



A **Newsletter** of the project *Formulation of a Strategic Action Program for the Integrated Management of Water Resources and the Sustainable Development of the San Juan River Basin and its Coastal Zone.*

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Welcome to the Special Edition of PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN TODAY! 3rd Meeting of the Steering Committee

This edition presents a summary of the outcomes of the 3rd Meeting of the Steering Committee, which took place on June 17, 2002, in San José, Costa Rica.

The Meeting

The governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua reiterated their commitment to encourage the sustainable development of the San Juan River Basin and adopt measures to confront the environmental deterioration of one of the region's most important natural reserves.

Both countries showed their support for and commitment to the execution of the project "at the highest level." Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, emphasized the need to conduct specific technical actions to ensure the sustainable development of the San Juan River Basin, by introducing the municipal scheme as part of the process of decentralizing environmental management, which will make it possible to reverse the process of environmental deterioration quickly.

For his part, Mr. Jorge Salazar Cardenal, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Nicaragua, reiterated "firm support of the project" and a commitment to achieve binational management of the river basin.

The support and importance of the PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN expressed by Minister Rodríguez was echoed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, through its representative on the Steering Committee, Sergio Ugalde, who transmitted the unlimited support of the Ministry and of the Government of Costa Rica to PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN. He added that his Ministry is interested in having the project be part of a greater effort by the governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua in the border zone, for the social and economic development of the region.

The Steering Committee decided to establish working and communication mechanisms between MINAE and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, and between MARENA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, in order to ensure that PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN is properly integrated into the relationship policies of the countries, and advance steadily towards the formulation of a proposal for the binational management of the San Juan River Basin.



Participants in the 3rd Meeting of the Steering Committee. In the center in the head table, from left to right, the Ministers of Environment of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, Jorge Salazar Cárdenes, and Carlos Manuel Rodríguez Echandi.

Multidisciplinary team for the formulation of the SAP

The SAP for the San Juan River Basin is a planning tool designed to ensure the availability of the goods and services that water resources provide for the conservation of ecosystems and for the social and economic development in order to meet current and future demands as agreed upon by all the parties involved. Further, the coordinated program executed jointly by the governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, with the participation of local governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and organized groups of civil society, will serve to orient and coordinate investments in the Basin.



Production systems developed through the Demonstrative Project "Revolving Fund for the development of agroforestry in the Municipality of Cárdenes, Nicaragua"

To begin preparing the proposals for programs and projects that will make up the SAP and initiate a consultation process with MINAE and MARENA, to assure that the proposed actions fit into the strategies and management of the ministries, and into the national and sectoral development policies and plans, the Steering Committee approved the formation of a multidisciplinary team that will begin to work in August.

Under the Technical Coordination and National Directors' Office in each country, the technical team will be headed by a principal specialist in water resources management, who will be joined during the first six months by a principal specialist in legislation and institutional arrangements and a specialist in information systems. Also on the team are local specialists in institutional arrangements and the senior specialist in gender, who have already been working with this project.

Cataloguing Workshop

The Steering Committee decided to hold a workshop on cataloguing in collaboration with the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC). The event will be divided in two sessions. The first, the cataloguing workshop per se, with wide participation by technicians and experts, will seek to identify information about updated use and cover maps that may have been generated recently by MINAE, MARENA, other governmental and non-governmental institutions, universities, etc.



The second session will be limited to experts in charge of the basic studies for PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN, MBC experts, and the specialists of the Technical Units. The purpose of this session is to identify products to be developed and their technical specifications, which will complement the studies on water resources, by recognizing areas and sources of degradation (pollution and erosion- sedimentation). At the same time, products to be developed will be identified by PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN together with the MBC, in order to bring about a better integration between these two projects and maximize the use of the GEF human and financial resources.

This is one of the areas in which PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN and MBC coincide, where joint work will permit mutual benefit and the optimization of the objectives that both projects pursue. The national liaisons of Costa Rica and Nicaragua of the MBC, present at the Steering Committee meeting, indicated that there are many areas of coincidence with PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN, and that it is necessary to work together in actions of mutual benefit to optimize the use of the human and financial resources of both projects. PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN can be a pilot area for improving the management of protected areas, and of joint training activities. The MBC and PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN must work in coordination to communicate and disseminate their actions. Another point of coincidence is the strengthening of local capacities, through work with the Federation of Municipalities and the Confederation of Border Mayors.

The cataloguing workshop is scheduled for August 13 and 14, in Managua.

Validation Workshop

The Steering Committee has decided that the First Workshop on Validation of Studies on Water Pollution, Critical Aquatic Habitats, and Coastal and Marine Resources will be held in November of this year. Through this activity, the Committee seeks to promote the integration of PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN into the actions that the Regional Committee on Water Resources (CRRH) has been executing with the Consultative Group on Water.

The purpose of the workshop will be to present the preliminary results of the studies to the scientific community of the Central American isthmus, in order to share the results with other transboundary basins on the isthmus, validate and supplement the results, and prepare recommendations for the formulation of the SAP.

It will also be useful for coordinating the activities of all the studies and exchanging information.



The participation of CRRH in this event will also facilitate the incorporation of the findings into the regional strategies and move towards the identification of working elements and standards for the hydrometeorologic, economic, social, and environmental monitoring of transboundary basins in the Central American isthmus.

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