

THE ECUADORIAN AWA TERRITORY: PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY HABITATS

Project Period: 1 October 2001-30 September 2003
Reporting Period: January-March 2002
Project Executants: WWF Colombia
Altrópico Foundation
Ecuadorian Federation of Awa Centers (FCAE its Spanish acronym)
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I. Background Information: Summary of Status and Advances of Activities

A. Introduction

The first reporting period was mainly devoted to planning and organizational aspects of the project. This second quarter involved major advances in consolidating work teams in the three participating institutions. Most project activities have been carried out as planned.

Major achievements this quarter can be summarized as follows:

- Ecuadorian government approved land grants for two new Awa centers.
- Communication antennas were installed in Awa territory.
- Report presented by SmartWood on FCAE forest management served to reorient program goals and activities in forest management.
- Workshops aiming to strengthen administrative issues were held.
- FCAE and Altrópico Foundation work teams have assumed planning and evaluation dynamics.
- Initial design of M&E system for the project prepared by WWF.
- FCAE was strengthened to face the growing pressures exerted by timber companies on Awa territory.
- Capacity building in different areas of interest, focusing on women and teachers.
- Fauna management training scheme was coordinated with the National Herbarium of Ecuador, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG).

B. Specific Outputs Achieved During Reporting Period

1. The Ecuadorian government approved two of five requests submitted by FCAE regarding land grants to new Awa centers (Rio Tigre and Pailón).
2. Advances were made in the installation of a communication system in Awa territory in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The definition of the radio frequency is pending.
3. SmartWood presented the final certification report on forest operations conducted by the Awa Federation. The report contained a series of prerequisites and conditions that are being analyzed by WWF, the Altrópico Foundation, and FCAE. These will unquestionably imply reorientations in the forest program as of next quarter, and have already served to direct several activities carried out with the communities.

4. The emphasis on capacity building in accounting and administrative processes (monitoring and planning) continues and is directed toward the technical teams of FCAE and the Altrópico Foundation. Several projects have already been prepared, and others are in process. The FCAE and Altrópico teams meet each month to plan and follow up on activities, thus allowing problems in project execution to be immediately addressed and strategies sought to solve them.
5. The contracting of a paralegal for the Awa helps strengthen the legal defense of the territory on which timber companies have exerted significant pressure.
6. A training project is being analyzed that will serve as basis for the agreement with the National Herbarium of Ecuador (in coordination with WCS and MBG) that aims to strengthen Awa promoters and technicians in fauna management, conservation sciences, and other topics related to territorial resources and protection. Discussion are underway to assure complementarity with current project.
7. The community of Río Bogotá has been pre-selected as the site for the establishment of the a Biological Research Station.
8. A proposal to monitor the impact of forest activities is ready to be shared with technicians and promoters of the forest and fauna management programs for discussion and subsequent streamlining.
9. Activities aiming to analyze population and environment interactions in the Awa territory are being implemented.
10. Training of women and teachers in topics of interest has begun.
11. The comprehensive health, conservation, and nutrition strategy implemented in San Marcos and Middle Gualpi is being monitored in terms of management of water sources, management of solid wastes, and nurseries of medicinal plants and spices.

C. Status of Activities

OBJECTIVE 1: Maintain forest cover and biodiversity elements and processes in the Awa territory and surrounding region.

Pressure	Response	Activities	Status	Observations
Distant/Root causes of loss of biodiversity: Interconnection of region; further opening of territory to powerful economic interests; conversion of remaining areas of forest; displacement of local communities by purchasing traditional lands of Afro-Ecuadorian communities; and further fragmentation of habitat.	Territorial protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place signposts indicating territorial limits 	Manufacture and placement of signposts	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A survey of companies that make signposts is being made to select the one that offers the best conditions. The company will be selected in April.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guards situated at critical points 	Monitoring of territorial limits	On track	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radio contact 	Installation of a radio-communications system	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company that will be in charge of the technical studies has been selected and the antennas have been installed. The radio frequency is pending. Negotiations to purchase radios, valued at US\$10,000, are underway before Ecuador's Ministry of Education.
	Organizational strengthening and leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitutional rights and territorial defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support and training in citizen action and indigenous rights Legalization of Awa centers that do not have land grants 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pressure exerted by timber dealers has increased during this reporting period. An Awa paralegal was contracted to support the team in this area. Ten meetings have been held at centers suffering most pressure to strengthen organized resistance. Ecuador's National Institute for Agricultural Development (INDA, its Spanish acronym) approved the land grant requests presented by the Río Tigre and El Pailón centers. FCAE held a workshop on updating and management of Federation statutes.

	<p>Policy analysis and land use zoning established in NW territory.</p> <p>Negotiations in process to influence land use in area immediately adjacent to the Awa Reserve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with regional Environmental Summit for the NW territory of Ecuador. • Development of legal actions to reduce pressure exerted by timber companies and other actors on Awa territory. • Definition and analysis of ecoregional dynamics. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Altrópico Foundation and FCAE continue to participate in interinstitutional meetings to prepare the Environmental Summit in San Lorenzo. • FCAE's Governing Council continues legal actions to respond to pressures exerted by timber companies in the region. • WWF continues to perform an in-depth ecoregional analysis as basis for discussion of future scenarios in the region.
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OBJECTIVE 2: Capacity building of local organizations so they are capable of addressing resource management problems and influencing local development processes.

Pressure	Response	Activities	Status	Observations
<p>Internal/ immediate threats Population density; increased pressure on wildlife and forest resources; need to generate additional income; and lack of alternative management options.</p>	<p>Organizational development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and administrative systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support to the Awa community and the Altrópico Foundation in financial and administrative systems 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The technicians of the six FCAE programs have received three training courses in accounting, computation, and preparation of project proposals. The FCAE itself and the Altrópico Foundation served as workshop facilitators.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and monitoring systems in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning workshops • Meetings of technical teams • Design of a system of impact indicators and processing for the project • General Assembly 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three planning workshops were held to restructure FCAE's operational plans. • Each month the FCAE and Altrópico teams meet to plan and follow up on activities scheduled for the reporting period. • The WWF team meets internally to analyze specific project issues. • The project's coordinating committee will meet during the third reporting period. • WWF has begun to design a system of impact indicators and processing for the project, which will be submitted to the FCAE and the Altrópico Foundation for discussion at the meeting of the coordinating committee. • 18 communities participated in the General Assembly held in Guadualito in March 2002.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising and project development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation and management of complementary projects 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project proposal presented by FCAE and Altrópico Foundation is currently under study, and four project profiles have been prepared to present to several entities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team development and contracting of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting of other members of the technical team, namely a biologist to coordinate fauna management and impact assessment and a consultant for the traditional health program 	Delayed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Altrópico Foundation plans to hire a biologist with a suitable professional profile for work with the Awa. • FCAE is looking for a consultant for the health program who fulfills the professional profile required. • FCAE contracted an Awa paralegal during this reporting period.
	<p>Alternative resource use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest management and certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of final evaluation report presented by Smartwood on forest certification • Continued development of forest management plans • Development of biological monitoring scheme for forest management 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of the three participating institutions is analyzing the report presented by SmartWood independently. A joint meeting will be held in May to adjust the work plan and make it coherent with the recommendations made in the report and the expectations of the Awa community regarding their forest program. • The forest program has continued its activities, but these have been reoriented based on the SmartWood report. Meetings have been held with those centers most involved in forest management to create awareness among staff. Cabling has been installed in two simplified plans and production maps prepared. Monitoring of plots has continued and germination trials have been carried out with native species. • An impact assessment plan has already been designed, but adjustments will be made as the Mataje forest management plan is modified and streamlined to follow the recommendations made by Smartwood.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of ecotourism to generate income linked to the establishment of the research station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection and delimitation of site for biological research station. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FCAE, the Altrópico Foundation and the National Herbarium have made several visits to the territory and pre-selected Río Bogotá as the site for the research station. • The Río Bogotá community has already been mapped and places of conflict and attraction sites situated. The delimitation problems continue with the Nitua Foundation. • The communal territory is being delimited (2,205.45 hectares). • A shelter was built with local materials to facilitate the work carried out in the area, such as delimitation and studies of flora and fauna for site characterization.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of fauna management team • Establishment of contacts with WCS and training team 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team formed last reporting period (3 Awa promoters and a support technician) is already working. • The Altrópico Foundation performed a participatory diagnosis of fauna and hunting in the Awa territory. • A preliminary diagnosis was also made of the fauna of the Río Bogotá community. • A training program on fauna and flora management and conservation biology, presented by WCS, MBG, and the National Herbarium, is under study.

	<p>Capacity building in technical aspects and knowledge bases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population survey, demographic analysis, and monitoring of Awa communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution of proposal approved by WWF-US to analyze the relationship between population and environment in the Awa Territories of Colombia and Ecuador • Performance of a time-series analysis and development of a GIS for the Awa territory. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consultant to execute the proposal is being sought in coordination with the technical teams of WWF, the Altrópico Foundation and FCAE. The Governing Council will participate in the population/environment project, in addition to the Higher Awa Indigenous Council de Ricaurte (Cabildo Mayor Awa de Ricaurte-CAMAWARI), a partner of WWF-Colombia in its Choco Ecoregional Program. • WWF is planning a workshop on time-series analysis and GIS with directives and technicians of the Altrópico Foundation and FCAE, with the collaboration of CAMAWARI technicians who have worked for several months on the topic with WWF. The workshop will be held in Ibarra in April. • A consultant was hired to incorporate the modeling of future scenarios with demographic dimensions into the time-series analysis of the Awa territory. This person is already working in coordination with WWF's GIS office.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental education at local schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training in environmental education • Follow up on teacher training and use of didactic materials • Further development of the "Awa Women and Family" Program. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workshop on curriculum planning was held with the participation of 34 teachers. • A follow-up survey has been made of 9 educational centers to evaluate the use of teaching materials, the relevance of the curriculum, and the methodologies used. Assistant directors lack dynamism in their supervision and monitoring. • Teachers, parents, and women participated in the workshop on "Women's Rights and Human Rights". • Three courses on confection and weaving for women were held in the community of San Marcos.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of traditional medicine and other aspects of environmental management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and participatory research in use of medicinal plants. 	On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WWF consultant resigned because of family reasons. FCAE and the Altrópico Foundation have, however, continued the work began by the consultant, and have conducted follow-up surveys in the communities of San Marcos and Middle Gualpi regarding the management of streams and solid wastes and the establishment of home gardens with medicinal plants and spices. The impact of previous work on the activities carried out by teachers and health workers in these two communities is evident. • The contracting of a new consultant to promote this component has taken more time than expected because of the complex profile involved.
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II. Detailed Description of Advances

A. Project Goal

The biodiversity habitat protection program aims to tackle the complex external and internal pressures exerted on the area surrounding Awa Territory in northwestern Ecuador and on the use of resources within that Territory. The capacity of the FCAE to implement an integrated protection strategy in defense of their territory will be strengthened, and alternative resource management and income generation activities will be developed and consolidated to reduce the overall internal pressure exerted on the resource base by the Awa themselves.

B. Description of Activities

See Table in Section IC above.

C. Management Issues (problems encountered, delays, difficulties, and solutions proposed)

- The already strong pressure exerted by timber companies is growing. The FCAE has intensified its presence at those Awa centers where greatest pressure to harvest timber is being brought to bear, and has held several workshops and meetings to increase the level of organized resistance and defense of the territory. External support, however, will be required in addition to legal assistance and capacity-building efforts for FCAE and Awa authorities at all centers.
- The SmartWood report indicates that the road toward forest stewardship certification of the FCAE will be long and expensive. A joint analysis will be carried out to design a work plan that is coherent with the report and with FCAE's expectations, but the goals of the forest program, as established for this project, will undoubtedly need to be revised.
- It has been difficult to find personnel with professional profiles suitable for working with the Awa in the areas of biological monitoring, fauna management, and alternative health systems and incorporation of medicinal plants. This problem must be solved next period or else there will be a serious setback in planned activities. A good induction and close accompaniment by FCAE and the Altrópico Foundation, in addition to WWF support, should help new team members overcome any initial weak points.
- The problem of delimitation of the Rio Bogotá community (selected site of the Biological Research Station) with the Nitua Foundation continues to be unresolved. The mapping of the area in conflict is a first step towards solving the problem. The limited participation of the Rio Bogotá community in the selection and study of the site has been a cause of concern. The FCAE will design a strategy to promote the participation of the local community in this process.
- The coordinator of FCAE's Women's Program has presented drawbacks in carrying out her responsibilities. FCAE is studying the best approach to follow.