

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY  
(GEF)**

**COLOMBIA**

**Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Matavén Forest**

**GEF MSP**

**Grant TF No. 028438**

**PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT**

**Fundación Etnollano  
Bogotá, May 26, 2005**

## I. Basic Data:

- (1) Date of Completion Report: May 2005
- (2) Project Title: Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Matavén Forest
- (3) GEF Allocation: US\$750,000
- (4) Grant Recipient: Fundación Etnollano
- (5) World Bank Manager/Task Team: Juan Pablo Ruiz
- (6) Goals and Objectives:

The project's global development objective is to conserve biodiversity of global importance in the northern Colombian Amazon region. Colombia is one of the world's "mega-diverse" nations, ranking third in terms of biodiversity (Mittermeier et al, 1998) and housing almost 15% of all known terrestrial species. Over 50% of the species within Colombia's territory are concentrated in the Amazon region, which is characterized by complex mosaics of ecosystems with high endemic levels. Specifically, the Matavén Forest is one of the most biodiverse and pristine regions within the Colombian Amazon. Protecting the Matavén Forest ecosystem can generate global benefits related to biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and international watershed management.

The project development objective is to support sixteen Matavén Forest indigenous communities (known as *resguardos* or *sectors*) to manage and conserve the area's biodiversity in a sustainable way, thereby contributing to an improvement in their quality of life and the preservation of their natural and cultural heritage. Projected benefits to local communities include: the legal recognition of Matavén's central region as ancestral and indigenous communal property, the design of participatory management plans to improve communities' socio-economic well-being, the recollection and publication of communities' ecological and cultural topologies and an increased female participation in decision making and handicraft production.

The project rationale is that environmental conservation and sustainable use based on an inter-related view between health, nutrition and the environment is profitable to local communities and constitutes the only alternative to an extractivist economy, assuring local population's future, health and well-being and protecting valuable biodiversity in the Matavén Forest.

### (7) Financial Information:

Proposed commitments for this project were US\$1,400,700. The initial co-financing estimate was US\$650,700 including Etnollano's own contribution worth US\$300,700. Contributions from other donors were initially estimated at US\$350,000 and included grants from the Administrative Unit of the National Natural Parks System, the government of Spain and two Colombian government entities, PLANTE and PNDA. It is worth noting that indigenous community "in kind" contributions were not valued during the project and are therefore not included in the project execution figures.

As seen in Table A, actual contributions increased moderately during project execution to a total of US\$1,430,200. While Etnollano and the government agency PLANTE reduced their contributions, other donors provided additional resources of US\$27,400. The GEF's contribution yielded US\$2,100 in interest income, which was invested in the project's activities.

**Table A: Co-financing Type/Source**

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own		Government		Other*		Total		Total	
	Financing								Disbursement	
	(US\$000)		(US\$000)		(US\$000)		(US\$000)		(mill US\$)	
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual
Grants	750.0	752.1	320.0	309.3	330.7	368.8	1,400.7	1,430.2	1,400.7	1,430.2
Loans/Concessional/ market rate										
Credits										
Equity investments										
Committed in-kinds support										
Other										
<b>Totals</b>	<b>750.0</b>	<b>752.1</b>	<b>320.0</b>	<b>309.3</b>	<b>330.7</b>	<b>368.8</b>	<b>1,400.7</b>	<b>1,430.2</b>	<b>1,400.7</b>	<b>1,430.2</b>

\* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

GEF covered the estimated incremental costs valued at US\$727,100, including the grant's interest revenues. This contribution funded the following activities: (i) the recollection and standardization of the region's cultural, ecological and socio-economic information through participatory research carried out with indigenous communities; (ii) training, education and communication activities related to health, nutrition and the biodiversity conservation to support the drafting of management plans in the *resguardos*; (iii) strengthening health promoter organizations, as well as teachers and indigenous leaders in the Matavén Forest; (iv) developing local initiatives to support the sustainable use of biodiversity, and (v) strengthening the Etnollano Foundation's institutional and operational capabilities for project management and inter-institutional coordination. Additionally, GEF funded US\$25,000 for the Block A PDF related to project design, which covered various workshops, consultancies and inter-institutional coordination activities. Tables B1 and B2 provide a summary of global expenditures by category and project component, according to the various sources.

## B. Expenditures by Category and by Project Components (initial and final allocations)

**Table B1: Expenditure by Category (in US\$000)**

Expenditure Category	GEF		Etnollano	Other Donors	Total
	Initial	Final			
PDF B	25.0	25.0	9.7	-	34.7
Goods	29.0	32.7	25.0	57.4	115.1
Workshops/training	132.6	117.5	60.0	124.8	302.3
Technical assistance	228.0	235.1	142.4	199.7	577.2

Operational costs	87.0	93.4	-	-	<b>93.4</b>
Sub-projects	223.0	221.5	-	59.1	<b>280.6</b>
Unallocated	25.4	26.9	-	-	<b>26.9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>750.0</b>	<b>752.1</b>	<b>237.1</b>	<b>441.0</b>	<b>1,430.2</b>

**Table B2: Expenditure by Project Component (in US\$000)**

Component	GEF		Etnollano	Other Donors	Total
	Initial	Final			
Block A	25.0	25.0	9.7	-	<b>34.7</b>
1. Information and Data Collection	128.0	129.1	-	203.3	<b>332.4</b>
2. Education and Communication	126.0	122.4	156.1	75.4	<b>353.9</b>
3. Organizational strengthening	161.0	160.7	71.3	103.2	<b>335.2</b>
4. Sub-projects	223.0	221.5	-	59.1	<b>280.6</b>
5. Project Administration	87.0	93.4	-	-	<b>93.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>750.0</b>	<b>752.1</b>	<b>237.1</b>	<b>441.0</b>	<b>1,430.2</b>

Project execution ran behind schedule and resulted in a six-month extension, from June to December 2004. Communities discussed every decision with their elders and traditional authorities, meaning frequent delays in project execution. For example, the revision of thematic maps and educational materials published during the project took longer than originally expected. The systematization, editing and correction of educational materials, returning them to the communities with the best possible quality, also took longer than planned. The geographic information survey developed during the project required sustained, in-depth editorial work in order for it to be user-friendly to the indigenous communities in their implementation of environmental and land management plans. Table B3 demonstrates the delay in resource execution and includes, under the column titled "Year 3", the six-month extension granted for the culmination of project activities.

**Table B3: Annual Implementation of Project Components (in US\$000)**

Component	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	Approved	Carried out	Approved	Carried out	Approved	Carried out
1. Information and Data Collection	53.6	40.4	37.2	41.8	37.2	46.9
2. Education and Communication	45.6	25.7	40	46.9	40.5	49.9
3. Organizational strengthening	53.6	39.1	53.6	47.4	53.6	74.2
4. Sub-projects	84.3	14.7	78.7	66.5	60	140.2
5. Project Administration	29	30.1	29	27.7	29	35.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>266.1</b>	<b>150.0</b>	<b>238.5</b>	<b>230.3</b>	<b>220.3</b>	<b>346.8</b>

\* Year 3 includes the six-month extension in project execution and therefore covers the months of June to December, 2004, in addition to the prior twelve month period.

Leveraged resources of US\$181,900 included US\$145,000 provided by the Environmental Protection Fund (FPAA), the National Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH) and the People's Defense Council to finance community research activities on ancestral management practices in the Matavén Forest. The National Natural Parks Unit also contributed an additional US\$37,000 to project activities. As Table C below demonstrates, additional resources were partially offset by reduced contributions from some donors; therefore, additional resources to the project were US\$27,400. In addition to these commitments, the government of Holland has

pledged direct financing to project stakeholders; amounts and agreements have yet to be formalized.

**Table C. Leveraged Resources (In US\$000)**

AGENCIES	PROPOSED	ACTUAL
UAESPNN	200.0	237.0
PLANTE	120.0	59.1
AECI (ETNOLLANO)	30.0	30.9
ETNOLLANO / PDF	9.7	9.7
ETNOLLANO COAMA	291.0	196.5
PEOPLE'S DEFENSE COUNCIL	0.0	13.2
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY (ICANH)	0.0	16.0
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND (FPAA)	0.0	115.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>650.7</b>	<b>678.1</b>
<b>TOTAL LEVERAGED RESOURCES</b>		<b>181.9</b>

## II. Project Impact Analysis

### (1) Project Impacts:

The Matavén Project is a clear example of a participatory approach to project design and execution that increases stakeholder participation to include previously marginalized indigenous communities. This project is a valuable conservation initiative because it was largely undertaken by indigenous groups and was effectively linked to a comprehensive organizational and land governance process. The project generated a series of positive effects in the region.

First, the project obtained the national government's recognition of indigenous land rights over 900,000 hectares encompassing the central region of the Matavén Forest. This zone rescues the indigenous communities' cultural history and promotes the region's natural resource conservation (see Annex 1 for maps of the project zone and Annex 2 for a copy of the government's resolution). Second, the project supported the creation of an association of indigenous authorities (ACATISEMA) including leaders from the 16 indigenous *resguardos*, which helped to obtain the central zone's legal recognition as indigenous *resguardo* and promote various project activities. Third, the project achieved increased female participation in activity design and execution. Fourth, the project promoted handmade crafts as an economically and ecologically viable production alternative for Matavén communities. Fifth, the project trained local representatives, reinforcing local communities' leadership capabilities and improving inter-*resguardo* communication. Finally, the project supported the creation and distribution of publications conveying information relevant to indigenous communities and validating their traditional, conservationist approach to natural resource management. Each of these outcomes is described in further detail below, and Table D describes project results versus original objectives.

A key element of this project's success is that it built upon the longstanding efforts of Fundación Etnollano within the context of the COAMA program. This program is an initiative involving various NGOs seeking to consolidate around twenty million hectares of tropical forest as indigenous *resguardos*. Since 1985, Etnollano has promoted participatory processes with indigenous communities in the Matavén Forest on themes of health, biodiversity and sustainable production alternatives.

### (1.A). Project Rationale and Objectives

Original objective indicators included: effective management in at least 50% of the Matavén Forest by indigenous communities with conservation criteria, ecological and cultural description and zoning of the central Matavén region, and environmental management plans for the central region as well as for at least 75% of the sixteen indigenous *resguardos*. With the exception of the central zone's zoning and environmental management plan, all objectives were amply met.

The project team worked arduously to obtain legal recognition of the territory as a *resguardo*, which implies the acknowledgement of collective indigenous rights to the soil and to the forest resources contained within, excluding subsoil resources (Article 330, Political Constitution). These indigenous territories have a status equal to that of municipalities (Article 357, Political Constitution), and as such are entitled to receive state payments (*transferencias*) for health, education and social programs (Gaia, 2004). While this was not an original project objective, because it depended on the government's approval and not solely on the project team's efforts, the team committed to providing key information necessary to advance the land titling process.

Following Etnollano's participative efforts to reconstruct a biological and social cartography of the project zone, the project team submitted biological and socio-economic information to the Colombian government's land reform institute (INCORA) supporting new *resguardos* and increasing original *resguardos*. In July 2003, INCORA issued resolution 37-03 increasing Matavén Forest *resguardos* from 950,000 hectares to 1,850,000 hectares and encompassing the previously untitled central zone (See Annex 2 for a copy of the resolution). Collective property rights made possible the reception of government transfers (*transferencias*) worth approximately US\$480,000 annually to cover sustainable development projects.

The project team also drafted, with indigenous communities, ecological zoning and management plans for 12 of the 16 *resguardos*. However, the Matavén central region's management plan and zoning agreement were not completed. While a preliminary zoning proposal was drafted with indigenous communities, and management plans in the *resguardos* issued water resource management principles that include the central region, the excessive efforts required to obtain the region's legal standing as *resguardo* diverted the project team's efforts away from formalizing the preliminary zoning proposal. However, indigenous communities have expressed their willingness to eventually issue a zoning and environmental management plan for this area. Indeed, indigenous land ownership of the central zone and the surrounding communities should ensure the conservation of globally important ecosystems.

### (1.B). Component 1: Information and Data Collection

This project component initially supported the following objectives: a description of the region's ecosystems, a cartographic survey, and the publication of maps and educational materials. Objectives in this component were fulfilled with no significant modifications. As a result of the project, Fundación Etnollano strengthened its editorial and publishing capabilities, producing a considerable number of written publications for national and international conservation audiences. All maps, posters and brochures were collaboratively constructed with indigenous communities in the project zone. In

addition, draft publications were always showed to local communities first so that they could receive inputs and corrections before they were printed. Published outputs were distributed among indigenous communities and support organizations. Annex 3 provides chronological detail of workshops conducted in support of this component, while Annex 4 contains a listing of project-financed publications.

#### (1.C). Component 2: Education and Communication

This component's principal objectives were to draft ecological zoning and environmental management plans for at least twelve of the sixteen indigenous *resguardos*, and consolidate indigenous leadership in Matavén's central zone, the latter of which will be discussed in further detail below. The project team completed management plans for twelve *resguardos* with communities' active participation. The workshops conducted in the fulfillment of this activity, listed in Annex 3, were essential to the achievement of the objectives. During several meetings, elders and indigenous leaders exchanged traditional knowledge about environmental and natural resource conservation and compared indigenous and non-indigenous approaches to environmental management. These discussions, as well as data collected during the project, including biological and cultural surveys and satellite images of the territory, served as valuable inputs to the management and zoning plans. Finally, indigenous communities provided significant feedback to these plans during a second stage of meetings, arriving to their final versions for distribution to the various *resguardos*.

#### (1.D). Component 3: Organizational Strengthening

This component initially included the following objectives: training twenty four local health promoters, increasing the capacity of four indigenous health promoter groups, and increasing the capacity of an association of indigenous leaders for management of the Matavén central zone. During the early project stages, indigenous health promoters were the principal mediums for consultation and communication between the various *resguardos*. Indigenous health promoters had won the communities' trust by providing valuable services related to health, nutrition, and natural resource management. Indeed, their main principle was that the environment must be conserved in order to protect foods and natural medicines essential to sustain healthy lives. The project was thus designed to train indigenous health promoters in promoting environmental management plans and recollecting traditional knowledge for the benefit of the communities.

However, the project team redirected its efforts when indigenous stakeholders preferred strengthening their own leadership group. At the request of local communities, the principal objective became the consolidation of ACATISEMA, a local indigenous organization for *resguardo* management. This organization was essential to the land titling process, administrating the central zone and distributing funds from *transferencias*. As a result, the project team focused on training indigenous leaders in financial and administrative principles.

Local leaders were trained to assume an administrative role in the region, consolidate the 16 *resguardos* and establish an operational base in Cumaribo, the municipality's capital (Annex 5 summarizes these activities). ACATISEMA became increasingly important during project execution and acted as an effective partner in implementing

project activities. During the project's final year, ACATISEMA began receiving funds directly from other donors.

Indigenous health promoters lost their appeal to local communities due to their limited experience in land titling and political consolidation. Another circumstance contributing to health promoters' demise was the legal requirement that all indigenous communities become affiliated to the government's health system. Unfortunately, the governmental health system's consolidation interrupted health promoters' efforts and discontinued valuable local initiatives such as seed exchanges and nutritional workshops.

Nevertheless, ACATISEMA leaders state that the entire process was supported and validated by the community's traditional healers. Indeed, local healers participated in all of the political meetings in order to ensure that project objectives continued in accordance with traditional conservationist principles. According to an indigenous ACATISEMA leader:

Traditional doctors are taking care of the Matavén Forest process; they are taking care of its vastness and wealth. We are asking them to always take care of this process so that tomorrow no natural resource will be touched in their sacred places, such as animals, plants, water or the environment. For us to do anything we always need their permission. Why? Because everything is interrelated; this is why they say to us: we are merely passing by and you are our future. This is the support we receive from traditional healers (Omar Briceño, member of ACATISEMA).

On the other hand, female participation in decision making was strengthened as a result of the project's activities. During the early project stages, indigenous leaders were reluctant to place women in administrative and leadership roles; female participation was not coherent with traditional practices. The project team respected this decision but continuously invited women to participate in project events and workshops. Over time and as a result of Fundación Etnollano's respectful interventions, women began participating in project activities. Currently, five out of the 17 board members in ACATISEMA are women representing all of Matavén's zones and cultural regions. Female participation has also been instrumental in the design of the handicraft production strategy described below.

#### (1.E). Component 4: Sub-projects

A principal project impact was to develop alternative livelihood mechanisms based on ecologically sustainable production. Handicraft production in Matavén is comprised of high quality baskets primarily elaborated by women. Activities related to this outcome, described in additional detail in Annex 6, included: technical assistance to make Matavén handicrafts more attractive to urban buyers, marketing handicrafts in the capital city of Bogotá, and depositing surplus margins in a community account. The earnings from this account were returned to the communities on the condition that they must be spent on social welfare improvements. This initiative was so successful that by the project's Year 3 communities in Matavén and surrounding *resguardos* marketed their products in Bogotá's Annual Handicraft Fair and sold US\$9,000 in handicrafts. In 2004, Etnollano and the GAIA Foundation established a retail outlet in Bogotá, called "Mambe Shop", in order to eliminate intermediary margins and thus return a higher value to handicraft producers. "Mambe Shop" is Colombia's representative in the



Brazilian-led Bolsa da Amazonia, a Latin American handicraft export initiative involving various countries. Furthermore, “Mambe Shop” is applying for fair trade certification in order to position its products abroad. Etnollano continues providing technical assistance to Matavén handicraft producers.

**Table D: Project Output Execution**

Project Rationale and Objectives	Indicators in Project Brief	Results
<p>The project development objective is to support the indigenous communities of the Matavén Forest to manage and conserve the area’s biodiversity in a sustainable way, thereby contributing to an improvement in their quality of life and the preservation of their natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The rationale for the project is that conservation and sustainable use of the environment based on the inter-relationship between health, nutrition and the environment can be profitable to local communities and constitutes the only alternative to an extractivist economy, assuring the future of the local population, its health and well-being and the protection of biodiversity in the Matavén Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective management in at least 50% of the Matavén Forest by indigenous communities with conservation criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed, with environmental management plans, participative workshops on sustainable production projects and the exchange of traditional knowledge</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ecological and cultural description and zoning of the central Matavén region, called “Heart of Health”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed with ecological calendars elaborated for all ethnic groups in Matavén, regional maps and posters highlighting environmental issues and socio-cultural aspects. Zoning of the central zone was not possible due to the project’s change in focus towards legal land titling</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management plans of the central region, in co-ordination and agreement with the traditional indigenous authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A preliminary proposal was drafted, but at the request of indigenous leaders, project activities focused on legal titling instead of on the elaboration of a management plan</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management plans for at least 75% of the sixteen (16) indigenous <i>resguardos</i> established around the Central Matavén Forest, in co-ordination and agreement with traditional authorities and leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed, including key inputs resulting from the analysis of shared environmental problems, regional maps and ecological calendars produced with indigenous communities</li> </ul>
Project Outcomes	Indicators in Project Brief	Results
<p>1. Ecological, socio-economic and cultural information, relevant to the land use plans, compiled by</p>	<p>1.1 Description of ecosystems, with partial inventories of their natural resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed</li> </ul>

the indigenous communities and presented in an accessible and useable (educational) format	1.2. Cartographic survey of the topology, for at least twelve (12) of the sixteen (16) indigenous <i>resguardos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed for the 16 <i>resguardos</i></li> </ul>
	1.3 Maps of land use, sacred and historical areas in the Matavén Forest, in accordance with the perspective of the local indigenous cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eight maps were produced from satellite images. Additionally, five maps were produced as a result of participative social cartography workshops representing the vision of five of the six ethnicities in the region. Finally, six ecological calendars were published with indigenous input community regarding ecosystem management.</li> </ul>
	1.4 An educational set about the region and its characteristics (with posters, booklets and maps), for use in the community schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed and includes an educational map, five brochures, four posters and one flyer</li> </ul>
2. Ecological zoning and environmental management plans for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the central zone and the <i>resguardos</i> , designed in consensus with the indigenous authorities and implemented with the active participation of the communities	2.1 Indigenous participation in the ecological zoning and leadership in the design of the environmental management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> </ul>
	2.2 Documents and maps of the zoning and environmental management plans, for at least twelve (12) of the sixteen (16) indigenous <i>resguardos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed for 12 <i>resguardos</i></li> </ul>
	2.3 Indigenous leadership in the management of the central zone of Matavén (# of indigenous leaders part of the Matavén Natural Area Management Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed through the consolidation of ACATISEMA</li> </ul>
3. Local leaders trained in technical and legal aspects of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, to manage the <i>resguardos</i> and the central conservation zone	3.1 Twenty-four (24) local leaders trained in these themes (6) in each zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained 27 leaders from ACATISEMA</li> </ul>
	3.2 Increased capacity of four (4) organizations of indigenous health promoters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rather than strengthening 4 indigenous health promotion organizations, Etnollano focused on ACATISEMA</li> </ul>

	<p>3.3 Increased capacity of an association of indigenous leaders (<i>cabildos</i>) and traditional indigenous authorities (AATIs) of the Matavén Forest, or other type of organization, which is considered appropriate by the 16 <i>resguardos</i>, for the management of the central conservation zone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed through the consolidation of ACATISEMA. This association of traditional <i>cabildos</i> obtained participation from the 16 <i>resguardos</i> and is receiving annual government funds worth Col\$1.1bn for managing the central zone and investing in projects approved in management plans. Etnollano increased ACATISEMA's institutional and administrative capacities, helping them open an office in the town of Cumaribo to conduct their administrative operations.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Local initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, identified and implemented</p>	<p>4.1 Identification of four lines of productive activities (one in each zone)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These were identified, but handicraft production was pursued as the most sustainable, ensuring improvements in social welfare</li> </ul>
	<p>4.2 Twelve (12) community grassroots associations implementing their own sustainable productive micro projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During Year 2, 12 productive sub-projects related to handicraft production were identified and agreements were signed with legal representatives of <i>resguardos</i> for their implementation</li> </ul>
<p>5. Matavén Forest positioned nationally and internationally as a special protected area under indigenous management</p>	<p>5.1 Mention of Matavén as a conservation area, within the Municipal Land Use Plans and Departmental Development Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Matavén Forest was included as conservation area in Cumaribo's basic territorial ordering plan, as evidenced by a communication from Cumaribo mayor to the Environment Ministry in May 1999.</li> </ul>
	<p>5.2 References to Matavén in national and international publications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed, see Annex 4 for a list of publications</li> <li>▪ The Matavén experience was presented by the GAIA foundation in a protected areas congress in Durban in 2004</li> </ul>

Planned Activities to Achieve Outcomes	Indicators in Project Brief	Results
1. Increase the collection and systematization of ecological, socio-economic and cultural information about the region, with participation from local indigenous communities	1.1 Twelve (12) participatory and multi-cultural reconnaissance trips to the central zone of Matavén	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5 expeditions in Year 1</li> <li>▪ 5 expeditions in Year 2</li> <li>▪ 2 expeditions in Year 3</li> </ul>
	1.2 Detailed cartographic survey of the indigenous territorial perception of the region (6 maps), to include geographical topology, and places of historical or sacred significance in the memory of the different ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed as a result of expeditions</li> </ul>
	1.3 Compilation of traditional knowledge and techniques for the management of territory and its natural resources: an educational monography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed through various participative workshops listed in Annex 3</li> </ul>
2. Support the inter-cultural dialogue , as the focal point of a process of training, education and communication, based on the relationship between health, nutrition and biodiversity conservation, for the management plans of the central zone and the surrounding <i>resguardos</i>	2.1 Educational materials on the Matavén Forest: 17 maps, 4 leaflets, 4 booklets, 8 posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed, with 10 maps, 2 leaflets, 6 booklets, 1 newsletter and 4 posters, 2 videos</li> </ul>
	2.2 Four (4) exchange visits, between leaders of different ethnic groups in the Matavén Forest, to raise awareness about the ecological unity and shared problems of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed, with further details in Annexes 3 and 5</li> </ul>
	2.3 Three (3) publications for a wider audience: 1 book, 1 multi-media, 1 web site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 book in process, 1 multimedia CD with a catalog of craftwork. The Matavén Forest website resides in <a href="http://www.etnollano.org">www.etnollano.org</a></li> </ul>
3. Strengthen the associations and organizations of indigenous leaders, promoters and teachers of the Matavén Forest.	3.1 Six (6) training events on legal and technical aspects of sustainable use of biodiversity for leaders of the organizations of indigenous promoters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5 training courses in book-keeping and accounting</li> <li>▪ 3 workshops on organizational strengthening</li> <li>▪ 7 workshops on improving craftwork production</li> </ul>

	3.2 Three (3) visits by indigenous leaders from Matavén to other protected areas, for the exchange of experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two visits were completed. Several indigenous leaders from ACATISEMA visited the Kuna (Kuna-Yala) region in Panama, learning how Kunas manage their lands and about their production and commercialization of handcrafts. A year later a group of Kuna leaders and female artisans from the Mola Cooperative traveled to Matavén to learn about the enlargement and administration of the group's reservation, as well as its work with handmade crafts.</li> </ul>
4. Develop local initiatives for the sustainable use of biodiversity	4.1 Four (4) community meetings for the analysis of regional and local problems, and the search for sustainable development alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed with five community meetings</li> </ul>
	4.2 Twelve (12) productive micro projects, identified and in operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 12 productive micro-projects are in operation. A training process was undertaken to promote handmade crafts as an economically and ecologically viable alternative for the Matavén communities. The so-called "ethnic Matavén handicraft," primarily elaborated by women, is currently well-positioned in the national market with high quality baskets and possesses solid export potential. Indigenous communities have increased the sales of handcrafts and they are annually participating in the National Handcraft Fair.</li> </ul>
5. Strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of Etnollano Foundation for the project management and support for the inter-institutional coordination within the framework of the COAMA Program, as articulated in	5.1 Upgrading of the accounting systems of the Etnollano Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completed</li> </ul>
	5.2 Strengthening of capacity in editing, media and communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Etnollano produced varied publications listed in Annex 4, including its website and editorial materials related to the project</li> </ul>

processes	5.3 Strengthening of COAMA as a network of NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ COAMA has been strengthened as a result of this process and continues to be a regional leader in project implementation</li> </ul>
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## (2) Project Sustainability –

The project secured a high degree of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. By promoting the connection between health and ancestral natural resource management practices, the project promoted conservation efforts in accordance with local beliefs. Social sustainability was also guaranteed through the formation of the central *resguardo* and through various project initiatives designed to improve quality of life among local communities. Economic sustainability was also guaranteed as a result of titling the central zone as a *resguardo*, which offers the sustainable use of its natural resources. In order to guarantee project sustainability, the project worked on the following objectives: (a) institutional strengthening; (b) government support to project objectives, (c) social and economic improvements, and (d) financial consolidation.

### *a. Institutional Strengthening*

The project achieved a high degree of institutional strengthening in the Matavén Region in order to guarantee the project's sustainability. During project execution, Etnollano refocused its activities related to the organizational strengthening of indigenous *resguardos*. At first, the Etnollano team considered that the 16 *resguardo* organizations should be constructed from the community base, and that it should not force the development of an association or committee representing the entire region. It was therefore initially decided to focus project efforts on educational work and the participatory research of the different *resguardos* through the health promoter organizations that have led the "heart of health" vision in the Matavén Forest.

During the beginning stages of the Matavén project, Etnollano began its work with indigenous health workers. Different possibilities were discussed regarding land ownership. However, when tackling issues such as land governance it became necessary to work directly with indigenous authorities (captains, leaders and traditional doctors). These efforts led to the creation of ACATISEMA, an indigenous community organization representing the region's 16 *resguardos*.

This indigenous organization wrote statutes, became legally registered and obtained a corporate pin number used to conduct various financial and operational transactions in Colombia. ACATISEMA consolidated itself in such a way that it could participate directly in the administration and execution of some of the project's components and activities, through partnerships with NGOs and other entities. Currently, ACATISEMA manages some of the financial resources and new projects, and receives international donations directly.

A potential risk exists that ACATISEMA will not work in the same participative and consultative manner that ensured Etnollano's success. Etnollano's methodology made constant consultations with local communities mandatory to decision making. Consensual local agreements led to active community support to project activities. However, the region's political instability may affect the democratic and participative nature of the relationship between ACATISEMA and its local constituents.

*b. Government Support*

Obtaining legal recognition of the central zone of the Matavén Forest was critical to the project's sustainability. The project executors took advantage of the Colombian government's longstanding and continuous support to biodiversity conservation through the recognition of indigenous territories. Indeed, during the past two decades over twenty million hectares have been legally declared as *resguardos* (indigenous communities) in the Colombian Amazon. In addition, the Matavén Forest is included within its respective Departmental Development Plan as a conservation zone and as the historical seat of indigenous cultures.

From project onset, it became clear that indigenous communities preferred the option of creating an indigenous *resguardo* over a National Park. An indigenous *resguardo* would, in their view, retain their autonomy. In addition, a negative precedent existed when the central government's National Parks Authority created the Tuparro National Park, located north of the Matavén Forest. This park generated conflict with the region's indigenous people over the degree of co-management to be allowed and resulted in the death of various indigenous people as well as of the park's administrator. For these reasons, local communities discarded the option of creating a National Park and sought the legal recognition of their territory as a *resguardo*.

The project created an inter-institutional entity to advance the titling process. An organism called Inter-Institutional Support Group (known as GIA for its name in Spanish) was created with the membership of the People's Defense Council, the administrative unit of the National Parks System, the mayor's office in Cumaribo, the Colombian land reform institute (INCORA) and Etnollano. This entity worked efficiently to obtain the *resguardo's* legal recognition and lobby at the central government level. The organization was dissolved once it achieved its principal objective, allowing ACATISEMA to follow up on the process. Knowing how and when to make way for the consolidation of indigenous organizations was an important lesson learned in this process.

*c. Social and Economic Improvements*

Ecological sustainability is intimately linked to quality of life improvements of the region's indigenous populations. To ensure the project's long-term sustainability, it is essential that the local population appropriate the vision of conservation promoted by the project and that the sustainable use of biodiversity becomes economically viable. For this reason, the project placed considerable emphasis on education and communication activities as well as on the generation of ecologically sustainable production alternatives.

One of the key project strengths was a high level of indigenous participation. Fundación Etnollano held various meetings with indigenous community leaders and elders to obtain approval and support for the GEF project. Once this support was clearly indicated, Etnollano conducted workshops throughout the project to support: the construction of a biological and cultural topology, the discussion of environmental concerns, the relevance of traditional natural resource management practices, the sustainability of local production projects, key concepts related to environmental management plans, and the identification of key land sites and species. These workshops are listed in Annexes 3 ,5 and 6.

The project also trained local communities to produce and commercialize their handicrafts. This output was achieved following various meetings with community leaders. During these meetings, productive projects were identified and their environmental sustainability determined. In addition, during the collection of biological and socio-cultural information, key natural resources used in the production of handicrafts were identified. A common conclusion during these participative meetings was that natural resources must be used wisely and protected for their sustainable use.

*d. Financial Consolidation*

During the project, four strategies were pursued to guarantee financial consolidation: (i) channel central government transfers to the central zone and the surrounding *resguardos*, ensuring that these are spent on environmentally sustainable projects; (ii) obtain international funding for conservation and environmental services; (iii) develop ecotourism, and (iv) obtain support from Colombia's National Parks Authority for the development of ecological management plans and conservation strategies.

The approach towards achieving financial sustainability was narrowed down during project execution to include the first two initiatives of consolidating central government transfers to *resguardos* and obtaining international funding. The Matavén Forest, including the central zone, receives approximately US\$480,000 in annual government transfers to be spent on social development projects and environmentally sustainable production alternatives. Through the creation of ACATISEMA, these resources arrive directly to the organization, which in turn must distribute them among the 16 *resguardos*. The project was also successful in obtaining international funding. ACATISEMA is receiving international donations directly as of 2004. As long as ACATISEMA invests these resources wisely, sustainable funding from international organizations is likely.

(3) Replicability –

It is probable that this project will be replicated nationally and internationally. Indeed, indigenous communities in Venezuela and in the northern Llanos region have already visited the Matavén zone in order to learn from their experiences. Matavén is being exposed internationally as a prime example of a community-led conservation area.

In order to disseminate the positive results achieved in the Matavén project, the project included among its activities: visits by indigenous leaders from Matavén to other protected areas for the exchange of experiences, the strengthening of COAMA as a network of NGOs working throughout the Amazon region, and references to Matavén in national and international publications.

During the project several indigenous leaders from ACATISEMA visited the Kuna (Kuna-Yala) region in Panama, meeting with the group's leaders and artisans. This allowed ACATISEMA leaders to understand how the Kunas managed their lands and to learn about their production and commercialization of handicrafts. A year later, also with support from the Bank, a group of Kuna leaders and female artisans from the Mola Cooperative traveled to Matavén to learn about the enlargement and administration of the group's reservation, as well as its work with handmade crafts. Due to these experiences, Matavén leaders widened their perspective regarding the project's possibilities and increased their confidence in indigenous land governance.



#### (4) Stakeholder Involvement –

The development of this project began in 1998 as the result of a lengthy and participatory process with indigenous health promoters in Matavén. All project activities were designed through participatory efforts that established the needs of the population, the conservation of their territory, their natural resources and their quality of life. This approach was critical to project success, dramatically reducing mistrust and promoting unity between the various *resguardos*.

The project was designed with the participation of the four indigenous health promoter organizations in the project region and in collaboration with the departmental government and the Special Administrative Unit of the National Natural Park System (UAESPNN) of the Ministry of the Environment. As demonstrated by the project indicators, all activities were carried out by indigenous communities or with a high degree of collaboration from their leaders.

The consolidation of ACATISEMA, described in earlier sections, demonstrates the high degree of stakeholder involvement. Indigenous communities were no longer project “beneficiaries” but partners during all stages of project implementation. Today, ACATISEMA stands alone administratively and financially.

A key lesson learned regarding stakeholder involvement is that as indigenous organizations consolidate, the roles that NGOs assume should become increasingly more limited. While this approach may take a longer implementation period, since it involves training activities and a higher level of consultation, it is worth the effort over the longer term because it guarantees project outcome sustainability.

#### (5) Monitoring and Evaluation –

Project monitoring and evaluation was based on indicators defined within the project activities. The relevant data for their analysis was collected during the various project activities and in biannual reports submitted by Etnollano. These reports were analyzed each semester to monitor project development and results were discussed at internal team meetings within the Foundation and at meetings with community leaders in the region. In this way, it was possible to involve the communities and their leaders directly in project monitoring and in the detailed planning of future activities.

Parallel to this process, work was carried out using a methodology of participatory action research developed with the indigenous health promoters of the Matavén Forest and that enabled the involvement of communities in the evaluation of their processes of change. Technical and financial reports were presented annually and included detailed evaluations of the various efficiency indicators, as well as their impact on biodiversity conservation and improvements in the quality of life among local communities.

As an important by-product of this process, a significant amount of biological and socio-economic information was gathered with the support of indigenous communities. This data constructed a valuable baseline biodiversity assessment for the region, supporting project activities and used for the direct benefit of the region’s indigenous communities.

An important lesson learned in the process of gathering data for project monitoring was that it had to be made clear to indigenous communities that the WB team was not going to appropriate traditional knowledge. The project execution team should be very careful in handling sensitive information, and should involve the indigenous communities in every step of the information-gathering process. In addition, it should be agreed with the communities which information will be published and which will be respected, according to their ancestral practices.

(6) Special Project Circumstances (optional) –

The ever-changing situation of public safety in this region of Colombia affected project implementation. Although Matavén is not a scenario for direct confrontation, armed conflict has interrupted the working dynamics in the region and has affected communications between support entities and communities, as well as between communities.

Another circumstance affecting the project is the unstable political situation in Venezuela, which can affect gasoline supplies to the Matavén region. Political crises between the governments of Colombia and Venezuela can affect the supply and prices of gasoline in the region, upon which most of the regional communications depend. In prior occasions, strikes in the Venezuelan petroleum company (PDVSA) led to gasoline scarcities that interrupted the implementation of some project activities.


(7) Institutional Capacity / Partner Assessments (optional):

According to Etnollano, the World Bank project team, led by Mr. Juan Pablo Ruiz, was prompt and efficient in its disbursements and feedback. The only unfortunate event for them was the postponement of a related GEF-supported project (the “Amazon project”). The Amazon project seeks to replicate the Matavén initiative in indigenous *resguardos* throughout the Amazon region, and was going to continue supporting Matavén Forest communities.

The Amazon project had received GEF-Sec approval to conduct the PDF B, and the official approval letter was distributed among the indigenous communities in the Matavén Forest. This letter generated high expectations in the project region among local stakeholders. However, following a meeting in September 2004 between the Government’s Focal Point (the Ministry of the Environment) and the World Bank, two projects in the Bank’s pipeline were defined as priority to the Bank’s and the government’s objectives: the National Protected Areas Trust Fund project, which could potentially provide financing to the Matavén *resguardos*, and an Agrobiodiversity project, which is blended with other Bank operations. The World Bank held meetings with the United Nations, which agreed to assume the commitments acquired in the Amazon project and undertake the role as Implementing Agency.

### III. Summary of Main Lessons Learned

The principal lessons learned during project execution were the following:

-  *Two critical success factors are land rights and indigenous land governance. Support for indigenous land management should be a core element of WB projects, whether it is in obtaining legal land titles or in effective land management.*

- It must also be recognized that Protected Areas and Co-Management conservation approaches have affinities, but that negative precedents exist between governments and indigenous organizations. The Bank has good examples of positive synergies between protected areas and co-management that should be made evident with indigenous partners in protected areas.
- ✚ *The WB should present the Safeguard Policies to stakeholders from the beginning and apply their principle of participation.* When indigenous communities learn the Safeguard Policies, they increase their trust in the WB; in turn, information regarding the WB's principles of action becomes clear to all project partners.
  - ✚ *Demand-driven subprojects favor local communities' ownership.* In Matavén the project team supported handmade craft production at the indigenous communities' request. While supporting sub-projects is important, it may generate internal ruptures within indigenous organizations.
  - ✚ *The WB team should clarify NGO roles to create effective teams with indigenous organizations.* Role distribution between NGOs and indigenous organizations should follow four guidelines: (i) the role must be useful to the project; (ii) the organization who assumes the role must be capable of meeting its requirements; (iii) whoever assumes a job must be satisfied with its functions, and (iv) all organizations must agree that the role should be awarded to that specific entity. As indigenous organizations consolidate, the roles that NGOs assume should become more limited.
  - ✚ *The WB should prepare indigenous organizations for responsible financial management.* Indigenous organizations tend to be inexperienced in the simultaneous management of power, self-determination and financial resource management. This situation may demand the presence of responsible third parties throughout project execution.
  - ✚ *Miscommunication between stakeholders is more frequent than assumed.* Information sharing and dissemination is essential to project success. Nothing may be assumed as obvious. Good communication must be constantly enforced by a specialist or a staff member with experience on this subject. Furthermore, it is essential to build a timetable agreed on by all project partners.
  - ✚ *Stakeholders have different priorities; respect differences and find synergies.* Links between indigenous community development priorities and conservation efforts should be made evident. However, it cannot be assumed that indigenous communities are always conservation friendly, and their political agenda should not be underestimated.
  - ✚ *Project exchange visits are more important than exchanging theoretical arguments.* Visits to projects contribute to a stronger sense of trust in the WB. The WB team should create mechanisms in the preparatory phases for these visits, focusing on land titling, traditional knowledge, property rights and sustainable production systems, among other themes.

#### IV. Financial Management Status

The first audit report corresponded to the period between January and December 2001. This report was sent by Amézquita y Cía, S.A., an accredited auditor, on June 21, 2002. The principal conclusion of this report was that resource management in the Etnollano Foundation and in project execution were managed in a satisfactory manner. In addition, financial information was presented in a reasonable manner. However, while the Special Account and the Entity received unqualified opinions, the project accounts received a qualified opinion due to the lack of notes to the financial statements and selected accounting information still pending. The Bank's Internal Financial Management team reviewed the report and considered it acceptable. The team issued a series of recommendations regarding improved account disclosure, which were cleared by the target date of December 27, 2002.

The second audit report was delivered by Amézquita y Cía, S.A on June 30, 2003 and covered the period from January to December 2002. The principal conclusion of this report was that resource management in the Etnollano Foundation and project disbursements were managed in a satisfactory manner. In addition, financial information was presented in a reasonable manner. However, while the Special Account and the Entity received unqualified opinions, the project accounts received a qualified opinion based on a difference pending reconciliation of US\$373. The Bank's Internal Financial Management team reviewed the report and considered it acceptable. However, it proposed several recommendations and target dates, including a reconciliation of the Special Account, an adjustment in exchange differences and the justification of travel advances. These issues were cleared by October 15, 2003.

The third audit report was presented on June 30, 2004 and covered the period from January to December 2003. The principal conclusion of this report was that resource management in the Etnollano Foundation and project disbursements were managed in an acceptable manner. In addition, financial information was presented in a reasonable manner. The Bank's Internal Financial Management team reviewed the report and considered it acceptable.

The auditing report of the last project period, which covers January to December 2004, was received on May 16, 2005. The Bank's Internal Financial Management team is reviewing the report.

Received by task manager: Yes