
Implementing Agency	United Nations Environment Programme
Country	Brazil
Focal Area	International Waters
Project Title	Implementation of Integrated Watershed Management Practices for the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin
GEF Allocation	US\$6,614,500
Cofinancing	US\$9,788,500
	US\$175,000 (United Nations Environment Programme)
	US\$1,250,000 (World Bank loans for PRODEAGRO and PROAGUA)
	US\$100,000 (Organization of American States)
	US\$8,264,500 (Government of Brazil)
Total Financing	US\$16.404 million
Dates	May 1999–April 2002
Environmental Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsustainable and poorly regulated economic activities damaging wetlands and riverine system of global significance
Project Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a watershed management program that addresses priority environmental issues • Encourage community-based land management and strengthen relevant institutions

Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay share the upper Paraguay river basin. Covering nearly 500,000 square kilometers, the basin comprises two areas with significantly different conditions, the Pantanal, an enormous wetland of global significance, and the Planalto or plateau, used mainly for cattle grazing and soybean and rice production. Agriculture, mining, and other development use unsustainable methods, weakly regulated by government. The result is high rates of soil loss, encroachment of wetlands and floodplains, loss of habitat, and agrochemical and heavy metal contamination. Increased tourism is contributing to overfishing, alteration of flora and fauna, and the export of threatened and endangered species.

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. The project is assisting the Government of Brazil in promoting sustainable development of the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin by catalyzing implementation of the best integrated watershed management practices for the region. Project activities will enhance and restore the environmental functioning of the system, protect endemic species within the wetland, and implement strategic activities identified by the World Bank–UNDP PRODEAGRO program that address the root causes of degradation.

- Activities**
- *Water quality and environmental protection.* This component is quantifying specific priority issues of concern, such as agrochemical and heavy metal contamination, endemic fishes and fisheries, and water uses and users, to provide a sound scientific and technical basis for managing the basin.
 - *Conservation of the Pantanal.* This component is refining and expanding conservation units within the Pantanal set up to preserve the best remaining areas of natural habitat in the region.
 - *Land degradation.* This component addresses cross-cutting issues relating specifically to land and water

management activities designed to protect and/or rehabilitate critical areas within the basin. Community-based land management will identify and demonstrate environmentally sound practices within the agricultural, mining, and urban economic sectors.

- *Stakeholder involvement and sustainable development.* This component is involving basin communities in practical, “hands-on” efforts to identify and demonstrate remedial measures as well as in a process of dialogue. This will help transfer experience in environmentally sustainable economic growth identified in the above components.
- *Organizational structure development.* This component is designed to strengthen and improve institutional and staffing capabilities to implement new laws, regulations, and procedures necessary for long-term success of watershed management measures.
- *Integrated watershed management program implementation.* This component is synthesizing the data and experiences, feasibility assessments, and cost analyses developed in the above components.

- Benefits**
- Decrease transboundary transport of contaminants
 - Increase river wildlife diversity
 - Prevent and control erosion, land degradation, sediment runoff, and floods
 - Protect wetlands and water supplies for drinking and agriculture.

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:

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