The Chiquitano Forest Initiative

A private partnership on behalf of a unique ecosystem

The Circumstances

- An energy project declared a national priority by government
- The history of pipelines in the region showed uncontrolled long-term impacts
- All legal obligations by the pipeline owners already fulfilled
- The Chiquitano Forest issue was not discussed in the project
- The companies had already initiated construction and agreed terms with local actors
- The insertion point of the initiative was late and unexpected

Founding Entities

- Fundacion Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN-Bolivia)
- Fundacion Amigos del Museo Noel Kempff Mercado
- Missouri Botanical Garden
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- Enron International Bolivia Holding
- Shell Latin America B.V.

Starting date: September 1999

Local Stakeholders

Private actors:
- 12 large private long-term forestry concessions
- 4 long-term community concessions (ASL)
- 1000 private cattle ranches
- 180 local communities
- Mining concessions

Government actors:
- 8 Municipalities
- Agrarian Superintendence
- Forestry Superintendence
What was at stake

The Chiquitano Dry Forest
- A large healthy Tropical Dry Forest of 5 million hectares
- The only endemic forest ecosystem in Bolivia
- Home to many unique species
- The Bolivian forest with the most valuable hard woods
- A vital connection for the Cerrado and Pantanal ecosystems – source of their long-term sustainability
- A permanent source of protein for 20,000 inhabitants of rural and isolated communities
- A one-of-a-kind forest in the world

The Initiative

A long-term Conservation and Sustainable Development Plan for an 8 million hectare region in eastern Bolivia
An effort to save:
- Chiquitano Forest
- Cerrado
- Pantanal Ecoregions

Focus and Bases

The Initiative was focused on:
- Reaching a balance between conservation and development
- Broad consultation and participative planning
- On-the-ground implementation by stakeholders
- Shared responsibilities of funding and monitoring

Based on:
- Collective conservation and sustainable development experience
- Solid technical and socioeconomic data and findings for the region
- Novel scientific approach in its design methodology
- Compliance of legal rights and obligations of all stakeholders
- Adaptive methodology for efficiency and efficacy of implementation

The Agreement

To make a voluntary joint effort on behalf of a large region
- Through a long-term Conservation and Sustainable Development Plan
- Intended as a private initiative - for safety, agility, continuity, and immediate attention to needs through emergency projects
- Envisioned to be very participative without compromising organization
- Long-term planning and permanence of the Program were most important issues to consider
- The Agreement included most details regarding basic founding commitments from the start
- A Trust Fund was decided to ensure long-term vision and continuity
- A Funding Agreement between parties was planned to regulate issues about funding compliance and timing
The Financial Instrument

**US$ 30 million over 15 years**

**Years 1-5:**
- $2 million annually contributed by Enron and Shell
- **Total $10 million over five years**

**Years 6-15:**
- Up to $10 million raised by the **four environmental organizations** over 10 years
- Up to $10 million provided by the Enron and Shell based on a **one-to-one** match
- **Total $20 million over ten years**

To be managed by a private, non-profit, conservation organization: 
*Fundacion para la Conservacion del Bosque Chiquitano (FCBC)*

The Legal Instruments

**FCBC became a legal entity through the following steps:**
- A Transitory Association under the Bolivian Law, between the founding members, that lasted from September 1999 to August 2003
- The issuance of a Tax Registry Certificate (RUC) from the National Tax Registry
- The Legal Incorporation as a non-profit organization (Personeria Juridica) granted in August 2003
- The tax exemption status (in process)

Approach Selection

**Were there …**
- Similar previous experiences of that magnitude in the country? – none
- Experiences of management plan design for national parks? – a few
- Experiences of work in buffer zones and with communities? – a few
- Capacities to deal with the political environment? – who knew !!!

**The approach:**
- Careful analysis of the global social and political environment
- Intensive pre-planning of the organizational set-up and functions for all involved regional stakeholders
- Gathering of all joint current institutional capacities and experience
- Work by faith in a set of goals and objectives for the region

Organizational Structure

*Executive Direction*
**Initial Political Reactions**

- Strong criticism from several small groups of political leaders after the *Agreement to Create the Chiquitano Forest Conservation Program in Bolivia* was signed by the founding members.
- Disagreement sprang from not sharing the committed funds as politicians wished, and because they felt the right to manage them as public funds.
- A rampant and virulent attack from foreign and local more radical organizations that claimed supposedly violated human rights.
- These groups made extensive use of distorted opinions in the media, with the intent of blocking pipeline financing by international funding agencies.
- The attacks extended to FCBC with the same type of groundless accusations - a large-scale campaign to slander and block the initiative.

**The Choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best case scenario in 15 years</th>
<th>Worst case scenario in 15 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a Conservation &amp; SD Plan</td>
<td>Without a Conservation &amp; SD Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Conservation and Sustainable Development Plan**

- A main task ordered to a national/international consortium of planning, social and environmental organizations, which had the experience and credibility.
- A regional planning effort that involved national, municipal and communal authorities - 800 representatives of all sectors - in 27 workshops.
- The process included public consultation, approval of design methodology, diagnosis validation, consensus of global strategy and implementation model.
- Future scenarios were generated and shared according to actual biophysical and socioeconomic data and projections.
- Consensus was reached regarding the spatial vision for the future of the region.
- The CSDP became the founding guide, through Action Lines, for yearly projects - proposed and implemented by local stakeholders and authorities.

**The shared desires**

**Of all stakeholders:**

- To work in participative ways.
- To harmonize development with conservation of biodiversity.
- To maintain the ecological functions of the ecosystems.
- To ensure connectivity between adjacent ecosystems.
- To prevent fragmentation of habitats.
- To prevent illegal extraction of natural resources.
- To prevent uncontrolled forest fires in the region.
- To help improve the livelihood of rural inhabitants.
A spatial vision by consensus

The Action Lines

Conservation and Scientific Research
- Protection, conservation and management of wilderness areas
- Management and conservation of flora and fauna
- Conservation and sustainable development research

Sustainable Development
- Sustainable forest management
- Sustainable agricultural and cattle production

Transverse lines of action
- Land use planning and land tenure
- Environmental education
- Institutional strengthening
- Pre-investment and support for additional fundraising

Core operations
- Implementation and administration of the Plan

Resolution of initial conflicts
Gradually reached through:
- Dissemination of accurate information about the Initiative
- The Stakeholders Committee as the representation of sectors
- Permanent contact with key local stakeholders with long-term vision
- Authorities and non-political leaders in the region
- The voluntary incorporation of new actors in the scene
- The issuance of the FCBC’s Legal Incorporation as a non-profit, private organization for public benefit

What has been done to date
- The Consolidation of a Stakeholders Committee with ample voluntary participation of all sectors
- 30 Agreements signed with the most legitimate and representative institutions and organizations
- 172 Projects mostly implemented by the local stakeholders with a total investment of US$ 3,300,000 to date
- Four years of steady work, with increasing interest, participation and support from the public opinion and local actors

- The Conservation and Sustainable Development Plan for the Chiquitano Forest, Cerrado and Bolivian Pantanal

- Its publication in four different versions and wide distribution throughout the region and the country
A few significant goals attained

• The creation of the Tucavaca Municipal Wildlife Reserve (242,000 hectare)
• Municipal Development Plans for 7 municipalities
• Municipal Land Use Plan for San Rafael Municipality
• 1 Million hectare of georeferenced private properties, 250,000 hectare of land use plans for private properties, 10,000 ha of private reserves
• Land titles for 34 Chiquitano indigenous communities (87,000 hectare)
• 180 hectare of organic coffee plantation with Chiquitano communities
• A variety of forest projects, from certification to management monitoring
• Effective forest control in the region through the Forestry Superintendence
• Technological transfer to all municipalities, enabling them to have a better control of their natural resources and better land use planning

Lessons learned

• The need to go with the law - and make efforts beyond the law
• The importance of partnership with key government agencies
• The importance of a good communication strategy and PR
• The value of public consultation with strong technical and scientific support
• Public consultation should not be confused with political manipulation
• Work must be addressed by sectors, otherwise pressures can become unmanageable
• An adaptive methodology is most useful with so many actors and interests
• All partners in the initiative should be equally active and well informed
• Both social and ecological issues are important to make a fair balance

Recommendations

• Funds: Look for friendly partnerships, instead of pressure-based initiatives
• Focus on implementation rather than just planning and waiting for a 2nd phase
• Use your funding to leverage additional resources
• Local partners: Conservation and SD are made with people and by people
• Participation: Think of ways for local actors to take part in most decisions
• Keep the decision-making process simple and without conflicts of interests
• Real wide public consultation is a must for the acceptance of the program
• Think about the very long term, without disregarding the immediate actions
• Focus on connectivity, integrating public (state) and private conservation areas
• Minimize administrative expenses - favor project funding and implementation

Is this a model to replicate?

• FCBC’s planning methodology + consultation process + implementation model = balanced conservation & development for a region, is a valid equation and worthy to undertake
• Associations of energy companies and conservation organizations are not a new concept in the world
• FCBC’s founding scheme is replicable, whenever there is a recognized need to prevent environmental impacts generated by projects to important ecosystems
• The CSDP is not a compensation or mitigation measure for localized damages, it is rather a set of long-term preventive measures
• Putting together ecosystem’s needs and people’s needs in the search for realistic solutions will always be given its credit … at the end !!!
Visit our website:
www.fcbcinfo.org

Thank you !!!