



Walter J. Lusigi  
04/06/2000 08:22 AM

13/2

Extn: 34798                      GEF  
Subject: UNDP PDF A: Argentina: Management and Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Esteros del Ibera.

The GEF Secretariat has reviewed this PDF A request and has no objection to further development of this project in accordance with established GEF practices.

Cheers.

Walter.

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To: Rafael.Asenjo@Undp.Org  
Gefbio  
Ramon Prudencio C. De Mesa

EnCorr

Ref #: GEFSEC-N-2000-00094

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR GEFSEC

### Incoming Correspondence Log

Official Use Only

Due Date:

**03/13/2000**

**FOR ACTION: Walter J. Lusigi**

**STATUS: Open**

**Project Name: Management and Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Esteros del Ibera**

VPU/Dept/Div: GEF Room : G 6-025 Telephone: 473-4798	Date Logged: 03/08/2000 07:06:45 PM Logged By: Ramon Prudencio C. De Mesa (GEF)
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#### CORRESPONDENCE DESCRIPTION:

From: Rafael Asenjo Organization: UNDP Reference #: To: Mr. Keneth King Dated: 03/08/2000 Type: OP2 Subject: PDF A: Argentina: Management and Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Esteros del Ibera
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#### ACTION INSTRUCTIONS:

<i>Please reply directly and provide a copy</i>
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#### INFORMATION COPIES:

Colin P. Rees, Mario A. Ramos/Person/World Bank, Alfred M. Duda, Andrea Merla, Maria C. J. Cruz/Person/World Bank, Kanta Kumari, Herbert Acquay, Julie Anne Waller/Person/World Bank



**United Nations Development Programme**  
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY



**Date:** 6 March, 2000

**To:** Mr. Kenneth King  
Assistant Chief Executive Officer  
GEF Secretariat

Mr. Lars Vidæus, Chief  
Global Environment Division,  
World Bank

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif  
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UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya

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**Pages:** 20

**From:** Rafael Asanjo  
Executive Coordinator

**Subject:** PDF A Funding for Medium Size Project:

Please find attached for your review and comments a PDF Block  
A request for funding entitled: ***"Management and Conservation of  
Wetland Biodiversity in the Esteros del Ibera."***

We would appreciate receiving your comments no later than 13  
March, 00.

Thank you.

**Medium Size Project Clearance Sheet - PDF A**

*(the template for this form can be found on L:\Medium Size Projects\Administration\Templates)*

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Management and Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Esteros del Iberá</b>		
<b>Country (ies)</b>	Argentina	<b>Focal Area</b>	Biodiversity
<b>Regional Bureau</b>	RBLAC	<b>PIMS Number</b>	1687
<b>Task Manager</b>	Lita Papanoni <i>[Signature]</i>	<b>GEF Amount (PDF A)</b>	US \$ 25,000

**PDF A Circulation**

Clearance	Date	Signature <sup>1</sup>
Technical Advisor Clearance (including verification of govt support letters)	6/3/00	<i>[Signature]</i> (technical advisor)
Programme Support Unit Clearance (including verification funds available)	6/3/00	<i>[Signature]</i> (PSU)
Distributed to IA's and GEFSEC		(task manager)
Comments Received UNEP		(task manager)
Comments Received World Bank		(task manager)
Comments Received GEFSEC		(task manager)
Endorsed by UNDP GEF Executive Coordinator		(UNDP GEF Exec. Coordinator)

**UNDP Project Document Information**

**UNDP Project Number**

Clearance	Date	Signature
Technical Advisor Clearance (including verification all GEFSEC & IA technical comments addressed)		(technical advisor)
Programme Support Unit Clearance of UNDP Budget		(PSU)
Verified that all the above data is entered in PIMS		(task manager)
Endorsed by UNDP GEF Executive Coordinator		(UNDP GEF Exec. Coordinator)
Delegation of Authority Sent to Resident Representative / Executing Agency		(task manager)

<sup>1</sup> Note and attach e-mail or fax if not physically signed

**Medium size project  
PDF A**

**Part I – Eligibility**

1. **Project name:** *Management and Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Esteros del Iberá*
2. **GEF Implementing Agency:** United Nations Development Program
3. **Country:** Argentina
4. **Country eligibility:** CBD Ratification: November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.
5. **GEF focal area:** Biodiversity
6. **Operational program:** OP 2 - Coastal, Marine and FreshWater Ecosystems

**7. Project linkage to national priorities, action plans, and programs:**

*The Esteros del Iberá* is today the largest protected area in Argentina. Designated by the Government of Argentina and the Province of Corrientes in 1983 as a **Provincial Nature Reserve** (Law N° 3371), the area spans 1.2 million hectares or 14.6% of the province's total territory (see attached map).

The *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*, formulated under the leadership of the Argentine Secretariat for Natural Resources and Sustainable Development, recognizes the *Esteros* as a National Priority Ecoregion.

Pursuant to its delegation as a Nature Reserve, provincial government authorities have officially requested the Federal Government (May 12th, 1999) to seek designation of the *Esteros del Iberá* as a Ramsar site. In support of these efforts, UNCTAD is currently supporting a detailed hydrological and biological study of the Reserve in collaboration with nine Universities from around the world.<sup>1</sup> As a result, Ramsar authorities have signaled their approval of the *Esteros* as a Ramsar site, with official designation to take place at the next Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel, scheduled to meet in June 2000.

<sup>1</sup> Entitled *Sustainable Management of Wetlands Reserve in the Mercosur: Project Iberá* carried out by University of Georgia, Universidad de Siena, Universidad del Salvador, Universidad del Centro, Universidad de Cadiz, Universidad de Rio de Janeiro, Universidad de Aveiro, Universidad de Campinas, Universidad de Rio Grande do Sul.

The Argentine-Paraguay Binational Hydroelectric Authority on the Paraná River has designated *Esteros del Iberá* for support as a wetland wildlife reserve in **compensation** for riverine areas affected by inundation of the area behind the Yacyreta-Apipe dam. This support is channeled principally to the Estero's five core Conservation Units - Galarza, Iberá, Itatí, Yaguareté Corá and Camby Reta (Annex 1).

Wetlands International - Americas has designated *Esteros Del Iberá* a key wetland site in the Western Hemisphere.

#### **8. GEF National Operational Focal Point and date of country endorsement:**

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto, 23 November, 1999.

#### **9. Project rationale and objectives:**

##### **Description of the project area**

Covering 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Annex 1), the *Esteros del Iberá* is one of the two largest freshwater wetlands south of the Tropic of Capricorn. This wetland is globally unique in that it is created exclusively by rainfall i.e. no hydrologic input from rivers or aquifers. Harboring unique sub-tropical biodiversity, the *Esteros* lies between the two largest rivers - Parana-Paraguay and Uruguay - of one of the largest watersheds in the world, the Rio de la Plata Basin.

The *Esteros del Iberá* are located in the central and northeastern part of Corrientes Province. They stretch 250 kilometers from the southwest to the northeast varying in width from 88 kilometers in the north, 147 kilometers in the center at Concepción, and 20 kilometers in the south at the Itatí Lagoon. The *Esteros*, (marshes, in English), comprise a vast basin of inundated grasslands, swamps, lakes and floating islands of marsh vegetation. Of the *Esteros'* 1.2 million hectares, 57,000 hectares belong to the Province and 1,143,000 hectares are privately held.

The *Esteros* are a depression of ancient poorly differentiated riverbeds approximately 60,000 years old. The central portion of the *Esteros* are made up of swamps and shallow lakes less than 5 meters deep surrounded by higher land to the north, east and west. There are 7 lakes with areas greater than 14 km<sup>2</sup>. Most of the basin is at least periodically flooded. The *Esteros* are different from the Pantanal - with which they might most readily be compared - in that they are fed directly by rainfall where as the latter is the result of its location and biophysical structure within an enormous watershed in central Brazil. The climate is hot with temperatures reaching a maximum of 44°C and a mean of 27°C, while the mean winter temperature in January and February is about 16°C. Annual rainfall is about 1400 mm.

Lush aquatic vegetation grows in the marshes and lakes covering extensive areas with Water Nettle (*Cabomba australia*), Reed (*Scirpus californicus*), and Camalote (*Eichornia sp*), among others. A strip of floating vegetation lines the lakes' borders, which in places forms floating islands of rotted roots and soil, called "embalsados". The embalsados are

formed by such species as Piri (*Cyperus giganteus*), *Panicum grumosum*, Totorá (*Typha sp.*), Pehuajó (*Thalia multiflora*), and about 20-30 others which line the shores around areas of open water to widths of up to several hundred meters. This formation is sufficiently thick and solid in places to walk on or even camp. When the water level rises in the marshes following heavy rains, the embalsados periodically break free from the lagoon edges and float downstream where they clog the drainage of the *Esteros* to the Corrientes River, thus playing a very important role in the wetland's hydrology.

Scattered throughout the marshes are small islands of higher forested land, which rarely flood and are often less than 100 meters in diameter. Beyond the marshes and lakes, a range of other vegetation types are found within the area of the reserve. To the north bordering the Paraná River are small pockets of subtropical rainforest; to the northwest and southeast are gently undulating grasslands with scattered woodland of principally Algarrobillo (*Prosopis algarrobilla*) and Espinillo (*Acacia caven*) (vegetation more characteristic of the xerophytic Chaco); and to the southwest, at the head of the Corrientes River, are temporally inundated pastures with pockets of gallery forest.

In terms of terrestrial vertebrates the fauna consists of 85 species of mammals, 35 reptiles and almost 40 amphibians. The regional and global conservation status of the most important species are detailed below:

**Jaguar** (locally extinct), **Ocelot** (locally extinct), **Giant anteater** (IUCN '96 vulnerable), **Marsh Deer** (*Blastocerus dichotomus*, CITES Appendix I<sup>2</sup> and vulnerable<sup>3</sup> IUCN '96), **Pampas Deer** (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*, IUCN '96 lower risk, CITES Appendix I)<sup>4</sup>, **Neotropical River Otter** (*Lutra longicaudatus*, CITES Appendix I), **Maned Wolf** (*Chrisocyon brachyurus*, IUCN '96 lower risk, CITES Appendix II), **Giant Otter** (*Pteronura brasiliensis*, IUCN '96 vulnerable), **Howler Monkeys** (*Alouatta caraya*, rare), **Red opossums** (*Lutreolina crassicaudata*) **Vizcachá** (*Cavia maximus paerea*), **Capybara** (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*), **Coipo** (*Myocastor coypus*, *Lagostomus*), **Crab Eating Raccoons** (*Procyon cancrivorus*), **Fox** (*Dusicoon sp.*), and **Red Brocket Deer** (*Mazama americana*). **Caimans** (*Caiman crocodylus*, CITES Appendix I and *Caiman latirostris* CITES Appendix II).

The **Marsh Deer**, the **Maned Wolf** and the **Caiman** have been declared *National Monuments* and incorporated into the provincial coat of arms.

Avian fauna is comprised of approximately 250 species. Of these more than 90%, are

<sup>2</sup> Appendix I: Includes all species threatened with extinction, which are or may be affected by trade. For more details refer <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/CITES/english/>

<sup>3</sup> VULNERABLE (VU) A taxon is Vulnerable when it is not Critically Endangered or Endangered but is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as defined by any of the IUCN criteria. For further details please refer <http://www.iucn.org/>

<sup>4</sup> The Pampus's Deer, *Ozotoceros bezoarticus celler* species is categorized as low risk (LR/nt)<sup>4</sup> in the IUCN '96 directory and is included in Appendix I of CITES. Nevertheless, this Argentine subspecies is at critical risk on a global basis with less than 350 individuals existing in the wild.

native to the region. The **White Headed Marsh Tyrant** (*Fluvicola leucocephala*), **Strange Tailed Marsh Tyrant** (*Alecturus risorius*) and the **Saffron-cowled Blackbird** (*Xanthospas flavus*) are endemic to *Esteros del Iberá* and its environs. It is important to note that the latter species is listed as endangered (EN<sup>5</sup> IUCN '96). Two migratory species, protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act, utilize this area as a flyway: the **Osprey** (*Paridion halia etus*) and the **Bobolink** (*Poli choryd onyzuroni*). The **Tordo Amarillo** (*Xanthospar flavus*), which exists only in the *Esteros del Iberá* is listed in IUCN '96 as EN (endangered). BirdLife International identifies three Key Areas of five within the Entre Rios Endemic Bird Area in or adjacent to the Esteros de Ibera.

The fish population consists of various sedentary species, frequently carnivorous, such as *Acestrorhynchus jenynsis* and *Apistograma corumbae*. One of the most typical characteristics of the esteros is the abundance of **Piraña** (*Pirañas semasolus* sp.). The Esteros cover the headwaters of the Corrientes River, so migratory species such as **sábalo** (*Prochilodus platensis*) and **dorado** (*Salminus maxillosus*) are found in the southerly lakes most closely connected to the River. It is known that the southerly lakes of the Esteros del Iberá are important spawning areas of these fish. In total, it is estimated that there are 80 species of fishes in the Esteros. The study "Sustainable Management of Wetland Reserves in the Mercosur: Project Iberá" is carrying out a biological inventory of fish species, which will include their conservation status, spawning area, nursery and migration routes. It is expected that this information will provide significant baseline data from which to monitor conservation efforts and their impact on safeguarding biodiversity

### Past and current conservation efforts in the project area

Article 13 of the National Wildlife Law (Law N° 22421 of May 12th 1981) declared that activities such as land clearing, drainage of wetlands, and construction of dikes must be first approved by national or provincial authorities on the basis of stringent environmental impact assessments. In 1983 Law N° 3771 was passed creating a Provincial Nature Reserve covering the entire area, including public as well as privately owned properties. While the law allows for determined extractive and productive activities within the reserve, it also specifies that any resource-based extractive activity requires a special permit and written authorization from Provincial government authorities to ensure sustainable use of habitats and species.

The relative absence of local counterparts and a lack of funding initially compromised conservation efforts in the *Esteros*. These have been mitigated by, first, the establishment of the local NGO, Fundación Reserva del Iberá on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1992, and second, the formal establishment and funding of the five core conservation units within the Esteros by the Binational Authority in May 17th 1994. These are Yaguareté Corá 10,000 ha, Iberá 12,000 ha, Camby Reta 10,000 ha, Itati 9,000 ha and Galarza 16,000 ha. The local NGO Fundación Iberá, whose board and staff are composed of biologists and experts, has over the last five years dedicated itself exclusively to the conservation of the Esteros.

<sup>5</sup> ENDANGERED (EN) A taxon is Endangered when it is not Critically Endangered but is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future.



The San Juan de Poriahu private reserve is located on the north-west border of the reserve and is under management with the assistance of Fundacion Vida Silvestre. This reserve is a key area for threatened birds (Birdlife International 1995).

Conservation Land Trust, one the two largest foundations in the world dedicated to conserving wildlands, has already purchased approximately 70,000 hectares in the *Esteros del Ibera*, at a cost of over US\$5.5 million. More recently, US\$ 175,000 has been invested to assist illegal squatters to relocate outside the Reserve. At present, negotiations are under way to acquire another 18,000 hectares for US\$2 million. These 88,000 hectares are located within the Reserve and set aside as core conservation units.

### **Current threats to biodiversity**

The *Esteros del Iberá* is home to 10 settlements with an estimated total population of 17,000 people, excluding the town of Ituzaingó (1990 census) which lies on the Parana River at the northernmost boundary of the reserve. The principal economic activity of the area is *cattle ranching* involving the majority of the inhabitants, with *rice farming* second in importance. *Forestry plantations* (pine and eucalyptus) are becoming more common on higher ground to the west as part of a provincial plan to bring up to a million hectares of land into wood production. A small part of the population is dedicated exclusively to *commercial and subsistence hunting* though many estancia workers hunt or trap to augment their incomes.

The threats to the *Esteros del Iberá* are grouped in the following categories:

#### **Threats from cattle ranching:**

- Risks of transmitting hoof and mouth disease and brucellosis from cattle to deer and capybara populations.
- Burning of grasslands to stimulate tender herbaceous undergrowth for grazing with uncontrolled fires endangering wildlife habitat.
- During seasonal flooding, cattle may compete with the larger herbivorous mammals such as Pampas Deer, Red Brocket Deer, Marsh Deer and Capybara for diminished food supply.

#### **Rice Farming:**

- Waterfowl poisoning resorted to by rice farmers in order to protect their crops.
- Conversion of wetlands to agricultural land.
- Intensive use of pesticides, with attendant consequences for water quality and wildlife.

#### **Tree plantation:**

- Eucalyptus and pine plantations located in the surroundings highlands, some within the boundaries of the provincial reserve.
- Agrochemical runoff from these plantations.
- Plantations close to wetlands may threaten water levels due to increased demand for water in the dry season versus a rainfed supply.

**Illegal occupants:**

- Illegal occupation of the scarce higher ground within the wetlands. This eliminates dry areas required for the subsistence of species such as the Maned Wolf, Marsh Deer and Capybara. At present, the Conservation Land Trust is carrying out a collaborative squatter relocation program, with US\$ 150,000 already invested in the effort.

**Hunting:**

- Commercial and sport hunting. Hunting outfitters promote trips involving unlimited waterfowl and mammal taking.
- Commercial hunting, and intensive poaching by subsistence level locals, not only endanger rare species but also reduce the potential for eco-tourism.

**Project objectives**

These threats point to the need for a participatory approach to resource use in the Esteros based on a bioregional management strategy. The goal of the strategy will be the long-term production of this ecosystem's goods and services for local, national and global benefits. An underlying premise of this approach is that the global biodiversity benefits to be achieved by this project are unlikely to be sustained without concomitant benefits accruing to local stakeholders.

To achieve the broad objective of participatory bioregional planning and management, the project will develop and implement a programme of activities encompassing the following:

A multistakeholder steering committee will be established to manage consultative formulation and implementation of the bioregional strategy and corresponding programme of activities. The strategy and programme will delimit areas of strict protection, areas of multiple use and areas of sustained production. It will promote transparent exchange of science-based information, policy dialogue with local and provincial officials, NGOs and the private sector, and the development of appropriate economic and other instruments to motivate compliance with land-use regulations and the goals and objectives of the bioregional strategy. The programme will wage a campaign to raise the awareness of the general public as to the Estero's importance for local development and local, regional and global environmental quality targeting school children, the different economic sectors, the press, and decision makers. It will provide technical training to land use managers in both the private and public sectors to ensure compliance with the strategy and the implementation of biodiversity friendly production activities. Based on the intrinsic link between local and global benefits, the bioregional management programme will identify income-generating activities to provide an alternative to current destructive practices, as well as the elements at policy and other levels required to enable their implementation.

**10. Expected outcomes:**

This project - *to be developed with PDF-A resources and co-financing* - is expected to result in the following principal outcomes. The project outcomes detailed below may be

subject to revision or supplementation based on the findings and results of project preparation.

- (a) A multistakeholder body established to guide the programme and project activities consisting of representatives of local and provincial governments, NGOs, academia, the private sector, local communities and landowners, and the binational hydroelectric authority.
- (b) A bioregional management strategy and programme of activities corresponding to the Esteros basin and encompassing the five core conservation units, areas of multiple use, and areas of sustainable production. The Plan will be developed with the active involvement of local communities and sectoral groupings, conservation NGOs, local and provincial governments and academia. The Plan will incorporate elements related to: policy dialogue, development of an incentive/regulatory framework to motivate adherence to conservation objectives and implementation of alternative income-generating activities, conservation training, monitoring techniques, species and habitat management, enforcement, conflict resolution, awareness raising, and the development of an eco-tourism strategy and guidelines to enhance capacities for alternative income generating activities. The Plan will also include an ecological *baseline assessment* of the Esteros' biodiversity, building on information from the UNCTAD-supported study, to assist in future monitoring of project progress and conservation impact, with the goal of informing adaptive management measures and programme and policy review. The participatory development of the Plan will ensure that its objectives, outputs and activities are based on specific contextual knowledge contrasted with scientific assessments and will be supported by a broad cross section of local stakeholders.
- (c) A *menu of economic and financial incentives* to motivate stakeholder adherence to the program's conservation objectives, including *recommendations for policy and regulatory reform* in the cattle ranching, agriculture and forestry sectors.
- (d) An *eco-tourism development strategy* based on sound ecological principles and led by local leaders and entrepreneurs to diversify sources of income and foster alternative livelihoods.
- (e) *Conservation training programme* for key staff in the provincial government, local NGOs, the private sector (including estancia owners), and academic research institutes active in conservation and resource management.
- (f) An *awareness and information dissemination campaign* targeting local stakeholder groups, i.e. local politicians and decision-makers, estancia owners, resource users and tour operators, on the importance of – and pressures on – the Esteros' fauna and flora.
- (g) A *financial strategy for meeting the recurrent costs of the Esteros' Bioregional Management Programme*. PDF A resources will assess the viability of tapping existing or developing new funding sources such as: provincial environmental budget, the binational hydroelectric authority, income produced from eco-tourism activities, continued support from foundations such as Conservation Land Trust, and support from

- Provision of essential infrastructure necessary to implement the *Bioregional Programme* such as control posts, trails, signs, communications, and appropriate administration and interpretation facilities.

#### Conservation training programme

- Development and implementation of training workshops led by conservation experts for Reserve personnel, relevant government officials, NGO staff and local communities on oversight, implementation and monitoring of the *Bioregional Programme*.

#### Recommendations for Policy and Regulatory Reform including incentive systems:

- Review and analyses of the legislative framework guiding resource use and sectoral activity in the Esteros region (particularly in cattle; rice production, and forest

plantations); identify current inconsistencies with conservation and sustainable uses, including potential disincentives; and, on the basis of consultations with relevant stakeholders, suggest modifications and draft legal amendments as appropriate.

- Present and seek approval of proposed amendments by legal authorities.

#### **Eco-tourism strategy:**

- Design and endorsement of an eco-tourism strategy for the *Esteros* as one of the means for alternative income generation for local stakeholders dependant on the area's biological resources.
- Identification and negotiation of the appropriate mechanisms to ensure a rate of return from eco-tourism proceeds to offset the reserve's recurrent operational costs.
- Training of key stakeholders in implementing and monitoring the eco-tourism strategy.

#### **Awareness and Information Dissemination Campaign:**

- Design of awareness-raising materials based on key conservation messages tailored to different user and decision-making target groups.
- Workshops to raise environmental awareness, conservation advocacy, and to maintain an on-going commitment and the active participation of civil society, particularly those involved in traditional economic activities (cattle ranching; rice cultivation, etc).

#### **A Program for Native Endangered Species Management:**

- Development of a management, breeding and reintroduction program for locally threatened and/or extinct native species based on preliminary viability assessments conducted at the PDF A stage. This will include consultations and active collaboration with leading authorities and NGOs (i.e., WWF, WCS, PROBIDES) on best practices and successful experiences in areas with similar ecological and socio-cultural conditions, as well as the design and evaluation of management strategies for the long-term maintenance of these endangered species.

### **12. Stakeholders involved in the project:**

The principal stakeholders active in the *Esteros del Iberá* include:

#### *Government:*

- **Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Corrientes.**
- **Departamento de Medio Ambiente del Ente Binacional Yacyretá in charge of Wildlife Conservation Units: Galarza, Pellegrini, Itaú, and Cambiretá, y Yaguareté-Cora**

#### *Academia:*

- **Universidad del Salvador.**
- **Universidad del Nordeste**

*NGO community:*

- Fundación Reserva del Iberá.
- Fundación Vida Silvestre, Argentina.
- Conservation Land Trust US.
- Fundación Ecos Capítulo Corrientes

*Private sector:*

“Estancias/Haciendas” involved in conservation and eco-tourism such as San Juan de Poriahu, El Tránsito, Guayaibí, San Alonso and San Marcos

Local community's involvement will be channeled through the institutions that figure under the above mentioned private sector and local NGO's such as *Fundación Reservas del Iberá, Fundación Ecos, Capítulo Corrientes, Universidad del Nordeste, Universidad del Salvador, Capítulo Corrientes, and Acuarapu-á.*

**Part II – Information on PDF-A Activities****13. Activities to be financed by the PDF-A:**

PDF-A activities will finance preliminary studies and consultations at both local and provincial levels to further define and consolidate information on: existing threats and best means and measure to counter them; baseline information and activities currently responding to these threats; as well as specific activities required to address gaps and threats not covered in the baseline scenario. PDF A activities and preparatory funding will be applied to corroborate and validate project objectives, expected outcomes, required activities to achieve them, and the final budget and time-frame for the full-scale project.

These preparatory activities will result in a detailed description of the GEF Alternative designed to generate global benefits through: 1] improved on-the-ground biodiversity conservation measures; 2] analysis of the impacts of productive sector activity – i.e. cattle, rice farming and plantation farming, on the existing biodiversity and the means by which conservation concerns can be incorporated into sectoral activity development, including the selection of pilot demonstrations; 3] enhanced public understanding of wetland ecosystems, and 4] greater institutional capacity to achieve and sustain these objectives. Discussions and consultations during the PDF-A will include a description of GEF requirements and eligibility, and will focus on generating necessary political, technical and financial commitments, particularly for non-incremental activities.

**Activity 1: Studies and consultations to serve as a foundation for the design of a Bioregional Programme by the project.**

- Rapid biodiversity assessments to identify “hot spots” within the Reserve.
- Assessment of scale and geographical scope of threats and impacts from agriculture (tree plantations, rice farming) and hunting (commercial, sport and subsistence).
- Assessment of infrastructure needs to implement a *Bioregional Programme* for the Esteros basin, including financial requirements to ensure continuity of operations.

Workshops with government officials and NGO staff on initial findings from the above activities and how these can translate into specific strategies to mitigate threats to the wetland. This will include discussions on potential partnerships with local actors and cofinancing prospects for components within the *Bioregional Programme* that may not be eligible for GEF funding.

- Consultations with provincial government entities and other national and regional private entities to assess current conservation efforts, coordinate actions, identify gaps and establish working partnerships for implementing the *Bioregional Programme*. This will include discussions on how recurrent costs of conservation will be covered after GEF resources are utilized.
- Awareness raising, advocacy and consultations will be held to garner support of local communities and obtain their inputs into the proposed *Bioregional Programme*.

#### **Activity 2: Assessment of capacity building and awareness-raising needs of stakeholders.**

- Consultations and discussions on the capacity building needs of stakeholders to implement the proposed *Bioregional Programme* and eco-tourism strategy (for instance, need for participatory decision making structures, training in various aspects of conservation management, ecologically sound eco-tourism, mechanism for the equitable distribution of profits and a proportionate share to sustain conservation efforts, etc).
- The capacity-building needs assessment, and will target productive sector entrepreneurs in the cattle ranching, agricultural and forestry sectors to determine and develop best practice models and replicable guidelines for sustainable ruminant management, organic rice cultivation, and tree plantation development consistent with conservation objectives.
- Identification of target groups and key messages for a comprehensive awareness-raising strategy.

#### **Activity 3: Analysis of legal framework.**

- A review of the current legal framework (laws and decrees) supporting conservation in the project area, to identify limitations, disincentives and barriers to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, particularly among the leading productive sectors. This will include issues of 10-year reform, easement and land titling, and conversion of conservation status from Provincial Reserve to Park.

#### **Activity 4: Assessment of eco-tourism potential.**

- Socioeconomic analysis of eco-tourism potential in the project area (including consultations with tourism entrepreneurs to gauge viability and demand) particularly the capacity to generate revenues for conservation while respecting ecological needs.
- Assessment of training needs and structures necessary to implement a community-led, conservation-oriented eco-tourism strategy.
- Consultations with stakeholders on other income-generating activities that can

contribute to recurrent costs of conservation.

**Activity 5: A feasibility study on the management, in-situ breeding, and/or reintroduction of endangered native species.**

- Collaboration with WWF, WCS and PROBIDES in gathering successful experiences in species management, in-situ breeding and reintroduction strategies.  
Definition of a species management strategy for the *Esteros*, including costing estimates for long-term monitoring, oversight and maintenance.
- Financial estimates for targeted outside support and training needs to effectively deliver and monitor such a programme over the short, medium and long-term.

**14. Expected outputs and completion dates of the PDF A:**

- Stocktaking and baseline assessment of existing biodiversity, analyses of current and potential threats along with related root causes as inputs to the proposed *Bioregional Programme*. (estimated time-frame 2 months)  
Analysis of existing and future activities planned to address threats and root causes as part of the project's programmatic baseline, including identification of existing gaps, necessary actions to address them as part of the proposed alternative, assessment of the incremental nature of proposed activity (i.e. complementary or substitutional), and estimation of corresponding co-financing requirements. (2 months)
- Documented consultation processes with relevant local and provincial stakeholders to achieve consensus on required measures to address existing threats and develop a sound and viable conservation management paradigm for the *Esteros del Ibera*. (throughout)  
Assessment of capacity building and awareness raising needs as inputs to; limitations of legal framework; and eco-tourism potential (2 months)
- **Formulation of medium size project brief and document (4 months after receipt of PDF A funding)**

**15. Other possible contributors/donors and amounts:**

- The Provincial authorities contribute periodically to the maintenance of the Reserve.
- The Binational Hydroelectric Authority currently provides funding for the five compensating Wildlife Conservation Units. Negotiations are already underway to secure a substantial increase in this support.
- The Conservation Land Trust has already purchased approximately 70,000 hectares in the *Esteros del Ibera*, at a cost of over US\$5.5 million. Recently, US\$ 175,000 were invested to relocate illegal squatters. At present, negotiations are under way to acquire another 18,000 hectares for US\$2 million. All of this land located within the Reserve is being set aside as core conservation units.
- The government of the Province of Corrientes has exempted the Conservation Land Trust from taxes covering these land purchases as they are being utilized for conservation purposes. The amount to be invested is in the order of US\$40,000.  
Fundacion Ecos has already invested approximately \$10,000 in the project and has

earmarked another \$10,000.

**16. Total estimated project budget and information on how costs will be met at the PDF A stage:**

Budget for PDF-A (*in US dollars*)

	PDF-A	Cofinancing*
<b>1 Personnel</b>		
2 Facilitators-3 workshops	2,000	
Coordination, technical and secretarial support	1,500	1,000
Project manager		3,000
Consultants	10,000	
<u>Sub total</u>	<u>13,500</u>	<u>4,000</u>
<b>2 Travel and Accommodation</b>		
6 National trips	1,000	400
2 Int'l trips + accommodation	2,500	2,500
Travel, workshop facilitators and accommodation	1,600	
Flying hours for inspection overflights	1,400	700
Lodging and meals for participants/organizers and facilitators	4,000	
Rental boats and fuel for inspection trips		2,000
<u>Sub total</u>	<u>10,500</u>	<u>5,600</u>
<b>3 Other</b>		
Materials	500	1,000
Administrative support		5,000
Communications	500	1,000
<u>Sub total</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>7,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>16,600</b>

\* Cofinancing from *Fundación Ecos* and *Provincial Government of Corrientes*.

**Indicative Budget for Medium-size Project (*in US dollars*).** PDF A financing will determine whether the proposed project can

	<u>GEF</u>	<u>Government</u>	<u>Cons. Land Trust</u>	<u>Fund. Ecos</u>
PDF-A	25,000			
Personnel	250,000	20,000	10,000	5,000
Subcontracts	75,000	--	8,000	10,000



Training	110,000	--	--	--
Equipment	90,000	--	130,000	5,000
Travel	25,000	2,500	20,000	--
Monitoring and Evaluation	10,000	--	--	3,000
Protected area infrastructure	165,000	20,000	--	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>42,500</b>	<b>168,000</b>	<b>23,000</b>

**ESTIMATED TOTAL MEDIUM-SIZE PROJECT BUDGET (including GEF and co-financing)  
USD 983,500**

\* Cofinancing from Fundación Ecos and Provincial Government of Corrientes.

### Part III - Information on the Applicant Institution

#### 17. Name:

Fundación Ecos, Corrientes Chapter

#### 18. Date of establishment, membership, and leadership:

##### Establishment

Fundación Ecos, April 1994

Fundación Ecos Corrientes Chapter, June 1999

##### Board Members

**Lic. Miguel A. Reynal**, President-Founder Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina, UNEP Global 500 Laureate. Member WWF UD National Council.

**Dr. Raúl Gauto**, Executive Director, Fundación Moisés Bertoni-Asunción-Paraguay.

**Gabriel Griffa**, Editor, Apertura Business Magazine, Argentina.

**Yolanda Kakabadse**, Minister for the Environment, Ecuador.

**Dean Peter Krogh**, Dean Emeritus of the School Foreign Service Georgetown University, U.S.A.

**Dra. María Leichner**, Attorney and Executive Director of Ecos-Specialized in Mercosur.

**Prof. Héctor Leis**, Dean of the post-graduate Program of Political Sociology, Santa Catarina University, Brazil.

**Dr. Daniel Sabsay**, Attorney and Executive Director Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN), Buenos Aires.

**Dr. Joaquín Reyes**, Attorney, Uruguay.

**Prof. Konrad Von Moltke**, Professor and Director for Environmental Studies, University of Dartmouth and Senior Fellow, World Wildlife Fund, U.S.A.

##### Founding Members, Corrientes Chapter

**Lic. Miguel A. Reynal**

**Dr. Pedro Perca Muñoz**, Director General of Fundación Iberá and ex Director of Provincial Reserve.

**Esc. Jorge Leconte**, Notary Public and prominent local statesman.

**Dra. María Leichner**

**Dr. Joaquin Reyes****19. Mandate/terms of reference:**

Fundación Ecos is a non-profit educational and research center, established in April 1994, based in Uruguay for the Mercosur region and created to promote nature conservation and sustainable development and transform environmental principles into concrete action at the local, national and regional levels. The concept of sustainability incorporates environmental, social and economic considerations in developing creative solutions to the problems facing our society. Ecos is building the capacity of Mercosur leaders from different sectors to generate the changes necessary for the transition to a sustainable society and sustainable use of natural resources. The Ecos research, education and implementation programs are designed to address institutional process, policy analysis, decision making, management and planning in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

To best achieve these objectives Ecos also does facilitation, conflict resolution, environmental impact analysis, training in corporate environmental management systems (ISO 14,000) and ecoregional biodiversity conservation.

**20. Sources of revenue:**

- World Wildlife Fund U.S.
- Bank of Boston
- The Tinker Foundation  
Citibank, N.A.
- Government of Uruguay
- UNDP
- World Resources Institute
- Archbold Trust
- Cornell University
- Wallace Global Fund
- The Moriah Fund, and others
- Other donors.
- 

**21. Recent activities/programs, in particular those relevant to the GEF:**

Fundación Ecos involvement with sustainable development educational and policy-making activities can be seen on our website: <http://www.fundacionecos.org>

The following is a listing of some of the activities: "First Global Leadership Conference on Management, Education and Training for Sustainable Development" in Costa Rica, September 11-16, 1995. Meeting on "Mercosur: Role of the Media in Environmental and Sustainable Development", October 9-11, 1995. National Consultation Meeting. The Summit of the America's meeting on Sustainable Development, June 18, 1996. Annual "La-Bell Leaders Conference Latin America" (Business, environmental learning and leadership), November 7-9, 1996. Seminar for South American Media Owners and Publishers on Environmental Responsibility and Sustainable Development, November 23-

25, 1996. An Environmental Impact Evaluation of 41 Argentine Airports, March-April 1997. Seminar on Sustainable Development as a Business Strategy for University and Business School Deans and Professors, June 6-7, 1997. Workshop on "Sustainable Development as a business strategy in the Oil Industry" for oil executives, November 29-30, 1997. Public hearing on the Installation of a water and sewage treatment plant in Encarnacion, Paraguay, December 15, 1997. Public participation meeting on the environmental impacts of Yacyretá Hydroelectrical Dam on December 17, 1997. Conference on "Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development within the Mercosur: The role of civil society", September 10-12, 1998. Action Plan jointly with WWF on integrating civil society into Trade and Environment issues in the Mercosur countries 1999/2000.

Fundación Ecos will be working closely with three stakeholders organizations: Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina, the most traditional and respected nature conservation organization which is associated to the World Wide Fund for Nature (this organization is the worlds largest and most active biodiversity conservation organization in the world operating in over 100 countries) in Argentina. FVSA in its 22 years has successfully put into place and managed various conservation projects such as the Tri-National Atlantic Rainforest Park, which includes protected areas in Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil (2.000.000 hectares), a system of 18 private reserves covering over 150.000 hectares, the Pampas Deer Project in the Province of Buenos Aires, the Pudu-pudu, (smallest known deer) conservation project, Bariloche, the Macaa Grebe *Posipes Gallardooides* conservation program, Patagonia, etc. The local NGO Fundación Iberá, whose board and staff are composed of biologists and experts, has over the last five years dedicated itself exclusively to the conservation of the Esteros. Conservation Land Trust, one the two largest foundations in the world dedicate to conserving wildlands, the Trust owns and operates the singles largest 700,000 acres privately held nature reserve in the world, Pumalin Park in Chile.

This project will be planned and executed by a network of the most prestigious and experienced scientific, technical organizations and individuals in the region since Fundación Ecos' Board and Staff are comprised of conservationists involved with other stakeholder organizations such as Fundacion Vida Silvestre Argentina, World Wide Fund, for Nature, Fundacion Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Fundacion Moises Bertoni, Fundacion Ibera and the Conservation Land Trust. The project will establish links with other GEF financed initiatives in the region of relevance to wetlands conservation, in particular with the Programme for Biodiversity Coservation and Sustainable Development in the Banados del Este (PROBIDES), Uruguay, recipient of USS 5.5 M in GEF financing. PROBIDES will be requested to periodically assist the project in design and implementation. Similar links will be established with the proponents of the Uruguay River initiative (PDF B in final stages of clearance prior to submission to GEF), in particular with the relevant Binational Commissions.

Fundación Ecos "modus operandi" in executing projects is to use, its own staff, Council Members other NGO's and technical, scientific organizations involved with the project. Ecos' Executive President, **Miguel A.Reynal** founded Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina 22 years ago (Executive President for twelve years). This organization is National

Associate Member of the World Wildlife Fund (largest organization in the world dedicated to conservation). He is also a member of the National Council of the WWF U.S. In 1996 Mr.Reynal received from the United Nations Environmental Program, UNEP, the Global 500 laureate for environmental achievement. Mr.Reynal continues on the Executive Committee of FVSA. Today after 22 years of effective biodiversity management and educational activities and thanks to its association with the WWF Fundacion Vida Silvestre Argentina is the most prestigious conservation organization in Argentina.

**Dr.Tomas Waller**, the projects chief biologist, is a member of the Scientific Council of the FVSA and perhaps the most knowledgeable scientist on the Esteros del Ibera, and is also working as consultant for the 9 universities who are carrying forward the UNCTAD Project on the Esteros.

**Dra.Maria Lechner**, full-time staff of Ecos, an Argentine environmental lawyer with many years of experience in the institutional framework surrounding sustainable development and conservation efforts. She will be in charge of the legislative review and institutional analysis surrounding the legal framework of the protection and conservation process.

**Dr.Pedro Perea Muñoz**, veterinarian, who is a founding and council member of the Corrientes Chapter of Fundación Ecos, has been Executive Director of the Provincial Reserve for the five years and Executive Director of Fundación Iberá for the last six years.

Ecos has the support of it's Council members amongst them are three prominent experts on wildlife conservation, **Yolanda Kakabadse**, President of IUCN and Minister for the Environment of Ecuador, **Dr.Raúl Gauto**, past founder and executive director of Fundación Moisés Bertoni, the leading nature conservation NGO of Paraguay and associate of the Nature Conservancy, **Konrad von Moltke**, who is professor and director for environmental studies at Dartmouth University and a Senior Fellow of the World Wildlife Fund U.S

#### **Part IV - Information to be completed by implementing Agency**

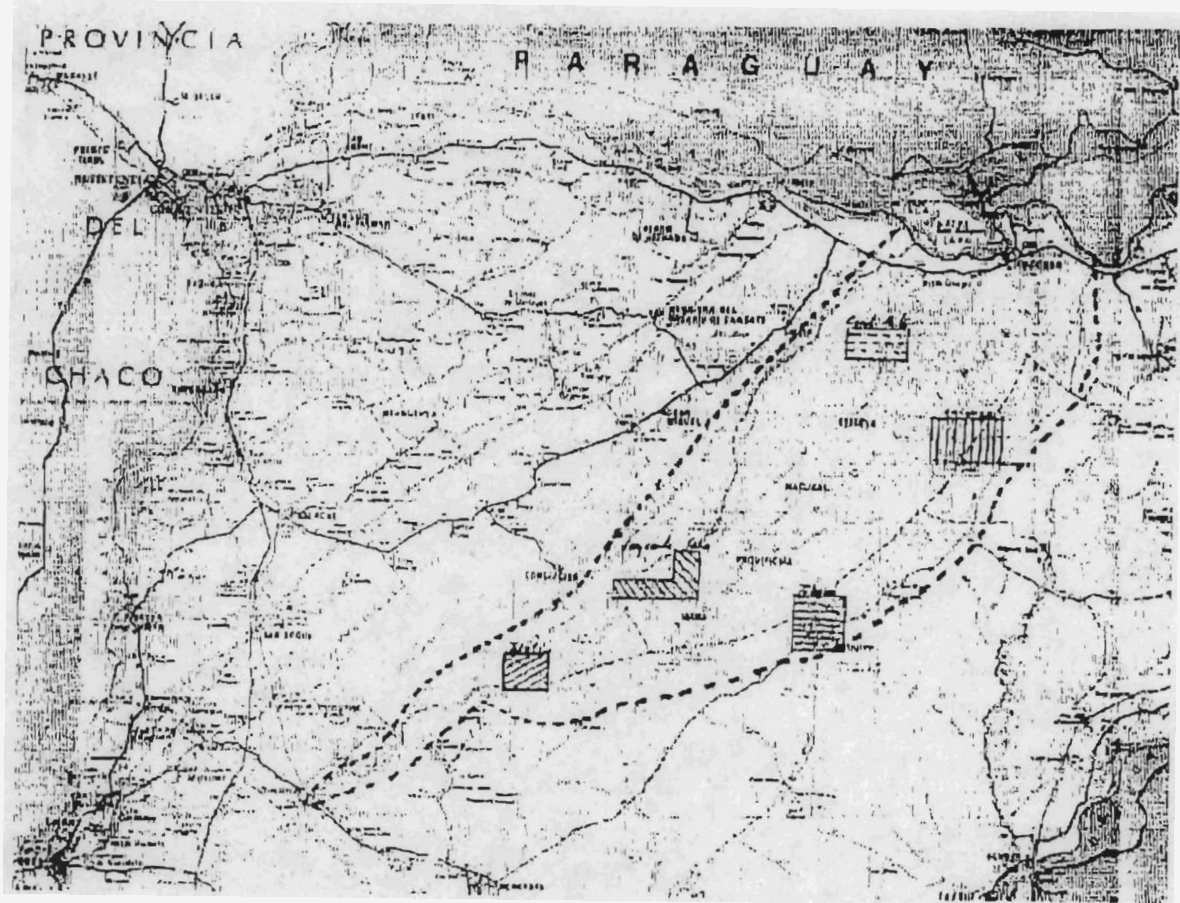
**22. Project identification number:**

**23. Implementing Agency contact person:**

Lita Paparoni, GEF Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Tel: (212) 905 5468, Fax: (212) 906 6688, email: lita.paparoni@undp.org

**24. Project linkage to Implementing Agency program(s):**

NA





Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores,  
Comercio Internacional y Culto

1999 - Año de la Esperanza

LETRA: SUBC

Nro: 106.655/99.

BUENOS AIRES 23 NOV 1999

LA CANCELERIA del Ministerio de Cooperación Internacional presenta sus atentos saludos al Consejo de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo y, en el marco del Global Environment Facility (GEF), tiene el agrado de presentar el siguiente proyecto:

Al respecto, se trata del Proyecto PDF/A "Manejo y Conservación de la Biodiversidad en el Parque del Iberá, Corrientes, Argentina", cuyo monto requerido al GEF es de \$ 1.000.000.

LA CANCELERIA del Ministerio de Cooperación Internacional reitera sus atentos saludos al Consejo de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)

SE  
106655/99

SECRETARIA DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES  
COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL Y CULTO

1999/4592

PNUD ARGENTINA

RECIBIDO ARCHIVO

23 NOV 1999

SECRETARIA DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES  
COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL Y CULTO

AL PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL DESARROLLO  
BUENOS AIRES