

**Mountain Forum, Regional Program for Latin America
INFOANDINA**

Credit N°

Phase I (May 1998 - December 1999)

CHF 365,000.-

1. Summary

2. Introduction, Background

At the 1992 Earth Summit (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, heads of state and governments endorsed the Agenda 21, including chapter 13, “Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development.” In its third session, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) defined the following tasks as main issues of Chapter 13 of the Agenda 21:

- ⇒ Recognize the need for strengthening the existing institutional mechanisms as well as the basic knowledge of mountain ecosystems through research, database development, pilot projects and information exchange,
- ⇒ Welcome efforts in preparing sub-regional agreements on mountains,
- ⇒ Urge Governments and organizations to promote initiatives aimed at raising awareness, including the convening of regional intergovernmental consultations.

It is in this context that – supported by the SDC and other donors - the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) the “Centro Internacional de la Papa” (CIP) and the Mountain Institute organized the International NGO Consultation on the Mountain Agenda in Lima, Peru. In February 1995, 110 mountain NGO leaders and interagency and government representatives from nearly 40 countries came together and agreed to create a Global Mountain Forum of NGOs and organizations interested in mountain development. The node identified for Latin America and the Caribbean (MF-LAC) was CIP/CONDESAN (INFOANDINA).

INFOANDINA, the communication hub for CONDESAN, was created in 1993 to support the information exchange among its partners from five countries in the Andean Region. INFOANDINA makes use of electronic and printed communication tools to disseminate research results in biodiversity, sustainable development of mountain regions in the Andes, and remote sensing. Furthermore, INFOANDINA organizes periodic training activities to strengthen the capacity of benchmark sites with the development of human resources in the use of the electronic communications.

The first phase of MF-LAC (1996-98) was made possible through funding from the SDC (140'000 USD) and the International Development and Research Center (IDRC – 42'000 USD). Funding from both sources was instrumental in expanding membership among institutions in the region. However, further developments of these efforts require additional funding to ensure a consolidation phase of MF-LAC.

3. Objectives

3.1 Overall Goals

The General Objective of MF-LAC is to empower participants to raise mountain issues on local, regional and national agendas and to promote policies and actions for equitable and ecologically sustainable mountain development that aims:

- ⇒ At the generation and strengthening of knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development of the Andean ecosystems
- ⇒ At the promotion of integrated watershed development and alternative livelihood opportunities for mountain people of Latin America

3.2 Project Objective

The Project Objective of MF-LAC is to coordinate a demand-driven Information service to support activities towards concerted efforts of sustainable mountain development.

3.3 Project Objectives for 1998 -1999

The specific objectives of the Mountain Forum in Latin America are described below:

1. Widen MF-LAC coverage establishing sub-regional nodes for MF-LAC in South America, Central America and the Caribbean, with the support of local and regional Latin American Networks for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions.
2. Organize E-conferences on key thematic topics that build on success, lessons learned and development of future priorities.
3. Publish and disseminate a periodic INFOANDINA/MF-LAC bulletin & brochure and organize the MF-LAC Electronic Library allowing indexing & searching in Spanish.
4. Develop an updated MF-LAC WEB page to post announcements related to Mountain issues.
5. Promote participation in MF-LAC workshops of members with restricted access to E-mail or the Internet.
6. Extrapolate results from MF-LAC to other regions.

This second phase (first phase for SDC's Latin America Division funding, specific to regional activities) is intended for further development of the successful activities of the first phase and to ensure their consolidation.

4. Partners and Beneficiary Groups

4.1 Project Partners

INFOANDINA operates MF-LAC under the umbrella of CONDESAN. A wide diversity of partners are associated to CONDESAN: NGOs, Universities, central and local governments, other groups and individuals. Most of the participants are working at seven benchmark sites, in Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru and Bolivia.

As result of a recent workshop, the following collaborating networks were identified in the Andean Region:

Venezuela: CIELAT of the University of Merida

Colombia: Red de Reservas Naturales in Nariño

Ecuador: ECOCIENCIAS in El Angel

Peru: ASPADERUC in Cajamarca, CIRNMA in Puno (CONDESAN partners from benchmark sites) and TMI-Huaraz

Bolivia: ABTEMA, Geographic Information Systems

Central America: RACSA (Red Latinoamericana Estrategias hacia la Sustentabilidad”)

4.2 People Concerned

The Mountain Forum is a global network for mutual support and exchange of ideas, experiences and information to empower participants (researchers, NGOs, and Government representatives), who are also the direct beneficiaries of the project.

Mountain Forum participants are encouraged and enabled to raise the awareness of mountain issues at local, national and regional levels. Successful advocacy should result in raising mountain issues on the agendas of decision makers, donor agencies and international organizations striving for more effectiveness in programs aimed to reduce poverty and to promote sustainable development of mountain regions, thus to improve live quality of mountain people.

Women's participation has been encouraged by the use of electronic conferencing. During the electronic workshops organized by MF-LAC, over 30% percent of the participants are women, and they participated actively sending their articles and comments. This percentage can be increased by implementing mutual links to & from WEB sites managed by gender - oriented organizations, such as Flora Tristan in Peru, FLACSO in Ecuador, CIAT-Hillsides in Colombia, etc.

5. Achieved Results

The first project phase from 1996 to 1998 in many respects was designed as an experimental and innovative project. After initial delays, owing to too optimistically assessed overall performance competence and capacity of the participating entities, the project as a whole has been making very good progress. The project has been very successful in establishing a wide variety of activities, covering five countries of the Andean region, different types of organizations, and working with different resources to disseminate the information related to mountain challenges.

The most relevant shortcomings remain:

- The overload of work requested by users demanding assistance to find documents or participate in activities.
- The lack of resource (connectivity, hardware, software) availability for users in rural zones.
- The lack of knowledge about the existence of the Mountain Forum initiative and its efforts to develop applications based on Internet resources as an important development tools.

6. Expected Results and Activities of Phase 2 (1998 - 1999)

Two electronic workshops per year in subjects of interest to the Development of Mountain Regions in Latin America will be organized. Therefore it is needed to identify and coordinate moderators at benchmark sites for each conference, and coordinate one representative per country to disseminate MF-LAC activities.

Time plan:

May 98	Dissemination of MF-LAC in Quito, Ecuador and Puno, Peru
June 98	Dissemination of MF-LAC activities in Colombia
July 98	Co-moderation of InfoPapa , E-Workshop on Potato Pests & Diseases in the Andes, moderated by CIP-LAC.
August 98	Support to the IESA-3 meeting CD-ROM & WEB.
September 98	Organization of Local Governments Electronic Conference, moderated by AME, Ecuador.
October 98	MF-LAC workshop Merida, Venezuela
November 98	Finish design of INFOANDINA Strategic Plan
January 99	MF-LAC workshop organization in Central America
March 99	MF-LAC workshop organization in Tucuman, Argentina
September 99	InSitu99 Electronic Workshop

7. Coordination

MF - LAC maintains coordination links with the overall coordination of Global Mountain Forum, as to other regional MF - Organizations in Latin America, such as CONDESAN, Red Interamericana de Sistemas de Produccion (RIMISP, Chile), the Red de Paramos (Ecuador), Red de reservas Naturales de La Cocha , Colombia), Mountain Project in Mexico and Chile, and the Red de Desarrollo Forestal in Peru.

INFOANDINA works in coordination with IDRC in the framework of a two-year grant of USD 20,000 to ensure the continuity of its basic operations until the end of 1998.

8. Budget

8.1 Financing of the Project

The project would be financed by IDRC, CIP,, and the SDC. The overall financing plan comprises of the following contributions: IDRC-INFOANDINA USD 20'000 (xx%),, and the SDC USD 243'000 (xx%). The contributions of the partners (NGOs, governments, other organizations and individuals) is expected to be ...

A detailed budget brake down, including the distribution of expenditure accounts by financiers, is given in Annex 1.

8.2 Budget for SDC's contribution to Phase 2 (May 1998 - December 1999)

The SDC contribution would cover the following costs: Project leader and a communicator (both full-time), local consultants, equipment (hard- and software for seven sites) and related operational costs, plus 18% overhead.

Budget for SDC	Total US \$	1998	1999	Total
		CHF	CHF	CHF
1. TA: INFOANDINA Institution Building				
15 Equipment	44,000	33,000	33,000	66,000

17	Operational costs	162,000	107,000	136,000	243,000
Subtotals		206,000	140,000	169,000	309,000
2. TA: Project Management, Administration					
22	Revenues	0	0	0	0
28	Overhead CIP*	37,000	25,000	31,000	56,000
29	“Abrechnungskonto”	0	0	0	0
Subtotals		37,000	25,000	31,000	56,000
Total SDC Funding		<u>243,000</u>	165,000	200,000	<u>365,000</u>

* 18% of 206,000 \$.

(1 US \$ = 1.50 CHF)

Personnel

During the first phase, the INFOANDINA project leader, who operated at CIP Headquarters, administrated the MF-LAC project. However, an assistant will be required to support the project administration in order to increase the performance in the second phase.

Project leader (full-time)

He/she will be responsible for the coordination of the activities of the regional node in Latin America. Working experience in the organization of workshops, distance training activities and experience in the organization and moderation of electronic workshops is desirable. The same applies for working knowledge of state-of-the-art communication protocols and mechanisms for delivery.

Project Assistant (full-time)

The Project Assistant will help the Project Leader with the regular mail delivery of printed documentation (bulletins, brochures, directories) to approximately 100 registered members in MF-Latin America. He/she will assist in the periodic updates of the MF membership database and co-moderate the electronic conferences organized by MF-LAC twice a year, support the organization of the face-to-face meetings and training events organized periodically at the benchmark sites

9. General Assessment

In the Andean countries, the actual situation for telecommunication is similar: Deregulation opens the market for opportunities for enterprises from the US and Europe. Due to this competency, the local users from cities and rural zones are benefited from reduced costs for accessing the communication services and the Internet. This situation provides mountain habitants with the opportunity to use the electronic media to share their local issues and elevate their concerns to wider forums, such as the Mountain Forum. The biggest issue at this point to provide a multiplier effect is to organize training activities to show these people the benefits of the use of this media.

The project concept has been tested and expanded through the first phase. At first, no significant risk may be anticipated in the implementation. Nevertheless, possible constraints in the implementation capacity, or possible failures in the participatory process, cannot be fully excluded.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Surveys will be conducted after the electronic conferences, and the comments of the participants can be found at the related WEB pages.

The project is being conducted in different geographic locations in the Andes, using CONDESAN benchmark sites. Therefore, the performance of the project can be evaluated at those locations, with the following performance indicators:

The quality and quantity of local participation in the project activities, the involvement of a wide base of institutions (NGOs, local governments, Universities, etc.), the quantity of new project proposals (Paramos Project submitted by CONDESAN) and other workshops organized as result of the electronic conferences (Paramos & Punas workshop in Arequipa, 1998).

Some activities of this project can become sustainable if we increase the quality of the services provided by InfoAndina, the demand for such services exists. For instance, the organization of moderated electronic conferences in Spanish is often requested by the participants to discuss specific topics of their interest. If we calculate the real value of this service offered now for free, we can assign a cost per/participant for future conferences, increasing the quality, at the risk of reducing the volume of the participation.

11. Proposal

Aufgrund dieser Ausführungen beantragen wir Ihnen, einen Beitrag von

365'000.-- CHF

für die zweite Phase (1998-1999) des Projektes "Mountain Forum, Regional Program for Latin America (INFOANDINA)" zu bewilligen. Die Verpflichtung erfolgt zu Lasten des Rahmenkredits zur Weiterführung der technischen Zusammenarbeit und Finanzhilfe zugunsten der Entwicklungsländer von 3,8 Mia. Franken gemäss BB vom 15. Dezember 1994. Die sich aus dieser Verpflichtung ergebenden Zahlungen sind zu Lasten des Budgets der DEH, Rubrik 0202-3600-002 vorzunehmen.