
Implementing Agency	United Nations Environment Programme
Country	Brazil
Focal Area	International Waters
Project Title	Integrated Management of Land-Based Activities in the São Francisco Basin
GEF Allocation	US\$4.771 million
Cofinancing	US\$17.443 million
	US\$175,000 (United Nations Environment Programme)
	US\$8,625,000 (World Bank loan for PROAGUA)
	US\$100,000 (Organization of American States)
	US\$8,543,000 (Government of Brazil)
Total Financing	US\$22.214 million
Dates	May 1999–April 2002
Environmental Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contamination and degradation of large river basin system from human activities
Project Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a watershed management program for the basin that addresses root causes of its degradation

In South America, the Rio São Francisco Basin extends over an area the size of the Colorado or Columbia rivers in North America. The river traverses diverse climatic zones, from humid to arid, and five states in northeastern Brazil before discharging into the Southwest Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystem and Brazil Current. Mining, agricultural, urban, and industrial activities contribute contaminants to this riverine system and, from there, into the coastal zone. Of chief concern are organic and heavy metal pollution and soil loss. Estuarine wetlands at the river mouth, which form particularly important and environmentally sensitive habitat, are threatened by unsustainable hydrological management and land use practices within the basin. Development in the area has historically been haphazard with little planning and within a relatively weak institutional framework. This has resulted in less than optimal use of its water resources and degradation of the coastal zone. Large stretches of river have been regulated, altering natural river flows. Significant modification of freshwater, estuarine, and marine flora and fauna has occurred.

The Project This project is being executed by the Organization of American States and the Secretaria de Recursos Hidricos do Ministerio do Meio Ambiente, dos Recursos Hidricos e da Amazonia Legal do Brasil. Its primary objective is to conduct planning and feasibility studies necessary to formulate an integrated watershed management plan that will promote environmentally sustainable development of the basin as a means to manage degradation of the coastal zone.

- Activities**
- River basin and coastal zone environmental analysis.* This component is working to provide a sound scientific and technical basis for strategic remedial actions that protect the marine environment from land-based activities.
 - Public and stakeholder participation.* This component is working to involve communities in identifying and field testing remedial measures and establish a dialogue process among persons and agencies with economic interests in the basin.

- *Organizational structure development.* This component is equipping and training institutions and individuals in implementing new laws, regulations, and procedures.
- *Watershed management program formulation.* This component is synthesizing data and experiences, feasibility assessments, and cost analyses developed in the other three components.

Benefits

- Reduce contamination and pollution of associated wetlands, coastal areas, and riverine systems
- Reduce contaminating discharges into the South West Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystem and Brazil Current
- Reduce soil loss, improve flood forecasting, increase effective and sustainable use of available water resources

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a financial mechanism that provides grants and concessional funds to developing countries for projects and activities designed to protect the global environment. GEF resources address climate change, biological diversity, international waters, and depletion of the ozone layer. Activities concerning land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation as they relate to the four focal areas, are also eligible for funding.

GEF is a joint venture of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank. These three agencies implement GEF projects.

For more information on this project, contact:

Organization of American States

Secretaria de Recursos Hidricos

Ministerio do Meio Ambiente dos Recursos Hidricos e da Amazonia Legal do Brasil
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