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INTERVIEW



DIALOGUE WITH COUNTRIES



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How to strengthen the Integrated Management of Water Resources of the largest water reserve in the world?

The 8 Member Countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, ACTO, share the main water reserve in the world and a rich ecosystem that helps regulate the global climate through a common hydrological system, ranging from the strong rains that feed the rivers to seasonal variations that influence the rivers flow and changes in biodiversity, which has led the Amazon countries to create the GEF/UNEP/ACTO Project – Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources, considering climate variability and climate change.

After three years of collaboration on the project, the countries prepared a Strategic Action Program (SAP) based on an interdisciplinary, systemic and participatory approach with communities, aimed at making sustainable this complex and heterogeneous region. Here the National Focal Points of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela explain the activities carried out and the main results achieved by the Project, in a joint interview with the representatives of the countries.

How important is for your country the construction, through the GEF Amazon Project, of a shared, regional and long-term Vision for the Integrated



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Management of transboundary water resources in the Amazon basin?



BRAZIL

The Amazon basin is located not only in Brazil and, therefore, all countries that are part of the Basin need to develop a shared Vision in order to use their resources in a strategic and sustainable way, especially given the current economic, climatic and ecological changes. Brazil considers that the construction of a shared vision strengthens the institutional framework to plan and execute protection activities and sustainable management of water resources in a coordinated way. The establishment of agreements between countries as a result of a shared Vision enables the construction of joint future scenarios and the identification and solution of the transboundary issues.



COLOMBIA

The Amazon is the main aspect of transboundary ecosystem integration in Colombia. The importance of developing a shared, long-term and regional vision for the Amazon basin lies in addressing water management with an environmental and integrated approach that involves an analysis integrating social, environmental, cultural, political and regional development components of each of the eight ACTO member countries. These peculiarities in the region, regarding the participation of social and institutional actors in the development of a vision contribute to define management guidelines, according to the potential of each

of the member countries, which contributes to joint actions on priority themes to address the challenges in relation to Integrated Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon basin.



ECUADOR

For Ecuador it is very important to rely on a shared, regional long-term Vision for Integrated Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon Basin since that vision can guide the actions of the country aligned with the other member countries of the basin towards a common long-term goal.



GUYANA

The construction of a long-term regional vision is of significant importance for Guyana since it establishes a basis for regional action and cooperation on sustainable water resources management in the Amazon Basin. Guyana's Amazon Basin territory is undergoing rapid social and economic development which presents a number of challenges as it relates to the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment. The formulation of a regional framework and consensus will facilitate more cohesive decision making and the sharing of resources towards the overall management of water resources within Guyana's Amazon Basin territory and the region as a whole.



PERU

More than 70% of the Peruvian territory is located in the Amazon region, so the

shared vision will allow us to comprehend and understand the priorities of the society in the context of integrated water resources management, considering its governance structures, needs and objectives of the major regional actors and the institutional and legal arrangements. With this integrated knowledge of national visions of the eight countries of the Amazon basin, the institutions will be strengthened, in order to plan and implement conservation, protection and preservation of transboundary water resources in their geographical area.



SURINAME

A shared, regional and long-term Vision is important, because on the national level it can be used as guidance for further policy development to streamline national activities.



VENEZUELA

The development of a regional Shared Vision could provide interesting elements for solutions of problems faced at different areas at the Basin. At the same time, the approach of a long-term vision for the management of transboundary water resources at the Amazon Basin would serve as platform for action regarding the protection of the basin carried out by ACT member countries. When it comes to Venezuela, the country has always been consistent in its Amazonian interests, and in the defense of its natural, geographic and especially river areas. A shared vision for the management of transboundary water resources would offer the possibility to be more effective in joint actions that member countries identified as priorities or in common commitments in defense of the Amazon region, always considering and respecting national interests and ultimately national sovereignty.

On the other hand, the development of a shared vision for the management of transboundary water resources turns into a catalyst, a major effort of the member countries of the GEF Amazon Project for the development and strengthening of national policies related to their respective Amazonian territories. Finally, it allows a

necessary institutional mobility of different national actors that drives to an important articulation in various local, regional and national levels of each of the institutions of the ACT member countries.

What benefits does the regional proposal of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) bring to the Amazon basin?



BRAZIL

The issues raised in the Regional TDA show new perspectives for transboundary management actions, with regard to water resources and the expansion of economic and human activities in order to use the potential of water resources of the region, considering its multiple uses and promoting sustainable development in harmony with the countries of the Amazon region.



COLOMBIA

Considering the scope of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), which is the identification of environmental issues at the Basin and the root causes of environmental degradation by analyzing cause and effect of each of the environmental issues and the prioritization of these, the benefit of a regional proposal is to establish a work front that allows ownership of the project by the member countries and join forces in a coordinated way to the development of actions leading to environmental sustainability at Basin and Integrated Management of Water Resources.



ECUADOR

The regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) proposed benefits the Amazon basin, as this important instrument allows to identify priority critical regional transboundary issues on water resources in the Amazon River basin, which is the first step to take action oriented to solution, mitigation and/or reduction of these problems. Among the various benefits that the regional TDA presents, it is important to highlight the identification and selection of nine priority



With the Risk Governance Model, designed by the Project, 295, 000 people were benefited from the Purus River

issues identified at the regional level in the Amazon basin consolidates by national TDA/ SAP consultants based on transboundary issues that each country selected. The regional TDA is an important instrument to the Amazon basin, as the region faces numerous challenges for the management and sustainable use of water resources in the context of its socio-economic development and anthropogenic and climate impacts. The basin is a unique water system that crosses national borders of eight countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela) that consider the need for a multilateral framework for the Integrated Management of Water Resources to meet the needs of the population living in the region.



GUYANA

The regional TDA provides a scientific methodology for determining the root causes and impacts of problems identified by relevant stakeholders within the Amazon community. This facilitates the development of targeted strategies to address the principal problems impacting on water resources management in the Amazon Drainage Basin. The commonality of the issues presented in the regional TDA proposal forms the basis for developing generic strategies which can be further tailored at the national level.



PERU

The regional TDA is an important input

for the SAP. It is positive for Peru, because it identifies transboundary problems in the Amazon basin - including water quality, extreme hydrological events, erosion and sediment transport, and deforestation - that reflect the reality of the Peruvian Amazon. The document aims to develop response strategies in preparation for the SAP, and so to consolidate a regional proposal. The SAP should be applied in each country in accordance with the problems identified in the TDA, for which the relevant national mechanisms and processes will be established.



SURINAME

Benefits:

- Issues on water resources identified.
- Actions can be formulated for these issues.
- Issues can be solved and a better water management system comes in place.



VENEZUELA

It allows a deep identification of different problems that could possibly affect the Basin. A regional proposal necessarily involves identification of national issues, followed by articulation with regional issues and evaluation of joint actions. The Regional TDA, which is the output of national TDAs, allows a broad identification of the mentioned issues. The benefits could be multiple, although we highlight the shared identification of issues that guarantees an articulation that is more effective, democratic and efficient, facing the new challenges of the management of



transboundary water resources. At the same time, it will allow a clearer identification of the responsibilities according to national issues presented by each country, for better conjugation of the actions going from national to regional.

How is your country prepared to contribute to the Strategic Action Program (SAP)?



BRAZIL

Transboundary management of water resources is an important issue to the country and, aiming to contribute to the success of SAP, we intend to integrate relevant regional actors and institutions that are involved in the management of water resources, in order to minimize the fragility of institutional arrangements and qualify human resources. Some challenges – like the involvement of actors, the pursuit of consensus among different interests, the respect for differences in the face of diversity and overcoming the gaps in the law regarding the committees in transboundary regions – must be overcome for the implementation of actions for the integrated and sustainable management of water resources in the Amazon region.



COLOMBIA

The contribution will be made under the Policy on Comprehensive Water Resources Management, which has a time horizon of 12 years and is implemented through a National Water Plan, which develops programs and projects in the short, medium and long term.



ECUADOR

The Central Water Authority (SENAGUA) is working on drafting the National Plan for Water Resources Management in which

both structural and non-structural projects are prioritized. Additionally, SENAGUA is working on shaping the basin Advisory Boards, instances of participation that will allow water users participate in the planning of each basin. Both national planning and public participation are tools that will generate and implement projects to ensure the comprehensive and integrated management of water resources in the Amazon basin, thus contributing to the Strategic Action Program (SAP).



GUYANA

At the political level, consideration is being given to the review of the existing national policy framework for integrated water resources management with the objective of incorporating needed adjustments to harmonize with the regional Strategic Action Plan.

Proposals for the allocation of financial, technical and human resources towards monitoring, research and data collection activities within the Amazon Basin are being developed by key national stakeholders for consideration at the political level. Initiatives in the area of public awareness and education on issues related to water resources management in the Amazon Drainage Basin will be undertaken within the relevant stakeholder agencies.



PERU

In Peru, a Sub-Committee on Water Resources was constituted in the context of the Peruvian National Permanent Commission. The Sub-Committee, composed of 14 national institutions, is in charge of the SAP approval. At the same time, the Focal Point requires establishment of strategic partnerships to support the implementation of projects, dissemination and adoption of the SAP. Once we have this document agreed by the member countries, it will be validated by the above-mentioned Committee.



SURINAME

Contribute by sending comments/input on the SAP on the basis of consultations and if the issues of Suriname have been taken

into account, an amount can be added on the government budget to implement the actions regarding Suriname.



VENEZUELA

The Strategic Action Program (SAP) is the beginning of a process that supports the Integrated Management of Water Resources at the Venezuelan Amazon Basin. The Venezuelan SAP is based on:

- A shared vision with institutions that are based in the Venezuelan Amazon basin for the protection and conservation of water resources and for the harmonious development of the basin.
- A Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDA), which organized the information on transboundary issues identified at the National Workshop, as well as its environmental, socio-economic and cultural impacts.

Starting from the above basis, these strategic actions in our basin requires institutional strengthening and projects that support both actions in the framework of ACTO and proposals presented at the Nation's Plan (*Plan de la Patria*) 2013-2019 referred to integrated management of natural resources, for which we have political will to promote actions that encourage, among others:

- The strengthening of technical, financial and institutional capacities for evaluation of water resources;
- The possibility of establishing financing mechanisms for the management of water resources;
- Promote the dissemination of public policies and strategies for the integrated management of water resources;
- Consolidate technical and scientific cooperation on water resources both bilateral in the form of South-South cooperation or advisory agreements and technical support among Amazon countries. To follow this framework for

action, we will develop a multidisciplinary technical team aimed at strengthening the institutions built to discuss common strategic lines from the needs and realities of the Venezuelan Amazon basin and agree with actions on management of water resources and adaptation to climate variability to implement measures that respond to the population issues.

Most targeted research, pilot projects and priority adaptation measures to climate change implemented through the GEF Amazon Project have been concluded. Is your country interested in replicating any of these processes?



BRAZIL

Brazil already carried out the Quantitative and Qualitative Opinion survey among the population, institutions and actors in the water sector in the Amazon region, in order to assess commonalities and priority demands in terms of socioeconomic, political and environmental issues as well as the stakeholders' perception of the future interface between the use of water resources and sustainable development. We are also implementing the Pilot Initiative Hydro-meteorological Network for the Amazon Basin, as part of the Amazon Project: Regional Action on Water Resources, implemented by the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization - ACTO, funded by the National Water Agency - ANA and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil. The Early Warning System in the MAP region is also an example of how to share knowledge and establish cooperation with replication possibilities. Therefore, we are following the pilot projects developed by Member Countries under the GEF Project that are likely to be replicated in our country.



COLOMBIA

Yes, Colombia faces a decreasing water supply that meets growing demand due to factors such as demographic and climate changes that also increase the pressure on water resources. This is the basis of the



Monitoring the water quality of the Amazonian rivers is a common goal of the Amazon countries

approach to the integrated management of water resources, internationally accepted as the way to an efficient, equitable and sustainable development and management of groundwater resources, used at the development of initiatives like the Pilot Project for the Evaluation of Aquifer Systems in the Region of Leticia - Amazonas - Colombia.



ECUADOR

As an ACTO member country, Ecuador is interested in replicate targeted researches, pilot projects and priority measures to adaptation to climate change, since they allow specific steps in territory that benefit communities and the protection and conservation of natural resources of the Amazon Basin



GUYANA

Yes. Several locations within Guyana's Amazon Drainage Basin territory have shown high vulnerability to flooding during periods of continuous precipitation. This has adversely affected the land transportation for economic and other purposes and in extreme cases, has required major intervention and emergency response to mitigate social and environmental impacts on communities within the region. In this regard, it is being proposed that consideration be given to the implementation of a pilot project which focuses on flood adaptation and mitigation strategies for the Guyana Amazon Basin Region in light of changing weather patterns

and river hydrology characteristics along the Takatu River.



PERU

Under the GEF Amazon Project, Peru implemented the MAP Early Warning System (Peru-Bolivia-Brazil), in the region of Madre de Dios, with the purpose of anticipating actions for prevention and mitigation of natural disasters in the Peruvian Amazon and avoiding human and economic losses for the population living in high risk areas. In this sense, we would like to express our interest in replicating this experience in the Loreto region, following the procedures and results of Madre de Dios, and obtaining the necessary resources for its implementation, in order to prevent and mitigate natural disasters in the Peruvian Amazon.



SURINAME

Yes, but it depends on the type of research, pilot projects and priority adaptation measures if they are applicable for Suriname.



VENEZUELA

Venezuela is in the process of formulating the pilot project. The project called "Rio Negro", which is already developed and will be implemented soon, primarily serves the needs and technical requirements for in-depth diagnosis of the main tributaries of the Amazon basin, the Negro River in the Venezuelan section and the so-called Casiquiare River.



Rui Faquini, Bo de Imagens, ANA-Brazil

Strengthen regional technical and scientific cooperation on water resources is a goal of the Amazon countries

Although targeted research were not carried out like in other countries, the conduction of meteorological, hydrometeorological and volumes and flow rates assessments that are projected for the Venezuelan Amazon will determine precisely which measures are priorities for adaptation, if they were required. It is important to highlight that Venezuela identified only 53,000 km² of its territory as part of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, and it includes two of the least densely populated municipalities and that are the most difficult to access in the country. Diagnostic studies and measurements using specific hydrological investigations are properly adapted to general Venezuelan interests in the region, and in Rio Negro project in particular, since the replication of some processes, as suggested above, do not meet the specific requirements of the national Amazon region. Adaptability to climate change is often a complex issue, since it is established that existing problems in the basins are already direct effects of climate change and require adaptation. In Venezuela, it is a region made up mostly of untouched forest, which means that talking about adaptation to climate change requires a prior comprehensive evaluation and measurement process that will take place under the Rio Negro project. Then, based on the results obtained in this project we could establish, first, preliminary criteria on whether there is substantial climatic damaged in this area, and then what measures are fully consistent with the national development plan

and the national policy on climate change that will be carried out by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

After three years of activities, which are the main achievements of the GEF Amazon Project?



BRAZIL

Among all achievements of the GEF Amazon Project, we consider extremely important the development of the Hydroclimatic Vulnerability Atlas, as it presents itself as a regional tool of information for planning, management of water resources and management of hydro-climatic risks. The development of the Integrated Information System on Water Resources – IIS is also a tool for knowledge production related to the shared management of the Amazon Basin.



COLOMBIA

Interaction and coordination among member countries, to create a common regional strategy aimed at sustainable integrated management of transboundary water resources in the Amazon basin and the development of a Shared Vision, which is aimed at achieving a bond of commitment among member countries.



ECUADOR

Among the main achievements of the GEF Amazon project, we highlight: Progress

has been made in institutional analysis of entities in charge of water resources in the eight member countries of ACTO. The institutional coordination mechanisms for protection of water resources at national and regional levels of the Amazon basin have also been identified and assessed. Thus, through institutional analysis, the national bodies responsible for the management of water resources were registered, including an assessment of the organizational, human, infrastructure and financial requirements to improve the participation of developing countries in this area. Similarly, proposals were elaborated for the foundation of the National Interministerial Coordination Committee for the Management of Water Resources in the Amazon River Basin, to create mechanisms for communication and information exchange, thus strengthening institutional linkages between countries. Information shared by the countries allowed to understand the status of the current situation of their institutions, their achievements and main challenges in managing water resources in the Amazon basin.



GUYANA

The main achievements of the GEF Amazon Project include:

1. Establishment of a regional approach to sustainable water management in the Amazon Drainage Basin.
2. Establishment of mechanisms for regional collaboration information sharing, research and developmental projects related to water management in the Amazon Drainage Basin Region.
3. Establishment of financing mechanisms for sustainable developmental activities related to water management in the Amazon Drainage Basin.
4. Greater sensitization and public awareness at the national and regional levels as it relates to the importance of the Amazon Drainage Basin as a global hydrological system.

5. Capacity building within the ACTO member countries on subject related to sustainable water management in the region.
6. Improved understanding of the Transboundary issues impacting on water management in the region and the implementation of approaches to addressing these issues.



PERU

The main achievements of the GEF Amazon Project are: **Shared Vision for the Amazon Basin**, the countries agreed on a proposal for a shared vision, that will be validated by the Project Steering Committee (June 2015). **Regional TDA**, nine priority transboundary issues were identified and at the moment the summary of the regional TDA is being reviewed. **Regional SAP**, the SAP index was approved and then validated by the Project Steering Committee (June 2015). It is worth mentioning that the Project has important inputs, like the study "Assessment of Aquifers in Sedimentary Basins at Amazonas hydrological province" (Brazil), the **Hydroclimatic Vulnerability Atlas; Model of Risk Management for the Purus river basin; and technical meetings** on management of water resources, hydro sedimentology, platform for data collection, international water law and extreme events.



SURINAME

For Suriname, for now: The issues identified in the National TDA report; and the trainings & workshops which gave insight on project implementation.



VENEZUELA

This project has provided valuable information on institutional and legal aspects and on technical information of the Venezuelan Amazon basin areas. We can highlight the following results, among others: Institution design and analysis. Inventory of legislation and regulatory framework. Diagnosis of environmental threats and socioeconomic impacts and possible risk areas to climate change. National Vision of the Amazon basin agreed and endorsed at the highest political level. Technical analysis of transboundary environmental problems, their causes and impacts.

What are your country's expectations about the Financing Strategy required to implement the Strategic Action Program (SAP)?



BRAZIL

Our country is committed to articulate with the GEF Focal Point possibilities for accessing funding from the institution. We are also consulting national financing options and international cooperation.



COLOMBIA

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is currently exploring the possibility of funding from the Global Environment Fund in order to leverage a regional initiative within the SAP.



ECUADOR

Ecuador expects to raise funds through the Global Environment Facility and other funding

sources that contribute to the implementation of Strategic Action Program (SAP).



GUYANA

At the national level, consideration will be given to the allocation of specific financial resources through relevant stakeholder agencies for targeted interventions and projects outlined in the SAP. External funding by way of grants from international agencies will also be pursued as a means of financing project activities. Various forms of in-kind contributions including the commitment of time inputs from technical staff, the assignment of existing resources and the dissemination of available research information will also be considered.



PERU

We believe that the expectations regarding the financing of the SAP are limited in terms of coordination between the countries; social, economic and environmental information in each country on the Amazon basin; budget for the implementation of the projects. In this sense, it is necessary that the countries involved choose to identify and evaluate other financing mechanisms through international partners.



SURINAME

Suriname is now in process to see how the GEF finance can be allocated and also an amount will be allocated from the government budget.



VENEZUELA

Venezuela is currently evaluating its national strategy for SAP, so estate a position in relation to funding strategies could be rushed, however, we are convinced of the importance of the participation of rural communities that are within the Venezuelan Amazon, and national institutional strengthening, as the main collectors and beneficiaries of the resources from the Global Environment Fund GEF that will have intended to perform different regional projects.



Given the immense challenges related to Water Resources Management and Climate Change, the ACTO Member Countries have been strengthening their cooperation. What is your vision for the next phase of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) implementation?



BRAZIL

We see it as an ongoing process of strengthening cooperation and dialogue already achieved by the Member Countries. The Strategic Actions Program - SAP will be a regional management tool that will allow the countries to respond to the priority transboundary demands/issues of the Amazon Basin.



COLOMBIA

Considering the Strategic Action Program (SAP) as the key element for achieving integrated water resources management in the Amazon River Basin, it is expected to SAP implementation that the actions defined from the priority critical transboundary issues, identified in the Regional TDA, establish clear priorities for institutional strengthening and coordination of governments, that responds with effective actions and impacts on the management of transboundary water resources.



ECUADOR

It should be an integrated and systematic process in which ACTO member countries do not work in isolated actions but concentrate efforts through actions that address the challenges of integrated water resources management.



RP/PE



GUYANA

A significant step to further advance the objectives of the Strategic Action Plan is the establishment of systems and the provision of resources to facilitate its implementation of the strategies outlined therein. Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms at the national and regional levels are also pivotal in ensuring that the specific aspects of the SAP, particularly those related to the use and pollution of water resources are addressed. Consequently, the next phase of the project should focus on the establishment of long-term national and regional implementation programs through legislative and policy reforms, the engagement of human, technical, financial and material resources and more extensive dissemination of information.



PERU

We consider that the new phase of a SAP implementation is a challenge in terms of management of transboundary water resources, and it should take into account the following points: a) The SAP is a strategy that implies solutions to determined issues. b) The basic

studies to understand the general situation of the Amazon, which support the development of solutions. c) Having detected a strategic solution that involves the participation of different countries, ACTO should communicate the implementation of these projects, adapting the strategic solution for each country. d) Continue to develop research studies in the countries, but knowledge acquired requires its implementation.



SURINAME

Vision: more cooperation on the area of institutional strengthening e.g. human capacity. Also information sharing and personnel training (lessons-learned) how to effectively implement the SAP.



VENEZUELA

It is truly important to carry out a shared project, involving all the Amazon countries. The joint work for the management of water resources also comprises the technical strengths that result from a joint activity. Moreover, the magnitude of the project implies effective participation of all member countries. In this sense, it is necessary to strengthen this process, encouraging the transfer of experience and expertise that different countries have to offer: this is indispensable to ensure optimal implementation of both the resources and the overall project requirement, and all this considering as a common goal the welfare of the people of the basin, national and public management of water resources and the preservation and conservation of natural habitats of the Amazon region.

Bolivia



Brasil



Colombia



Ecuador



Guyana



Perú



Suriname



Venezuela

