on national biodiversity commissions and regional/national strategies on biodiversity information sharing )

**2 Promote the ratification of the Central American Biodiversity Agreement**

Institution Responsible            CCAD (ongoing)

***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The Central American Biodiversity Treaty has been ratified by all seven nations in the region





### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

As noted previously, PROARCA is providing support to the Central American governments in the development and consolidation of the national protected areas systems that will comprise the regional system. These systems include both terrestrial and marine areas, including wetlands.

USAID Bilateral programs, often with assistance from USAID/W-supported initiatives such as Parks in Peril (with The Nature Conservancy), support the Central American governments in protecting and managing specific national reserves and protected areas. An example is the Rio Platano Biosphere Partnership for Biodiversity in Honduras, implemented by the Bilateral Mission in coordination with the DOI, the Peace Corps, the GOH, and indigenous NGO Mopaw. This program is complemented by initiatives from Parks in Peril and PROARCA/CAPAS.

## **7 Strengthen technically and financially the CCAD**

Institutions Responsible	PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00) Central American Governments (ongoing)
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### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

The PROARCA/CCAD agreement is helping to strengthen the Executive Secretariat of the Commission through direct technical assistance in administrative and financial areas, as well as in support to the Biodiversity and Environmental Legislation Coordinators, the installation of the Regional Information Center, and other key program components. The CCAD has developed administrative and financial manuals, successfully introduced corresponding procedures, and achieved full USAID financial certification. The endorsement of CCAD operations by USAID is a clear indicator of the Commission's financial accountability and demonstrates its professionalism, competence and reliability to other donors.

In addition, selected personnel from Central American Ministries of Environment and Natural Resources (that constitute the CCAD membership) are receiving technical and management skills training through CAPAS.

The CCAD is successfully broadening and strengthening its operational/administrative financial base, obtaining donor funding from SIDA/Sweden to complement USAID support. Continuing efforts are also being made to have the Central American member countries contribute their annual payments which are still largely in arrears.

**8 Promote the participation of indigenous people in the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity**

Institution Responsible PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00)

*Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

The CCAD Executive Secretariat has taken the regional lead in promoting respect for/involvement of indigenous groups in the determination of protected areas issues and activities, and in demonstrating that indigenous NGOs can best manage their natural resource base, including protected areas For instance, the Commission provides technical support and assistance to the "Asociacion Chajulense", a local Guatemalan indigenous organization that has received government authorization to manage the Bisis Reserve

**9 Implement the following actions: sign, promote the ratification of, and create the institutional capacity for the execution of important global and regional biodiversity agreements that affect Central America**

Institution Responsible CCAD (ongoing)

*Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

Among the major regional and global biodiversity-related agreements ratified to-date by all or most of the Central American countries<sup>3</sup> are

- \* Rio Global Biodiversity
- \* Rio Global Climate Change
- \* C A Biodiversity
- \* C A Climate Change
- \* C A Forest Protection
- \* C A National Sustainable Development Councils
- \* C A Biodiversity Strategy
- \* Convention on trans-boundary shipment of toxic wastes
- \* Tulum Declaration (Mesoamerican Coral Reef System)

**II ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION**  
**A United States Government Commitments**

**1 Provide support for Central American Governments in their efforts to**

**1 a Establish a network of experts in environmental legislation in Central America**

Institutions Responsible      PROARCA/CCAD and PASA with EPA (1/96 through 12/00)

Note A \$1 8 million PASA was signed between USAID/PROARCA and EPA in September, 1995, to assist the CCAD and pertinent Central American institutions in the areas of environmental legislation and enforcement, and pollution prevention

***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The PROARCA/CCAD Environmental Legislation program has promoted the establishment and strengthening of the Network of Environmental Law Organizations (“RODA”) and an expanded network that includes other NGOs as well as government legal specialists

This program has brought about the regional networking of Central American environmental legal authorities, including public attorneys, legal advisors, prosecutors and judges. The establishment of this permanent coordination is helping to improve enforcement and compliance of environmental laws and regulations

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**1 b Establish a network for cooperation among institutions that promote compliance with environmental legislation**

Institutions Responsible      PROARCA/CCAD with EPA and OIRSA, CAPRE, FEMICA (1/96 through 12/00)

### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

In addition to RODA and the expanded legal network, PROARCA/CCAD, with assistance from EPA, has established networks of agencies working in enforcement of environmental legislation (1st regional conference held in 1997) and pollution prevention through regional organizations OIRSA (re pesticide contamination), CAPRE (water quality), FEMICA (solid waste disposal), and PROECO (air quality)

The Regional Technical Commissions on Environmental Impact Assessments and Environmental Legislation that were created under the PROARCA/CCAD program are also promoting compliance in these areas

#### **1 c Develop environmental standards to improve pesticide use and management**

Institutions Responsible PROARCA/CCAD and EPA (1/96 through 12/00)

### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

The PROARCA/CCAD Environmental Legislation component and the EPA are coordinating with OIRSA/FAO to set standards and provide technical assistance on pesticide use and management. A July 1997 meeting in San Salvador established and set into motion regional coordination for structuring pesticide norms

Program initiatives in this area have also included regional training in the pesticide disposal, the training of the Regional Environmental Impact Assessment Technical Commission in the harmonization of procedures, the approval of a new pesticide law in *Nicaragua*, and the development of implementing regulations norms in *Guatemala*

#### **1 d Build the management capacity of environmental agencies in the region.**

Institutions Responsible PROARCA/CCAD (1/96 through 12/00)

### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

Training provided by PROARCA under the CCAD/EPA and CAPAS programs have directly strengthened Central American government agencies and NGOs. Notable examples include the Regional Congress of Central American Controllers on Environmental Audits, ongoing training for government and NGO representatives in

environmental policy, legislation and enforcement, national fora on the Alliance for Sustainable Development and environmental legislation, training of national and municipal authorities in pollution prevention for solid wastes and pesticides, management skills training for conflict resolution, public participation, strategic planning, monitoring of protected areas and buffer zones, CITES

The PROARCA/CCAD Biodiversity program has spearheaded the establishment and strengthening of networks of institutions (including universities) and individuals involved in environmental management

The CCAD has also coordinated with USAID/W and the Swiss Development Agency COSUDE to obtain funding for the training in environmental law of judges and other government legal experts. In addition, the Swedish International Development Agency SIDA is providing funding to the CCAD that will benefit Central American organizations in strategic planning, information systems, environmental management and environmental education

**1 e Strengthen the enforcement and compliance of environmental legislation, which includes training, institutional strengthening, and disseminating information on environmental laws to the public**

Institutions Responsible      PROARCA/CCAD with EPA and USAID Bilateral programs (1/96 through 12/00)

***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The EPA program with the CCAD provides technical assistance (in the form of training, workshops, policy meetings, visits, to program demonstrations, etc ) as determined by the requirements of Central American government and private institutions concerned with environmental enforcement and compliance, and solid waste, waste water and pesticide pollution. This assistance occurs at the national as well as local (e.g., municipal) levels

A variety of mechanisms have been established to disseminate information on environmental legislation, including the aforementioned regional networks, the creation of the Environmental Legislation Information Consortium, the development of a matrix on the state of regional ratification of environmental accords, the CCAD environmental legislation website on Internet, and the RODA monthly bulletins

PROARCA/CCAD technical assistance has also been instrumental in the formation by national government Controllers of the Central American Technical Commission for

## Environmental Auditing

The CCAD-sponsored networks and training in environmental enforcement and compliance have resulted in effective legal actions being taken throughout the region. Notable examples have occurred in *Belize* (fines levied against maritime companies for destruction of coral reefs), *El Salvador* (for illegal cutting of forests and mangroves), *Guatemala* (for illegal cutting of forests) and *Honduras* (for improper granting of environmental permits)

### 1 f Prepare an analysis of the legal framework for the energy sector

Institutions Responsible      EPA/FAO/OIRSA and PROARCA (1/96 through 12/00)  
(See Energy, Section II)

#### *Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

The model or specific (e.g., *El Salvador and Panama*) environmental laws and regulations developed with assistance from the CCAD Environmental Legislation program include the addressing of energy considerations. The parameters and procedures for Environmental Impact Assessments that are being established and standardized regionally also impact on energy issues as these relate to environmental quality. In addition, the CCAD and Central American nations are developing a regional action plan on freshwater resources (see *Biodiversity C A Govt Commitments #3*) that often have implications for energy-generating potential.

**2 Work with the CA countries to implement the Prior Informed Consent procedure (PIC) prior to importation of pesticides**

Institutions Responsible PROARCA/CCAD with EPA (/96 through 12/00)

*Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

The PROARCA/CCAD Environmental Legislation program and EPA are coordinating with Central American governmental environmental institutions and ministries of agriculture to carry out a study on the ability of individual countries to implement PIC. This study and planned regional meetings will determine required follow-up actions.

**3 Consider providing assistance for the application of the legislation related to the other matters of the Alliance for Sustainable Development**

Institutions Responsible PROARCA/CCAD with EPA (1/96 through 12/00)

*Regional Environmental Program and Partners*

Under PROARCA the CCAD is coordinating with appropriate institutions (including the Central American Parliamentary Commission for Environment and Development and national environmental commissions) to promote the inclusion of environmental considerations in other areas of ALIDES and CONCAUSA.

The CCAD Environmental Legislation program is assisting the Central American Bank for Economic Integration to incorporate and harmonize procedures for the inclusion of Environmental Impact Assessment in its programs.

Other CCAD initiatives, with funding from the Ford Foundation, World Wildlife Fund and the International Development Bank are also dedicated to promoting the Alliance at different levels of national governments.





Public participation is also at the heart of the LEPPi program that focuses on strengthening decision-making processes for natural resource allocation and management at the municipal and community levels. Government-endorsed community workshops in selected project sites throughout Central America are helping to formulate strategies and implement action plans in such areas as waste water and solid waste disposal and improvement of potable water systems. Current pilot projects are located *Costa Rica* (Puerto Viejo-Manzanillo), *El Salvador* (La Union and Usulután), *Guatemala* (Ixcan and Puerto Barrios), *Honduras* (Choluteca) and *Panama* (Bocas del Toro).

CAPAS skills management training to government environmental agencies includes public participation themes.

## **5. Gradually eliminate lead completely from gasoline**

Institutions Responsible      CCAD with EPA (1/96 through 12/00)  
Central American Governments

### ***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The regional and national Comparative Risk Assessments did not identify lead in gasoline as a pollution priority. All Central American countries except Panama have already eliminated lead from gasoline.

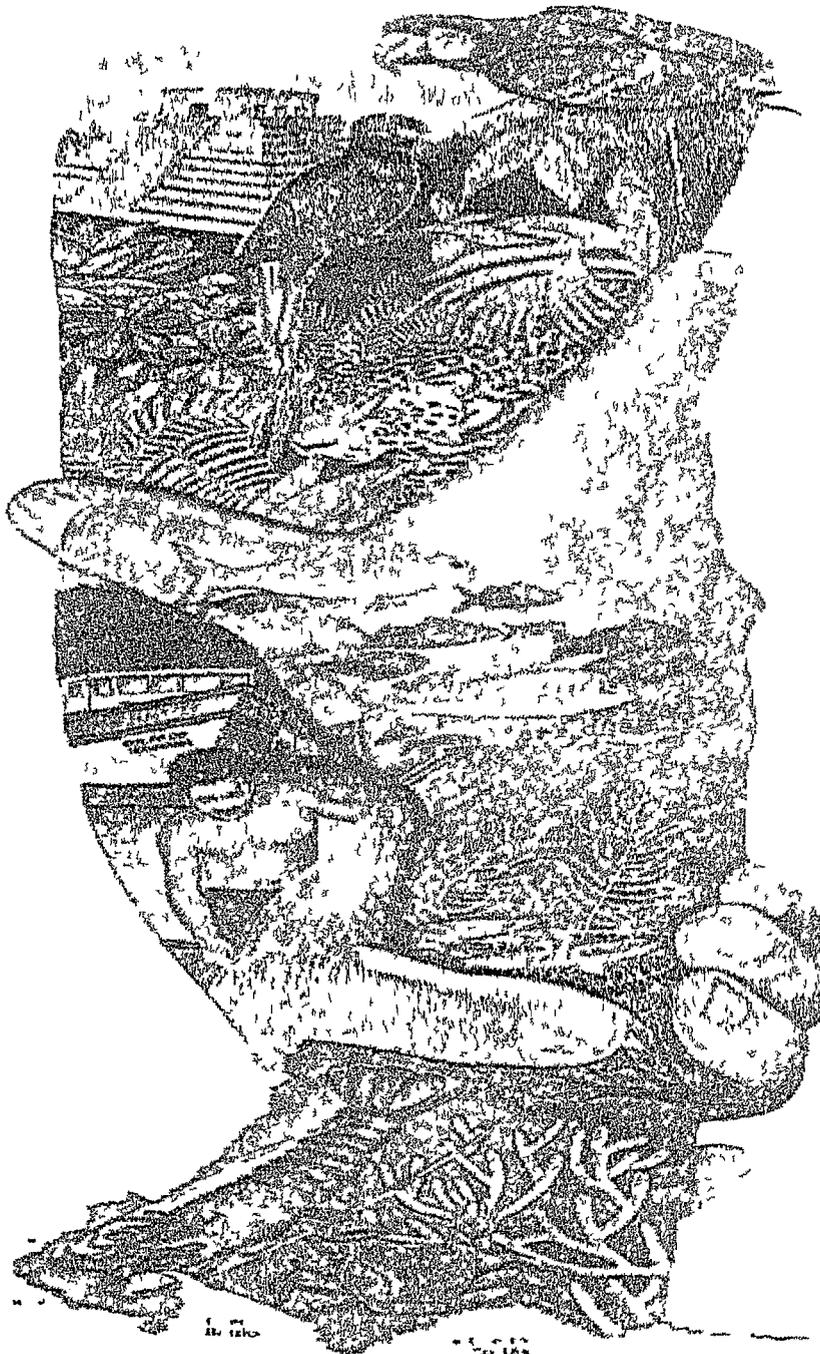
## **6. Establish, jointly with the US, a set of integrated principles to direct cooperative work on regulatory development, including efforts to regulate the safe use of pesticides and to protect the population exposed to lead**

Institutions Responsible      CCAD with EPA  
Central American Governments  
USAID Global buy-in

### ***Regional Environmental Program and Partners***

The principles and procedures governing the technical assistance program between the CCAD and EPA have been finalized, and will be updated and improved as required.

# The Central American Regional Environment Program



**PROARCA**

## *PROARCA*

An enhanced regional consciousness and commitment is emerging in Central America for cooperative efforts in environmental management for the conservation of the region's natural resource base and the upward harmonization of its environmental laws. The first steps toward creation of both legal and administrative mechanisms to promote region-wide collaboration in these areas were taken in October 1994 by Central American leaders through the negotiation and conclusion of an "Alliance for Sustainable Development" for Central America which defines three major hemisphere-wide initiatives on the environment. The CONCAUSA agreement was subsequently signed between the US Government and the seven countries of the Alliance to support key environmental objectives specified within the three initiatives. The CONCAUSA agreement provides the political mandate for the PROARCA Program.

The USAID/G-CAP Central American Regional Environmental Program, known by its Spanish Acronym PROARCA (Proyecto Ambiental Regional para Centro America), is a five year, \$25 million program which seeks to promote the effective regional stewardship of key natural resources in support of sustainable development. The Program seeks to accomplish this goal through the development and consolidation of a Central American (CA) system of protected areas and promoting strengthened regional regulatory and enforcement framework for environmental protection. These constitute two major components of the CONCAUSA agreement signed at the Miami Summit of the Americas in December 1994.

The PROARCA Program consists of three major activities: Central American Protected Areas System (CAPAS), Coastal Zone Management (CZM), and Environmental Protection. A significant aspect of the underlying vision for PROARCA is the establishment of a Central American "biological corridor" along the isthmus. The Environmental Protection activity is designed to support the sustainability of these interventions and help control contamination threatening priority areas through upward harmonization of environmental laws and regulation throughout the region. Upward harmonization of environmental regulatory frameworks is taking place within the context of the CONCAUSA agreement, with the objective of establishing common or uniform environmental legislation, regulations and standards within Central America that meet the highest practical levels achievable and that ensure adequate environmental protection across the region.

### **A Conservation of Biodiversity Initiatives Central American Protected Areas System (CAPAS)**

For centuries, Central American ecosystems have played a critical role in the flow of genetic material between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. In recent decades, this flow has become increasingly threatened by extensive deforestation, urbanization and environmental contamination. Consistent with the CONCAUSA agreement, the objective of Component I is the consolidation of a Central American System of Protected Areas and the gradual ecological restoration and sustainable use of areas surrounding them. CAPAS is envisioned as a network

of key ecosystems which are interconnected through "corridors" of biological material, both terrestrial and marine. The PROARCA Program supports establishment of uniform criteria for selecting core protected areas to be included in the Protected Areas System. It also supports the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) as the program counterpart and coordinator of donor activities within the System. CCAD is the regional treaty organization supported by all seven Central American countries to specifically address environmental and natural resource management issues.

Examples of activities in collaboration with CCAD and the bilateral USAID Missions include:

- Identification of national systems of priority protected areas to be included in a regional system of parks,
- Analysis of the existing deficiencies in legal and policy frameworks for ensuring effective parks management,
- Analysis of policies and laws that promote the use of funds raised through revenue generating activities for park management and financial sustainability,
- Information dissemination and exchange at the regional level in support of national protected area programs, e.g. sustainable financing mechanism/practices,
- Organization of regional fora for building consensus on national protected area systems, and
- Facilitation of regional exchanges linking area managers and other Central America experts through regional information networks.

The critical ecosystems which make up the heart of the Central American Protected Areas System (CAPAS) are called the core protected areas. Core protected areas are large, legally established (or to be established) parks and biosphere reserves in each country which are made up of a protected nucleus zone, and another surrounding area called the buffer zone. Due to the critical role that buffer zones play in conserving bio-diversity and reducing threats to continued protection of that diversity, PROARCA will also support mechanisms for improving management of natural resources in buffer zones. Models of fiscal self-sufficiency for bio-diversity conservation and sustainable use will be a major objective of the Program, thus, sustainable financing of parks and protected areas will be identified and developed. Finally, the PROARCA Program will seek opportunities for community participation in order to increase public involvement in managing protected areas and their buffer zones.

## **B Coastal Zone Management**

The coasts of Central America and their associated coral reefs, mangroves and sea grass beds are a center of biodiversity of great economic importance for fisheries, tourism and other enterprises. These areas not only generate vast amounts of foreign currency for the region but also serve critical ecological functions, such as natural filtration by wetlands in cleansing contamination. Over the past 10-15 years, the first marine-coastal protected areas have been created and other major ones proposed. However, in general, poor governance and policies related to coastal zone management hinder the protection and sustainable use of even these

designated protected areas. Legislation and regulations either do not exist, are inadequate, or poorly implemented and enforced. PROARCA addresses these issues while working in priority coastal areas where effective models for protection of core areas may be demonstrated and then adapted for application at the national and regional levels. These priority areas have been chosen in consultation with bilateral Missions and coastal area experts and based on their biological importance and the regional nature of the problems to be confronted.

- Gulf of Honduras (Belize/Guatemala/Honduras)
- La Mosquita Coastal Zone (Honduras/Nicaragua)
- Sea Turtle Nesting Sites (Belize/Guatemala/Honduras/Nicaragua/Costa Rica/Panama)
- The Gulf of Fonseca (Salvador/Honduras/Nicaragua)
- Bocas del Toro (Panama-Costa Rican coast line)

The Coastal Zone Management Activities are implemented primarily through an "umbrella" grants program through which subgrants have been awarded to communities, local NGOs and other concerned parties in order to maximize their strategic and catalytic impact within each selected area within the region as a whole. Subgrantees gather baseline data, increase public awareness of CZM issues, develop and implement conservation and sustainable use practices and management plans, provide and strengthen local fora for discussion and negotiation of management plans and policy issues tied to sustainable use of coastal resources, and monitor progress against PROARCA's strategic objectives.

Other principal areas of activity include the completion of baseline assessments for each program intervention area and activity included in the consortium's intervention strategy through remote sensing and detailed field surveys. Based on these baseline assessments and drawing from existing scientific surveys and data for the priority protected areas, the consortium will provide technical support for management plans for the coastal and marine area targeted within the strategy.

Field programs are being implemented at selected sites within the targeted priority coastal areas, to demonstrate replicable solutions to coral reef/coastal zone management. Demonstration programs test economic viability and compatible use of coastal resources with ecosystem conservation. Technical assistance will also be provided for assessing appropriate user fees or taxes in coastal area management plans for selected sites.

Finally, the program is designing and implementing community-based environmental education and awareness programs in the selected demonstration sites, stressing community involvement and participation. Lessons learned and models for ensuring effective public involvement in coastal zone management will be developed and disseminated under the regional CZM strategy.

## **Pollution Prevention Environmental Legislation Initiative**

PROARCA Initiative Addresses pollution issues related to the regulatory and legal frameworks, in anticipation of a GATT sub-regional free trade agreement. Examples of issues that are of immediate concern are

- Promoting pollution prevention and clean technologies over end-of-pipe treatment wherever possible, which provide direct economic benefits to businesses in the short and long-term as well as reducing the need for waste treatment and disposal, or production of toxic substances,
- Incorporating the costs of pollution in the cost of doing business so that it is more costly to pollute than not to pollute, thereby ensuring economic growth that is sustainable environmentally and does not result in long-term social and economic devastation
- Effective public participation in problem identification, problem-solving, rule-making, and right-to-know,
- Leveraging and directing US Government and other donor and private resources through a coherent participatory regional strategy, and
- Establishing the mechanisms and professional networks for effective technology transfer, both regionally and globally

Specific activities under PROARCA include a regional comparative environmental risk assessment to reach consensus on and prioritize the major pollution problems in the region, compilation and synthesis of existing environmental legislation in Central America to identify critical areas where additional legislative and regulatory strengthening are required at the national and regional levels, completion of a management risk assessment to evaluate each country's capacity to address the priority environmental contamination risks, implement current laws and design a viable environmental protection program, harmonized legal frameworks and environmental standards to serve as the foundation for ensuring adequate levels of environmental protection, pollution prevention and sustainable industrial practices or clean technologies for achieving environmental standards, effective monitoring and enforcement systems to help ensure that the costs of environmental contamination (and its prevention) are internalized in the cost of doing business, rather than remaining a purely social cost and implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations

The PROARCA Program places major importance on a participatory process in achieving its objectives. Environmental consensus building through stakeholder identification and targeted public awareness efforts are key activities. Technical and managerial advisory services provided through PROARCA help build national and regional capabilities in support of a Central American System of Protected Areas and reduce environmental contamination across the region.

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