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Monitoring Forest Cover In the Amazon Region



Is an initiative of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) oriented to develop and implement participatory systems for monitoring forest cover in Amazonia; and also for strengthening of existing regional coordination platforms. It was originated from the joint efforts of ACTO Member Countries (Bolivia, Brasil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela).

The project is been executed since mid-2011, and like all regional ACTO projects involves actions at national and regional level for monitoring Amazon deforestation.

A historic regional initiative

In the “Declaration of the Heads of State of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization”, adopted in the city of Manaus, Brazil, in November 2009, it was decided to start joint efforts to “Identify actions to reduce and monitor deforestation ...” (). Later, in the Eleventh Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ACTO, held also in Manaus, in November 2011, the Member Countries adopted decisions to make viable and to deepen regional cooperation activities, highlighting, among others, the project Monitoring Deforestation, Forest Utilization and Changes in the Use of Soil in the Pan-Amazon Forest.

2005: ACTO Member Countries made progress identifying indicators of Sustainability for the Amazon Forest within the Tarapoto Process for Criteria and Indicators. At that time, the forest cover was identified as a key indicator to generate information

2005- 2006: ACTO implemented the Amazon Common Agenda focused on forest monitoring in the region by employing

free data systems for remote sensing image and GIS data. Said software was developed the by the National Institute for Space Research of Brazil (INPE).

2008: During the 44th Council of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Project was presented by Brazil at the request of ACTO Member Countries and it was technically approved with no resource allocation. Afterwards in 2010, the project was approved at ITTO with resource allocation.

2010: An ITTO (Brazil) - PS/ACTO Agreement is signed for the implementation of the Project “Monitoring Deforestation, Land Use and Land Use Change in the Pan-Amazonian Forest”-RED PD 029/09 Rev1 (F). That same year, ACTO and INPE subscribed the first Cooperation Agreement for training ACTO Member Countries personnel in the use of the Terra Amazon System developed by Brazil to monitor the Brazilian Amazon Region.

Objectives:

- Contribute to improve forest management on issues related to deforestation, land tenure, changes in the use of soil and sustainable forest management.
- Provide real-time information for ACTO Member Countries about the extension and quality of forest cover.



Implementation schedule (1st and 2nd phase)

2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
ITTO-BMZ(GIZ)/DGIS 1st Phase Components: "Monitoring Deforestation, Land Use and Land Use Change in the Pan-Amazonian Forest" - RED PD 029/09 REV. 1F ITTO: USD 1'124.784 BMZ/GIZ-DGIS: USD 1'000.000 PS/ACTO: USD 389.600 ACTO Member Countries: USD 3'748.400 Total: USD 6'262.784													
						BNDES Amazon Funds 2nd Phase Actions: "Monitoring forest cover in the amazon region" Total: R\$ 23'693.641							

Main results

Among the main achievements of the project during the period of 2011-2014, the following can be highlighted:

(i) support to national institutions; (ii) formulation of National Forest Cover Monitoring Plans in ACTO Member Countries; (iii) installation, equipment and startup of the National Observation Rooms (OR); (iv) training of technical teams appointed by the Member Countries on monitoring techniques; and (v) preparation of regional maps of the amazon deforestation.

Support to National Institutions

The project supports the continuity of governmental initiatives related to monitoring deforestation and changes in land use. It also promotes an institutional infrastructure at national and regional level. Currently, each participating country has a National Coordination Unit (see Table 1) to strengthen the institutional commitment between representative institutions with the development of monitoring systems in their Amazon regions.



1st Project Steering Committee, Cochabamba, Bolivia (May 2012).

Formulation of National Monitoring Forest Cover Plans

During the first phase of the project, ACTO countries have formulated Monitoring National Plans or updated similar planning instruments. These plans were presented at the Regional Workshop on Monitoring Forest Cover and Methodological Development for the Elaboration of the Regional Report on the Status of the Amazon Forest. Said Workshop was held in Lima, Peru, in August 2014.

Table 1: National Institutionalilty

COUNTRY	NATIONAL FOCAL POINT -NFP (1)	NATIONAL COORDINATION INSTITUCION -NCI (2)
Bolivia	Viceministerio de Medio Ambiente Biodiversidad, Cambios Climáticos y de Gestión Forestal.	Dirección General de Bosques; y Viceministerio de Medio Ambiente, Biodiversidad, Cambios Climáticos y de Gestión Forestal.
Brasil	Ministério das Relações Exteriores (DAS II América do Sul).	Departamento de Políticas para Controle do Desmatamento do Ministério do Meio Ambiente (MMA Brasil).
Colombia	Dirección de Ecosistemas del Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible.	Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones Científicas (SINCHI).
Ecuador	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores.	Dirección Nacional Forestal del Ministerio del Ambiente (MAE).
Guyana	Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC).	Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC).
Perú	Ministerio del Ambiente (Minam) y Ministerio de Agricultura (Minagri).	Programa Nacional de Conservación de Bosques (Minam), y Dirección General Forestal (Minagri).
Suriname	Foundation for the Forest Management and Production Control (SBB).	Foundation for the Forest Management and Production Control (SBB).
Venezuela	Ministerio del Poder Popular de Ecosocialismo, Hábitat y Vivienda, y Ministerio del Poder Popular para RR.EE.	Oficina de Bosques del Ministerio del Poder Popular de Ecosocialismo, Hábitat y Vivienda.

Installation, Equipment and Start UP of the Observation Rooms

Between 2012 and 2013, seven (07) Observation Rooms for monitoring deforestation in the Amazon Region were installed in ACTO Member Countries. The installation and startup of the ORs in each country has been done with the support of the National Coordinating Institution (NCI) designated by each country for this purpose.

The main direct contribution to be made in each country during the first and second phase is oriented to the implementation of the ORs, where monitoring will be performed. Each OR is provided with computer equipment; video conference system and Internet. Technical staff already appointed by each country was hired according to the technical needs. The technical staff was trained in monitoring techniques.

At regional level, the work of ORs is reflected primarily in the elaboration of regional maps on amazon deforestation. The 1st Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) held in Cochabamba, Bolivia in May 2012, decided to start the elaboration of the first map.



Observation Room of Suriname.

Observation Rooms in the ACTO Member Countries:

	Dirección Forestal del MMAyA (La Paz, Bolivia).
	Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonia Colombiana- SINCHI (Bogotá, Colombia).
	Ministerio del Ambiente- MAE (Quito, Ecuador).
	Guyana Forestry Commission- GFC (Georgetown, Guyana).
	Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina- UNALM (Lima, Perú).
	Foundation for the Forest Management and Production Control- SBB (Paramaribo, Suriname).
	Dirección General de la Oficina de Bosques- Ministerio de Ecosocialismo (Caracas, Venezuela).

Training Technical Teams on Monitoring Techniques

With the purpose of helping with the implementation of the Monitoring Project and especially for the Observation Rooms operations, two Cooperation Agreements have been signed between ACTO and INPE. The first Agreement promoted monitoring capacities of deforestation by training technical teams of the ORs at INPE headquarters in Belem.

From 2012 to 2014, six courses on “Training for Tropical Forest Monitoring System using Terra Amazon System / PRODES Project (Program for Calculation of Deforestation in the Amazon), were carried out. 150 technicians have been trained.

It is available easy access to standard and essential monitoring forest cover technologies like INPE's Terra Amazon System with capacity to detect-with remote sensing technologies- real time information on deforestation.

The newest ACTO –INPE Agreement (July 2013) will allow to continue with OR's teams training and will provide an adequate technical support for the OR work. The Agreement will also improve capacity building on forest fires monitoring and, in the short time, will consider issues such as forest degradation.



Training Course in Bolivia, 2012.

Elaboration of Regional Maps on Amazon Deforestation

The elaboration of the regional maps on amazon deforestation is a clear sign of Member Countries efforts against deforestation. The first regional map was discussed at 1st PSC (Cochabamba, Bolivia, 2012) and later the parameters of the 2000 -2010 Map were defined at the 1st OR Regional Meeting (Lima, Peru, October, 2012). It is important to point out that during the following OR Regional Meetings in 2013 and 2014, countries delegates decided the continuity of the preparation of regional maps for 2010-2013 and 2013-2014.

Activities carried out in 2014

2014 CRA/INPE Training Program (Belem, Brazil)

In the context of the PS/ACTO – CRA/INPE Training Program in Monitoring Technologies at INPE's Regional Amazon Center in Belem do Pará, during the months of April, May and August training in "Tropical Forest Monitoring using the Terra Amazon System / PRODES Project" (May 5th to 16th , 2014) were held.

The training develop knowledge and capacities in forest cover mapping, monitoring deforestation and surveillance of local consultants selected by the countries in support of the work to be done by the Observation Rooms, as well as national technicians of ACTO Member Countries. For the latter it was presented and developed the Terra System and its support program PRODES developed by INPE.

Additionally, knowledge of cartography, geoprocessing, image processing and remote sensing were increased; and also experience of methodologies, techniques and concepts related to using deforestation monitoring systems were shared.



Training Course on the CRA / INPE, Brazil.

Joint Regional Workshop: National Plans for Monitoring Forest Cover in ACTO Member Countries and Exchange of Forestry Information and Methodology Development for Drawing Up the Regional Report on the State of the Amazon Forest (Lima, Peru. August 26 -28, 2014).

The workshop was held with the participation of the eight ACTO Member Countries.

During the Monitoring Plans segment, the following issues were highlighted: the importance of forest monitoring to establish the foundations for forest management; the coordination among ministries for deforestation control; progress in national quantification of deforestation and carbon monitoring; pressures on the natural heritage as the basis to define public policies to ensure its sustainable development, conservation and restoration; importance of adopting a technical and political structure to be implemented gradually to ensure the sustainability of a National Forest Cover Monitoring System as well as its articulation among the various State entities, at national and regional level; the national monitoring plan should be considered a multifunctional plan that can be used by as many actors



Regional Joint Workshop, Lima, Peru.

as possible; importance of the construction of a coordinated forest monitoring system for forest management planning and the compliance with international commitments; as well as the need of permanent training.

3rd Regional ACTO Member Countries Observation Rooms Meeting: Updating INPE's Terra Amazon System and Technical OR Teams Meeting (Bogotá, Colombia. October 06-10, 2014)



3rd Regional Meeting Rooms comment.

The Regional Encounter was held in Bogotá, Colombia with the participation of delegates from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guyana Ecuador, Peru and Suriname. The objective was to update TerraAmazon System developed by INPE for monitoring deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.

A technical meeting of the countries OR teams was also held were progress in the implementation of the Work Plan 2013-2014, agreed at the 2nd OR (Paramaribo, Suriname. November 2013) in response to the suggestions made in the 2nd PSC (Guyana. March 2013) and 3rd CDP (Brazil. October 2013); was presented and evaluated. It was also discuss and recommended a new Work Plan for 2015.

At the meeting, the delegates agreed to present the first Regional Map for Amazon Deforestation 2000-2010 at the 20th COP for Climate Change in Lima, Peru; and deliver the second Regional Map

2010-2013 by January 31st, 2015. A 2015 Training Program at INPE's Amazon Regional Center was also approved.

On the other hand, delegations recommended to the 4th PSC to be held in Coca, Ecuador (October 21-22, 2014), to create discussion spaces about the lessons learned as well as preventive actions and deforestation monitoring based on the information generated by the project.



The participants agreed to present the first Regional Map of Deforestation Amazon 2000-2010

Fourth Project Steering Committee (PSC) of the Project “Monitoring of Forest Cover in the Amazon Region” (Coca, Ecuador. October 21-22, 2014).



Progress in implementing the project was unode the points raised by the delegate.

Delegates from the eight ACTO Member Countries participated at the 4th PSC in order to review the progress made in the implementation of the ACTO Monitoring Project, particularly those related to the use of BNDES resources during the period October 2013-September 2014. Also to identify, propose and agree on actions to be implemented during October 2014-September 2015.

At the meeting delegates approved the Project’s Technical and Financial Report (October 2013- September 2014); the Project’s Operational Plan October 2014- September 2015; as well as the 2014-2015 Observation Rooms Work Plan that was technically defined at the 3rd OR Meeting (Bogota, Colombia. October 2014). It is important to point out that among the most important agreements were those related to the deforestation regional maps and the compromise to continue its elaboration as a sign of the progress that Member Countries are achieving regarding deforestation in the context of a regional cooperation, as noted below.

2000-2010 Regional Map: Agreement undertaken at the 3rd Observation Rooms Meeting (Bogota 2014) referring its presentation at the CC COP22 at Lima, 2014.

2010-2013 Regional Map: Agreement undertaken at the 3rd Observation Rooms Meeting (Bogota 2014) was ratified in order to present the map at the 11th United Nations Forum on Forests, to be held in May of 2015.

2013-2014 Regional Map: Countries ratified their interest that the Observation Rooms’ continue with the development of regional deforestation maps. Some countries noted the need to have internal consultations about the feasibility of preparing the aforementioned map by the end of January 2015. The PS/ACTO and Brazil expressed INPE’s capacity to provide technical support, recommendations, and inputs to the countries.

A project with strategic vision

The new BNDES resources will allow continuing to support ACTO Member Countries on their efforts against deforestation and changes in land use change with more reliable, available and timely information. They will also help government authorities with their decision taking; and the policy makers to respond with more appropriate regulatory frameworks.

Moreover, the use of monitoring technologies in the amazon countries will allow them to have better conditions for the implementation of actions at the national and regional levels in order to reduce changes in forest cover and their consequences to the balance of carbon in the soil, water cycles and energy.



Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)

In 1978 the representatives of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela signed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (TCA) to start a process of coordination and cooperation on common challenges in the Amazon region. Later in 1998 ACTO was established to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty.

ACTO is an international organization aimed at promoting harmonious, participatory and sustainable development in the Amazon region. ACTO's Permanent Secretary (SP) was installed in Brasilia, Brazil, in 2002.

