

# Land Purchase for Conservation

Proceedings of Symposia hosted by  
IUCN National Committee of the  
Netherlands & World Land Trust  
2006/2008

Land Purchase: An Intervention Strategy for Conservation  
(The Netherlands, September 2006)

Financial Sustainability of Private Protected Areas  
(Belize, May 2008)

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## The Sharp End of the Stick

To most people around the world, even those who describe themselves as environmentally conscious and strongly in support of preserving wild places, biodiversity and habitat conservation is something of an abstract concept. One makes a donation to a conservation organisation, and receives some notice that, thanks to their generosity, conservation goals have been achieved.

Exactly how biodiversity conservation, wildlife conservation, rainforest protection, carbon sequestration, watershed protection or any of the myriad elements of the work being done to protect the Earth's environment is actually pursued and achieved takes many forms. One thing is always constant – conservation, while ultimately rewarding, is difficult and very hard work for all those involved.

IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands and World Land Trust share a belief that direct intervention in the form of land purchase is an exceptionally valuable approach, as it places ownership and management responsibility in the hands of a conservation organisation. Taking it a step further, they also share the philosophy that the most beneficial approach is for this ownership and management responsibility to be in the hands of a local, in-country conservation organisation. And this is where the real work emerges.

Local conservation organisations, working in-country and on the ground, are the ones with the rolled-up sleeves, sweat-run brows and calloused hands. These are the people negotiating the deals, signing the deeds, patrolling the reserves, putting out fires, meeting and working with local communities, hiring and training local staff, raising the funds, and protecting the habitats and the wildlife within them.

Not only is this the hard work that turns good intentions into truly protected habitat – real acres in real places - it is an extraordinary practical challenge. As recently as 20 years ago most of this work was led by organisations in the north. Now an evolution of profound importance has matured: not only is the critical conservation work being done on the ground, largely and often by local residents, but the leadership itself is home grown. A new generation of conservationists

has developed dynamic local conservation NGOs and has taken the responsibility for making environmental protection a reality in their own countries.

This leadership represents the sharp end of the stick. These remarkable individuals must not only know what to do on the ground to turn donor intentions into protected places, and how to do it, but increasingly they must be chief executives, accomplished fundraisers, government liaisons and lobbyists who are comfortable and competent in remote forests, halls of government, international conferences, corporate board rooms ... and airports. Especially airports, for they are now constantly on the move.

The wealth of knowledge that these professionals have and their willingness to share it, inspired IUCN NL and WLT to organise two events to bring these experts together. This publication has been created for and on behalf of them, and can be used both as a fundraising tool as well as a guide with valuable experiences and ideas for NGOs (considering) using land purchase as a tool for conservation.

The first chapter describes the importance of land purchase as a tool for conservation, the IUCN NL and WLT partnership and the variety of ways in which corporate sponsors can become involved in this conservation strategy. Chapter 2 contains the proceedings of both Symposia, most recently in Belize in 2008, as well as the original meeting in the Netherlands, 2006. Both sets of proceedings provide information about experiences, opportunities and pitfalls of using the purchase of land and management of private nature reserves as a conservation strategy. In 2008, special attention is given to various possibilities for achieving financial sustainability for the management of a protected area. Included in the publication is a CD containing presentations from all participating NGOs, NGO profiles and the text of this publication in Spanish.

We hope that this publication provides valuable lessons about using land purchase as a tool for conservation. Above all this publication is a tribute to all participants of the event, dedicated professionals working in the frontline of conservation.

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Chapter 1

# Land Purchase for Conservation





## Forests, grasslands and wetlands disappearing: Ecosystems and Wildlife on the edge of extinction.

### **Why should we do something?**

The past few decades have seen relentless clearance of the world's tropical forests together with the loss of other vital habitats, such as grasslands and wetlands. Tipping the scales on this destruction has led to the loss of species and situations where many are just managing to hang on, often in unsustainable numbers, with ever decreasing habitat ranges.

Logging, and the conversion of forested land to agriculture or human settlements are to blame for more than 90 percent of all cases of extinction or seriously endangering animals and plants. The IUCN<sup>1</sup> Red List of Threatened Species (2008) concludes that almost 17,000 species severely threatened with habitat destruction as the most prominent cause. The onslaught of logging and land conversion has resulted in the loss or serious fragmentation of the world's wilderness habitats, and, by creating smaller and smaller sanctuaries for wildlife, traditional animal migration routes are obstructed and the areas in which they survive are no longer viable, particularly for larger species. In addition to the effects on biodiversity, the degradation of habitats can cause massive disruption of human communities, increase poverty, triggering migration to other areas in search of fertile land and the avoidance of animal/wildlife conflict. The influx of new groups of settlers to specific regions can, in turn, threaten the fragile ecological balance. And finally, the degradation of land frequently leads to other environmental problems such as the siltation of rivers, pollution and soil erosion and in extreme cases, desertification.

With escalating land prices, triggered by commercial developments such as 'biofuels' or coastal development 'resort' projects, there is no time to wait for politicians and speculators to see the light. Nor can we wait for decisive action from decision makers, who notoriously travel business class from conference to conference and spend endless hours discussing issues that seem irrelevant to conservationists working in the frontline of conservation, who can see only too well catastrophes waiting to happen. When used as a

conservation tool by capable NGOs, land purchase can be an extremely valuable, though sometimes complex, instrument to protect threatened ecosystems and safeguard them for future generations. But unlike many other conservation interventions, there are often only very limited windows of opportunity, meaning that it is essential that funds are available when that window occurs.

### **Strategic Land Purchase to create viable Nature Reserves**

The threats to the world's natural habitats are immense. We desperately need to save what is left, but time is running out and we cannot leave it to governments. Many local NGOs have, independently, faced the challenge, and realised that in areas under high pressure, the purchase of relatively small, targeted remnants of natural vegetation in order to create Private nature reserves can have a disproportionately beneficial impact on the conservation of local biodiversity.

There are, many different reasons for creating nature reserves, and each reserve will be created for a variety of different reasons. The primary reason, of course, is to help conserve species, but other reasons can be incredibly diverse. Some reserves are created in urban areas, either to preserve relics of a landscape that have largely been lost, or more commonly as purely educational resources. But the overwhelming majority of reserves are created in order to preserve habitats that are important for wildlife – in particular endangered species – that would otherwise be destroyed by unsympathetic 'development', conversion to agriculture, drainage or any one of numerous damaging changes.

Some of the fragments of the forests remaining in places such as the Atlantic Rainforest in Brazil, are now critical for the survival of endemic species, and by buying these remaining fragments and getting legal protection for them, the NGOs are in a unique position to make conservation history. Many people will argue that this is the job of governments, but this route is fraught with problems, and in many countries not one to be relied upon. Governments rarely have the funds available for private land purchase, and so

<sup>1</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature, founded in 1948.

the only means available to them is compulsory sequestration of the lands. This process is usually not only very time consuming, but likely to alienate local feelings against nature conservation. Conversely, as many of our partner organisations have demonstrated, if the purchase is handled carefully and diplomatically, it can actually enhance the reputation of nature conservationists and benefit local communities. Add to this, the fact that nature conservation organisations are often less restricted in the way they can approach land acquisition; for instance acquiring land which, on the face of it, doesn't constitute an important wildlife habitat, but is a vital corridor between two significant conservation areas, can be a strategically important land purchase.

The greatest benefit of land acquisition that creates corridors between existing protected areas, is that it invariably has a significantly greater impact than the acquisition of the same sized area if it is isolated. This is particularly true for small nature reserves. A land acquisition of a few hundred hectares on its own, isolated in the middle of agriculture for instance, cannot sustain populations of large predators such as jaguars, or large herbivores such as elephants, and even if it can sustain populations of species such as primates, the conflicts with agriculture may become serious, leading to persecution. If however, the few hundred hectares is a corridor between two large, but otherwise isolated protected areas, such as a national park and a forest reserve, the impact is significantly greater.

### IUCN NL and WLT: a Strong Partnership

The IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL) is the platform of the Dutch IUCN members. Its staff are working on issues such as the Dutch ecological footprint, influencing Dutch policies and brings business and conservation organizations together. It also has a long history of funding local nature conservation projects all over the world. From 1994 onwards, over 1,500 projects on sustainable ecosystem management and conservation have been supported all over the world, mainly with funds from the Dutch government's Overseas Development Aid budget line. Although a wide range of activities could be supported, funding land purchase was not possible because the Dutch government, for obvious reasons, did not want to become involved with land purchase outside its own borders. Consequently, many requests for funding land purchase had to be turned down.

In 2001, IUCN NL became a beneficiary of the Dutch Postcode Lottery, the largest charitable lottery in the world. Fifty percent of the gross proceeds of this Lottery goes directly to various charities. Since its launch in 1989, the Lottery has paid out over 2,7 billion euro to 64 beneficiaries. With the funds from the Postcode Lottery, IUCN NL started a new funding facility specifically for funding land purchase - the Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature programme (SPN). In the last 9 years almost 70 projects have been supported in 27 countries, covering about 20,000 hectares and a wide range of ecosystems. The fund made it possible for local conservation organisations to purchase and protect land, from the high altitude Paramos of Colombia to the grasslands from Kenya, and from the wet forests in India to the dry forests in the Paraguayan Chaco.

World Land Trust (WLT), an IUCN member, has a 20-year record of funding land purchase and has, to date, assisted its partners in securing over 270,000 hectares of threatened habitat. It started life as the UK counterpart for Programme for Belize (PfB) and for the first two years concentrated its efforts in raising funds for PfB's Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area. WLT then moved on to Costa Rica, funding the purchase of land adjacent to Corcovado National Park, and then on to the Philippines assisting the Philippine Reef & Rainforest Conservation Foundation to purchase and protect the island of Danjungan in the Visayan Group of Islands of the Southern Philippines, an area with many highly threatened and endemic species. WLT now manages a portfolio of projects with over a dozen international project partners and is committed to strengthening these partnerships and helping towards project and organisation sustainability. While tropical forests remain at the

forefront of public concern, WLT has also pioneered land purchase of other threatened habitats including Pantanal Wetland and Dry Chaco in Paraguay, and Coastal Steppe in Argentina. Over recent years, WLT has also developed its Carbon Balancing programme which now offers corporate clients and individuals an opportunity to offset their unavoidable carbon emissions. Funds raised through this programme are used for restoration and assisted regeneration projects, usually adjacent to protected areas in order to increase the sizes of reserves for the benefit of wildlife.

WLT's funds for conservation are raised through a variety of ways. Some 12,000 people have, over the past twenty years, assisted WLT by making donations to 'buy' acres or hectares of threatened habitats. Many of these have converted into regular supporters by pledging monthly or annual amounts to the Trust. The Trust's website attracts a growing number of on-line donations from supporters usually based in the UK, but also from across the world. Additionally, corporate support, both for land purchase and carbon offsetting, is becoming a major source of income to fund WLT's conservation activities

### Joint Projects: A Shared Vision

Both the IUCN NL and WLT share the view that the best way of achieving long-term, sustainable conservation is by strengthening local NGOs. The partnerships between IUCN NL, the WLT and their respective networks are key to the successes achieved so far, and as the local partners grow in strength, and in their membership support, so also does their ability to manage protected areas. The IUCN NL and WLT provide management oversight, but without micro-managing the projects, so that their donors can feel assured that funds are well spent. And, in the case of land acquisition, there is always a very clear and demonstrable result that can be measured – in hectares. It also lends weight to the true permanency of land purchase that, in most cases, donors are able to visit the areas saved.

Although WLT can demonstrate 20 accumulated years of experience in the conservation field, this belies the fact that, prior to the formation of the Trust, several of its senior staff and Trustees already had extensive experience in the field of international conservation. It was this experience that led to the formulation of the Trust's over-riding policy of strengthening local NGOs and not taking direct management control.

The IUCN NL has a different, but equally applicable experience, having been at the centre of a coalition of NGOs, with many years of experience in funding small grants conservation projects all over the world.

And while its objectives for funding land purchase are almost identical to those of the WLT, its criteria for giving funds are different, particularly since land purchase is only one funding stream of several available.

*"To be clear, though, the WLT [and IUCN NL] does not own one square centimetre of land overseas. They have provided funding to assist the purchase of thousands of acres by partner organisations in countries where we work. These funds have all been sent overseas ... It is the Trust's view that conservation, if it is to be sustainable, has to be in the hands of local people. That is why our modus operandi is to raise funds in order to support local organisations. It is our local partners who negotiate the land purchase in their own country..."*

Sir David Attenborough CH FRS, Patron World Land Trust

The unique relationship between IUCN NL and WLT has developed organically over several years, initially through independently funding some of the same projects being instigated by some of the same in-country organisations. This discovery led to increased communication between IUCN NL and WLT, which in turn has resulted in more effective application of funds, strengthened recipient organisations, and an emerging series of special project opportunities. The demonstrated success of the cooperative efforts between IUCN NL and WLT has established a solid foundation for a more extended working partnership, the value of which was recognized in 2008 and the relationship between IUCN NL and WLT elevated to a formal working partnership, for which a Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed.



Classical situation where a strategic purchase can create a corridor between areas of high biodiversity value. Example from Misiones, Argentina.

## How businesses support conservation

IUCN NL and WLT both know from experience that, compared with almost all other forms of conservation, purchase of land and creating private protected areas is probably the most assured way of delivering tangible conservation results. In turn these tangible results mean that it can be made attractive to potential donors in the charitable and corporate sector who can demonstrate their commitment to the conservation of the natural environment by not only helping create reserves, but also developing long-term commitments, and helping provide resources for protection and management. This can be a symbiotic relationship, providing feedback to their staff, clients and customers and demonstrating an environmental commitment to the world at large. By investing €10,000, US\$20,000 or £5000 a visible, protected haven can be created for the protection of wildlife and their habitat into the future.



Webcam at feeder in Buenaventura Reserve



Miko representatives with Sir David Attenborough

## Coffee Saving Threatened Habitats: Miko Coffee Investing in Conservation

*A partnership established in 2006, saw the collaboration of Belgian coffee company, Miko, and the World Land Trust, for the development and marketing of a new Fair Trade, organic brand of coffee called Puro. Efforts were not only made in the ethical sourcing of the beans used in Puro coffee, but the company also invested in land purchases of threatened habitats in Ecuador, with a donation of 2% of the brand's turnover being earmarked for this conservation initiative. When launching the partnership, Andy Orchard of Puro Coffee said:*

*"At Puro we see no sense in industrial growth at the expense of the community and the welfare of our planet. We aim to assist in every small way in halting deforestation, and are proud to have teamed up with the World Land Trust to assist in making it an economic reality. Helping local people improve living conditions without compromising their natural resource is vital. The WLT conserves biodiversity by protecting threatened habitats and, by working through local partners, helps ensure that they are managed sustainably. Puro has already funded the purchase of over 200 acres of rainforest in Ecuador, which is an area over one-third the size of the City of London. This figure is growing weekly and for every kilo of espresso beans sold, more land can be saved for the future."*

*Miko also went on to invest in the development of a website ([www.wildlifefocus.org](http://www.wildlifefocus.org)) featuring live-streaming footage from a webcam on Fundación Jocotoco's Buenaventura Reserve, where WLT continues to fund land purchase activities. The website now attracts further businesses to sponsor other webcams, and follow Miko's footsteps by investing in conservation.*

## Donations 'in kind' and pro bono support

World Land Trust has been working with a growing number of corporate supporters and, in some cases, the business themselves may have goods or experience which could be hugely valuable to the partner organisation. This requires the donor organisation to make the connection and recognise where help could be given, and to make the link.

Travel companies, for example, can assist partner organisations in many different ways. Firstly, if appropriate, a relationship can be formed whereby they promote the reserve and its lodge as part of their travel itinerary, thereby helping bring in funds for the project. Secondly, they are usually very pleased to promote their commitment to the project on their website. WLT works with these companies on their web content and will, on occasion, ask the partners for specific information requested by the company. This in turn shows the close network between partner, donor and company. Thirdly, they can use a variety of ways to raise funds for the project. For instance, Travel Republic, a WLT supporter for several years, makes a donation for every return passenger air ticket booked through them. They are currently supporting land purchase in Paraguay and have requested that a plaque be placed in the sector of the Chaco-Pantanal Reserve which was funded through their donations, and a photograph taken for them to put up on their website and to show customers. Such plaques are excellent ways of demonstrating meaningful support and encouraging other companies to do the same.

Another corporate supporter of WLT, Nikwax, manufacture environmentally-friendly mosquito repellent. They have provided their products to the staff of Guyra Paraguay and to WLT representatives travelling to project areas, where mosquitos are a serious problem for field workers. Apart from the fact the the product really works, this is an example of a good partnership between the partner, the donor and the company. A different type of support is offered to the WLT by NHBS (Natural History Book Service), an international on-line book supplier. They have been donating field guides and reference books to WLT for several years and WLT maintains a list of books which are available to partner NGOs. Any partner representative coming to the UK is encouraged to visit the WLT office to go through the books and take any that would be of value to their organisation. The main costs involved are in shipping the books, so this should be avoided if possible.

Lastly, pro bono advice from reputable companies is always valuable. Corporate supporters of WLT, Ibex Earth, have a group of lawyers offering pro bono advice and Pricewaterhouse Coopers has provided pro bono management and financial advice to partners through its Ulysses Programme.

## Ulysses Programme: Pricewaterhouse Coopers assisting Project Partners through leadership development

*Ulysses is a global leadership development programme for future leaders of Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) staff, with the aim of helping other organisations with their development. Their mission is to offer a programme designed to build a global network of responsible leaders who are committed to developing quality, trust-based relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders. In their words: "These leaders will understand PwC's responsibility as a firm, and as individuals, to integrate stakeholder collaboration into the role of high performing business to create sustainable success for communities and markets across the world."*

*The programme offers huge potential for overseas NGOs, and in 2008 Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda (GESG), IUCN NL and WLT project partner in Mexico, applied to and was accepted into the programme. The overall objective of the PwC assignment with GESG was to develop an integrated business strategy for long-term sustainability of conservation and sustainable development activities in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, after the project's current funding ended in 2008. This plan was anticipated to underline the viability of the reserve as a business, taking quantitative measures and the social perspective into account, with the view of attracting potential donors.*



Chapter 2  
**Symposia Proceedings**





## Letters from Chief Executive Directors of WLT and IUCN NL

The World Land Trust was delighted to have the opportunity of working with the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands in creating a Symposium programme involving our international partners undertaking land purchase for conservation. Bringing together this unique network was stimulating, productive and creative, and as a direct result of the enthusiasm generated from the initial Symposium held in Holten, Netherlands in September 2006, a second Symposium was hosted by Programme for Belize, at its La Milpa Field Station in May 2008. Programme for Belize was founded in 1988 and has set high standards for NGO conservation through land management. Over the past two decades it has been innovative in a wide range of fields, and the La Milpa Field Station gave all other partner organisations of IUCN NL and WLT an opportunity to discuss issues and problems against a background of real conservation.

The period between the two Symposia saw a significant growth in WLT with more funds becoming available for conservation through land acquisition, but the key issue discussed in Belize was how to make nature reserves pay for themselves, and how to make them sustainable. The WLT/IUCN NL partner organisations are among the most proactive and dynamic in the conservation world, and we believe that by facilitating the growth of these organisations we can assure a future for wildlife.

*John A Burton*



John A Burton  
Chief Executive Officer  
World Land Trust

Working in biodiversity conservation is like playing chess on many different chessboards. Sometimes you are trying to convince high level decision makers or informing CEO's of large companies on sustainability issues, whilst in the meantime fulfilling the inner drive to always look for the best opportunity and practical solutions to support activities at the field level. Talking is needed, but the need for real solutions should not be ignored as it is at the ecosystem field level where it all happens. It was through its ecosystem grants programme that the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL) - eight years ago - recognized the importance of supporting local organizations with the purchase of natural areas. After successfully having approached the Dutch Postcode Lottery, the Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature (SPN) was initiated in 2001, and since then many local organisations have received financial support to acquire threatened natural areas. Some years later we recognized that our colleagues at the UK-based World Land Trust shared a similar vision and working methods, and soon we established a deeply rooted cooperation between the WLT and our SPN programme. In 2006 this working relationship culminated in a great Symposium within a national park in The Netherlands, involving a selection of SPN partners and Dutch IUCN members Staatsbosbeheer and Natuurmonumenten, with a follow up meeting in 2008 at the first land acquisition project supported by WLT, in Belize. Since then the momentum for purchase as an important instrument to conserve biodiversity on the local level has increased tremendously. We are committed to continue our WLT/IUCN NL partnership with all the other partner organisations to show that biodiversity conservation can be made financially sustainable.

*Willem Ferwerda*



Willem Ferwerda  
Executive Director  
IUCN National Committee of the  
Netherlands



Record of proceedings  
Symposium “Land Purchase as  
an intervention strategy for  
biodiversity conservation”  
Financial sustainability for  
Private Protected Areas

19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008

Programme for Belize's La Milpa Field Station  
Rio Bravo Conservation Management Area, Belize  
Hosted by: Programme for Belize

### Day 1: Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>

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- Arrival at Radisson Hotel, Belize City
- Drinks Reception

### Day 2: Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>

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- Transfer to La Milpa Field Station
- Introductions, catch-up and presentations

### Day 3: Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

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- Session 1: Definition and Issues
- Session 2: Payment for Ecosystem Services  
**(Keynote Speaker: Roberto Pedraza – Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda )**
- Session 3: Carbon Issues **(Keynote Speakers: Roger Wilson - World Land Trust & Edilberto Romero - Programme for Belize)**
- Session 4: Ecological Restoration / Avoided Deforestation **(Keynote Speaker: Nicholas Locke - REGUA)**

### Day 4: Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

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- Session 5 & 6: Tourism, volunteers and education **(Keynote Speakers: Constantino Auca - ECOAN & Aukje de Boer - IUCN NL)**
- Walking tour of La Milpa Field Station
- Evening presentation : Landscape Auctions **(Keynote Speaker: Daan Wensing -Triple E)**

### Day 5: Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>

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- Session 7: (Inter)governmental funding and trust / endowment fund **(Keynote Speakers: Marco Cerezo - Fundaeco and Alberto Yanosky - Guyra Paraguay)**
- Session 8: Private sources and corporate funding **(Keynote Speakers: Vivek Menon - Wildlife Trust of India & John Burton - WLT)**
- Session 9: Social sustainability and community involvement **(Keynote Speaker: Benno Glauser - Iniciativa Amotocodie)**
- Session 10: Leadership 'burn out' and its affect on institutional sustainability.

### Day 6: Friday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>

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- Wrap up: What's next? How do participants see this network?
- Transfer back to Belize City & Press Conference

### Introductions, Catch up and Presentations

The first Symposium, held in September 2006, at Holten in the Netherlands, had brought together key decision makers from overseas project partners supported by the Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature Programme (SPN) within the IUCN National Committee for the Netherlands, and UK-based World Land Trust. That Symposium was attended by many who had not previously met, and following introductions to the individuals themselves and the organisations they represented, the framework for an ongoing network for the benefit of international conservation was formed. Everyone attending expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to be able to speak about issues relating to their specific organisations, and to hear how others dealt with similar issues in their own countries. It was agreed that there was a huge amount of knowledge around the table and by bringing together this consortium of conservation experts it could lead to a smoother path in the road to conservation of threatened habitats and wildlife. It was agreed that the next Symposium should take place in approximately 18 months time, and Programme for Belize offered to host the Second Symposium. Like the first Symposium, it was agreed that it should be held in the field, away from distractions, and close to the wildlife that all were trying to conserve.

The Programme for Belize (PfB) was the first project funded by the World Land Trust – in fact the WLT was established to fund raise for PfB. The La Milpa Field Station was an ideal venue, as not only is it located in the middle of the forest, but it is also an excellent example of an ongoing project to provide sustainable income for conservation.

## Definition and issues

A major discussion point at the previous meeting had focused on defining financial sustainability in the context of conservation NGOs and private protected area managers. The sustainability of the organisations represented, many of them relatively young and rapidly growing in order to meet the ever growing demands and challenges in saving and protecting threatened habitats, was agreed to be central to a consolidated and effective approach to long term conservation achievement.

In its simplest form, financial sustainability is understood as securing permanent funds to keep the organisation or project functioning. It is necessary however to examine the issue more deeply, as the question of financial stability can be applied at both the institutional and protected area management levels. Over the long term, funding must be secured for conservation activities, financial stability and institutional functioning.

It is evident that financial sustainability is not necessarily the same as institutional sustainability, although both are important. Financial sustainability goes beyond administrative costs: it also includes minimal management costs for the reserves and funds for investment (education and community outreach, management, facing extreme climatic variation, and other unforeseen circumstances). Financial sources should match objectives and activities as much as possible, for instance, moving away from conservation and going into management, tourism etc. Therefore the planning of non management career development is important for the future stability and continuity of the NGO.

Institutional sustainability is transparency, decision making etc; which may lead to financial issues, but is not the same. Financial sustainability can not be obtained without honesty and credibility, or without a strong institutional foundation that is capable of good conservation work and sound fiscal and institutional management. Transparency, hard work and example-setting are perhaps the three best pieces of advice for sustainability and stability. Also "accountability" should be added to the concept of financial sustainability – i.e. where has the money

gone that has been received? Sadly, there have been cases of NGOs with reasonable donor bases that collapse due to internal problems. Sustainability of an organisation is based largely on good administrative management.

The need for institutional sustainability takes the discussion a step further. Certainly, a functioning and sufficient funding stream is important, but sufficient funds alone are not enough. Strong internal management practices and good staff and boards are paramount. Institutional strengthening is an important component in the pursuit of sustainability. Securing financial sustainability is difficult, especially for young NGOs that are typically founded and driven by conservationists, not economists or businessmen. Conservation is the main objective; over time, as organisations establish a foundation of success and a commitment to managing reserves 'in perpetuity' the need for an expanded focus on financial and institutional stability rapidly emerges as a much more demanding and consuming priority. As one participant put it, "*All young organisations have accountants, older organisations have financial managers.*"

The issue of protected area management versus institutional needs differs from organisation to organisation. For example, for Programme for Belize's (PFB) Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area (RBCMA), the only protected area managed by PFB and the focus of virtually all of its work, the financial sustainability of the RBCMA is completely linked with the financial sustainability of PFB. PFB has community based institutions where the administration is mainly supportive. PFB's two criteria for financially sustainable activities are:

- Maintaining biodiversity and not affecting ecological services,
- Ensuring it is economically feasible – to the extent of treating it as a business and demonstrating that conservation can pay for itself. Financial sustainability means securing funds for both the core costs of the RBCMA as well as the administration and, to a lesser degree, community outreach and education.

Alternatively, an organisation such as Fundación Jocotoco in Ecuador, which owns and manages a network of 8 reserves throughout the country, needs to maintain a strong central organisation that is capable of coordinating and facilitating the management and long-term sustainability of all of its reserves. It must raise and manage the funds necessary to ensure long term viability of its reserves, while at the same time sustaining the core administrative structure necessary to its operation. In this case, the sustainability of the organisation is not linked to the sustainability of one or more of its protected areas, but its reserves are significantly dependent on the viability of the central administrative entity for their survival.

In Brazil, Fundação O Boticário generally believes that in order to function they need to learn from enterprises/companies and their practices. Speaking from experience they have also found that these enterprises/companies can benefit from learning from NGOs too.

In an ideal world all projects should pay for themselves, but rarely is this possible. The solution is to urge governments to place conservation at the top of the list of their priorities, because at present conservation is seriously lacking on the agenda of most Latin American Governments. Ensuring this level of priority for conservation will contribute greatly to stability, and it is therefore necessary to pressure governments to assume their responsibility. Therefore, lobbying is key to getting large amounts of money from governments and the best way to guarantee the most amount of leverage is through a joint approach.

Iniciativa Amotocodie has even more distinct perspective, as its unique mission makes it necessary to distinguish between institutional sustainability and the external reality. IA does not aspire to become institutionally sustainable, as what IA does should actually be done by government. The reality is that IA puts itself in a risky situation and struggles every year for financial survival. IA has temporary presence, so land purchase has to be sustainable without IA. Therefore, sustainability is not just financial and institutionally defined, but represents a much broader social and anthropologic requirement.

The range of activities pursued by conservation organisations will always need external funding. Financial sustainability is not the same as covering costs. With this fundamental understanding in mind it was agreed that financial **stability** is perhaps more important than financial **sustainability** (and is more appropriately the first step towards it). This is a critical semantic point, and all participants agreed that **stability** is indeed what most organisations are looking for.

Looking for sustainability may take you away from your original role, and NGOs should try to keep focus on their original missions despite pressures of change and in continuity externally and internally.

A change of mentality amongst the donor community would alleviate some problems. Donors of all kinds commonly fund projects for a limited number of years and usually want a strong focus on the core conservation objectives, typically only covering a small amount of overhead and institutional strengthening. To add to the conundrum, when evaluating a conservation project, some donors or 'investors', particularly institutional donors, do not look at the conservation benefits/successes as measurements of achievement, but at the economic aspects which are more easily quantified. Conservationists do not come with that mindset and consequently must be able to look at their projects not just on conservation merit, but also as a business.

As organisations mature, the funding environment shifts. NGOs come to realise that even the best funding sources come to an end at some point. Early recognition of the need to develop alternative and (hopefully) sustainable sources of income generation (discussed in more detail later in the meeting) can help to establish a foundation for these initiatives while funding is still available. Of course, some sites within protected areas, and in some cases entire protected areas, are not compatible with economic development activities, for example environmentally or archaeologically sensitive sites where tourist visitors are not allowed, and, in some cases, the need to protect fragile habitats and their wildlife. Donors need to be made aware of this and consequently be encouraged not to consider financial sustainability as a sole criteria, but in the context of the overall protected area management parameters.

New organisations are faced with the daunting question of how to identify and act on the keys to their own institutional stability, when the majority of their time, energy and expertise is focused on urgent conservation issues. Alberto Yanosky of Guyra Paraguay pointed out that since the group first met in The Netherlands in 2006 there has been growing emphasis on "sustainable livelihoods" which is a relatively new topic. Over recent months climate change initiatives, carbon credits, payment for ecological services etc. have provided new opportunities to help finance our organisations. Guyra Paraguay have been working to limit administrative costs, and, as a result, have become more transparent. Guyra also incorporates risk assessment and have come to realise that some risks can be conquered and others cannot (e.g. political

constraints). In addition, a larger part of Guyra Paraguay's project budget now goes to activities such as communication.

One strategy that ProVita, in Venezuela, has used successfully is to try to obtain financial stability by identifying at least 10 donors a year. Initially this involves a great deal of proposal writing, but from relatively small projects it has been possible to build confidence with donors. This is one recommendation for new NGOs. As a complementary, longer term strategy, the importance of identifying and establishing a support base of a few donors who are likely to develop a long term commitment greatly increases the chance for enduring financial and institutional sustainability. The model for this kind of sustainable donor-relationship must be built in such a way that once the confidence has been established the donor is enthusiastic about moving on to new project funding once the initial commitment has been achieved.

Better established organisations often consider creating endowment funds as a way of covering costs and providing a sustainable source of funds for the future. However, it is recognized that creating functioning endowment funds not only takes a lot of planning and implementation work, it can also present a conundrum when an organisation raises funds from both UK and US sources. The general perception in the USA is that endowment funds are a good way of working towards financial sustainability, while in the UK it is generally not considered good practice to have significant funds sitting in the bank account when they are urgently needed for conservation challenges today. Endowments can be successfully achieved more easily if they are attached to a specific reserve rather than the NGO itself. Some organisations are beginning to look at building in extra money to the price per hectare when purchasing land, in order to help create an endowment fund for reserves.

## Payment for Environmental Services (PES): Environmental Services as a tool for financial sustainability

### Keynote speaker

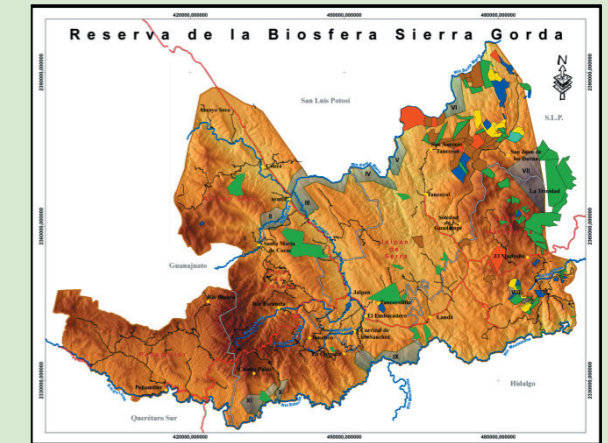
Roberto Pedraza – Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda

Ecological services, such as protecting water catchments, are a new potential source of revenue, which some of the partnerships are already tapping into. Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda (GESG) has a wealth of experience in the implementation of Payment for Ecological Services (PES) programmes focussing on water, carbon and biodiversity. Some of their initiatives, like putting an economic value on forests as carbon warehouses and the soil retaining capacity of vegetation, are still in their development stages but it is important to put in the ground work in order to reap the returns later.

The Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (SGBR) in Querétaro State, is the most ecologically diverse protected natural area in Mexico. The pressures exhibited by the 100,000 inhabitants concentrated in 638 communities within the Reserve boundaries threaten to compromise the ecological integrity of the reserve and its natural resources. GESG uses various strategies to protect the valuable ecosystems in this highly diverse Biosphere Reserve of which the purchase of lands is an important one. In 1996 the first pieces of land were bought in Joya del Hielo, an old growth cloud forest unique in terms of biodiversity. This pioneering conservation effort cleared the path for other donations from philanthropic organisations and organisations like World Land Trust and IUCN NL.

Because of its physical, geological and environmental characteristics, the Biosphere Reserve plays an important role as a hydrological recharge zone, supplying rivers and springs that sustain approximately 300,000 inhabitants within the reserve and its areas of influence. Taking all this into account, the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) and Gonzalo Rio Arronte Foundation are providing funds for the Payment for Hydrological Services implemented by GESG. The levels of CONAFOR funding that could be provided were US\$40 per ha per year for cloud forest and US\$30 for other ecosystems.

In 2005, on behalf of the GEF Project "Conservation of Biodiversity in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve", the first payment of "Renting for Conservation" was received by owners of sites chosen for their biological value and capacity for environmental services. These properties constitute 2,444 additional hectares belonging to twenty-seven owners, and covered by ecosystems like tropical deciduous forest, conifer-oak and cloud forests, with the presence of several endangered fauna and flora species. Land owners benefiting from this project (funding provided is USD\$24 per ha per year) agree to refrain from forestry resource extraction activities and to guard against illegal hunting and forest fires. Many beneficiaries are cattle raisers who suffer attacks from jaguars and pumas on their cattle. While PES does not provide direct compensation, the attitude towards wild animals has improved as a result.



Conservation strategies in Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve - Green: lands under PES conservation scheme from CONAFOR, Blue: Rental for conservation, Rio Arronte, Yellow: Private Nature Reserves (purchased land), Red: properties currently for sale.

Roberto Pedraza confirmed that US\$500,000 was the expected income each year for the next five years, at which time it was due to end. However, GESG are hopeful that in the meantime, laws will be in place to guarantee continued payments; and also hope that during this time there will be a wider understanding of the global importance of saving biodiversity.

Questions were raised regarding the corporate investment and why this would be attractive to companies. Roberto confirmed that the interest came primarily through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and also the fact that there might be opportunities to sell the carbon rights and make a profit, in years to come. He confirmed that the internal capacity for this scheme was funded by GEF funds together with matching funds that had to be found (seed money for Sierra Gorda came to a total of US\$6.7 million). The annual budget increased dramatically with a return of 4:1. As this was a family-run initiative continuity was guaranteed as well as the consolidation of the relationship with the local community.

GESG charges US\$14 per tonne for its carbon offsets and the question of how much due diligence should be carried out prior to accepting funding from companies wanting to offset their carbon emissions, was discussed. In the case of GESG they felt the priority was to establish the model in order to be in a position to demonstrate a successful project with effective long

term management. Initially it is important to be opportunistic but at the next stage the integrity and commitment of potential 'offsetters' needs to be assured.

Roger Wilson (WLT) reported that WLT had bought offsets from GESG, and established that US\$15 is considered to be about the right price for an offset. There is an issue regarding the pricing of a) an offset produced by avoided deforestation and b) an offset from planting, in that carbon offsets produced from avoided deforestation will cost less (US\$6-7) rather than US\$15 for the latter. There is a difference between the amount that companies pay for compensation (US\$15) and the prices paid in the carbon market (specifically speculating businessmen who pay US\$6/7). A "top of the range product" may be sold for a higher price, as it includes carbon, water and biodiversity. Those individuals and companies approaching WLT generally believe that biodiversity counts, and therefore are willing to pay for it. On average WLT charges £15 per offset, sometimes more. In the carbon market however, biodiversity is not important as they are only interested in offsetting at a cheap rate. Therefore, it is important that one remains flexible when dealing in carbon pricing and recognises who the audience is.

- WLT buys credits from GESG for already reforested areas. WLT expect monitoring to continue for 20 years, while the U.N. expect it for 30 years.



- O Boticario charges US\$250 per hectare/per year for a period of five years in Brazil, for hydrological services and erosion control. When developing their carbon programme, issues surrounding the calculation of price were apparent. Problems arose with specifying a project lifespan or offset period of only 5 years, purely because a company could not really claim to have offset activities if, after 5 years, the forest involved was cut down.
- A reason for utilizing PES (in Sierra Gorda) is that most of this land is not for sale. By paying landowners for PES there is an incentive to conserve the land, which they otherwise might not do.
- In Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay, soya and sugar cane plantations threaten the survival of natural habitats. While the commitment of the Paraguayan government for enforcing environmental protection was noted and applauded they have not yet allocated funds to implement this effectively. There is a concern that without greater direct action, opportunities for PES may be missed in Paraguay.
- How much compensation is paid to a land owner is also important. In Paraguay less than US\$500 per hectare would not be attractive considering the prices that can be achieved from growing soya and sugar cane.
- In Paraguay there was a study carried out on how much the Atlantic forest is worth, and how much it would be worth if it was used for something else. This study concluded that land prices have risen due to the fact that land owners have recognised that land is worth more due to its ecological services potential.
- Water may be an even more urgent issue than carbon at this time. For this reason Fundaeco in Guatemala has made a breakthrough deal with a water company by encouraging this municipal company to give concessions. The water company now pays 2.5% royalty as a payment for Hydrological Ecological Services on their income, and this provides protection for the watershed (in the protected area). There are other examples where protected areas are working in a similar way with municipalities to contribute to protecting land.
- Another similar approach can be seen with some "port companies" that have trouble with sedimentation. Fundaeco have offered these companies the chance to pay for reforestation etc. in order to reduce the sedimentation along the navigation routes that lead to the ports.
- Another way in which Fundaeco hopes to raise money is by pressuring the government to contribute more finances to protecting land via taxes that already exist. For instance, there is a tax on gasoline for road construction and asphalt. 10% of this tax goes towards protected areas. Also, there is an oil fund in Guatemala and Fundaeco is asking for 10% of this fund to go towards the protection of nature. In other words, utilise money and taxes that are already in place (instead of creating new taxes), invest in PES and work to convince policy-makers to redirect a portion of existing taxes towards conservation.
- In Patagonia (Peninsula Valdes) federal government incentives have not stopped current (non-environmentally friendly) activities. For example, exempting landowners from tax has made very little, or no, difference because the people don't currently pay anyway! In theory, incentives for ecological services should not have a negative effect.
- In Ecuador, an NGO working closely to one of Fundación Jocotoco's (FJ) reserves is implementing a project which involves a hydro-electric scheme; it is approved by the Government and means that a power line will cross a this FJ reserve and cross a National Park. The outcome has been double-sided: initially it was positive because of PES, but the knock-on effect has been a rise in land prices. From this experience FJ has learnt that it is crucial to maintain good relations with the local community as there was a fear that from an external point of view it could reflect very badly on FJ. For example, initially FJ was receiving money from the water company each year with no benefits to the local community. However, to address this issue, FJ decided to channel the money back into the communities to avoid such problems. Another issue is that power lines can be dangerous to wildlife, such as birds.
- It is very important to consider the issue of "trust": in many cases, as is the case in Ecuador, many communities are misinformed about PES and therefore people begin to mistrust NGOs, seeing them as businesses and thinking they will charge them for use of water, oxygen and forest. This is a potential pitfall that NGOs should be aware of. Transparency is vital.

## Carbon Issues and Ecological Restoration

### Carbon Issues - Keynote Speakers

Roger Wilson – World Land Trust  
Edilberto Romero - Programme for Belize

Carbon Sequestration is a well-developed 'Payment for Environmental Services' (PES) system. The World Land Trust is very active in this field, using carbon sequestration as a supplementary financing mechanism for land purchase associated with reforestation and through 'Reduced Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), for forest protection. WLT concentrates on voluntary emissions offsetting, driven by corporate social responsibility and adding value to the offset by also conserving threatened habitat and species.

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It also works at two levels. At its simplest, clients and donors may simply want to support reforestation for its own sake, or be able to pitch their donation to an approximate amount of emissions avoided by protecting threatened forest. The more complex level involves full carbon accounting and monitoring, but opens a new channel to large corporates. Programme for Belize pioneered one of the first large-scale projects on the Rio Bravo. This was established in 1996, in the pre-Kyoto 'pilot phase' under the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change. The project, financed by a group of US and Canadian utility companies, is on-going and preparations were in hand for certification to create tradable credits. In his presentation he detailed the steps taken to reach this point.

The discussion included the following points:

- Marco Cerezo described another carbon initiative – the Pico Bonito Carbon Fund. This is a corporation comprising a local foundation, investor, local community and international foundation. Sequestration techniques include both reforestation and avoided deforestation, undertaken on land purchased from small land-owners. After the project period (20 years) the area will be returned to the communities. Shares in the scheme can be bought off the web.
- Marco Cerezo also asked if existing reserves were eligible for credits from avoided deforestation.

Roger Wilson replied that he hoped eventually they might, given that retrospective credits for avoided deforestation could finance management costs for entire reserves. The main problem is proving additionality – one has in effect demonstrated that the land would be protected anyway on biodiversity grounds. The issue is debatable though, as it excludes reward for past good stewardship. A draft proposal was presented to the World Bank based on the principle of retrospective credits and they were not averse to the concept, indicating the principles involved are understood.

- Edilberto Romero pointed out the issue of leakage. The PfB project has produced 1.7 million tones of carbon, but probably only 20% can be certified. The remainder is likely to be set against 'leakage' – shifting deforestation from one area to another. Roger Wilson noted that WLT always uses very conservative initial estimates of emissions reduction in its projects and then only allows 40% of that as potential credits from a project. This creates a buffer against leakage deductions from the start of the project.
- Both Alberto Yanosky and Lou Jost asked about the costs of certification and who bore them. Edilberto Romero stated that in the PfB project these costs, reckoned to be US\$ 150,000 for an area covering 51,000 acres, were borne by the investors but that he saw other options. They could be covered by a bank loan that was repaid from the sale of credits or by an endowment fund established at the start of the project for that purpose.
- Alberto Yanosky also asked if one had to wait until 2012 to use REDD opportunities in the voluntary market. Roger Wilson replied that the voluntary offsetting involving REDD to meet Corporate Social Responsibility targets already existed. The opportunities needed to be taken now and would themselves influence the discussions leading to the post-2012 regime. Daan Wensing noted that the Dutch Government was the chief negotiator for Europe on carbon issues and IUCN NL met them every two months. Input from participants would therefore be welcome.
- Mark Gruin asked if any land purchase mechanisms could help prevent leakage. Roger Wilson

answered that leakage was a particularly difficult issue to pin down properly but was easiest to track with large holdings with a few owners rather than many small holdings. In the event that leakage issues were so uncertain that they undermined the carbon sequestration case, NGOs can always fall back on the biodiversity conservation arguments as justification.

- Lou Jost wanted to know more or less how much carbon was stored in standing forest. Roger Wilson stated that one could only claim what would have been lost annually, not the total standing stock in the forest. WLT used an initial conservative estimate based on best available information on the forest type – evidently lower for Chaco dry forest, higher for wet forest – with a general conservative default (based on Ecuador measurements) for REDD of 100 tCO<sub>2</sub>/ha/yr. For growing forest the equivalent figures are 12-19 tCO<sub>2</sub>/ha/yr. These figures are based on a C:CO<sub>2</sub> conversion of 3.67 and are net of the leakage deduction. These figures are used to initiate a project and are replaced by site-specific values when the funding is used for monitoring of actual performance.

The general agreement was that carbon sequestration did have substantial promise as a financing mechanism for forest restoration and protection. The topic therefore resurfaced in the next session.

### Ecological Restoration - Keynote Speaker

Nicholas Locke – REGUA

The REGUA ecological restoration work concentrates on reforestation of valley-bottom land that has been cleared for very many years and where soil quality itself has been degraded. The approach involves producing a wide range of native species in nurseries, including a combination of pioneer and mature forest species, that are then planted out at a density of 1000/ha. The planting rate has been built up to a level of 20,000 p.a., a sustainable rate within the overall work-program of the site. The tree-planting scheme is integrated with wetland creation.

The restoration work is worthwhile in itself but also serves broader aims. Greater habitat diversity increases biodiversity (bird species alone have almost quadrupled in the restoration area) and so enhances ecotourism. It also creates an educational tool and a model to encourage others to take comparable actions elsewhere. The restoration work is therefore integrated with the full range of REGUA activity and contributes to key aspects of it.

The following discussion had two strands: on technical tree-planting issues and on the underlying costs, benefits and principles.

On the technical side:

- Whether herbicides (notably Round-Up) should or should not be used stimulated lively discussion. Victoria Maldonado said that they had success in simply sowing seeds straight into the ground, without clearing the herbage. Nicholas Locke said that would not work on his site, due to invasive introduced grasses and that Round-Up helped (and indeed was necessary for) seedling survival. Plantings were therefore more successful on former cultivated ground rather than pasture. Lou Jost reported that he too used Round-Up and for the same reason.
- Eric von Horstman observed that Pro-Bosque avoided using herbicides at Cerro Blanco because the dead grass posed a serious fire risk. They relied instead on manual cleaning. At first they left the cut grass at the base of the tree but now moved it as it still represented a fire-risk (and lost 2000 trees to it at one point). On the other hand Nicholas Locke found that using Round Up reduced the fuel build-up and so helped though it was only practical in relatively small areas. He also used zones defined by physical features (roads, streams etc.) that acted as fire breaks. The importance of managing fire-risk was generally recognized. It was, alongside cleaning, a major cost in Paraguay. At Cerro Blanco, Pro-Bosque also used fire breaks but found them only partially successful (due to wind-blown sparks) and also invested in guard stations to reduce the likelihood of people setting fires and ensuring swift action if they did. Fire management training was also required, in their case undertaken with Fundación Jocotoco.
- Victoria Maldonado asked if irrigation assisted establishment. Nicholas Locke said that irrigation had been used in an area near the lodge to promote good growth and high survival. Now that work had expanded to 15-20 ha per year he timed the planting for the beginning of the rainy season, using volunteers to water the saplings only as an emergency measure.
- Noting that REGUA used transplanted natural as well as nursery-grown seedlings with as wide a range of native species as possible, Lou Jost asked how performance compared between the two. Nicholas Locke thought transplanted natural seedlings were good on an occasional basis but that the root ball could be damaged when seedlings were gathered and that it was usually better in nursery-grown plants anyway. Tino Auca said that ECOAN had good results from cuttings and

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## Tourism, Volunteers and Education

### Tourism - Keynote Speaker

Tino Aucca – ECOAN

Tourism, per se, is a huge topic, and many of the partners already have extensive experience, some good, some not so good, and some disastrous. The pitfalls are many and partner NGOs have much to learn from each other's experiences. In the words of Marco Cerezo (FUNDAECO) "*where tourism is concerned*) *We have made all the mistakes in the book!*" The terminology is also important. The word 'ecotourism' is often used very loosely to refer to tourism with a wildlife and habitats focus. However, the general understanding of the word is tourism which is ecologically friendly: something very different. You can have wildlife tourism and stay at a five-star hotel, and this is not ecotourism. NGOs using the word ecotourism need to ensure that their facilities stand up to the criteria of being eco-friendly; and this would be using composting toilets, solar energy etc. In many cases tourism being undertaken by partner NGOs is sensitive wildlife tourism and not 'ecotourism'. Partners should work on accurately describing the tourism they are offering.

Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) is involved with the protection and extension of the 2,586.5 hectares Abra Patricia Nature Reserve in the Northeast part of the Peruvian Yungas. This area comprises habitat for 317 resident bird species, of which 23 are considered globally threatened, including endemic and extremely rare birds such as the Critically Endangered Long-whiskered Owllet. Here, and in many other areas of Peru, ECOAN is closely involved in tourism projects that aim to provide a sustainable income source for local communities and reserve managers. Furthermore ECOAN is implementing projects to reduce the pressure of tourism activities on the natural resources.

The presentation emphasized the negative impacts of tourism along the Inca Trail. The costs to tourists is not enough – particularly for the use of resources such as fire wood, water etc. and, in any case, the amounts they do pay usually goes to the tour operators and not to the local communities. In an attempt to

relieve the negative impacts of tourism on the natural resources, ECOAN invests in wood-efficient stoves and environmental education programmes etc.

### Open Discussion

For at least the last 15 years in-country conservation NGOs have been encouraged to pursue ecotourism as a way of generating income to help towards financial sustainability. The results have been mixed, and each organisation was able to share examples and challenges. The fundamental question is: *Should conservationists be actively involved in tourism?*

In the experience of Programme for Belize:

- First a feasibility study is needed to ascertain if it is likely to be profitable, and then the decision is whether to manage the programme yourself or put it under concession. PFB has carried out its tourism in many different ways over the years and it now has its own in-house tourism department.
- Investment costs are high and it takes about two to three years to recover expenses.
- Tourism is challenging because it is a very sensitive business, visitor numbers can fall off for reasons beyond your control, such as changes in global travel patterns.
- Quality has to be of a high standard and marketing is critical; PFB needs to improve its facilities as well as its marketing.
- Developments within tourism need to be continuously assessed, and it is necessary to try to keep ahead of the game, since there is always going to be a lot of competition from professional tour operators.
- PFB has been focussing on educational groups and researchers, but you can't expect to make money from the latter, although good researchers can enhance your tourism product. Educational groups are a good resource, but after 9/11 it was learnt that this is one of the most sensitive groups, and were likely to cancel their visits in the face of political instability or natural disasters.

Fundación ProBosque used to charge different fees for foreigners and nationals but were criticised by the

REGUA reported the same experience though it was used only at a small scale. Marc Hoogeslag asked if REGUA relied solely on planting or included natural regeneration for ecological restoration. Nicholas replied that in REGUA's case, natural regeneration occurs after the planting has created shade.

- Edilberto Romero asked about pest-problems and survival rates. Pancho Sornorza noted that Fundación Jocotoco had indeed experienced losses to pests while Nicholas Locke found this was not a major issue for REGUA where conditions were favourable and survival was at 95%.

Regarding costs, benefits and principles:

- Noting that Nicholas Locke mentioned a cost of c. US\$3.00 + overheads per seedling, Marc Hoogeslag asked how that compared to costs in, for example, Ecuador. Roger Wilson said that this was more or less the norm because that was the price the funder was prepared to pay. Where costs were lower for seedling establishment, related actions (e.g. in training) were simply added to the budget.
- Marc Hoogeslag enquired if REGUA sold seedlings as a supplementary revenue stream. Nicholas Locke replied that they did not but there was definitely a market as there was a regional plan to plant 10 million trees in the coming five years. Large-scale seedling production was not, however, that easy.
- Reforestation gave good opportunities for community participation, beneficial both in principle and as a cost-effective way of operating. Tino Aucca reported that the ECOAN approach promoted voluntary community reforestation while REGUA found it better to pay local people for the work. Pancho Sornorza also noted the community benefits gained from the restoration work.
- Marco Cerezo was interested in making the connections between habitat restoration and carbon. He noted that natural regeneration was a cheaper and faster reforestation technique and arguably captures more carbon. As a result, Fundaeco had persuaded the Guatemalan authorities to make natural regeneration eligible for forestry subsidies – was it also eligible for carbon sequestration? Roger Wilson confirmed that it was and that he preferred it wherever possible, on cost-effectiveness and biodiversity conservation grounds. 'Assisted natural regeneration' was an accepted reforestation technique under the Kyoto Protocol, gaining carbon from the moment actions removed the cause preventing regeneration – e.g. alleviating grazing. Combining natural regeneration with enrichment planting was also an option.
- It was also noted, by Mark Gruin, that carbon off-setting was associated with real tropical forest but

could also be applied to other types – e.g. mangrove, Chaco dry forest etc. What was the potential there? The response was that they all had potential – less biomass (and thus stocked carbon) could, for example, be counterbalanced by the availability of larger areas at lower prices. The same principles applied to peat- and wetlands though measurement of avoided emission was more difficult. There was indeed a substantial body of literature related to carbon sequestration in mangrove. Gerry Ledesma pointed out the similarities with terrestrial forest from his mangrove restoration experience in the Philippines. There too, nursery-raised trees had better survival rates than transplanted natural seedlings. The community dimension was also important, here linked to enhancing crab fisheries in the mangroves.

The overall consensus was that habitat restoration was neither a simple nor cheap management activity. One of the interesting points was that nearly all the partners were involved in ecological restoration in some form, facing more or less similar issues and addressing them in different ways adapted to their circumstances. Between them was a deal of experience that could be shared and disseminated. A similar situation applied to carbon sequestration which, for all the partners, was a means of achieving biodiversity conservation rather than an end in itself. Again there was diversity and similarity that gave strength and depth to the project portfolio and could be capitalized upon.



international and national tourism authorities, and therefore decided to have uniform charges: US\$4 adult, US\$3 child, US\$15 for cabins, including meals, per day). ProBosque does not aim to make a profit, but aims to break even. An important aspect to any tourism programme should be the educational remit.

ProVita warned that if your feasibility study suggests that it is better not to do tourism, then don't do it – tourism does not boom everywhere. The importance of identifying a unique selling point was also stressed – in ProVita's case this is community tourism (home stay). This is attractive to tourists, and generates much more income, since people stay longer.

REGUA has found important benefits of tourism included community employment, and demonstrating to the local community the importance of conserving their heritage. REGUA also identified tourists to be potential donors.

Fundación Jocotoco treats all visitors as potential donors and aims to give them a great experience. (Three visitors to FJ have turned into major donors) However, as an NGO it is sometimes difficult to get tourism permits, an issue which still causes problems for FJ. As conservationists it is necessary to lobby governments for ease of getting a tourism license.

In Paraguay, the law has changed and NGOs can engage in tourism, but it makes paying taxes a lot more complicated. Guyra Paraguay has found that donor trips have been very successful, and they are being contacted more and more by individual bird-watchers wanting specialist guided tours.

Programme for Belize has a representative of the Ministry of Finance on the board, and it is able to carry out tourism as long as the profits are reinvested in conservation. Tourism is a business branch of the NGO therefore taxes have to be paid separately. Joint ventures and hiring other companies to do tourism has proven too risky for PfB. For example, PfB were taken to court for US\$500,000 and although they won, it proved that the associated risks are high and there was a lot to lose.

Fundaeco stated it has made all the mistakes that can be made in eco-tourism! It believes that the goal of any tourism project should be to generate income for the local community, institutional promotion, breaking even and helping cash-flow. It is now concentrating on site management and building an infrastructure rather than marketing or selling. Not all sites can be profitable tourism destinations. It is important to concentrate activity and investment in a few sites with

high potential, but also recognize the carrying capacity, and identify alternative options. Less attractive sites should not necessarily be expected to be profitable, but if there is a presence of hikers and campers, for instance, this could act to discourage encroachment and hunting in the area.

PRRFC in the Philippines also believes that carrying capacity is very important. It organises camps for young people, considering them to be the conservationists of the future.

Both Tino Aucca and Pancho Sornoza (Fundación Jocotoco) had been guides before becoming CEOs of conservation organisations and they believed this had helped in the development of their tourism programmes. They also recognized the importance of leading donor trips themselves rather than expecting a reserve guide to be able give everything that is needed. Because of the importance of concentrating on conservation at all times, and the tendency for business aspects such as tourism to deflect attention away from the key objective, ECOAN will be setting up a separate organisation to handle tourism. This requires investment and, as mentioned earlier, legal aspects need to be closely studied, but by setting up a separate organisation it is easier to comply with government regulations.

It is worth noting the introduction to tourism on REGUA's website:

*Guapi Assu Bird Lodge is a birding and wildlife lodge situated in the heart of the Atlantic Forest, or Mata Atlântica, in south-east Brazil. Part of the REGUA project, Guapi Assu Bird Lodge was opened in 2004 to provide high quality accommodation for visitors to the reserve. The Lodge is non-profit making, with all income generated going towards our conservation work. The Lodge is beautifully situated on a small hill at the edge of the restored wetlands, overlooking the forested Serra dos Órgãos mountains. Guests have access to low and high altitude forest and the reserve wetlands and we run excursions to a variety of other habitats for species not found at REGUA.*

Nowhere does REGUA claim to be offering ecotourism, and yet this is one project that benefits greatly from their tourism facilities. A lot could be learned from this model.

In concluding, John Burton pointed out that virtually all conservation NGOs engage in tourism, but do not have a meaningful budget to spend on marketing, whereas commercial travel operators treat this as a major part of their business. The British Birdwatching

Fair, held every August in the UK, being an example of an excellent opportunity for marketing to a very focused target group of keen birdwatchers who travel. REGUA have found that by attending the Birdfair (assisted by WLT), visitor numbers have been significantly increased at REGUA.

#### Volunteers - Keynote Speaker

Aukje de Boer – IUCN NL

It seems an attractive proposition: getting young healthy and enthusiastic volunteers from overseas to undertake work on reserves. But the reality can be the opposite. There is certainly potential for using volunteers, which, when managed properly, can become the organisations best advocate as well as possible conservationists of the future. However, a set of procedures for choosing and managing volunteers is vital in order to safeguard the organisation from potential disasters. Overseas volunteers are often young, falling into the 18-23 age group, sometimes never having lived away from their own home and country. Faced with a very different climate, expectations and culture, together with a degree of freedom they probably didn't have at home, problems are waiting to happen. And failures can linger, causing long term negative impacts which could take years to overcome.

There is also a financial aspect to receiving volunteers. Providing adequate guidance, housing and food for volunteers can be time and money consuming. Although many volunteers do not understand right away why they are being charged if they are working for free, most of them will understand once they know what their contribution is being used for. When establishing the price for volunteering, it is important to take into account that, in general, costs diminish when a person is staying longer, is highly skilled or comes as part of a group. One option is to establish different rates for different kinds of volunteers, a second one is to set the same price for all volunteers. In the first scenario, profitability of the volunteer programme depends on the number of volunteers, in the second one, the programme is profitable when the host receives many long term or highly skilled volunteers or groups. Whichever option one chooses, it is unlikely that a volunteer programme will do much more than cover for its own costs. For this reason, it is important to ask yourself whether you are willing to accept that the immaterial benefits of volunteering may be more important than the material ones, before you start a volunteer programme.

Points raised in the discussion included attention to the negative impact of volunteers taking away work

from local people. For example, the £2,000 paid by the volunteer to work for a couple of weeks could be used to employ a local person for a whole year! This is not normally taken into account but it is good to try and ensure that no long-term employment is being lost through the volunteer placement. On the positive side volunteers can also bring advantages to a community by providing intercultural exchange.

Fundaeco ensures that volunteers pay for a salary of a local person to work with them, providing a job and opportunities for good social partnerships. They recognize also that unskilled volunteers often come with high expectations of what they want and do not necessarily expect to contribute. Consequently, a lot of time and energy can be expended with no tangible results. To address this, Fundaeco now employs a local co-worker, paying US\$50 a week, to act as a 'buddy' to the volunteer. And it should also be recognized that while there may be no tangible benefits of having a volunteer, if they have had a good, motivating experience they will become an important ambassador for both the organization and conservation in the future.

REGUA relies heavily on volunteers, advertising and recruiting from international websites. Community outreach is part of the programme in an attempt to consolidate the volunteers into the community.

PRRFC have had a lot of experience using experienced scuba diving volunteers to carry out marine surveying along 1200km of coastline, and the results have been positive on the whole. If scientists had been employed to do the same work it would have been very expensive. It is sometimes difficult to avoid cultural clashes, usually associated with inappropriate behaviour (i.e. dress code, drinking alcohol etc), but on the positive side, volunteers have done excellent work for conservation and have been able to pass on conservation awareness to the local community and also help teach English. Volunteers, when selected carefully and properly trained in advance, can be a very useful asset to a project.

PfB had had similar experiences and confirmed that training and management were key. Cultural differences must be recognized and addressed, and the local community must also be aware of how they fit into the reserve's ownership and operations. For instance, for a long time PfB had a battle to convince local people that RBCMA belonged to Belize because the community has a lasting perception, due to constant presence of foreign volunteers, that it belonged to foreigners. PfB endeavoured to solve this problem by teaming up with Belizean students, which

had the extra bonus of education. Volunteers are not charged a fee, but are expected to cover their own lodging, food and managing costs.

Fundación Jocotoco's recommendation is that taking on volunteers should be recognized as a major commitment and if NGOs don't feel confidence in taking on this responsibility then they should not as the issues involved are complex and time consuming.

ECOAN is gaining more experience in this field as they see volunteering as a growing resource. It is important to know how to deal with volunteer agencies to ensure that they provide the volunteers we want rather than focusing on what they want. As an example ECOAN was sent a volunteer who had been told by the agency that he would be carrying out reforestation work, even though it was not the time of year for reforestation! Sometimes it is simply not possible to 'supply' a project to meet the volunteer's expectation as sold him by the agency. In general ECOAN prefers to work with institutions and universities.

Other partner experiences highlighted the following issues:

- National volunteers are perhaps even more important (ProBosque has agreements with the national universities and therefore most of their volunteers are Ecuadorian.)
- Key to success is ensuring that expectations are realistic: for many volunteers the reality never seems quite as great as the expectation while they are with you, although, of course, once they have returned home they then begin to digest the wealth of the experience and can end up with a completely different version of the reality than how you saw it at the time.
- Maintaining flexibility for volunteers is important so that there tasks can be changed if there is a problem.
- Recognise that there will be successes and failures and develop a formula for dealing with both – i.e. keeping in touch with the best volunteers and using them as your ambassadors, and ensuring that less successful volunteers are not able to impact on the other volunteers or the organization.

It was noted that there are programmes for exchanging park rangers, the costs of which may not be prohibitive and only involve travel expenses.

- WTI has experiences with exchange programmes through the Global Tiger Forum. The main objective is to show rangers from other countries a tiger in India, for example some rangers protecting the tiger in Siberia have never seen a tiger.
- ECOAN have exchanged rangers with an organisation in Ecuador and *vice versa*. It teaches how to record data, use a digital camera, use a gun etc. The RARE programme has been very helpful in teaching rangers how to work with local communities.
- Fundación Jocotoco is currently training their own rangers to be able to assist Fundación Ecominga's new rangers. FJ would be very interested in exchange opportunities, not only to help the personal development of rangers, but also because it creates commitment among staff members. In addition, some programmes help rangers learn English which is important for eco-tourism, especially bird guides.
- In REGUA research teams help to teach the rangers the dynamics of nature and this can prove to be a very enriching experience for the rangers themselves.

- PfB has been involved with a ranger programme on a national level. In Belize, after qualified training, rangers can be granted the status of "special constable" which then gives them the right to arrest people, giving them a degree of power and authority to protect the areas appropriately.

It was agreed that exchange programmes are a very useful tool, and WLT/IUCN NL were asked if it would be possible to provide funding to maximise the potential of this network.

Education of visitors and 'donor' tourism are important aspects for all NGOs to consider. Every visitor to a reserve is a potential donor and, conversely, if the visitor has a bad experience they won't come back, nor will it be recommended to others. Therefore managing the visitor experience is paramount. Whether it is the training of park guides to ensure that they have complete knowledge of the birds and other inhabitants of the reserve, or the staff at your visitor facility, or drivers they are all representing your country and your organisation. A good visitor experience can lead to both funds and the best PR available, and all at no cost.

*Take for example Bernard and Oonagh Segrave-Daly, supporters of the World Land Trust, living in Suffolk. Mr and Mrs Segrave-Daly had an interest in visiting the Ranch of Hopes (Estancia La Esperanza), owned and protected by Fundación Patagonia Natural. They first visited six years ago and were welcomed by Jose Maria Musmeci and the staff at La Esperanza with such warmth and knowledge that they instantly felt akin with the project. Since then they have visited on two separate occasions, have donated themselves and organised fundraising events especially for the project, and speak to all their friends and acquaintances about the wonderful work being undertaken by FPN. Nothing can beat this kind of experience and interaction.*

The moral of the story is: **In all cases, be it tourism, volunteers or education, ensure that you manage expectations.** Don't inflate bird numbers; if the weather is likely to be bad say so; and if accommodation is very basic, this should be made clear in the first instance. This doesn't need to sound negative, and in general, visitors going to see nature reserves aren't expecting top end facilities, but organisations need to be honest about the realities. Visitors will be able to see for themselves, so there is no point in attracting them under false pretences, as this can only lead to a poor experience.



*WLT supporters visit the REGUA reserve and see the last fragments of Atlantic Rainforest for themselves. This particular couple chose to commemorate their wedding by funding the purchase of a sector of land through REGUA.*

In closing John Burton, World Land Trust, said that for a donor organisation, recommending volunteers to partners was a tricky business. Many people, particularly students, come to WLT asking about volunteering with overseas project partners. This is not something to take lightly and WLT's normal approach is to say that first the volunteer must work in the WLT UK office to gain experience and for WLT to assess their suitability. This usually puts them off, which WLT sees as a positive way of assessing commitment. Generally WLT only recommends graduate or post graduate volunteers where the volunteer position is part of their degree and they won't pass at university unless they do a good job. From past experience WLT does not normally recommend gap year students. WLT also organises Study Tours for representatives of its project partners and there are opportunities for partner staff members to come and work in the WLT office.

## Landscape Auctions

### Keynote Speaker

Daan Wensing – Triple E

Triple E (Economy, Ecology and Experience) is a company inspired by a concept frequently acknowledged by conservationists, that nature is 'priceless' and consequently has a monetary value. To prove that and to make it attractive to investors, it was decided that Triple E must be a for-profit company. A key objective is to turn conservation into a positive thing, rather than protesting against damaging activities, focusing instead on the intrinsic value and appeal of nature.

Landscape Auctions: The concept of Landscape Auctions originates from The Netherlands where most nature is in private hands and a lack of finance threatens biodiversity conservation. For a Landscape Auction, the landscape is divided into tangible pieces called 'landscape elements', for instance a wildlife corridor, a pond, or a group of trees. The landowner then determines the minimum price for each element by calculating how much it would cost them to maintain the ecological functions of these landscape elements for 10 years.

Before an auction is held, a catalogue is published listing all the landscape elements, the terms and conditions, and the 'rules of the game'. In this way, buyers can base their bid on all relevant information. The catalogue is also published online and potential buyers are approached through the media and relevant networks.

On 15 September 2007, over 300 people (representing banks, accounting firms, a waste plant, a high school as well as many individual citizens) participated in the first ever Landscape Auction, which took place in the nature area being auctioned off, and raised i.r.o. €150,000 for the maintenance of the landscape for the next 10 years.

The landscape elements that are 'sold' through the auction do not actually change hands as they remain the property of the land owners. Participants only 'buy' or pay for the maintenance costs of the element, not the element itself. The money raised through the

auction is managed by a regional trust fund or NGO, which also monitors compliance. Contracts are thus between land owners and the trust fund/NGO, as well as between winning bidders and the trust fund/NGO.

All bids are clearly labelled, ensuring that the money paid for a particular landscape element is only spent on that element. This is key to the concept of Landscape Auctions: a direct link between payments and product. When the money paid for an element exceeds the cost, the auctioneer and the bidder determine on what additional element that extra money should be spent. This ensures transparent, tangible and direct influence. Successful bidders can go and 'enjoy' the elements they bought.

The auctions help to showcase the value of our landscape and to break a barrier between those who can take care of it and those who value this service. Companies can show their commitment to the landscape in a tangible way and communicate that CSR can be turned into something real (conservation of landscape elements). A funeral home, for example, bought an area with an ancient funeral mound in a protected area as they saw it as their responsibility to take care of a heritage which is intimately linked to its business.

Donations through the auctions are also tax deductible, as the payments are made to an NGO, making it even more attractive to participants. Citizens can and do participate -- by buying the tree under which they had their first kiss, the area they walk their dog, the hedge next to their house. A school adopted a hedge and its pupils helped maintain it as well as using it as an educational tool. A group of people that did not know each other joined hands and placed a bid to secure a landscape element they all felt connected to but could not afford alone. This clearly shows the power of this new tool: the direct link between what you pay and what you get.

Daan Wensing explained the technicalities: *"If I buy then the contract is between me and the fund, which states how much and for what. Money is paid up front and the interest pays for the costs of the fund."*

*There is another contract between the fund and the farmer. When the farmer complies with the contract the fee is paid and the fund does the monitoring. The contract is for 10 years minus one day because of government restriction and the contract states that at the end of the contract then the property is put up for auction again immediately."*

In terms of the bidding, the farmer is guaranteed up to a certain amount and the rest goes into the fund or is used to fund other landscape elements that were not sold.

Auctioning the view: Part of the money the real estate agent charges, goes into a fund that pays for maintenance of the countryside facing the houses.

**NOTE: Land title is never transferred; the auctions only raise funds for management and monitoring costs.**

Points raised in discussion:

- 'Buyers' receive a certificate stating what they have 'bought' and the price they have paid. In Dutch law donations to foundations are tax deductible for the donor ('buyer').
- There is no official registration, since the 'purchase' only relates to use rights, and not about land rights. It is a private transaction.

- If the owner does not comply he does not receive the money and he can be taken to court for breach of contract. Non-compliance will also affect neighbouring properties negatively, so peer pressure is another reason for complying with the contract. Registration would be more secure, but land owners usually don't want to do that. The contract is the base, but trust is also very important. If owner dies or sells, contract remains valid.
- The landowner is asked how much it will cost to maintain the element, and, following negotiation, a price is agreed that is acceptable to all.
- The NGO suggests what needs financing, and Triple E 'sells' it. Practically anything could be 'sold', so it is possible to cover management costs.
- At the auctions, Triple E charges a 5% fee, but with a maximum. The fee covers the cost of organising the auction plus a little bit extra. The fee is added to the management costs agreed with the owner. At the moment the auctions are not profitable.

Fundaeco has a very good relationship with a bank and five years ago they presented a proposal based on Eco-bonds. The aim was to guarantee a scheme of Collateral Guarantees. The bank did not approve at that time, but things have changed since then and it may now be possible to move this forward and put the bonds on the market, which could earn funds for conservation purposes.



## Funding Sources: (Inter) Governmental Funding, Trust and Endowment Funding, Private and Corporate Funding

Sourcing funding was one of the key issues addressed, and is of course one of the main problems that has been confronting the CEOs of all the organisations that attended the symposium. There was considerable experience of a wide range of funding mechanisms, and delegates were able to exchange experiences and learn from each other. It was apparent that each project required individual approaches to funding, but there were also common factors involved, and innovation and creativity was one of the keys to success.

### (Inter)governmental Funding - Keynote Speaker

Marco Cerezo - Fundaeco

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The main message that came across when the topic of governmental funding was introduced, was one of creativity and enthusiasm when any approach was to be made, where "good ideas, promoted with passion, would generate their own resources". Departments not traditionally known to be donors for wildlife conservation, that might act as a new funding source, include: the Ministry of Agriculture and other Agrarian Institutions, the Institute of Tourism and the Ministry of Economy.

Government funding can provide multiple sources of income, as well as the stability created by having a portfolio of funding sources, including: incentive schemes, funding generated through entrance fees to tourists, grants and donations, payment for ecological services, investments, gifts in kind, percentage funding from existing taxes, and economic incentives. Some sources could also play an educational purpose, i.e. green car stickers with funding towards carbon sequestration.

Lastly, funding provided from government sources, perhaps for costs that are difficult to cover or raise through more traditional means, such as guard salaries, also serve to be used as match funding from international foundations.

Main Points from Discussion:

- "Green Sticker" initiatives already exist in Brazil, whilst in Guatemala, the initiative is still at the planning stage, with NGOs working on the government to accept the principle. If the government approves, it will start an education campaign to explain that a car produces carbon which harms the environment. The sticker will help compensate for this CO2 emission.
- Investment schemes were thought too risky due to possibility of younger banks going bankrupt, and are also known to be administratively costly. 25-50% of the funds being invested into Banco de Desarrollo Rural are re-invested to guarantee continuity.
- Criticism has been apparent from locals regarding a PES scheme with a local water company being managed by Fundaeco, with the perception that the NGO representatives were businessmen out to make a profit, a problem solved through open discussion about what the funds were being used for. The funds generated through this PES scheme are assigned to a specified protected area, with funds being used according to a budget approved by the water company to protect the watershed. Political conflicts will arise inevitably, with the Mayor, for example, wanting a piece of the cake.
- Fundaeco are currently requesting that 10% of a government tax on gas to go towards conservation, under the justification of carbon issues. It was noted that this was being proposed for an existing tax, and that proposing new taxes would be much more difficult to achieve. Also, in Guatemala, conservation NGOs are not charged full land taxes by municipalities for nature reserves, and it is thought that this will have a significant impact on funding, should the situation change in future.
- In Guatemala, 3% of GNP is allocated for conservation, a figure much lower than that allocated for education, health and agriculture. However, the fact that a budget for conservation exists at all is seen to be a very good start and has a positive psychological impact in terms of political and public perception of conservation.

### Trust / Endowment Funds - Keynote Speaker

Alberto Yanosky - Guyra Paraguay

Endowment funds: Can they work hand in hand with conservation?

Definition: A sum of money is invested which gains interest for the beneficiary: Re-investing interest into conservation a financial instrument for providing a source of sustainable income. Endowment funds are complicated issues, requiring significant time and effort, and a sound strategy/management plan/structure, but with potential for good profits in the end.

Probably every NGO would like to have an endowment fund. A cushion of financial support, gaining interest with the sole purpose of supporting core costs, which are notoriously difficult to raise funds for. But opinions on endowment funds are mixed.

In general the creation of endowment funds comes after the initial urgency of a campaign begins to fade. This is a good model for certain types of organisation's fundraising, where there is a one-off campaign, the funds for which are successfully raised. But this will never be the case with conservation, as the urgent need will always be greater than the fundraising abilities of the NGOs. In other words, the job of a conservation NGO is never finished. While we all agreed that raising funds to buy land and carry out conservation will always be the priority, the other priority is to create a sustainable organisation.

It is a conundrum that raising endowment funds is probably easier for larger, more well established organisations, whereas for conservation NGOs, who, on the whole tend to be smaller and focused on their conservation targets, the time and resources are limited. In the US, for instance, raising endowments is at the forefront of organisational priorities, with larger institutions (for instance, TNC and WWF) carrying out endowments in Latin America. In the UK, however, endowment funds are considered something of a 'luxury' to be raised through legacies or grant-giving bodies who restrict their giving to this purpose. In general donors do not want to see the funds they have given for urgent conservation work being put into an endowment when they could be spent much more effectively to address urgent conservation needs. Every country is different, and opinions on endowments varied. But population and pressures on land are growing, and usually the cost of land is going up all the time. If the organisation has money in the bank would it be better to use that money to buy and save threatened land while there was an opportunity? There is conflict between investing in long term finan-

cial sustainability, when you might be sitting on money that could save habitats that would otherwise be lost.

Some of the NGOs present, however, are working to build up an endowment, sometimes for purposes of purchasing their own office building to give them long term security. In all cases a reputable bank must be identified and, in some cases, this means a bank in either Europe or USA. Ethical investments are an important issue in Europe, but are very complex. Also it is important to keep tabs on where the investment is going to ensure that it isn't being invested in something known to cause environmental problems. It was noted that in fact land is often a very safe investment, but it is often very difficult to get loans to buy land.

Main points from discussion:

- Alberto Yanosky pointed out that protected areas across Latin America are threatened with encroachment. Guyra Paraguay could raise funds to buy all of San Rafael, or could stick to managing a smaller patch of land and form an endowment. It is a strategic and philosophical choice.
- Fundaeco has a small endowment, invested in shares, high yield, high risks, which are used as a guarantee for when a loan is urgently needed for an investment. If needed, they could also sell the shares (their commercial value has doubled.)
- GESG reported that Fondo Patrimonial is growing, but it is not available to smaller organisations. It has not worked for conservation in Mexico so it is important not to put all your eggs in one basket.
- CODEFF reported that in Chile things are very different and you cannot get a loan if you have an endowment.
- In Belize, 36% of land is already under protection, so perhaps it isn't a case of one or the other: buying land or setting up an endowment fund, there is room for both.
- Lou Jost reiterated that conservation opportunities are being lost if land is not bought. The situation in Ecuador is not like in Belize where 4% of its land is already in the hands of PfB. It was agreed that strategies were country specific, but there was wide agreement with Lou Jost that there is a need to be more aggressive in buying land. New Protected Area declaration is difficult, with increasing pressures from population growth and biofuel demands. Land purchase is a strategic priority.
- There is a need to be more aggressive with financial strategies: to identify ways to combine buying with endowment. It should also be possible to find a way to transfer the land already owned and protected into assets that can be used to generate additional funds.

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- GESG have had free consultancy from PriceWaterhouseCoopers and this has been very helpful.

The role that Governments could play in NGO stability was also noted: where NGOs were carrying out conservation initiatives that were part of governmental responsibility. There is a need for systematic advocacy to encourage governments to value conservation of natural habitats and put in funds for their protection. The reserves have been created *in perpetuity*, and in 30 years government funding should be an important part of all financial plans. It was noted that in Guatemala, two years of lobbying generated millions of dollars to cover the next 20 years management costs, therefore there is a significant return on lobbying. However, it was important to have a consolidated approach and it was suggested that this network of NGOs form a coalition and work together to pressure governments, noting that lobbying should only be attempted with a clear set of targets.

Other issues raised relating to Endowment Funds included:

- The need to have an independent board of suitable individuals to govern the fund.
- Look at potential threats, such as political ones, and prepare for them.
- Feasibility study is important to see if this will work.
- Being innovative and find new ways to raise funds. Potential use of national lotteries, for instance?

In closing it was agreed that, in an ideal world, the donor would provide additional funds as part of the land purchase donation, to be used for an endowment on the land. If you buy land but cannot secure management funding, then this compromises protection. The importance of funds raised through legacies and wills was identified as being a potential source of significant funds for endowments, and if funds come from these sources then it is perfectly acceptable to use them to establish an endowment.

In terms of sustainability it was agreed that every contract with an NGO should include a paragraph clearly stating what would happen to the protected land in the event of the NGO being wound up.

### Private and Corporate Funding - Keynote Speakers

Vivek Menon – Wildlife Trust of India & John Burton - WLT

The topic of corporate fundraising, presented by John Burton, was introduced using the WLT's 20 years of fundraising efforts as a case study. In WLT's experience, a well-established and solid reputation has been necessary to attract corporate supporters to the organisation, which has only borne significant fruit over the past 5 years. WLT has found that the most important factor that has drawn this form of support, has been the internet and through the organization having a good website. WLT now spends 80% of its advertising budget on its website, and focuses on making it easy to use, easy to find (through search engine optimization), providing regular updates through press releases, project information and blogs in order to be found on major search engines. WLT has found it crucial to spend time and money on developing a good website in order for it to have significant impact on corporate donors, many of which are donating for the PR value and therefore want to be able to maximize this publicity.

WLT's experience working with corporate donors has brought about some steadfast rules, necessary for both the creation of a meaningful donor-recipient relationship, but also maintaining the integrity of the organisation's work.

- Although most corporates donate for PR reasons, some also wish to remain anonymous. Some also donate to receive the publicity of supporting an environmental charity, despite its product being environmentally unfriendly (known as 'greenwash'). WLT considers each potential donor carefully and has in the past, turned down donors because the donation was purely for 'greenwash' and could potentially damage WLT's reputation.
- A well-known person like Sir David Attenborough is attractive for corporate supporters, but it is important not to over-use and therefore de-value the kudos created by a figure-head such as this. The same case is true of organisational size, where the degree of exclusivity is lost when an organisation gets too big. Being small, however, has not meant that WLT has not attracted larger donors.
- Overhead costs should be identified up-front, although most businesses are happy to accept these, as a standard 15% overhead really means an 85% profit, which is highly acceptable.

- The NGO must fulfil the promised outcomes, providing adequate reporting and evidence of how money has been spent. WLT always encourages (and helps to facilitate) site visits to project areas, and to meet project partners.

The majority of discussion over this topic addressed the criteria for accepting/rejecting a donor, and it was clear that opinions over this issue varied widely. The range of viewpoints included:

- Guyra Paraguay are concerned with balancing diplomacy and hypocrisy, and for that reason, Guyra doesn't accept funds from alcohol or tobacco companies.
- Iniciativa Amotocodie will not accept any corporate funding, as it is impossible to know where it comes from, and IA also does not allow donors to use the name of the organization. IA has also not accepted government money, since it is associated with corruption and corporate politics.
- O'Boticario looks at donors on a case by case basis, and also recognises the potential that first funding can have in also opening a door to working with an organisation on other levels (education for example).
- Fundación Palma recognizes the ease at which it could reject all oil companies, being a Chilean organization. However, it understands that oil extraction as well as other mining operations are vital to the countries development, and should instead establish the companies' interest in mitigation of the effects of their activities and in other social and environmental activities.
- Fundación Jocotoco highlighted the need to discuss all the issues with the organisations governing board. An oil company constructed a pipeline to run through a large part of Ecuador. An "eco"-fund was going to be established to deal with this issue of the pipeline, and Jocotoco was asked to manage the funds. Jocotoco had just acquired a few reserves, and to maintain credibility in front of communities they did not accept to manage this fund. They are not always opposed to corporate funding, but recognise that it has to be managed wisely.
- ECOAN mentioned that it receives funds from a beer company for capacity building and international travel to promote the organisation, as well as from a mining company. It recognises that talking with companies can also help get the message of conservation across.
- Pro Bosque has been working with a mining/cement organisation for 15 years, before greenwashing was really an issue. It recognises that organisations should not be so cynical and some-

times accept a company's sincerity when a donation is made. Working with Holcim (the mining/cement company) has been quite easy, they approve a budget and Pro Bosque executes it. Holcim also have to inform Pro Bosque of any large contracts they have.

- With specific regard to carbon offsetting, WLT believes that someone who is trying to do something about climate change is worth encouraging. Unless it is a very obvious case of greenwashing, WLT will take them seriously. It is expected that companies undertake other internal action to reduce emissions at source before they look to offsetting. WLT also has a very high price for offsetting, separating the serious companies from the less serious ones. If you accept the high price, including benefits for biodiversity, the company is worth working with.

Much of the discussion highlighted the fact that it was mostly important to know the donor, and their donors' interest in environmental issues. In a lot of cases, the donation will have stemmed from a particular department within a company, or a person who has genuine interests in environmental issues and is simply providing a means for providing funding for a good cause, regardless of its source. John Burton also highlighted the fact that the donation would always be made to some other organisation regardless, so it was crucial not to waste an opportunity or have funding go to a less meaningful cause, if it could be avoided.



When corporate supporters make sizeable donations for land purchase they are often very pleased to have a record of their support to show to staff and clients. Ocean Contract Cleaning are major supporters of World Land Trust and are currently supporting land purchase and protection through Guyra Paraguay.

## Social Sustainability and Community Involvement

### Keynote Speaker

Benno Glauser – Iniciativa Amotocodie

Involving the local community, providing employment, assisting with education services are all an essential part of a conservation programme if it is to have long-term sustainability.

The issues presented in the presentation by Benno Glauser were in general outside the scope of the other delegates. Participants agreed however that the social anthropological aspects of conservation are extremely important, and that at any future meeting time should be allocated for a more detailed discussion.

*Iniciativa Amotocodie (IA)* is a small NGO working in the Chaco. The Gran Chaco is a vast ecosystem of rich biodiversity which also extends to parts of the lowlands of Bolivia and the North of Argentina. More than 15 million hectares of the Gran Chaco are still pristine virgin forests which are also the home and vital territory of at least four indigenous groups living in voluntary isolation. They belong to the Ayoreo People, and so far they have not established contact with our modern civilization.

IA is rallying protection for the isolated Ayoreo groups on one hand, and on the other lends its support to the already contacted Ayoreo in their pledge in favor of sustainable life perspectives for themselves and also in favor of protection of their traditional territories which cover almost the entire Northern Paraguayan Chaco. These territories have been converted into numerous private properties by modern society, and are presently subject to an absolutely irrational deforestation aimed at giving room to farms dedicated to livestock raising.

IA has contributed to halt environmental destruction by diverse legal and political protective measures. Also, while not renouncing the legal territorial rights held by the Ayoreo, this joint action includes the recovery of parts of the territories through land purchase, as a desperate emergency measure applied in order to “buy time” for the isolated groups and for the integrity of their habitat and its biodiversity. IA was able to purchase a first plot of Ayoreo land and virgin forest in 2005. In January 2008, this land was recog-

nized by government decree as a “Private Protection Area” belonging to the Ayoreo Heritage. Presently, IA is preparing to turn the corresponding land title over to the Ayoreo People’s organisation UNAP.

IA believes in a strong and active role of the local population in the management of local natural resources and communities, even more so if - like in this case - , the local population in question is an indigenous People deeply rooted in the territory they have sustainably lived in for centuries. Such a favorable constellation is a guarantee for the protection and conservation of natural resources, while responding at the same time to current challenges for the entire humanity,

The discussion was largely confined to answering specific issues raised in the presentation. Some the specific points raised included:

- In Paraguay, logging is forbidden in indigenous territories. However, companies can sometimes get permits and corruption is high, but IA do not foresee large problems. With food prices rising, local people will probably be forced to take control of natural resources themselves.
- Contacted Ayoreo use modern weapons, but few of them are capable hunters, so hunting is limited.
- In some protected areas in Guatemala, there is mixed ownership: private, community and state owned. When there is private ownership Fundaeco buys it, if it is state it is transferred to the national council of protected areas, and if it is community owned, they work with the communities.

## Leadership ‘burn out’ and its effect on institutional sustainability

Sustainability of an NGO depends on strong and sound institutional capacity. As we have experienced, many of the NGOs represented are small and understaffed, funds are tight and the main responsibility for the survival of the NGO often falls on the shoulders of its leader. This relentless burden of responsibility is bound, at times, to cause stress and time management dealing with periods away from the office puts strain on staff. It also can cause strain on private life and on health. It is recognized that many of the participants at this meeting are crucial to their organisation and so working towards institutional stability is paramount. Because of the ever-increasing threats to natural habitats there is an ever increasing call on staff, and the leader’s time. But be wary of our extreme schedules since the strain involved could lead to major institutional problems: try to limit the stress in running NGOs. In order for the NGO to survive into the future the work load should be sustainable and the training of staff and volunteers to handle some of the institutional and conservation responsibilities has to be the way forward.

It was noted that institutional crises can arise due to disagreements among the Board of Advisors; these problems can take up a lot of time away from the main goals of conservation. A good relationship with the Board of Directors is vital to the smooth running of the organisation and it is important to recognise that members of the board may require training on a variety of aspects relating to the organisation to enable them to support their CEO effectively.

Lack of capacity is a major issue and, in some cases donors have supported capacity building and institutional strengthening. Wherever possible NGOs could develop this relationship and donors could be encouraged to think more in the longer term and accept the part they can play in the sustainability of the NGO. Keeping an eye on your institutional capacity is key – not taking on programmes which do not fall within it. Workshops and training programmes on institutional capacity building were discussed, but while several NGOs agreed on their usefulness, having taken part in such programmes, often with extremely successful results, many have had to stop participation because they were simply too expensive.

Of course the leader is always going to have to juggle a multitude of different activities and challenges and it is unrealistic to expect this to always be stress-free. Some delegates mentioned the ways that they have found to relieve stress situations which have included: not having a computer at home to reduce the temptation of working nonstop; taking care to eat well and relax properly whenever possible and planning for retirement and having healthcare and pensions in place. It goes without saying that good forward planning is essential as is sharing responsibilities and training and delegating as much as possible.

There is always the Worst Case Scenario, and, unfortunately, the leader must always plan for this possibility. The loss of senior managers or even the CEO, puts a tremendous strain on the organisation. Guyra Paraguay has tackled this issue by appointing 3 coordinators who share the main responsibilities. They have also found that the situation has been eased since Guyra staff have communicated independently with WLT, not always through the Director, and it has been possible to forge a strong relationship with board members and staff, relieving the Director of some of the work.

One NGO leader commented that he himself had suffered from burn out which had led to the Board taking over and carrying on very effectively. For example, they made the decision to fire some staff members, a decision that the CEO should probably have made earlier. They also made institutional improvements and introduced some beneficial procedures. This particular CEO came to realize that sometimes you can be too close to the organisation to recognise where improvements can be made: it is always a good exercise to take a step back every now and again and do your best to look at your organisation objectively.

The question of leadership continuity in the NGO is a subject often raised by those giving funds, who look for reassurance that the NGO will not simply collapse when the charismatic CEO leaves the organisation. But equally donors need to recognize that funds are needed to train the leaders of tomorrow. Also donors,

at the request of the CEO, should be encouraged, when appropriate, to deal with other staff members and not expect always to deal with the CEO. The role of women within NGOs was discussed in relation to the fact that sexism does occur in some countries. While this was difficult to deal with, it was considered important to empower women into senior positions.

In closing, it was agreed that this forum contained a group of individuals and NGOs with a wealth of experience which could form the basis of an exchange programme. Such a programme could work to train leaders of tomorrow and bring institutional strengthening at the same time. This was thought to be an excellent idea and will be followed up following this meeting.



## Wrap up: where do we go from here?

It had been unanimously agreed at the close of the first Symposium in 2006 that the forum had provided a valuable and important networking opportunity for NGO protected area managers. Furthermore it had effectively established a strong group with shared experiences for continued networking and cooperation. At the end of the 2008 Symposium there was an Open Discussion on future participation, initially focusing on the following considerations:

- If it is agreed to have another Symposium, should the invitation be extended to include more NGO representatives?
- Representatives of NGOs who were attending for the first time at the 2008 Symposium had said how helpful they had found the discussions, and this reflected the potential in extending the network to involve new NGOs in the future. There were pros and cons regarding this as it was recognized that the size of the group had been a key factor in maintaining focus, therefore keeping it manageable was an important consideration
- The costs involved in holding the Symposia must be taken into consideration.
- It is for the Partner representatives to decide on the way forward.

Before discussion several participants commented on the value of this Symposium:

*"It is clear that we cannot do all the work, but we must remain united. I believe that we should invite more NGOs to continue to teach and learn from each other. We must share and voice our experiences discussed at the Symposium – especially with new organisations as they are the ones with the energy!"* Francisco (Pancho) Sornoza, Fundación Jocotoco

*"I am very grateful for this Symposium and for the honest contributions that have been expressed. How can we bring experiences from a national level to this meeting? This network needs to tackle climate change and how it will affect the planet as a whole. We need to be conscious that things will get worse and we need to be prepared for this."* Alberto Yanosky, Guyra Paraguay

*"Capacity building is very important for us as it provides motivation and a great opportunity to learn from others. PFB is leading a network of PPA's in Belize. This is a good tool for sharing experiences and taking it to the national level."* Edilberto Romero, Programme for Belize

*"I have learned a lot this symposium and it is very valuable for new and young NGOs like Ecominga. Discussion is a great way to learn as it is far more interactive than simply reading something. I really believe we have to keep inviting [new] people in order to spread the positive lessons of a Symposium like this."* Lou Jost, Fundación Ecominga

The positive outcome from the Symposium and the wish that they should continue were unanimous and, in discussing the way forward in preparation for the next meeting, the following points were highlighted for more in-depth discussion and consideration:

- This is a small but very dynamic group, the effectiveness of which could be significantly diluted if attendance was broadened with more people attending.
- At this meeting there has been almost 100% repeat turnout from last year which shows how useful the representatives considered the First to be.
- CEOs and Senior managers can take back information on issues relating to their particular NGO and actually implement them.
- Some countries are represented by more than one NGO. Should we consider becoming more democratic and only allow 1 representative per country?
- Should WLT and IUCN NL presence be reduced?
- WLT and IUCN NL have funded both Symposiums so far: is it right for that to continue? Do participants believe that the Symposia are of such importance that their organisation may consider contributing to the costs?
- Apart from the publication of the Proceedings of the Symposium might there be an opportunity for a book, which could be used by those involved in Private Protected Areas?
- The timing between the meetings has been set at every 18 months, being a reasonable length of



time to maintain continuity and yet keep issues and discussion fresh.

It was suggested that a fund could be developed to attract donors to contribute to the costs of participants. This was thought to be an excellent suggestion which would be followed up after the meeting.

- At this second meeting the quality of discussion had been strengthened because participants already knew most of the other participants and good relationships had been formed. It was felt important to maintain this continuity to build on further discussion. It was agreed that it was important that the IUCN and WLT delegation should remain at the same level as it brought to their attention many issues of NGOs which they may otherwise be unaware of.
- The strength and quality of the forum and discussions hinged on the fact that a 'conservation family' had been formed and several delegates felt that this could be lost if participation was broadened or changed.

In summing up it was clear that the majority of participants, while wanting to welcome new, like-minded NGO participation, were concerned that the dynamics of the group should not be lost. It was agreed that participants often had opportunities to meet up at other international meetings and conventions where discussion could take place, as was going to happen at the Barcelona meeting. WLT suggested that it might be possible to organize 'virtual meetings' and it was agreed that while this would not mean that the real meetings weren't necessary they would still provide a good focus and also help address the carbon footprint involved in the group travel. WLT and IUCN NL have regular meetings so it would be possible to inform partners of when these were going to take place and they too could be involved. It was agreed that options for discussion and dissemination of information would be considered over the coming months.

Marco Cerezo (Fundaeo, Guatemala) commented that now that the groundwork had been covered participants needed to reflect on the group that is rapidly becoming a group of large land owners in Latin – America, and elsewhere.

Many issues had been discussed but there was a need to address issues including:

- Social sustainability and the fact that many indigenous people are gaining political momentum. How do we best deal with the needs and rights of indigenous people in PPAs?
- How can we register lands in perpetuity as conservation lands? How do we get the government to recognise this and get tax exemptions, rangers, funds etc.?

Edilberto Romero (Programme for Belize) felt that lobbying was key to success and the network could be used to support and strengthen campaigns. For example, the tax issue in Belize had been a problem for PFB, but because of successful lobbying PFB was now exempt from paying the tax.

Other suggestions included

- Designating one person who could facilitate contacts between partners and IUCN NL/WLT.
- If more organisational representatives and donors were invited then there may need to be closed sessions to discuss personal agendas.
- Creating a list of donors who support management costs to distribute amongst ourselves.
- WLT and IUCN NL could coordinate joint input of donors to upscale projects.
- Identifying new opportunities increase our fund raising. For example, social networking systems like Facebook.
- A list of where land is easily available and purchase is needed and would be very useful for WLT as we are trying to draw up a shopping list for donors to choose aspects they wish to purchase.

It was agreed that it is important to organise the Symposium in a place like Programme for Belize's La Milpa Field Station as it reminds everyone of the reason they are here: in the wild, surrounded by nature, away from the email and phones: far better than a conference centre.





Record of proceedings  
Symposium “Land Purchase as  
an intervention strategy for  
biodiversity conservation”

24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006  
Hoog Holten Hotel  
Sallandse Heuvelrug National Park, the Netherlands

## Arrival: Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>

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- 6.30pm Drinks reception  
7.30pm Buffet dinner hosted by Willem Ferwerda (IUCN NL Executive Director) & Marieke van Schaik and Judith Lingeman (Dutch Postcode Lottery).

## Day 1: Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

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### Session 1: Opening and individual presentations

*Chair: John A Burton, CEO World Land Trust*

Introduction to the symposium by John Burton (WLT Chief Executive Officer) followed by five-minute presentations by participants, summarising backgrounds and projects.

### Session 2: How land purchase can assist biodiversity conservation

- What are the real, perceived and potential threats to species or an ecosystem?
- What measures are taken to prioritise on conservation activities? Why has the choice for land purchase as an intervention strategy been chosen?
- What were/are the alternatives?
- What is the objective of the intervention: species conservation, ecosystem conservation, creation of corridors / stepping-stones, strategic purchase to block access to vulnerable areas?

### Session 3 & 4: Logistical Aspects for Land Purchase Projects

- Legal matters, including Land Tenure and Access Rights
- Negotiation Process
- Government Involvement
- Community Involvement & Indigenous Peoples
- Importance of involvement by local NGO's
- Strategic purchasing and links with national protected areas network
- Potential risks & how these are managed

## Day 2: Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>

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### Session 1 & 2: Making projects sustainable – Resource Exploitation

- Types and implications.
- Exploitation of Flora & fauna
- Non-intrusive exploitation, tourism (eco - or scientific -)
- Participation of communities living adjacent to protected areas.

### Session 3 & 4: Making projects sustainable - Environmental Services

- Carbon Sequestration
- Watersheds
- Biodiversity monitoring

## Day 3: Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>

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### Session 1: Fundraising & Donor Relations

Presentation on common reasons for rejection of proposals by Marc Hoogeslag & Kirsty Burgess, & discussion on an 'ideal' application form.

- Individual experiences of fund-raising, obstacles and possible solutions
- Donor communications
- Project Marketing

### Session 2: Institutional Aspects & business planning

- Long -term stewardship of an NGO
- Capitalisation & Business Planning
- Institutional requirements to fulfil long-term sustainability
- Viability of handing over management to government or community?
- Education & Outreach Programmes
- Any additional questions arising from previous sessions on sustainability

*Presentation National Park staff and excursion and Presentation Natuurmonumenten (Herman Reimerink and Feiko Prins)*

### Sessions 3 and 4: Open Meetings

*Informal session discussing any queries arising from previous sessions, possibility to work in smaller groups*

## Day 4: Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>

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### Sessions 1 and 2: Future needs and role of NGOs

- Influencing policy
- Incentives (implementation/enforcement) to buy and manage land for conservation
- Real needs – technology transfers, fundraising ideas and training, training of local persons.
- Need for another symposium? Time scale?
- Content of symposium publication
- Suggestions of other suitable organisations that should be involved
- Symposium evaluation (forms/discussion)

Public Event - Amsterdam

## Opening and individual presentations

Chairman: John A Burton, CEO World Land Trust  
John Burton, Chief Executive Officer of the World Land Trust and Chairman of the Symposium, welcomed the participants and introduced the symposium by emphasising the objective – to bring together the senior leaders of in-country conservation NGOs with extensive working knowledge of developing and managing conservation projects that involve land purchase as a strategic activity in an interactive forum to share experiences and generate solutions to common challenges.

Each of the representatives of the participating organisations gave a brief presentation, summarising their organisations and the work they are doing. The breadth and scope of their conservation initiatives is remarkable: from managing 250,000 acres of largely undisturbed forest in Belize, to securing and managing an uninhabited island in the Philippines, acting as the leading conservation voice and marine wildlife protection agent in coastal Patagonia, protecting the interests and historic homelands of the isolated indigenous peoples of remotest Paraguay, replanting and restoring the critically endangered Atlantic Rainforest, and working to provide protection and safe-passage corridors for wildlife across the entire Indian sub-continent.

The biodiversity represented in the room was extraordinary, with an equally staggering range of issues and areas of activity. What was immediately clear was the seriousness with which the responsibility for managing land and protecting wildlife and biodiversity is taken, and the commitment that these leaders and their organisations demonstrate on a daily basis. During the course of the presentations a significant number of common issues and shared philosophies and approaches emerged:

- Some combination of wildlife, land and biodiversity protection is fundamental to all organisations.
- Land purchase is an important and valuable tool for establishing or enhancing protected areas.
- Land purchase for conservation can be a complicated process, especially in remote areas, as it often involves a land ownership mosaic that can include privately-owned land, communally-owned land, trust or local government land, and public or federal land, each with their own issues, require-

ments, parameters and challenges. In addition, there are sometimes considerable differences from one country to another in the relative of strengths or weaknesses of property rights and private land ownership and land tenure traditions and laws.

- Community participation is truly necessary for success, including the establishment of real connections between nature and people.
- Field staff is crucial, as they are the 'front lines' in the conservation work and represent vital, personal links to the communities in which the organisations work.
- Environmental education and public awareness are necessary and important.
- The importance of the organisations and their conservation activities is magnified by the fact that much of the work being done is outside of the national protected areas systems, and often involves working with private land owners.
- There is constantly a need to develop alternative income sources. Nearly everyone mentioned tourism as a hoped-for source of additional income.
- It is crucial that some means of on-going conservation protection be developed as a safeguard against organisational failure.
- Research is important, especially as a way to provide a solid scientific foundation for land management and other conservation initiatives.
- On-going monitoring is fundamentally necessary.
- Regional and international partnerships are important ways of extending reach, enhancing capacity, and generating funding.

These organisations represent the vanguard of habitat and wildlife conservation in some of the world's most extraordinary places. Snapshots of these organisations and the work they are doing are found throughout this publication.

## How can land purchase assist biodiversity conservation?

The question of how local/in-country conservation organisations came to pursue land purchase as a biodiversity conservation strategy reveals a significant range of answers, but all are based on the common theme of pursuing the most effective way possible to preserve wildlife, biodiversity, and threatened habitats in often difficult legal and working environments. In some cases organisations, like Programme for Belize and the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Project, were established primarily to purchase and protect land. Others, like Fundación Patagonia Natural, Wildlife Trust of India and Fundaeco, recognised land purchase as an effective way to respond to a specific opportunity or to address a specific threat. The other extreme of the range was represented by organisations like Guyra Paraguay and Nature Kenya which recognised land purchase as something of a last option, especially in areas with a high concentration of private land ownership where there was little incentive or government mandates to protect natural habitats.

In an attempt to provide specific context to the discussions the question was posed, "What is the objective of the intervention: species conservation, ecosystem conservation, creation of corridors / stepping-stones, strategic purchase to block access to vulnerable areas?" Perhaps not surprisingly, the answer was resoundingly, "All of the above, and more." On the most fundamental of levels land purchase is seen as a flexible, important and increasingly effective means of establishing protected areas necessary to address the full range of conservation challenges. It is driven by pre-established priority and urgency in the face of imminent threat, sometimes in combination.

No matter what the initial incentive for pursuing land purchase all of the participants shared an approach that is very much driven by an applied combination of practical thinking and creative necessity; in all cases land purchase is recognised as a critical conservation intervention strategy.

When pressed to identify specific advantages that can accrue from land purchase the participants, although from in many cases wildly different situations

and circumstances, were able to focus on a number of keys factors:

- Sometimes, especially in cases of imminent threat (for example, from logging or clearing for agriculture) with a need to save very high priority habitat, outright land purchase is in reality the only way to achieve effective protection;
- Similarly, land purchase, while it can be time consuming, is still normally the fastest option for protecting habitats of high value that are under imminent threat;
- Land ownership changes not only status but standing – there is a different level of perceived authority and control when a conservation organisation actually holds title to the land, especially in the eyes of local people. It gives influence and helps engage communities by establishing the organisation as an active neighbour, with shared tribulations and concerns;
- Land ownership by a conservation organisation can create an opportunity to influence a wider area of privately held land in the same region through demonstration of better practices and by establishing connectivity between areas of high biodiversity.

The last two bullets are particularly important – taken together, they represent the fact that, by becoming a landowner, a conservation NGO creates a 'conservation foothold' in the area or region.

In some countries and/or cases there exists political pressure against establishing new government-owned protected areas, making the case that a threshold for the amount of land in the protected areas system has been reached. Land purchase for conservation can potentially mitigate or even by-pass this perception.

**Point of Emphasis:** It is becoming increasingly important that the protected area land is owned by a local, in-country organisation as opposed to a foreign/international NGO or private individuals with a conservation intention. There has been a significant backlash against foreign ownership of land for conservation, notably in Argentina, Chile and Brazil.

## Logistical Aspects for Land Purchase Projects

### Legal and other logistical issues

While recognised as a significantly important conservation intervention strategy, land purchase by conservation NGO's in order to establish or enhance protected areas presents a significant number of challenges and a range of complex legal and practical issues. Despite the fact that specific laws, regulations and political realities differ from country to country, many commonalities do exist and clear strategies have emerged.

Of fundamental importance is the need to establish clear title to any land identified for purchase. In remote areas this can be difficult and time consuming, but nevertheless remains essential. It is especially important to recognize the difference between land title and land possession: while laws of possession may apply, conservation purchases should not be pursued based solely on the seller's possession of the property. Often conservation land purchases are being funded by donors, which adds another layer of responsibility to the purchasing NGO. In some cases the purchasing NGO may need to assist the seller in establishing clear title. Although this is obviously an extra expense, it is usually worth the money.

Similarly, along with establishing clear title it is equally important to declare the true value of the land in the transaction deed. This should be part of the negotiation process, as it is necessary to negotiate the declaration of the true value of the land in the transaction and in the recorded deed.

Land purchase always includes additional costs over and above the purchase price itself. Land taxes, transfer taxes, surveys and title searches, public notices, public registries, legal fees and management costs and a host of other requirements all need to be identified, projected and factored into the calculation of how much money will actually be needed to complete the purchase, take possession of the property and implement a protection and management programme. Tax issues can be especially tricky, and need to be identified at the very beginning of the negotiation process. It is not unusual for the seller to owe back taxes on the land, and if the acquisition is of high

enough priority it may be necessary for the purchasing NGO to pay all or part of the back taxes owed in order to expedite the process and gain clear and unencumbered title to the land. All of these costs ideally need to be identified *before* requesting donor funds.

One of the most challenging periods in many conservation land purchases is the time between the down payment and the completion of the sale. It is not unusual for a purchase to be completely negotiated and a down payment made, but then be followed by an extended period of time for all legal matters to be resolved and additional funds raised. It is vital to establish a means of protecting and controlling the property during this interim period between signing the agreement of sale and actually completing the purchase and taking possession of the property. It is equally vital to make sure that donors are aware of the fact that some land purchase projects can be very time-consuming, and that flexibility and patience are often required in order to successfully achieve the conservation goals.

After-purchase monitoring and management costs need to be included in these overall cost estimates for the land purchase project. It is especially helpful if baseline information can be gathered before the purchase is undertaken, both as a sound scientific approach and as a safeguard against damaging activities that could take place in the time between signing the agreement of sale and actually taking possession of the property. Proper estimating of on-going management costs is essential in order to prevent serious funding shortages once the purchase has been completed.

The reality that land purchase can typically be a lengthy and time consuming process, factoring in the negotiations, the need to establish clear title and true value, the legal process, and the need to raise the necessary funds, is very often at odds with the need to act urgently to protect a threatened piece of land. There is no easy solution to this problem although it can be valuable to establish long-range goals for land purchase.

A planned and considered set of long-range land purchase goals and objectives provide a number of benefits:

- Clearly identifies lands of high conservation priority that the NGO can set as objectives for acquisition;
- Allows the NGO to complete a significant amount of background work and research before even getting close to expressing interest, making an offer or entering into negotiations, all of which can help to significantly reduce the amount of time necessary to complete a land purchase once the process has been initiated;
- Allows the NGO to get to know the landowner casually and informally, and to establish a relationship with the landowner and the landowner's family before they are ready or even interested in selling – these personal relationships can be invaluable once the landowner is ready to sell;
- Allows for the preliminary completion of at minimum a framework of accurate cost estimates for the project, which can then be communicated to donors in advance.

This kind of preliminary background work completed or in process as part of a considered long-range land purchase programme allows the NGO to complete critical purchases of threatened lands much more quickly than would otherwise be possible. In addition, the planning process itself is both beneficial and impressive to donors, who recognize that the NGO is working thoughtfully and deliberately towards its land purchase and conservation goals. It allows donors to begin lining up funding before it is immediately needed, and may even convince donors to provide funding for the planning process itself and its associated background work.

Good communication is a powerful tool in any conservation land purchase programme. It is important to properly communicate the intentions of the purchasing NGO to the seller and seller's family, to the immediate community, and to the relevant government agencies. Not only does this help to meet legal requirements and begin the process of establishing good relationships with the neighboring and affected community, it can also help to protect against fraudulent sales, especially through the liberal use of posted signs and notices.

### Dangers of de-gazetting

There has been what appears to be an increasing number of cases in recent years where de-gazetting of national protected areas has either been discussed, threatened or actually implemented. The concern is that this has the potential of becoming in-

creasingly widespread, resulting from a range of pressures and circumstances, including:

- Perception that too much land is already tied up in protected areas, and thus not available for small-scale agriculture or logging which could benefit rural residents and communities;
- Pressure from well-connected individuals and/or extractive or intensive agriculture industries with powerful political influence, like oil, mining, logging, biofuels;
- General lack of interest in enforcing protected areas laws and regulations.

The legal status of protected areas that are owned and managed by conservation NGO's is generally protected by international law, but governments with enough motivation to exploit the property can make declarations of sovereignty.

Direct land ownership by a conservation NGO can act as a strong legal and conceptual buffer against this action. Even though 'takings' of NGO-owned protected areas are still possible, they are much more difficult, and likely subject to legal action. Several important issues and approaches can be taken into consideration in order to successfully counter this action.

- Whenever possible enlist government support, either formal or at least tacit, for the conservation land purchase. In some cases it can be possible to even get government to request an NGO purchase particular pieces of land. For example, the Indian government is now actively supporting the purchase of land to establish elephant corridors between protected areas, which include the relocation of rural villages, because it recognises that this approach helps to reduce the compensation the government is required to pay when elephants destroy crops. This is an action that government departments would like to be able to do, but may be unable due to political or financial reasons. Land purchase by NGO's for conservation can be positioned as something that helps government, rather than opposes it.
- The chances of gaining real government and community support can be significantly increased if it can be demonstrated that the land being purchased has substantive value. Examples of this include watershed protection and enhancement of sustainable livelihoods.
- It is critically important to establish clear title to land being purchased. This is especially true for NGO's, which are nearly always held to very high standards with high expectations from the national

community, the donor community and the conservation community for ethical and transparent behaviour. All land purchases must be pursued in a completely legal and fully accountable manner, with very clear legal agreements, accurate deeds and surveys, and a recognition from the beginning that conservation land purchase can sometimes be complex and take time. Any transfer or other land taxes, if applicable, must be paid; public notices must be given if required; proper cadastral procedures should be completed.

- Local authorities and local communities should be made aware of the purchase and the plans for the property as early in the process as possible to forestall the spread of negative rumours, which can make the management of the property and the generation of local support much more difficult.

### Community Involvement

Close communication and involvement with local communities is recognised as a fundamentally important part of the work of any conservation NGO. Land purchase is no exception. In this case “community” is defined as both people *living in* the area of, and in some cases on, the land that is being purchased, and people *using* the area around or on the land that is being purchased. In addition, special considerations must be made in cases where the land being purchased is community-owned, rather than individually-owned.

These connections are especially important where and when indigenous communities are involved, and most especially with indigenous peoples who live in very remote places and/or are non-contacted.

If the purchasing NGO has the full support of the local people it can effectively protect the land, even if it does not have government support. Local community support for a land purchase for conservation, and on-going conservation management, programme is typically even more important than government support (although government support is still important and ideally necessary).

Working with a local and/or indigenous community depends on a combination of consultation and communication. It is important to establish a set of best practices to use as a guideline both generally, for the NGO, and specifically for the land purchase project being pursued. This is especially helpful and important in dealing with issues like legalisations of settlers (after purchase) and pre-existing extractive concessions. For the most part, a basic “good neighbour” policy regarding accepted uses and activities in protected areas is normally a very good starting point,

although special measures may need to be taken to balance these activities and uses with the conservation needs and priorities of the project.

Pursuing a community involvement agenda before land purchases are completed can yield additional benefits besides making the management less confrontational. An NGO that is truly local and seen as part of the community can often help keep the prices of land down. (Conversely, land purchase or even land purchase negotiations by international NGOs can dramatically inflate the purchase price of the property in question.) It is important to communicate transparency to the communities, involving and/or consulting with the local people before the land purchase, and then maintaining communications once it has been completed.

This kind of open involvement and transparent communications does have one potential drawback – it can create unrealistic expectations in the local community regarding economic benefit. It is imperative that the purchasing NGO manages these expectations from the very beginning, clearly and honestly stating the benefits of the protected area without exaggeration. Many people in the conservation community believe that when an NGO purchases land for conservation the benefits to the local communities is automatic. This may be true, but not always in ways that the local community expects.

### Risk Management

Conservation land purchase projects have a number of risks associated with them, combining issues typical of any land purchase deal with the special elements inherent in a conservation or protected area management initiative. There is no magic formula for avoiding or eliminating these risks; the most useful approach is to recognize from the beginning the fact that these risks exist – by recognizing and understanding them they can be anticipated and, if not totally avoided, at least mitigated.

Classic risks associated with conservation land purchase projects are many and varied, and include but are not necessarily limited to the following examples:

- The seller backing out after the down payment has been made. One recommended mitigation strategy is to set a large down payment with a legally-enforceable contract requiring a payback of double the down payment amount if the seller backs out;
- The seller doing damage to the land in the time between accepting the down payment and finalising the sale. The best mitigation strategy is to gain control of the land during the sale finalisation process,

ess, ideally by taking immediate possession and posting the land accordingly, but at the least to complete a baseline environmental assessment and inventory and write the findings into the contract;

- Land price inflation – always a danger, especially in a dynamic market for land with strong pressure for development. Knowing the land price situation well and moving quickly to come to an agreement once negotiations have begun are important;
- Identifying and having on hand enough resources for on-going management;
- “Bad neighbour” perception of conservationists and protected area managers. This can be especially true in countries where there is already a large amount of land under formal conservation protection;
- Watersheds – represent a risk of government appropriation.
- Understatement of risk to donors and government agencies: it can be useful to present “worst case scenarios” so that everyone involved is clear in their expectations and understandings;
- Unclear boundaries – pursue good surveys, on your own if possible;
- Unclear land titles – pursue definite clarification. Consider paying costs associated with this clarification as both a gesture of goodwill and as a way of expediting the process;
- Incursions from farmers, loggers, etc into protected areas. Government, media and local communities can be good allies if properly nurtured and good relationships established;
- Land taxes, including unexpected and potentially significant increases in land taxes;
- Tax exempt status – If land dedicated to conservation is tax exempt it could be a contentious issue, raising claims of preferential treatment that could cause a backlash, politically and locally;
- Xenophobia against foreign purchase and ownership of land, including charges of neo-colonialism, which could in extreme cases, result in expropriation. This reinforces the importance of working through local conservation NGOs for conservation land purchase, as opposed to a foreign or international entity buying land directly;
- Mining, oil or other extractive potential of high national priority and economic value under the surface of the land. Strategies to mitigate this situation include designating the land as important for science; purchase or negotiate to have granted the mining (or other) subsurface concession rights; establish a conservation easement on the land and then donate it to government for inclusion in the protected area system; plan for and pursue economic activities on the property that are dependent

upon it remaining in a natural and/or undisturbed state (like ecotourism) and which would be harmed by extractive resource exploitation;

- Human rights issues, including indigenous rights – this is a very complex and potentially difficult subject, as it can involve conservation NGOs in social science issues outside of their areas of expertise, and can also be very emotionally and politically charged;
- Corruption, which can take many forms and manifest itself in many ways, but which is an all too common issue. Establishing a good reputation and good relationships with government officials (local and national) can help, as can ‘freezing’ properties on National Registers by way of conservation easements and other legal tools. But, there is no easy answer, every situation is different, and situations can change rapidly and without warning.

Risk assessment should be an integral part of any land purchase strategy, in both the development of a long-range purchase strategy and in the pursuit of specific land purchase projects.

A critical element of risk mitigation is to clearly communicate the NGO’s intentions regarding the land purchase to the public at large – so that they understand what the NGO is trying to accomplish; to government – so that they accept that the NGO is adding support for conservation, not replacing what government is doing; and to supporting donors – so that they understand the circumstances and the potential risks involved.

One goal of the communication agenda is to achieve all-important transparency. Conservation easements on purchased property can help; as they deliver the message that the land purchase is not for the personal benefit of the people associated with the NGO, which can protect against smear campaigns which would try to claim just that. (A conservation easement is a transfer of usage rights – an ‘easement’ – which creates a legally enforceable land preservation agreement between a landowner and a qualified and legally recognized land protection organisation for the purposes of conservation. It restricts development or other environmentally negative or harmful activities on the land. Importantly, these restrictions become part of the chain of title for the land, and are thus perpetual and binding on all future landowners. The specifics of conservation easements differ from country to country, but in nearly all cases some form of conservation easement is available.)

The naming of the reserve is also important, as the name can send a message with sometimes unintended

ed consequences if not properly thought out and considered.

The viability of handing land over to government should also be considered if and where appropriate. This can have value, as it can theoretically establish a greater degree of long term security and on-going funding for management and protection, but several key considerations are important:

- Conditions must be established to ensure long-term protection, including conservation easements if possible;
- Formal and duly recorded proclamation of protected area status is critically important;
- The legal framework must exist to accept the hand over and recognise the land as part of a formal protected areas system;
- The government must have the capacity and structure to both accept and manage the land as a protected area;
- The political system must be risk-free in terms of land protection;
- Conditions of return on donated land must be formalised;
- Local communities must have legally recognised status and structures for ensuring same;
- There must be a legal and legally enforceable guarantee of permanency – permanency is paramount!



## Making projects sustainable – Resource Exploitation

Project sustainability is a goal that underlies all conservation land purchases. The fundamental objective is always not simply to acquire land, but to preserve and protect it in perpetuity. This takes sound planning, sound management, good science, community and government support, and a host of other elements. Which means that it also takes time, and energy, and money. While there is some feeling that NGOs should not be expected to be financially self-sustaining, as it is in most cases simply not feasible and creates a major distraction away from the core conservation mission, the reality is that many funders are requiring that an effort towards this end be demonstrated. In addition, it does at times become necessary in order to make up for short-falls in funding.

It is exceedingly rare for any land purchase project to include an endowment or other long-term funding mechanism that provides all of the money necessary for the long term conservation and management of a newly purchased protected area. Consequently, protected area managers are faced with the need to continue to raise funds from outside donor sources and to pursue revenue generating activities on the project lands.

In-country conservation NGOs and protected area managers realise that they have a huge responsibility in this regard, as they are faced not only with securing and otherwise generating the funding necessary to ensure the long term viability of the protected area, but increasingly they are significant employers, especially in rural areas, employing people both directly in protected area management activities and indirectly through the purchase of goods and services.

Land acquisition itself can be an exceptionally flexible tool in generating core funding for protected areas. For example:

- The NGO can buy land of lesser conservation value, and sometimes lower cost, and give the land to local communities in a land swap. This is especially applicable where there may be people living in, on or around the land that is to become the protected area, but would prefer to live elsewhere, in a place

- more suitable for agriculture, for example;
- The NGO can contract out community concessions like legal logging, where appropriate;
- The NGO can provide land purchase services to local communities, charging for its expertise and experience in land purchase, land sales, creating easements, and meeting legal requirements of land sale and transfer;
- The NGO can creatively purchase large pieces of land that contain a core area of high conservation value and sell of non-critical portions for compatible economic development activities, at a higher price. If done properly, and if the land can accommodate it, the NGO can establish the protected area in the land with the high conservation and biodiversity value and use the proceeds of the sale of the other portions to fund the purchase.

Protected Area Managers have historically relied on a sometimes ad hoc variety of timber and non-timber forest products and sustainable economic development initiatives to generate income to support protected area management and other conservation-related activities. These have included everything from handicrafts and ecotourism to specialty food products. This is always a considerable challenge, as it is not generally a field in which conservation NGOs have in-house expertise. Additionally, these activities typically take place on a 'handicraft' scale, and in order to elevate them to a 'commercial' scale the NGOs need to take into account capital costs, running costs, costs of production and/or delivery, and environmental and social impacts – a daunting prospect for most. Again, conservation NGOs are held to a higher standard than their commercial competitors, as they will by necessity need to pay strict attention to environmental sensitivity in order to stay true to their missions.

By way of general comparison, the private sector attracts capital investment and research and development funding from private investors, who have a higher expectation for return on investment and a lower environmental ethic; NGOs and protected area managers are largely dependent on donor and grant funding, must maintain the highest standards of environ-

## Making projects sustainable - Environmental Services

mental responsibility, and can only generate a much lower return on investment. This makes it difficult to compete in markets that are traditionally the realm of the private sector.

This is not to say that developing an entrepreneurial approach to generating revenue from sustainable economic development activities is impossible. On the contrary, many NGOs are finding a variety of creative ways to leverage their position as protected area managers to offer real services in important and potentially profitable niches.

The question remains, "What were the NGOs set up to do?" This is a difficult problem, because conservation organisations are established to pursue conservation activities, attract most of their funding in support of conservation activities, and recruit employees and manage organisations whose mission is conservation. Their 'business' is not business, but conservation.

**Ecotourism** is a big issue, and an increasingly professionalised and competitive business. What is certain is that all of the participating conservation NGOs are actively involved in ecotourism at one level or another. All agreed on the following reasons for pursuing ecotourism activities on lands they own and/or manage:

- Ecotourism fits the mission of sustainable use;
- Ecotourism is consistent with environmental education objectives and activities.
- Ecotourism can generate revenue;
- Ecotourism infrastructure can support research activities in the field;
- Ecotourism can provide benefits to the local community.

This last element is sometimes poorly understood. It is important once again to manage expectations, which are often wildly exaggerated when it comes to the realities of what ecotourism in protected areas can realistically generate. At a basic level, it is also important to understand that benefits can and should accrue to local communities in three ways:

- Direct benefits accrue through direct employment.
- Indirect benefits accrue through the sale and purchase of goods and services.
- Community benefits need to be considered, through the establishment of a profit sharing scheme or community fund. This last point is important, because it provides some benefit even to those residents who choose not to participate, directly or indirectly, in the ecotourism venture but whose lives and communities are still impacted by tourists. It is also important that this be structured as partnership, not charity.

There is no standard template for protected area managers to follow in pursuing ecotourism, other than an understanding of the basic fundamentals of any good tourism operation – responsiveness, providing good experiences, cleanliness, good food, etc. Each situation will be different. It is recommended that NGOs recognise the fact that they are not experts and running a tourism business is not their primary mission. There is value in getting good advice.

Some protected area managers are finding success in generating revenue by providing environmental services and delivering carbon offsets. These pursuits are proving to be mission-consistent and profitable, and take advantage of in-house environmental expertise.

Environmental services include both passive and active pursuits: they range from doing environmental assessments and impact statements to protecting watersheds. What is important is that environmental services can and should:

- Take advantage of programmes on land owned and managed by the NGO;
- Facilitate participation by small land owners.

The key philosophy behind the provision of environmental services is that they are based on the resources available to the conservation NGO – the land itself and/or the talents of the conservation-related staff members, who in some cases are able to allow the NGO to charge and generate revenue for the services and work these people are doing anyway. Essentially, these approaches are fundamentally mission consistent, as opposed to commercial or pseudo-commercial ventures that are often outside the core mission and internal expertise and capacity.

Examples presented of successful environmental services initiatives include:

Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda (Mexico) – 'Fundo Del Agua' project in watershed protection, which generates funds from state governments in return for managing the watersheds in the Sierra Gorda region. This approach by-passes the federal system, as it is not dependent on federal programmes and all arrangements are negotiated with local governments and water authorities. The goal is to create an endowment and generate annual fees, which can be used to support the land management and conservation activities.

Fundaeco (Guatemala) – Fundaeco has had success marketing a 'Green Sticker' programme, whereby they charge \$10 per car to pay for carbon sequestra-

tion in Guatemala. The programme has been successful largely because of the marketing effort that Fundaeco put into it, which has created a certain status around having a Green Sticker on your vehicle.

Fundación Pro Bosque – Has had success providing consultation on reforestation, taking advantage of in-house expertise.

Guyra Paraguay – Has established support services for government agencies, including helping to draft deeds, etc for land purchases and providing GIS services. This not only provides revenue, but serves the additional function of establishing good and close working relationships with government in general and key individuals in various agencies.

PACT (Protected Area Conservation Trust – Belize) – An additional fee is added on to the departure tax specifically to fund conservation organisations and projects in Belize. The Trust receives the fees, and accepts funding applications and proposals from Belizean organisations.

**Carbon Sequestration** (including carbon offsetting and carbon balancing) is becoming an increasingly important service for both international and in-country conservation organisations. In the UK and throughout the EU the concept of carbon balancing both individual lifestyles and business-related enterprises is being heavily promoted and pursued in the media and by governments. As a result the interest is creating new markets and new opportunities. There is no doubt that carbon balancing is now a very advanced and sophisticated, and completely accepted, activity in Europe, and is spreading. While it is somewhat lower profile in the US, it is gaining momentum there as well.

There are primarily two income streams involved:

- Voluntary offsetting, which is driven by an interest in satisfying social responsibility and generating positive publicity;
- Tradable offsets, which provides incentives through returns on investment.





In addition, there is an encouraging trend, due in part to advances in the science of carbon sequestration, for an emphasis on the biodiversity benefits of offsetting. This trend is especially noticeable in the realm of voluntary offsetting, but less so with the tradable markets in CO<sub>2</sub>.

For protected area managers in the tropics this is translating to new opportunities for land purchase and protection and for new funding streams to support these activities. In simple terms, the voluntary offsets are being coordinated by and passing through international NGOs, who set up the programmes, collect the funds, and are responsible for directing those funds to support verifiable offsetting activities with in-country conservation partners and protected area managers. For their part, the protected area managers are responsible for 'delivering' the offsets through tree planting, assisted natural regeneration and avoided deforestation.

This last element – the 'deliverables' – is crucial, and protected area managers need to maintain clear understandings of and communications regarding what is expected. It is important that detailed planning be done at the beginning, including recognition of the need to capture the costs of capacity building.

Several of the participants have had recent experience with carbon offsetting, including Programme for Belize (one of the earliest to set up a carbon sequestration programme), Guyra Paraguay, Fundaeco, and Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda. In some cases there have been barriers to participation that were, at least initially, difficult to overcome, including project opportunity costs, transaction costs, and time and expertise. World Land Trust has been steadily expanding and refining its programme, with an emphasis on transparency and full cost calculation for its clients matched by a concerted effort to assist its in-country partner organisations with project planning and delivery. Its recent experiences with Fundación Jocotoco, REGUA, Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda, Fundación Pro Bosque and Guyra Paraguay are showing excellent results and generating substantive income and conservation results.

An important emerging development in the carbon offset field is in the growing recognition of the value of avoided deforestation as a legitimate tool in the pursuit of carbon offsets. While not yet recognised under the Kyoto Protocol, avoided deforestation is nevertheless proven effective. Of particular interest to the subject of land purchase as a conservation intervention strategy, avoided deforestation fits in perfectly with land purchase approaches, enabling the fees paid to

offset carbon to be used directly to fund land purchase.

A number of general common threads run through all the organisations' approach to making projects sustainable, forged by the realities of making projects work 'on the ground' in often difficult working and funding environments:

- An entrepreneurial spirit and energy to find creative ways of generating funds to support conservation activities;
- Many things pursued are need-based and reactive;
- There is a constant need for and effort to achieve what can be a difficult balance between 'running businesses' and 'doing conservation';
- There is an overarching need for an emphasis on both environmental responsibility – *do no harm* – and economic feasibility – *lose no money!*
- With many initiatives there exists a big challenge to move from a 'handicraft scale' to a 'commercial scale' in order to make them truly viable;
- Ecotourism is important and seen as necessary, but NGOs need help in developing it and making it work properly and profitably;
- Environmental services will play an increasingly important role, and have the potential to be a very good and appropriately profitable enterprise for protected area managers;
- Carbon sequestration initiatives need to capture the costs, and there is a great need to share experiences among NGOs;
- Is an economic development component necessary to justify a land purchase proposal? Some donors require it, but in some cases it may not be feasible. Ideally, this should be clearly assessed, discussed and communicated.

Similarly, the most clearly stated common challenge is one that has long plagued protected area managers: core operating funding and funding for project management are key to the success of any organisation and any project, yet core operating and project management costs are historically and notoriously the most difficult to raise and generate.

## Fundraising & Donor Relations

In order to filter through the volume of funding applications that they receive donors have developed a number of objective and subjective criteria. All donors provide guidelines for submitting applications, including the information needed and annual deadlines for receiving applications for funding. These basic criteria are fundamental, and while for some donors they may seem overly complicated, the fact is that they are established primarily to act as a first layer of filtering – if the applicant cannot meet these initial requirements, even though their project may be valuable and worthy, the chances of receiving funding are virtually non-existent. This is especially important if an organisation is applying for funding from a particular donor for the first time.

Beyond this first fundamental step there are a number of things that organisations can do to dramatically improve their chances of receiving donor funding. In a general sense donors are looking for a combination of the following elements:

- Excellent, well designed projects that deliver real conservation benefit and quantifiable results;
- Sound and stable organisations with the capacity to deliver what they are proposing;
- Responsiveness, both during the application process and throughout the implementation of the project.

Do the research into the donor: know and understand what kinds of projects they have funded, what their requirements are, what other organisations and/or projects similar to yours they have funded. All submissions should be in the language that best suits the donor.

Initial contact is very important. At this point donors will already be looking to assess the potential of working with your organisation. The initial contact should be brief and concise. Some organisations, like IUCN NL, will require a pre-proposal brief in order to make an early determination if it's appropriate for the organisation to submit a more complete formal proposal. This first assessment will consider both the quality of the proposal and the project, and will often result in requests for further information. If additional informa-

tion is requested speed of response is critical. For initial contact information it is the quality of the information, not the quantity of information, that is paramount. Keep in mind that this should be a concise summary of who you are, what you are trying to accomplish, how much it will cost and why it is important.

It is always useful to provide the following basic information to donors to whom you are submitting application for funding:

- Organisational details and Organisational experience;
- Budget details;
- On-going running costs;
- Maps and imagery of area to be purchased and surrounding area; ecosystems, landuse, threats, who owns neighbouring properties, additional opportunities for future land purchases;
- Vision for post land purchase management and funding.

When submitting budgets it is important to keep in mind that the land prices, to the donors, are more about the justification than the expense. The applicant NGO must clearly delineate the benefits of spending the money they are asking for.

Know your donors and what other donors they like to work with, like IUCN NL and World Land Trust. If possible consider submitting joint proposals to donors that are known to have good working relationships with each other.

It is important to clearly make the case for why land purchase is the best strategic option for conservation. Describe the impact the project will have beyond the site level; and give details about the real and potential threats.

There will be challenges with raising funds for less well publicised areas – essentially, how can a conservation NGO 'sell' the less charismatic sites or ecosystems to potential donors? The four fundamental tools that apply to all projects become even more important in these cases:

## Institutional Aspects & Business Planning

### Long-term stewardship of an NGO

Long term stewardship of an NGO requires continuation planning that includes attention to both project sustainability and organisational sustainability. While on the surface these may seem to be consistent with one another, it is not always the case, especially if projects are not well designed from the beginning, with enough allowance for administrative and management costs. Large projects of definite length can also be dangerous, since while they are running they provide funding for and require levels of administrative and management support that may not be sustainable when the project terminates. Additional complications can arise when attempting to meet partner expectations and donor expectations, which are not always consistent with one another.

The four fundamental things common to all of the participating NGOs that were identified as basic and essential for successful long term stewardship are:

- Capacity – how to build and maintain the internal expertise and infrastructure necessary to deliver good projects while simultaneously managing the organisation, raising funds and developing new projects;
- Funding – not just project funding, but core operating funding as well;
- Endowments Management – endowments are seen as important tools for long term organisational sustainability, but most NGOs have little or no experience or expertise with their structuring and management;
- Fundraising Training – NGOs and their staff and leadership must, and are expected to, be competent fundraisers, yet most are trained and educated in conservation-related fields. Conversely, it can be difficult to find time or money for on-going training in fundraising.

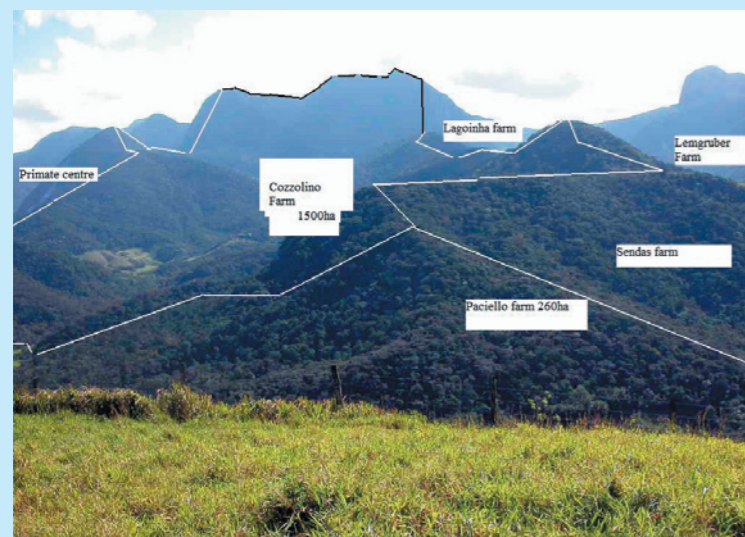
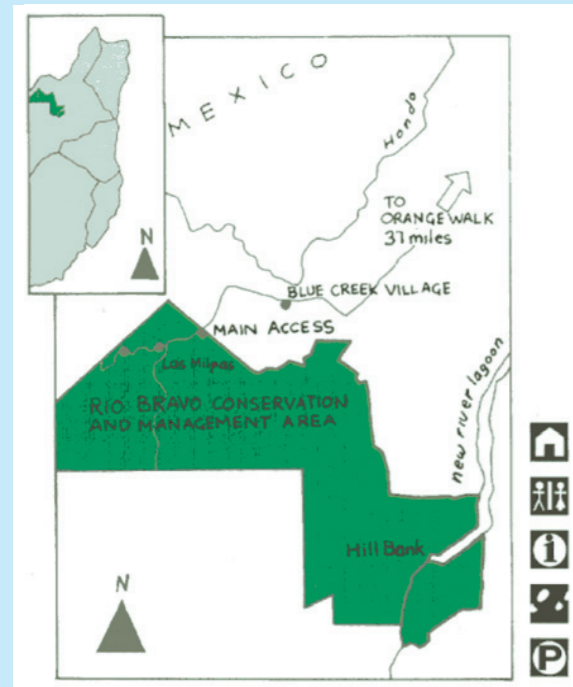
Faced with these challenges, and often acting very much alone, the leaders of the participating NGOs, like most of their peers in the conservation community, have adapted a range of common approaches in their attempts to sustain their organisations and the work they are doing.

- Maps, locating the country, the region and the project area in context for easy reference and understanding;
- Images, creating a visual point of reference and case for conservation;
- Bulletins, demonstrating the ability of the NGO to communicate its case and providing information on its operation and its record of success;
- Making a clear case for the conservation priority inherent in the project for which funds are being sought.

From the organisations perspective, they appreciate it when donors keep things simple and encourage dialogue. Establishing good personal relationships with donors is extremely valuable. Face-to-face meetings with donors is key. Also, donors can bring other partners to the table, and NGOs can bring other donors. Do not underestimate the value of donor visits. Donor tourism creates opportunities for short and long term support. It is important that the donors are able to meet and interact with the leaders of your organisation on these trips, including board members.

Donor flexibility is also highly valued. Both NGOs and donors need to recognise the importance of innovative methods, even if they have a higher risk associated with them. It is worth repeating there the point made in earlier discussions: It is vital to make sure that donors are aware of the fact that some land purchase projects can be very time-consuming, and that flexibility and patience are often required in order to successfully achieve the conservation goals. Keeping donors informed during periods of delay is extremely beneficial.

Participating organisations recognised the value of sharing resources and expertise among themselves. Mapping and translation are two important areas for this kind of inter-organisational cooperation. Maps especially are important, but can be expensive to produce. NGOs that have well-established mapping and imagery capabilities are very willing to assist those that don't. Photography and videography are also areas with good potential for resource sharing and cooperative support. Local counterparts can review applications for each other.



WLT has found that maps are vitally important in engaging corporate support and other high donors. The more maps that can be produced of project areas, particularly identifying individual parcels of the land, the easier the task is of raising funds.

- Intensive work to understand and quantify the resources;
- Planning;
- Working with communities, stakeholders and government officials and agencies
- Enlisting available expertise;
- Demonstrating leadership and taking responsibility;
- Creativity.

This combination of tools is most effective when focused on creating healthy human and natural resources.

### Capitalisation and Business Planning

All successful organisations have formalised and actively pursue business and organisational planning, for both sites managed and the institution in general. For example:

- The Wildlife Trust of India works on a three-year internal planning cycle, with a mid-year and annual review. They have a strict policy of only deviating from the plan in the case of an emergency or when faced with an unusual opportunity, and try whenever possible to make project-specific changes only. WTI's policy is to accept projects and funds only from or for good projects and good donor institutions. WTI's three year internal plans and mid-term reviews are prepared by field staff and headquarters staff, and then are presented to the board;
- Guyra Paraguay works on a five-year planning cycle, with a strong mid-term evaluation in year three. In addition, they develop a business plan for each individual site managed, which is shared with Guyra's partners when evaluated and approved. Each December Guyra gathers feedback, internal and external, on the implementation of the plan. This includes feedback from international partners which is not only useful, but helps with Guyra's image and its relationships with its partners. Guyra's staff proposes and plans for projects, and its board prepares business plans;
- Nature Kenya prepares a five-year strategic plan to establish the strategic direction for the organisa-

- tion, and an organisational business plan to define financial targets. A mid-term review is completed for both plans. The plans are prepared by the board and senior management, and shared with all staff for feedback. The business plans set financial objectives and targets, review what has been achieved so far, and include mechanisms for monitoring progress against the established objectives;
- Fundaeco engages itself in a strategic planning exercise for the organisation as a whole every five to six years. This includes individual management/business plans for each of its reserves, and also creates an overall land acquisition plan for the organisation. The land acquisition plan in particular forces Fundaeco to evaluate the previous plan and assess its performance. The most recent land acquisition plan established a target of buying 450 hectares a year for ten years, with evaluations and assessments of area, cost (including loans, if necessary), history, strategies including freezing properties in the national registry, lobbying on tax exemptions on perpetuity reserves, and risk assessment. A priority of the land acquisition plan is an accompanying owners list. An important part of the planning process is a risk assessment exercise, which includes cadastral and registry issues, land invasion potential, long-term management, and identifies cases where mortgages may have to be taken without having the funds in hand in order to meet urgent conservation needs;
  - Programme for Belize does management planning every five years, and includes both strategic planning and financial planning for the organisation. It has also established an endowment fund that is specifically intended to generate income that can be used for core operating costs only.

All NGOs agreed on the importance of criteria-based flexibility in the implementation of the plans; WTI's approach of "deviating from the plan only for emergencies or when faced with an unusually good opportunity" was cited as an excellent and succinct way to parameterise the flexibility issue.

The funding of land acquisition is typically one of the more challenging aspects of trying to create forward looking land acquisition plans, especially since there are not many donors that specifically fund land purchase and acquisition. All participating NGOs indicated that it would be useful to share a list of those donors that do fund land purchase as a good reference for future planning and funding.

- World Land Trust ([www.worldlandtrust.org](http://www.worldlandtrust.org)) and
- World Land Trust-US ([www.worldlandtrust-us.org](http://www.worldlandtrust-us.org))
- IUCN NL Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature

- Programme ([www.iucn.nl/funds](http://www.iucn.nl/funds))
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service Neotropics and Migratory Birds programmes
- US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Conservation International's Global Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Rainforest Alliance
- Oro Verde
- Nature and Culture International
- Earth Birthday US
- Moore Foundation
- Deep Ecology
- Weedon Foundation
- National Audubon Society (bird-related only)
- Massachusetts Audubon Society (bird-related only)
- Aveeno Foundation
- Garfield Foundation
- Park Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Jensen Foundation
- Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- World Wildlife Fund
- American Bird Conservancy

In addition, The Foundation Center's search engine for funders and the US-based Charity Navigator are useful research resources.

#### Long-term Institutional Requirements

The recognised challenge of securing core operating funding is not diminished by acceptance as fact. All participants raised this as an issue of constant and primary concern. It is an on-going conundrum – many, if not most, donors, institutional and individual alike, are ready to provide project funding but few will expressly fund core operating costs; but, without proper attention to core operations, and the funds needed to support them, NGOs are less able to deliver excellent individual projects and perpetual protection and management.

One tool that is being pursued by some NGOs is the creation of an **endowment fund**.

- PfB has worked for 16 years to develop its endowments. It currently has three funds, and considers their management and growth as part of its five-year strategies and management plans. It has found that many donors are interested in and impressed by the fact that PfB does have endowment funds, even if many of them may not choose or be able to donate funds towards endowments. PfB's experience has been that fund raising for

endowment has been most successful during the first few years of its existence, when the organisation and its long term sustainability and success are still new and interesting to donors. PfB has two carbon sequestration parcels established in the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area: the first was set up with no associated endowment, and has had on-going problems with funding; the second comes with a \$500,000 endowment that was included in the original land purchase structure, with the caveat that the endowment fund could not be tapped until the end of the initial project establishment and funding period.

- In the Philippines, there is a national endowment fund that can be tapped by NGOs for projects and administration. It currently has an endowment of approximately 25 to 30 million dollars, with a 9% annual yield. Any projects supported by the fund can claim 30% for administration, with the remaining 70% being grants to support the project work.
- Guyra Paraguay also has three working endowment funds: One, for \$6,000,000, is dedicated to projects; one, for \$2,000,000, is dedicated to the institution; and the third is dedicated to improve the local business environments in and around its protected areas.

It is generally agreed that endowment funds are more difficult to create and raise money for than specific projects, but that over the long term the effort is worthwhile. The circumstances are also markedly different from one donor country or region to another. For example, in the UK endowment funds are rare, and often can be counterproductive with UK funders as they have the potential to create an impression that an organisation must not need any more money if they have a substantial amount "in the bank." A similar attitude can exist in the EU, to the point where it may be advisable to "hide" (i.e. account for separately) endowments. The US, where endowment funding is more common and seen as important, on the other hand, can be quite different, but the prevailing attitude is that endowment funds need to be quite large in order to be effective. In the case with many US donors substantial endowment funds are seen not as a reason to not support an NGO, but as something that lends credibility and consequently makes the NGO more attractive to donors.

Other tools for and approaches to long-term financial sustainability

**National tourism taxes** – Belize adds an extra fee to departure taxes specifically to fund something called the Protected Areas Conservation Trust

(PACT). While PACT accepts applications for funding from any Belizean NGO, it unfortunately was set up to provide project funding only, and not operational funding. Landing fees for cruise ships passengers can similarly be a substantial source of potential funding for conservation NGOs.

**Entrance Fees to Protected Areas** – If properly established can be a significant source of relatively steady on-going support. For NGOs with a network of protected areas and working in a place with an established tourism market the establishment of 'honey pot' reserves that have high potential for visitation and command a high entrance fee can be especially valuable, as they can generate operating profits that can be used to support other, less attractive or accessible protected areas. Fundaeco, for example, includes in its land acquisition planning a strategy of looking to purchase land that can become high visitation, high entrance fee site for just this purpose.

One important aspect of developing an entrance fee structure is to make sure that local communities and nationals in general either are exempt or pay a very low fee in comparison to the tourist fee.

Entrance fees and visitation in general, are not appropriate for all protected areas or even all NGOs. In some cases the reserves may be either inaccessible, dangerous, or so biologically sensitive that visitation would do more harm than good.

**Twinning of Reserves** – for example, in Colombia protected area reserves are "twinned" with US reserves, which provide funding for environmental education and also help to support schools in local communities.

## Afternoon press conference & public event – Amsterdam.

An afternoon press conference was held in Amsterdam, near the IUCN NL office. Willem Ferwerda, Executive Director of IUCN NL, welcomed an audience of donors, conservationists, media and others interested in the Symposium and its topics. Three presentations were held to give the audience an impression of the importance and effectiveness of land purchase as a conservation intervention strategy: John Burton, CEO of the World Land Trust, spoke on the work of the Trust; Alberto Yanosky, Executive Director of Guyra Paraguay, spoke on the work and strategies of Guyra; and Marco Cerezo, Director General of FUNDAECO, discussed the innovative approaches for conservation implemented by FUNDAECO in Guatemala.



## ANNEX: Organisations represented at IUCN NL / WLT Symposia & Participant details

### CODEFF (Chile)

The National Committee for the Defense of Flora and Fauna (CODEFF) was founded in 1968 and is Chile's oldest non-governmental environmental organisation. CODEFF has 4,000 affiliates distributed among five branches in the country. Its mission is to promote nature and environmental conservation, and achieve sustainable development that reconciles the need for improved living standards with conservation of Chile's natural resources. The foundation of their work is research, education and dissemination of information, and grassroots participation by citizens. At the national and regional levels, CODEFF runs programs which include Forestry, Biodiversity, Environmental Education, Communications, Legislation, and Membership and Volunteers.

Website: [www.codeff.cl](http://www.codeff.cl)

Victoria Maldonado – [victoria.maldonadosj@gmail.com](mailto:victoria.maldonadosj@gmail.com)  
(currently working for Fundación Palma)

### ECOAN (Peru)

Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) is a Peruvian non-profit organisation with the aim to preserve Peruvian ecosystems and its flora and fauna that are on the verge of extinction. An important aspect of their work is the management and extension of the Abra Patricia Reserve in Northern Peru. In their work, focus is centered on the sustainable use of natural resources, with participation and full commitment of locally involved communities, such as their projects to reduce the pressure of tourism activities on the natural resources.

Website: <http://www.ecoanperu.org>

Tino Auca - [tauca@hotmail.com](mailto:tauca@hotmail.com)

### Fundación Ecominga (Ecuador)

This Ecuadorian foundation was started in 2005 by a group of 11 Ecuadorian and international biologists, educators, and environmentalists, with the main purpose to identify and protect Ecuadorian forests with exceptional concentrations of unique and endangered species. The foundation's focus has been on endemic plants, which often have very small ranges in Ecuador, but with reserves also protecting several endangered mammals and birds as well. A secondary objective of the foundation is environmental education and training of local people, as well making efforts to educate foreign students and assist working scientists to develop

new methods for measuring and analyzing areas of high biodiversity such as those being protected.

Website: [www.ecominga.org](http://www.ecominga.org)

Lou Jost - [loujost@yahoo.com](mailto:loujost@yahoo.com)

### Fundación Frontera Verde (Argentina)

This Argentine organisation was set up in 2007, with the specific objective to protect one of the last relics of the Selva Paranaense (sub-tropical rainforest) eco-region, located in Misiones Province, Argentina, an area which remain largely undisturbed compared to neighbouring areas of Southern Brazil, Western Paraguay and Central Argentina, and containing 20% of the remaining 7% of the critically endangered Atlantic Rainforest. The organization aims to co-operate with the government of the Province of Misiones, undertaking objectives set out by academic institutions, in particular, the Marcio Ayres Research Station, as well as undertaking conservation and educational objectives, and representing the rights of the indigenous people living within the forest, allowing the latter to utilize the environment in a sustainable manner.

[No website currently available]

Mario Malajovich - [mmalajovich@gmail.com](mailto:mmalajovich@gmail.com)

### Fundación Jocotoco (Ecuador)

Fundación Jocotoco is an Ecuadorian organisation established to protect land of critical importance to the conservation of Ecuador's endangered birds and associated biodiversity. The Fundación achieves this by purchasing lands and managing them as private ecological reserves. To date, Fundación Jocotoco has established eight reserves protecting about 13,000 hectares, home to about 800 species of birds, of which over 100 are range-restricted or endemic species, and about 40 are globally endangered species.

Website: <http://www.fjocotoco.org>

Francisco Sornoza - [fsornoza@pi.pro.ec](mailto:fsornoza@pi.pro.ec)

### Fundación Natura (Colombia)

Fundación Natura is a non-profit Colombian organization created in 1983 and dedicated to the promotion of sustainable use of biological diversity as a mechanism for conservation and sustainable human development. It develops scientific research activities, designs and implements conservation projects and

works for the integration of indigenous, black and peasant communities in the conservation activities of the natural areas they inhabit.

Website: <http://www.natura.org.co>

Clara Solano - [csolano@natura.org.co](mailto:csolano@natura.org.co)

### Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza (Brazil)

The Fundação O Boticário de Proteção à Natureza (O Boticário Foundation for Nature Protection) is a Brazilian non-profit organisation created in 1990, resulting from the O Boticário Group's commitment to make an effective contribution toward the conservation of nature. Headquartered in Curitiba, the capital city of the state of Paraná in southern Brazil, the Fundação O Boticário is a non-governmental, non-profit organization. Its mission is to promote and take actions to conserve nature. Through its Nature Conservation Incentives Program, the Fundação O Boticário has supported more than 1,100 initiatives so far throughout Brazil. These initiatives are helping to save plants and animals endangered of extinction, to protect relevant natural areas and to sensitize the population to environmental issues.

Website: <http://internet.boticario.com.br/portal/site/fundacao>

Maria de Lourdes Nunes - O Boticario - [malu@fundacaoboticario.org.br](mailto:malu@fundacaoboticario.org.br)

### Fundación Palma (Chile)

Fundación Palma is a Chilean non-profit organisation with the aim to pursue the recovery and conservation of Chile's native forest, with a special focus on the Chilean Palm, which is an endangered endemic in continental Chile. Its mission is to bundle efforts in education, innovation and active research to strive for conservation of Chile's natural heritage. PALMA has important experience in the protection of wild areas and working with communities living on the fringes of these protected areas.

Website: <http://www.fundacion.cl>

Victoria Maldonado – [victoria.maldonadosj@gmail.com](mailto:victoria.maldonadosj@gmail.com)

### Fundación Patagonia Natural (Argentina)

Fundación Patagonia Natural (FPN) is non-governmental organisation founded in 1989 to promote the conservation of flora and fauna and protection of the Patagonian environment within Argentina, encouraging responsible management of its resources and ecosystems. Its activities involve: interacting between government, private and non-government organisations at provincial and national scale, as a mediator/facilitator to provide information and to make recommendations on natural resource management and conservation; providing environmental education through all sectors of the community; and carrying out

research into issues relating to biodiversity of the region and its protection.

Website: <http://www.patagonianatural.org>

Luis Castelli - [lc@funafu.org](mailto:lc@funafu.org)

### Fundación ProBosque (Ecuador)

Fundación ProBosque was created by a Ministerial decree in 1992. Its institutional mission is to "Be a private organization with broad experience in the management of protected areas with an emphasis on reforestation, agroforestry, investigation, environmental education and ecotourism programs, in order to support biodiversity conservation of the dry tropical forests of coastal Ecuador, through the capacity of its and inter-institutional cooperation".

Pro Bosque works in two areas, private protected area management and reforestation, the latter focussing on native species of the dry forest. It administers the 6.078 ha Cerro Blanco Protected Forest, on the outskirts of the City of Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city with a population of approximately 1,9 million inhabitants.

Website: <http://www.bosquecerroblanco.com>

Eric von Horstman - [vonhorst@ecua.net.ec](mailto:vonhorst@ecua.net.ec)

### Fundaeco (Guatemala)

The Foundation for Ecodevelopment and Conservation (FUNDAECO) in Guatemala was created in June 1990, with a mission to "protect the integrity, beauty and stability of nature through the creation and management of Protected Areas, the sustainable use of their natural resources and the improvement of the quality of life of its local inhabitants". Fundaeco's projects focus on the protection of the Caribbean Rainforest Corridor of Guatemala, the establishment of the Ecological Metropolitan Belt of Guatemala City and on supporting the protection and restoration of the Biological Corridor of the South Coast of Guatemala. The purchase and management of private reserves is an important instrument in reaching the goals of these projects.

Website: <http://www.fundaeco.org.gt>

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### Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda (Mexico)

In 1987, a small initiative of local residents formed the Sierra Gorda Ecological Group (GESG) in order to confront the complex environmental problems affecting the Sierra Gorda of Queretaro. The 383,567 hectare Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (SGBR) was created by presidential decree in 1997, making it the most ecologically diverse protected natural area in Mexico. The Biosphere Reserve is the result of 19 years commitment, where sustainability programmes have been developed in the areas of sanitation, restoration, training, management of natural resources, and

the regulation of processes. The common goal of GESG is ecological conservation through sustainable development, while participating in activities such as fire fighting, Payment for Ecosystem Services, land purchase and community ecotourism.

**Website:** <http://www.sierragorda.net>

Roberto Pedraza - [pedraza\\_roberto@yahoo.com](mailto:pedraza_roberto@yahoo.com)

#### **Guyra Paraguay (Paraguay)**

Guyra is a Paraguayan non-government organisation, established in 1997, with a mission to:

- Lead, promote and coordinate progress towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, with a special focus on birds, through advocacy, research, public awareness and active community participation;
- To become an authority on Paraguayan biodiversity, with a particular focus on birds and their habitats, and to act as a catalyst for increased community participation in nature conservation;
- To promote research and sustainable development, as mechanisms to achieve a better quality of life for the population.

Guyra's strategic objectives focus on: developing key databases in order to identify species conservation priorities; identifying and prioritizing sites of greatest conservation importance in Paraguay; monitoring the fragmentation of the principal eco-regions in Paraguay including Atlantic Rainforest, Cerrado, Misiones' Grasslands, Pantanal and Chaco; integrating socio-economic development with ecological requirements in areas of conservation importance; and undertaking environmental education and advocacy throughout Paraguay.

**Website:** <http://www.guyra.org.py>

Alberto Yanosky - [yanosky@guyra.org.py](mailto:yanosky@guyra.org.py)

#### **Iniciativa Amotocodie (Paraguay)**

Iniciativa Amotocodie (IA) is a small NGO working in the Gran Chaco, home and vital territory of indigenous groups living in voluntary isolation. IA works to protect the rights of the isolated Ayoreo Forest Communities and the integrity of their environmental, cultural and spiritual habitat. Based on a growing critical awareness of their history of injustice, and the negative impact of the development of surrounding society, the Ayoreo aim for a future in which they can retrieve their lost territories, as well as their ancestral life model.

IA has contributed to halting environmental destruction by diverse legal and political protective measures. Also, while not renouncing the legal territorial rights held by the Ayoreo, this joint action includes the recovery of parts of the territories through land purchase, as a desperate emergency measure applied in order to "buy time" for the isolated groups and for the

integrity of their habitat and its biodiversity.

**Website:** <http://www.iniciativa-amotocodie.org>

Benno Glauser - [bennoglauser@quanta.com.py](mailto:bennoglauser@quanta.com.py)

#### **Nature Kenya (Kenya)**

Under severe threat from an expanding population, Kenya's rich biodiversity is under serious threat, as continued pressure is put on its environment. Nature Kenya, a Birdlife International partner, is responding to this challenge in various ways. Most importantly, it is identifying conservation priorities, like Important Bird Areas, using birds as indicators and develops partnerships with local groups (Site Support Groups) as well as national and international partners. Through education and awareness, country-wide support for conservation is strived for, and advocacy campaigns are implemented to direct authorities towards more sustainable policies.

**Website:** <http://www.naturekenya.org>

Enock Kanyanya - [ewkanyanya@yahoo.com](mailto:ewkanyanya@yahoo.com)

(currently working for Birdlife International)

#### **Philippine Reef & Rainforest Conservation Foundation**

The Philippines Reef & Rainforest Foundation was formed in 1993 as a non-profit organisation, for the initial purpose of preserving Danjungan Island in the southern Philippines, from development. With the assistance of personnel from the Negros Ecological and Forest Foundation, World Land Trust and Coral Cay Conservation, a plan for protecting the island and its marine resources was formed, and Danjungan was purchased and designated as the Danjungan Island Marine Reserve and Sanctuary. Project activities have included working with the local fishing community to halt destructive fishing practice, restoration of mangrove habitats, and the establishment of an small scale facility on the island for ecotourism and education.

**Website:** <http://www.prrcfi.org>

Gerry Ledesma - [glledesma@gmail.com](mailto:glledesma@gmail.com)

#### **Programme for Belize (Belize)**

Programme for Belize (Pfb) is a non-profit organization, established in 1988, to promote conservation of the natural heritage of Belize and responsible use of its natural resources. The Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area (RBCMA) is its flagship project where Pfb seeks to demonstrate practical applications of its principles focused on linking conservation of tropical forest with the development of sustainable land uses. On the Rio Bravo, Pfb implements several programs: scientific research, environmental education, professional training and promotes environmental awareness amongst visitors. The organization is committed to the goal of earning suffi-

cient revenue from its economic activities to support the conservation of the RBCMA. To this end, Pfb has carried out major research on the land and its resources to arrive at sustainable development plans which include: ecotourism, sustainable timber extraction, carbon sequestration, agroforestry and extraction of non-timber products.

**Website:** <http://www.pfbelize.org>

Edilberto Romero - [pfbel@btl.net](mailto:pfbel@btl.net)

#### **ProVita (Venezuela)**

In 1987, a group of undergraduates in the School of Biology at the Universidad Central de Venezuela founded Provita. Since then, the non-profit, non-governmental organisation has devoted its efforts to environmental conservation in its widest sense, with special emphasis on threatened species and ecosystems. Twenty years later, guided by their slogan "Innovation in Conservation," Provita has become a fundamental reference for biodiversity conservation in Venezuela and Latin America. Provita also has implemented projects directly, most notably on Margarita Island, located in northeastern Venezuela. The Yellow-shouldered Parrot (*Amazona barbadensis*), Blue-headed Conure (*Aratinga acuticaudata neoxena*) and the four species of marine turtles that nest on the island (*Dermochelys coriacea*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Caretta caretta* and *Eretmochelys imbricata*) have been the principal foci of research, management interventions, public awareness campaigns and environmental education programs. Among the most important achievements of this work are the increase of the parrot population from 700 birds in 1987 to more than 1600 at present, and the successful implementation of a new management technique for Parrot and Conure populations threatened by poaching, known as "partial captive breeding."

**Website:** <http://www.provitaonline.org>

Franklin Rojas - [frojas@provitaonline.org](mailto:frojas@provitaonline.org)

#### **Reserva Ecologica de Guapi Assu (Brazil)**

Reserva Ecologica de Guapi Assu (REGUA) is a non-governmental organisation with a mission to protect the forests of the upper catchment of the Guapiaçu river basin, located within Rio de Janeiro state, which is part of one of the biggest fragments of the Atlantic rainforest (Mata Atlantica) left in Brazil. REGUA has an active land purchase policy, and its protection and conservation strategy can be defined through: employment of local (ex) hunters as the first line of defence against poaching and habitat destruction; biodiversity monitoring; habitat restoration, including reforestation and re-creation of previously existing wetlands; and species re-introduction, with the Red-billed Currawong and Black-fronted piping Guan successfully re-introduced to date.

**Website:** <http://www.regua.co.uk>

Nicholas Locke - [aregua@terra.com.br](mailto:aregua@terra.com.br)

#### **Wildlife Trust of India (India)**

Wildlife Trust of India is a non-profit conservation organisation, committed to urgent action that prevents destruction of India's wildlife. Its principal concerns are crisis management and the provision of quick, efficient aid to those areas that require it the most, whilst in the longer term it hopes to achieve, through proactive reforms, the conservation of India's wildlife and its habitats. In addition to its efforts to secure and manage private nature reserves, WTI's multifaceted programmes address issues and needs such as: wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, enforcement of laws against wildlife crime, raising awareness and outreach, as well as community involvement.

**Website:** <http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org>

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#### **Triple E (Netherlands)**

Triple E –Economy, Ecology and Experience- is an expertise centre that operates right at the interface between economy, ecology and the experience people can gain from and through nature. The firm believes an economic approach to nature conservation is viable from both an ecological and a commercial perspective. We carry out projects that visualize and commercialise the economic potential of nature, amongst other by structuring it into an investment asset. The landscape auctions were developed with Triple E and are an example of how economy, ecology and experience can be combined to the benefit of conservation.

**Website:** [www.tripleee.nl](http://www.tripleee.nl)

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