Document of
The World Bank

Report No: ICR0000960

IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT
(TF-28372)

ON A

GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF US $10.1 MILLION

TO THE

ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

FOR A

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PROJECT

September 30, 2008

Sustainable Development Department
Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay
Latin America and the Caribbean

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective August 11, 2008)

Currency Unit = Peso
$Peso 3.05 = US$1
US$ 0.327 = AR$1

FISCAL YEAR
January 1 – December 31

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APN	National Parks' Administration (*Administración de Parques Nacionales*)
BANK/FAO-CP	World Bank/Food and Agriculture Organization Cooperative Program
BCP	Biodiversity Conservation Project
BIS	Biodiversity Information System
CAL	Local Advisory Commissions (*Comisión Asesora Local*)
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CIPCAMI	Reserch Center for Prevention of Industrial Mining Contamination (*Centro de Investigación para la Prevención de la Contaminación Minero Industrial*)
CC	Consultative Commissions
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CNP	Copo National Park
EIA	Environmental Impact Eavaluation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FM	Financial Management
GoA	Government of Argentina
ICR	Implementation Completion Report
INDEC	National Institute of Statistics
INTA	National Institute for Agricultural Research
IRR	Internal Rate of Return
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LVNP	Los Venados National Park
MLNP	Monte León National Park
MNP	Mburucuyá National Park
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP	New Protected Area
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NP	National Park
NPAS	National Protected Areas System
NPV	Net Present Value
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
OD	Bank´s Operational Directive
OP	Bank´s Operational Policy
PAR	Project Audit Report

PIU	Project Implementation Unit
POA	Annual Work Plan (*Plan Operativo Anual*)
QCNP	Quebrada del Condorito National Park
SAyDS	Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development *(Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable)*
SGNP	San Guillermo National Park
SMNR	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Project, loan 7520 AR
SOE	Statement of Expenditure
SRNyAH	Secretariat of Natural Resources and Human Environment *(Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Ambiente Humana)*
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
WWF	World-Wide Fund for Nature

Vice President:	Pamela Cox
Country Director:	Pedro Alba
Sector Manager:	Laura Tlaiye
Project Team Leader:	Robert Davis
ICR Team Leader :	Florencia Reca

ARGENTINE REPUBLIC
GEF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

CONTENTS

A. Basic Information

Country:	Argentina	Project Name:	Biodiversity Conservation Project (GEF)
Project ID:	P039787	L/C/TF Number(s):	TF-28372
ICR Date:	10/08/2008	ICR Type:	Core ICR
Lending Instrument:	SIL	Borrower:	GOVERNMENT
Original Total Commitment:	USD 10.1M	Disbursed Amount:	USD 9.8M
Environmental Category: B		**Global Focal Area: B**	
Implementing Agencies: Administacion de Parques Nacionales			
Cofinanciers and Other External Partners:			

B. Key Dates

Process	Date	Process	Original Date	Revised / Actual Date(s)
Concept Review:	02/17/1995	Effectiveness:	05/29/1998	05/29/1998
Appraisal:	06/23/1997	Restructuring(s):		
Approval:	10/21/1997	Mid-term Review:		07/23/2001
		Closing:	06/30/2006	03/31/2008

C. Ratings Summary

C.1 Performance Rating by ICR

Outcomes:	Satisfactory
Risk to Global Environment Outcome	Low or Negligible
Bank Performance:	Satisfactory
Borrower Performance:	Satisfactory

C.2 Detailed Ratings of Bank and Borrower Performance

Bank	Ratings	Borrower	Ratings
Quality at Entry:	Satisfactory	Government:	Satisfactory
Quality of Supervision:	Satisfactory	Implementing Agency/Agencies:	Satisfactory
Overall Bank Performance:	Satisfactory	**Overall Borrower Performance:**	Satisfactory

C.3 Quality at Entry and Implementation Performance Indicators

Implementation Performance	Indicators	QAG Assessments (if any)	Rating
Potential Problem Project	Yes	Quality at Entry	None

at any time (Yes/No):		(QEA):	
Problem Project at any time (Yes/No):	Yes	Quality of Supervision (QSA):	Satisfactory
GEO rating before Closing/Inactive status	Moderately Satisfactory		

D. Sector and Theme Codes

	Original	Actual
Sector Code (as % of total Bank financing)		
Central government administration	11	11
General agriculture, fishing and forestry sector	82	82
Other social services	7	7
Theme Code (Primary/Secondary)		
Biodiversity	Primary	Primary
Environmental policies and institutions	Primary	Primary
Land administration and management	Secondary	Secondary
Participation and civic engagement	Primary	Primary

E. Bank Staff

Positions	At ICR	At Approval
Vice President:	Pamela Cox	Shahid Javed Burki
Country Director:	Pedro Alba	Myrna L. Alexander
Sector Manager:	Laura E. Tlaiye	Constance A. Bernard
Project Team Leader:	Robert Ragland Davis	Robert Kirmse
ICR Team Leader:	Florencia Ines Reca	
ICR Primary Author:	Florencia Ines Reca	

F. Results Framework Analysis

Global Environment Objectives (GEO) and Key Indicators(as approved)

The general goal of the project is to conserve biodiversity of global importance; the specific objectives are to: (a) expand and diversify the existing national protected areas system to include several of the country's most globally significant but inadequately protected ecoregions, and (b) create the conditions for their sustainable management through investments in institutional strengthening, refined mechanisms of consultation and participation, and improved biodiversity information management.

Revised Global Environment Objectives (as approved by original approving authority) and Key Indicators and reasons/justifications

not applicable

(a) GEO Indicator(s)

Indicator	Baseline Value	Original Target Values (from approval documents)	Formally Revised Target Values	Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years
Indicator 1 :	Effective management of new protected areas. Increased provincial presence in provincial reserves around project federal PAs.			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	Increased provincial presence in provincial reserves	Increased federal and provincial presence in PAs and provincial reserves	Demonstrable increase in federal/provincial presence in 5 PAs and 3 reserves - PAs have 67 federal staff and provincial reserves have 19 provincial rangers.
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100% (data from provincial and APN records verify institutional presence)			
Indicator 2 :	Effective management of new protected areas: Less disturbances of, and incursions into, protected areas (illegal extraction of resources)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	decreased disturbances and incursions	n/a	Disturbances reduced by half according to surveys in PAs. (Five PAs with ecosystems of global importance protected by 31 rangers and 11 firefighters. Incursions, fires and disturbances

				substantially reduced from increased control by APN.)
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	99% (Some minor incursions reported. Protection of areas is secured by APN to extent possible.)			
Indicator 3 :	Better protection for key indicator species: Populations of indicator species			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	increased protection for indicator species	n/a	Monitoring program shows indicator species populations stable or increasing in surveys. Habitat protection secured for 300 species (16 threatened) in Montane savanna, Puna, Arid Chaco, and Patagonian Steppe.
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	Monitoring programs reporting for 26 indicator species. 97% of area of target habitats area secured. <3% of the target area habitats (Pampas) not protected/procured at closure.			
Indicator 4 :	Adoption of sustainable use practices by persons in buffer zones that are not beneficiaries of the project			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	sustainable use practices adopted by non-beneficiaries	n/a	Expert estimates indicate low levels of adoption of non-beneficiaries.
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	Non-beneficiaries not adopting practices due to lack of capacity and financial support.			
Indicator 5 :	Development of groups and local activities which support the protected areas objectives			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	Groups/activities support PA objectives	n/a	Groups participate in 65 Sustainable development activities implemented in park buffer zones which support the parks' conservation objectives and 53 workshops of parks' consultative

				commissions contribute to PA objectives.
Date achieved	07/01/1998	03/31/2008	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 6 :	A majority of the members of the consultative commissions are satisfied with their participation in the commission			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	Majority of participants satisfied	n/a	Survey results indicate participants of 5 consultative commissions satisfied with participation
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 7 :	Increase in public participation in the creation and protection of other federal and provincial protected areas			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	Increase in public participation/protection in other areas	n/a	APN has adopted the format of participation for the project and has formally agreed to apply them to 11 additional protected areas
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 8 :	Mitigation plan: Levels of income for affected families reestablished or increased			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	incomes increase	n/a	Surveys indicate increases in income for mitigation plan participants in Condorito, Copo and Monte Leon.
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 9 :	Increase in access to biodiversity data: Number of users from outside the national parks administration system providing or accessing data increases over life of project			
Value	0	increased public	n/a	the BIS is

(quantitative or Qualitative)		access to biodiversity data		accessible to the public through the internet. Over 75,000 external users annually visit the site.
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 10 :	Mitigation plan: Affected families are satisfied with effectiveness of mitigation plan			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	0	n/a	7
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100% (families participating in mitigation activities were overwhelmingly satisfied with the results. 1 mitigated individual in PNML is incapacitated and could not be surveyed.)			

(b) Intermediate Outcome Indicator(s)

Indicator	Baseline Value	Original Target Values (from approval documents)	Formally Revised Target Values	Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years
Indicator 1 :	Land purchases complete (no.)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	5	n/a	4.5
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	06/30/2003
Comments (incl. % achievement)	90% (A down payment made for the 5th area = 0.5 achievement.)			
Indicator 2 :	Sustainable use projects completed (no.)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	17	15	64
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	>400% (1 not completed)			
Indicator 3 :	Meetings of Consultative Commissions held (no.)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	45	49	53
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008

Comments (incl. % achievement)	108%			
Indicator 4 :	Person months contracted (no.)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	350	n/a	445
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	139%			
Indicator 5 :	BIS website design complete (%)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	100	n/a	100
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	06/30/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100% (BIS complete and on line)			
Indicator 6 :	Project unit staffed (%)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	100	n/a	100
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100			
Indicator 7 :	Phsical works (infrastructure) completed and in use			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	24	n/a	39, with one not in use
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	139%			
Indicator 8 :	Approval of National laws			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	4	n/a	3
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	06/30/2007
Comments (incl. % achievement)	75%			
Indicator 9 :	Identification and placement of "Intendentes"			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	5	03/31/2008	5
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008

Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 10 :	Management Plans			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	5	n/a	5
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 11 :	Biodiversity Baseline Studies			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	5	n/a	5
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 12 :	Social Assessment Specialist			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	1 contracted each year all years	n/a	1
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 13 :	Public awareness campaigns			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	5	6	10
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	160%			
Indicator 14 :	Approved proposals for subprojects			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	15	20	65
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	500%			
Indicator 15 :	PA-specific participation plans			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	5	6	5

Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	85%			
Indicator 16 :	Stakeholder workshops			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	12	18	58
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	11/16/2006	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	338%			
Indicator 17 :	Home improvements (for mitigation)			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	10	n/a	9
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	90%			
Indicator 18 :	Person months contracted for mitigation activities			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	350	n/a	445
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	127%			
Indicator 19 :	BIS Workshops			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	2	n/a	2
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 20 :	APN SIB Personnel Trained			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	20	n/a	27
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	135%			
Indicator 21 :	PIU Equipment Procured			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0%	100%	n/a	100%

Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 22 :	Monitoring programs underway			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0%	100%	n/a	100%
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	03/31/2008
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100% (monitoring of 26 spp in 5 parks underway)			
Indicator 23 :	Medium Term Review Complete			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	1	n/a	1
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006	03/31/2008	12/31/2001
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			
Indicator 24 :	Medium Term Review Complete			
Value (quantitative or Qualitative)	0	1		1
Date achieved	07/01/1998	06/30/2006		12/31/2001
Comments (incl. % achievement)	100%			

G. Ratings of Project Performance in ISRs

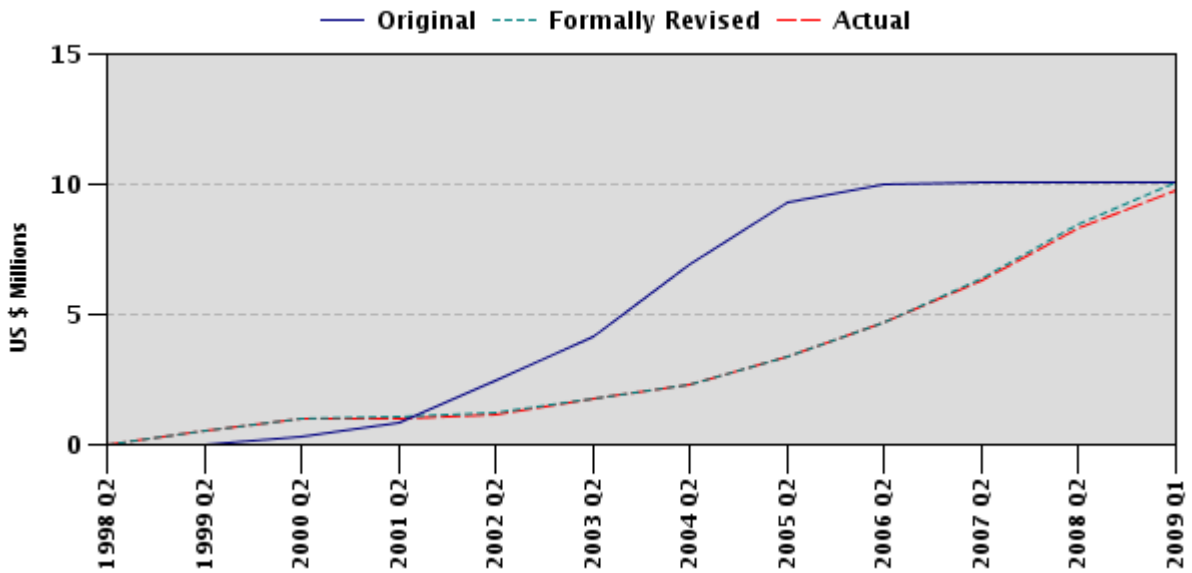
No.	Date ISR Archived	GEO	IP	Actual Disbursements (USD millions)
1	05/21/1998	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.00
2	10/05/1998	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.50
3	12/08/1998	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.50
4	04/29/1999	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.50
5	10/19/1999	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.74
6	04/26/2000	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.97
7	11/14/2000	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.03
8	05/23/2001	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.03
9	09/27/2001	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.18
10	05/10/2002	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.33
11	09/06/2002	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.57
12	12/20/2002	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.78

13	05/16/2003	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.78
14	06/19/2003	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	1.93
15	07/28/2003	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	1.93
16	12/10/2003	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	2.28
17	06/08/2004	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	2.70
18	08/17/2004	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	2.97
19	11/01/2004	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	3.09
20	04/18/2005	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	3.66
21	05/01/2006	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	4.98
22	11/20/2006	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	6.12
23	06/24/2007	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	7.13
24	12/20/2007	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	8.17
25	04/29/2008	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	9.32

H. Restructuring (if any)

Not Applicable

I. Disbursement Profile



1. Project Context, Global Environment Objectives and Design

(this section is descriptive, taken from other documents, e.g., PAD/ISR, not evaluative)

Argentina is characterized by a broad mix of ecological regions and rich biological diversity due to its wide range of climatic conditions. Of the 178 terrestrial ecoregions in Latin America and the Caribbean (identified in a World Bank/World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) study), 18 are found in Argentina. They range from the tropical rain forests of Misiones Province to the cold and arid Patagonian steppes of southern Argentina. While most are shared with adjacent countries, several are exclusive to Argentina, including most notably the Espinal, the Monte, the Pampas, and the Córdoba Montane Savannas (Chaco Serrano). Predictably, this diversity in ecoregions supports a large number of species of flora and fauna. With a total land area of 2.7 million km2 (two percent of the world's land surface), Argentina accounts for 12.2 percent of the world's gymnosperm species, 12.3 percent of the world's mushroom species, 10.9 percent of birds, and 8.7 percent of mammals. The country is particularly rich in endemic species, with more than 2,500 vascular plant species, 32 amphibian species, 53 reptile species, and 46 mammal species found nowhere else.

Argentina has long recognized the importance of these biological resources. Its national park system, the first in Latin America, dates back to 1903 with the donation of 7,500 ha of private land to the State. This initial holding was later enlarged and became the Nahuel Huapi National Park, the nation's first national park created along with the National Parks Commission in 1934. Other important accomplichments leading to the present national park system include the establishment of another 30 national protected areas; the creation of the national school for park rangers in 1967; and the development of a national protected areas system (NPAS) in 1986.

At appraisal, the country's protected area system (both national and provincial) had grown to cover some 4.9 percent of the national territory (about 13 million hectares). Of this total, some 22 percent was in the national park system, which consisted of 31 national protected areas, while the remaining area was under provincial or other forms of local control. In addition to their importance for biodiversity conservation, Argentina's national park system also represents an important source for generating revenue. Several of the country's national parks and reserves are major tourist attractions which provide significant sources of revenue.

Notwithstanding the global significance of the country's biological resources, their unsustainable use and over-exploitation continues at an alarming rate. Over the last century, it has been estimated that Argentina lost more than two thirds of its original forest cover. Deforestation continues unabated; the current loss rate is estimated to be 160,000 hectares per year. The Chaco is the forest ecoregion most threatened, and the location of most of current deforestation in Argentina. The loss of non- forested habitat is also significant. This is particularly true in the Pampas ecoregion, where conversion of grasslands to extensive livestock production has reduced this natural ecosystem to only one percent of its original size. Similarly, over a third of the Patagonian Steppe is severely eroded due to overgrazing by sheep and cattle, an issue of increasing concern in many of the country's other open habitats. At the species level, available information appears to support a similar pattern of irreversible loss. For example, in a recent study on the country's biodiversity species, 22 percent of Argentina's 2,355 vertebrate species were considered threatened or endangered.

At Appraisal, a National Parks Administration (APN) analysis estimated that less than 21 percent of the total area under protection was adequately managed, 30 percent under some form of management, and almost 50 percent (mostly under the jurisdiction of provincial or municipal

authorities) receives very little or no management support. Moreover, the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS) did not equitably represent many of the country's ecoregions considered to be of global significance in terms of their biodiversity. According to the degree of protection and threat levels, nine Argentine Ecoregions were identified as top priorities for increased biodiversity conservation; the Pampas, Brazilian Interior Atlantic Forests, Semi-Arid Chaco, Patagonian Steppe, Argentine Espinal, Humid Chaco, Cordoba Montane Savannas, Littoral/Marine Habitats, and Central Andean Dry Puna.

The National Park Law (Regimen Legal de los Parques Nacionales, Monumentos Naturales y Reservas Nacionales - Mensaje y Ley Orgánica) No. 22.351 of 1981, provides the legal basis for establishing and managing protected areas (PAs) in Argentina. This law defines the management objectives and characteristics to be used to classify PAs into one of several conservation classes. Land, water and biological resources designated as national protected areas can be declared on the basis of scientific importance, education, and the enjoyment of present and future generations. Each protected area must be officially designated with its own individual national law.

The Government of Argentina (GOA) had long demonstrated a commitment to protecting biodiversity. The country is a signatory to a host of international conventions, including the Agreement on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR, 1971); the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES, 1973); the Convention for Conservation of Migratory Species (1979); and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and in November 1996, the Government hosted the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In 1994 GOA began initial consultations with technical specialists within and outside government agencies to determine priorities for a national biodiversity strategy and a national protected area network. In September 1996 GOA received a UNDP-administered GEF grant to finalize the national biodiversity strategy, including support for a process of full consultation and participation of all stakeholders. Key elements of the strategy have already been identified and have been incorporated into the design of the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Project (BCP). These elements include: (i) strengthening and extending the protected area system; (ii) increasing national and local capacity in natural resource management, both in forested and non-forested areas; and (iii) promoting greater public participation in natural resource management.

At appraisal, Argentina faced a number of constraints in addressing environmental conservation issues. In particular, constraints on public spending had severely restricted government resources available for new investments in protected areas. Efficient management of the country's natural resources was hampered by poor coordination between different levels of government, deficiencies in the policy and legal framework, and lack of technical expertise and established mechanisms for public participation and consultation. Recognizing these opportunities and weaknesses, the Government proposed an integrated program which was composed of an IBRD-financed Native Forests and Protected Areas Project and a Global Environmental Facility (GEF)-financed Biodiversity Conservation Project (BCP). Specifically, the IBRD-financed Native Forests and Protected Areas Project (Loan 4085-AR) pursued these issues by enhancing the policy, legal and regulatory framework governing native forests, by addressing information constraints to the sustainable use of native forests and conservation of biodiversity, and by supporting the modernization of APN as a national parks management entity. GEF support of the Biodiversity Conservation Project complemented these objectives by making possible the formulation of an integrated and balanced approach to improved conservation of natural habitats containing biodiversity of global significance.

The semi-blended IBRD Native Forest and Protected Areas Project (NFPA) (Ln. 4085 Ar.) had two components; Native Forests (Comp. A) and Protected Areas (Comp B.). Component B was executed by APN and was the main link between the IBRD and the GEF Project. Component B had two subcomponents: (a) Plan for Modernizing APN and (b) Infrastructure Development and Management Strenghtening of the Selected Parks. Under the Protected Areas Component, APN prepared a plan to modernize the institution, as well as finance specific infrastructure developments and strengthening of management in four selected parks in Patagonia, including the strengthening of APN's regional technical office. These parks (Nahuel Huapi, Lanin, Glaciares, and Los Alerces) are the major revenue-generating protected areas managed by APN and the most heavily visited.

1.2 Original Global Environment Objectives (GEO) and Key Indicators (*as approved*)

The project was conceived prior to the use of the Results Framework later employed by the Bank. The overall objective of the project was to conserve biodiversity of global importance; the specific objectives were to: (a) expand and diversify the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS) to include several of the country's most globally significant but inadequately protected ecoregions, and (b) create the conditions for their sustainable management through investments in institutional strengthening, refined mechanisms of consultation and participation, and improved biodiversity information management.

The project objectives align with the objectives identified with for each of the three components of the project, described below in Section 1.5. Impact indicators were developed for each of the objectives. Specific performance indicators were also developed during preparation.

Development Objective	Impact Indicator
Component A – New Protected Areas	
D.O.1Increased protection of biodiversity in ecoregions of global importance. (Effective management of new Pas) (Increased protection for key indicator species)	Increased provincial presence in provincial reserves around federal Protected Areas. Fewer disturbances and incursions into PAs (illegal extraction of resources). Stable populations of selected indicator species at Year 1 of the project.
D.O.2 Promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity in areas adjacent to Protected Areas	Adoption of sustainable land use practices by non-participants in the project, measured by changes in land use patterns.
D.O.3 Increase public participation in the creation and protection of each Protected Area Mitigation Plan	Development of local groups and public activities that uphold the objectives of the Protected Areas. The majority of Consultative Commissions (CCs) members satisfied with the level of participation in CCs. Creation of CCs in other provincial and national Protected Areas. Income levels of affected families

	reestablished/improved, and families satisfied with the effectiveness of mitigation measures.
Component B – Biodiversity Information System	
D.O. 4 Increase access to biodiversity data	Number of non-APN users of the system (to provide/access data) increased during the life of the program Development of a more extensive Biodiversity Information System, determined by the creation and integration of additional information nodes.

1.3 Revised GEO (*as approved by original approving authority*) and Key Indicators, and reasons/justification

(i) Key Impact indicator *"Increased provincial presence in provincial reserves around project federal PAs"* was formally changed in 2003 to read *"Increased federal and provincial presence in PAs and Provincial Reserves"*.

(Justification: The indicator was changed, as the main focus and investment of the project was in federally protected areas, not provincial reserves. Yet, no indicator to measure federal presence in PAs was included in the original Key Impact Indicators set. The changed indicator includes both federal PAs and provincial reserves.)

(ii) Key Impact Indicator *"Social organization of affected families maintained/improved"* was formally dropped.

(Justification: Field staff, APN and Bank supervision team agreed that the indicator was of limited utility for measuring key impacts of the project. The effects of social organization on the protected areas is sufficiently covered in indicators 3,4, 5 and 6. Family well-being is measured in indicators 8 and 9.)

(iii) Key Impact Indicator *"Development of a more extensive BIS determined by the creation and integration of additional information nodes"* was formally dropped.

(Justification: The indicator was unnecessary for measuring key impacts as the BIS is fully complete with the five nodes established by the project. Expansion of the system is being carried out by APN through increased functionality, improvements in technology and links with other national information providers, not through establishment of additional nodes.)

1.4 Main Beneficiaries

(original and revised, briefly describe the "primary target group" identified in the PAD and as captured in the GEO, as well as any other individuals and organizations expected to benefit from the project)

The principal beneficiaries of the project were:

- The government institutions, principally APN, responsible for the management and sustainable development of protected areas;
- Rural populations in the zone of influence (and within the protected areas in certain areas);

- Park visitors (through the provision of improved facilities, management and services in the new parks);
- The tourism sector (through new infrastructure which attracts increased numbers of park visitors to rural areas);
- The education sector (through the development of teaching materials and training programs for rural schools relative to conservation)

1.5 Original Components (*as approved*)

The project had three components: (A) Protected Areas; (B) Biodiversity Information Management; and (C) Management, Monitoring and Evaluation. Total project costs at appraisal amounted to US$ 21.6 million; US$ 10.1 GEF (originally expressed as US$ 7.3 million SDR in the Grant Agreement), US$ 11.1 from GoA and US$ 0.4 form from buffer-zone grant beneficiaries.

Component A - Protected Areas (base cost US$ 20.3 million, US$ 9.3 million from GEF, US$ 10.6 million from GoA and US$ 0.4 million from beneficiaries).

The general objective of this component was to support the establishment and consolidation of five new protected areas in poorly represented ecosystems of recognized global importance. The selected areas were: (a) Los Venados (an area in San Luis Province identified as the largest remnant of relatively intact Pampas); (b) San Guillermo (in San Juan Province, the southernmost extension of the Central Andean Dry Puna); (c) Copo (in Santiago del Estero Province, one of the last pristine areas of Semi-Arid Chaco in Argentina); (d) Quebrada del Condorito (in Córdoba Province, an area including a part of the Córdoba Montane Savannas, an ecoregion endemic to Argentina); and (e) Monte León (in Santa Cruz Province, an area of Patagonian Steppe and littoral and wetland habitat). Selection was made based on evaluation criteria applied to 32 potential areas. A team of local and international biodiversity experts confirmed the significance of the selected sites in terms of: (a) their global importance for biodiversity conservation; (b) the degree of threat to the ecoregion; and (c) a complex of factors related to investment feasibility (e.g., provincial interest, cost of land purchase, support of local communities, and other institutional considerations.) There were three sub-components:

Subcomponent A.1. Establishment and consolidation of new protected areas (US$ 15.9 million base cost, US$ 6.7 million from GEF and US$ 9.2 million from GOA). The project supported the establishment and management of five protected areas in the selected sites, for which the management strategy was based on a policy of strict protection, but with provisions for the possibility of low-impact visits. Following the completion of legal establishment and land acquisition, livestock should be gradually eliminated from the parks and park rangers should be hired to manage visitor use and to control access, poaching and other types of illegal activity. It was planned that these rangers would also conduct basic inventory and monitoring activities, paying special attention to key indicator species. Moreover, the project developed partnerships with the local scientific community to monitor the effects of park management on flora and fauna. As such, the project financed: (a) technical assistance for boundary demarcation, drafting of legal documents, preparation and implementation of operational plans, implementation of environmental assessments and other specialized studies and activities associated with the establishment and management of these areas; (b) limited equipment; and (c) small works (construction of observation points, interpretative trails, fencing, administrative offices, interpretative center and park ranger residences, and one road repair).

Subcomponent A.2. Sustainable Development Activities in Buffer Zones (US$ 1.4 million base cost; US$ 0.9 million form GEF, US$ 0.1 million form GoA and US$ 0,4 million from beneficiaries). The project supported improved community land-use practices through pilot projects, studies, and support to extension activities. Pilot activities consisted of financing a variety of small activities (e.g., the testing of improved land management models, recovery of degraded natural grasslands, fire management, and the implementation of complementary biodiversity studies) that contributed directly to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in PA buffer zones. This subcomponent also supported awareness-building activities aimed at local communities living in and around the parks, thereby helping to increase local knowledge of, and support for, the parks themselves. In most cases, funding for this sub-component was made available on a competitive, cost-sharing basis to NGOs, universities, and government agencies working in collaboration with local landowners or rural communities. GEF funding was used to cover the incremental costs of the sub-component.

Subcomponent A.3 Public Participation (US$ 1.8 million base cost; US$ 0.7 million from GEF and US$ 1.1 million from GOA). As an essential part of project preparation, an extensive stakeholder participation and consultation process was implemented with representatives of federal and provincial institutions, NGOs, rural families, local farmers, community organizations, and universities. This subcomponent played a central role to ensure broad public participation in the creation, protection and management of each protected area. This has been done through the formulation of a Participation Plan and a Mitigation Plan and their implementation for people who might otherwise have been adversely affected by park establishment. Social mitigation costs included training for alternative employment, employment in park management activities, and improved housing and living conditions for the people who would continue to live in the parks. GEF funding was used to cover the incremental costs of this sub-component while GoA financed the Mitigation Plan.

Component B - Biodiversity Information Management (US$ 0.6 million; US$ 0.5 million from GEF and US$ 0.1 million from GoA): The objective of the component was to provide decision makers (national and international) with ready access to information for decision making relative to conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity. The project considered the ability to access and exchange information on Argentina's globally important biodiversity as an essential tool for effective management and protection. This was achieved by putting into place an internet- based biodiversity network, enabling worldwide access to to Argentine biodiversity information.

The component financed the development of prototype nodes within APN and provided the training and standards needed to extend the network nationally and internationally. The project financed system development, limited hardware acquisition, and reconfiguration of existing databases. A major thrust of the component was a training sub-component to ensure the sustainability of the first -node within this emerging network. The component consisted of (a) promotion of the Biodiversity Information System (BIS) at the national level, (b) development of the BIS software, (c) adaptation of existing data bases to the BIS, and (d) capacity building and training. GEF support of US$ 0.5 million was proposed to finance the incremental costs of the component.

Component C – Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (US$ 0.6 million base cost; US$ 0.5 million from GEF and 0.1 million from GoA). This component financed technical assistance, equipment and incremental operational costs needed to strengthen the capacity of the implementing agencies to manage the overall program. It also supported scientifically sound monitoring of biodiversity at globally significant Protected Areas sites.

1.6 Revised Components

Not applicable (no revisions)

1.7 Other significant changes
(in design, scope and scale, implementation arrangements and schedule, and funding allocations)

During execution of the Project, four amendments to the grant agreement were made (July 2003, December 2003, February 2005, and June 2006) as follows:

i) On July 11, 2003, at the request of APN, the percent of expenditures financed by the GEF for "goods" and "works" disbursement categories were modified to increase the percentage of GEF resources required from 88% to 100% for "works", under disbursement category (1)(a); from 82% to 100% for "equipment", under disbursement categories (1) b), (4)(a) and (5)(a). This helped to boost implementation, as lesser amounts of scarce counterpart funds were required for implementation. It also enabled the project to take advantage of the tax exemption in effect in Argentina for procurement of goods and services carried out using funds provided by international cooperation (Argentine Law no. 23.905). Finally, it helped to streamline the procurement process, as payments under categories with 100% GEF financing were not required to be processed with counterpart funds (which require a separate internal routing and authorization). (The effect of this amendment was demonstrable and implementation picked up substantially as a result.)

ii) The second amendment (December 17, 2003), requested by the Bank, was to change the grant amount, which had previously been recorded in Special Drawing Rights (SDR), into United States dollars.

iii) The third amendment (February 17, 2005) approved the tables of adjusted Project monitoring indicators. (see Section 1.3)

iv) The fourth amendment (June 26, 2006), requested by APN, was to add a sixth protected area (Mburucuyá National Park), reallocate funds, and modify the percentage of expenditures financed by the GEF for the "Grants" disbursement category (This helped to expedite the administration and disbursement of funds to subprojects, by using only one funding sources).

In 2005, APN conducted a comparative analysis of options for incorporating an additional protected area into the Project. Once complete, they provided a justification for inclusion of the highest ranking candidate from their analysis, Mburucuyá, to the Bank, along with detailed analyses of other alternatives. Following a review of the request and field mission by the supervision team, the Bank's Lead Ecologist conducted a site visit and an assessment using the WWF tracking tool to determine its suitability for inclusion in the project. Social and environmental assessments of the park and surrounding area were carried out by APN -- both were found to be acceptable by the Bank (and the social assessment recognized as a best practice). Based on the assessments, good registration with the project objectives and the justification provided by APN, it was concluded that the area was an excellent candidate for inclusion in the project.

Mburucuyá is located primarily in the Humid Chaco, an ecosystem identified at appraisal as having globally significant biodiversity, and insufficient protection. The area has a range of ecological conditions and vegetation due to the convergence of three different ecoregions: hygrophytic forests associated with the Parana Forest ecosystem; Chaco forests, primarily *Schinopsis spp. and Prosopis spp*.); and yatay (palm) savannas and Mesopotamian-type wetlands (including 104 lagoons and 8,000 ha of marshes and streams, in an excellent state of conservation). The protected area is home to 13 threatened species of vertebrates and 27 endemic species of flora. In addition, it contains extremely important grasslands, prioritized for conservation as *Valuable Grassland Areas in the Pampas and Plains of Argentina, Uruguay, and Southern Brazil* (D. Bilenca and F. Miñarro. J.M. Kaplan Fund-FVSA 2004.

Institutional arrangements

The Biodiversity Conservation Project was designed to be executed by the National Park Administration (APN), a semi-autonomous agency within the Secretariat of Natural Resources and Human Environment (SRNyAH). Following a series of institutional reorganizations in the environment areas, in 2001 APN was transferred to the Ministry of Tourism. No negative impacts were incurred as a result of this transition.

Project Extensions

The project had one extension for twenty-one months, to March 31, 2008, in order to complete the established goals and incorporate a *New Protected Area*, Mburucuyá National Park, (MNP) into the project. Impacts of the fiscal and political crises of 2001 – 2003 on the project had slowed progress during those years. However, following the crisis the project had recouped its momentum and showed good signs that it could successfully accomplish its objectives, providing it was granted the additional 21 months – which proved correct.

Amendment of Disbursement Category Allocations –

Two of the amendments signed had the purpose of modifying the percent of expenditures financed by the GEF of select disbursement categories (July 2003 and June 2006) and reallocation of funds between categories (June 2006). The following funds reallocations were authorized:

- *Works,* disbursement category (1)(a) – increased from US$ 3,140,685 to US$ 4,040,685;
- *Goods,* disbursement category (1)(b) – increased from US$ 1,106,850 to US$ 1,332,850;
- *Consulting Services,* disbursement category (1)(c) – decreased from US$ 1,328,220 to US$ 1,156,220;
- *Operating Costs,* disbursement category (1)(d) – decreased from US$ 1,369,726 to US$ 387,726;
- *Consulting Services,* disbursement category (2)(a) – increased from US$ 110,685 to US$ 237,685;
- *Grants,* disbursement category (2)(b) – increased from US$ 747,123 to US$ 914,123;

- *Operating Costs*, disbursement category (2)(c) – decreased from US$ 83,014 to US$ 20,014;
- *Consultant Services*, disbursement category (3)(a) – increased from US$ 262,877 to US$ 271,877;
- *Training*, disbursement category (3)(b) – decreased from US$ 442,740 to US$ 57,740;
- *Operating Costs*, disbursement category (3)(c) – decreased from US$ 27,671 to US$ 4,671;
- *Goods*, disbursement category (4)(a) – increased from US$ 96,850 to US$ 134,850;
- *Consultant Services*, disbursement category (4)(b) – increased from US$ 262,876 to US$ 423,876;
- *Training*, disbursement category (4)(c) – decreased from US$ 69,178 to US$ 32,178;
- *Operating Costs*, disbursement category (4)(d) – increased from US$ 41,507 to US$ 82,507;
- *Goods*, disbursement category (5)(a) – increased from US$ 13,836 to US$ 15,336;
- *Consultant Services*, disbursement category (5)(b) – increased from US$ 456,575 to US$ 604,575;
- *Operating Costs*, disbursement category (5)(c) – increased from US$ 27,671 to US$ 42,671;

2. Key Factors Affecting Implementation and Outcomes

2.1 Project Preparation, Design and Quality at Entry

(including whether lessons of earlier operations were taken into account, risks and their mitigations identified, and adequacy of participatory processes, as applicable)

Project Preparation

The Bank team was composed of protected areas, biodiversity, information systems, social, and public participation specialists and other technical experts. The FAO CP played a very important role in providing technical experts to work side-by-side with national counterparts in project formulation. The project was well conceived and had a sound technical design that targeted the issues and constraints derived from the sector review report.

Lessons learned and incorporated

The design of the project was based on GEF-related experience from Argentina and on the larger information base derived from other relevant projects supported under the GEF Pilot Phase and other related environmental protection projects in Latin America.

The only completed GEF-financed project in Argentina was the Patagonia Coastal Zone Management Plan Project (CZMP). The main lessons derived from the CZMP project included: (a) the need to build on a strong, established organizational base; (b) project preparation and implementation should be carried out to the maximum degree possible through the use of local experts; and (c) the education of decision makers and the population generally on the role of and need to conserve natural habitats is vital to develop support for managing protected areas sustainably.

The key lessons derived from other GEF-funded biodiversity projects elsewhere in Latin America, that had been also generally corroborated in the November 1995 World Bank report,

Mainstrearning Biodiversity in Development: a World Bank Assistance Strategy for Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, and by the 1996 Bank report *GEF Pilot Phase Portfolio Project Implementation Review* were fully taken into account during the formulation of the BCP.

Rationale for Bank and GEF Involvement:

The project was the Bank's first GEF- funded project aimed at improving the conservation of biodiversity of global importance in Argentina. The BCP provided a vehicle for pursuing one of the three pillars of the 1995 CAS for Argentina: rebuilding infrastructure (including addressing environment issues) by improving environmental management and protection. In particular, the Project supported the in situ conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, a key objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity, consistent with the GEF Operational Strategy for Biodiversity and with all four GEF Biodiversity Operational Programs.

The proposed national parks for GEF assistance were selected to protect arid and semi-arid ecosystems (the Pampas, the Central Andean Dry Puna, and the Patagonian Steppe); forest ecosystems (Córdoba montane savannas and the Chaco); mountain ecosystems (the Puna), and coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems (littoral and wetland Patagonian habitats). The project was consistent with the Conferences of the Parties (COP) guidance on conservation and sustainable use of vulnerable ecosystems and species; capacity building, including human resource development and institutional strengthening; and innovative measures to conserve biodiversity, including government-private partnerships for land management. Furthermore, the Biodiversity Information Management component was designed to contribute to the Argentine National Information Management responsibilities as defined in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Project design

One important factor contributing to the project's success was the decision to base the project's design on the comprehensive Argentine Forest Sector study of 1993 (No. 11833-AR). The sector work concluded that the Bank can be of great assistance to the government in helping it to develop and to implement an appropriate state role in the conservation and management of natural habitats. The project's success demonstrates the importance of carrying out a sector review to identify issues and constraints in the early stages of preparation.

Risk Assesment

The risks identified during the preparation were i) lack of awareness by local decision makers concerning the need for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the protected areas to be created through the project and ii) limited involvement by and support from provincial governments regarding biodiversity conservation, due to lack of financing.

To mitigate the first risk, both the project design and activity implementation emphasized local public consultation processes and participation of stakeholders at each of the proposed protected area sites. Consultative commissions were created at each area, including participatory workshops to support public participation in the development of park management plans.

One of the selection factors applied to the proposed protected areas considered for inclusion in the project was the existence and degree of provincial support, which partially mitigated the second risk. In addition, sustainable development and training activities were included for residents of the provincial buffer zones around each national park included in the project.

When the Project was formulated, the San Guillermo Protected Area had a specific risk linked to the mining exploration permits valid in the buffer zone adjacent to the park. The law (No. 24.585/95) requires environmental impact studies to be done prior to exploitation. These studies must be approved by provincial authorities and include mitigation measures. During Project implementation, both APN and the Bank supervision team carried out activities to evaluate the possible impacts of mining activities in the Park's influence zones (Veladero and Pascua Lama, both of Barrick Gold Corp. of Canada).

In September 2005, the supervision mission visited San Juan and met both provincial authorities, the UnderSecretary of Mining and the Undersecretary of the Environment, and the on-site managers of Barrick, including their Vice President, Legal Counsel and Medical Director, to learn more about the monitoring, control and mitigation measures being employed at the mines. The mission also visited CIPCAMI (*Centro de Investigación para la Prevención de la Contaminación Minero Industrial*) (a provincial technical center with state-of-the-art water quality monitoring equipment and personnel trained and financed by the Japanese Government).

CIPCAMI and Barrick reported they had been carrying out independent water-quality monitoring of the Las Taguas, Cuesta del Viento and San Juan El Palque Rivers. Both of the water monitoring programs reported they had yet to detect any problematic contamination from the mines. The project financed a followup study, *"Physical and chemical water quality monitoring of the Blanco River between Junta de la Palca and Cuesta del Viento Dam"* to assess the threat of contamination from the mines and to determine the adequacy of both Barrick's EIA, as well as their monitoring programs (and CIPCAMIs). The study identified technical areas where the EIA could be improved. APN followed up with the Secretary of Mining and the Province concerning the findings and is now working with the Province to determine best locations for new water monitoring stations that include park's concerns. The Secretary of Mining has also followed up with Barrick and made recommendations for improvements to its EIA and mitigation efforts.

Borrower Commitment

To achieve the Project's objectives, a strong commitment from APN was fundamental, both from technical personnel and from authorities, particularly PIU staff. APN showed a high commitment to the project and worked diligently with provincial authorities in the creation of the parks. Given that this was only the second project with external financing in APN, initially there were some minor issues associated with the administrative flow of counterpart funds. However, they were eventually resolved through the use of a revolving account for each park (established within APN).

2.2 Implementation
(including any project changes/restructuring, mid-term review, Project at Risk status, and actions taken, as applicable)

Project activities were initiated in August 1998 at a good pace. While disbursements were slow initially, due to the time lag between procurement of lands and the implementation of site activities in the new parks, progress was considered satisfactory up until the midst of the political and economic crisis of 2001 - 2003.

The economic crisis eventually took a toll on the project's execution and the project was considered at risk, as was most of the Argentine portfolio. In 2003, the project was downgraded to unsatisfactory, due to a slowdown in work and corresponding disbursement lag. With 50% of

the population haven fallen below the poverty line, the government was compelled to shift scarce funds from line agencies to avert or mitigate social crises. Consequently, across the board budget cuts were experienced in the project and sector.

However, with assistance from the Bank team, the agencies made successful appeals for additional funding to the Ministry of Economy and Production and the President's Chief of Cabinet. In addition, the Bank agreed to an amendment of the grant agreement to increase the percentage of GEF resources required from 88% to 100% for "works", under disbursement category (1)(a); from 82% to 100% for "equipment", under disbursement categories (1) b), (4)(a) and (5)(a). This helped to boost implementation, as lesser amounts of scarce counterpart funds were required for implementation. The disbursement profile was updated, and the project began pulling ahead.

Another difficulty stemming from the economic crisis was its impact on the procurement of

Estancia San Nicolás (San Luis Province), site of the proposed Los Venados National Park. The purchase of the Estancia began in December 2000 with a down payment of 30% of the total (apx. $US 0.83 million equivalent of counterpart funds), and, in June 2001, the final payment should have been made. However, APN did not have sufficient funds on hand to complete the purchase due to budget cuts imposed during the crisis. A legal process is still underway to resolve its acquisition by APN.

Although the peso was pegged to the dollar at a 1:1 ratio at effectiveness, the peso devalued to nearly 3.6 to 1 in 2002 and remains today at about 3.1 to 1. The devalued peso, along with low rates of inflation (avg 8%) between 2003 and 2006, resulted in lower rates of disbursements in the project in US Dollars, even as the country emerged from the crisis and the project began to recover lost ground in implementation. This is because most of the project's expenditures were in Argentine Pesos and US Dollar equivalent costs were much lower after the crisis compared to the cost estimates at appraisal. The graph below shows the disbursements in US dollars before and after the crisis relative to the dollar-equivalent in pesos.

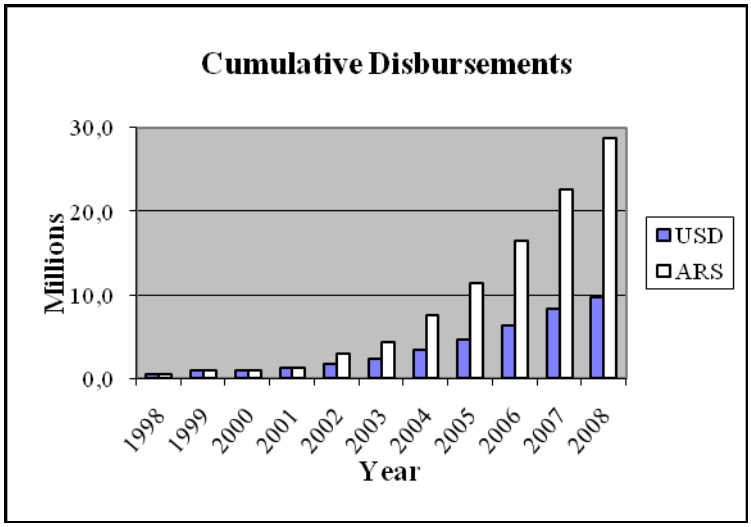


Figure 1. Cumulative Disbursements in US $ and AR Pesos

The project was implemented in a semi-blended arrangement with the IBRD Native Forests and Protected Areas Project (US $15.8 million). The two projects shared facilities, and some of the administrative costs. For example, financial management and procurement were shared between the projects. The two projects were supervised by the same National Director in APN, and were thematically complementary. The IBRD project focused on modernization of APN as a national parks entity, including major infrastructure investments in Argentina's four most highly visited national parks, while the GEF project complemented this by improving the conservation of natural habitats containing biodiversity of global significance.

During project implementation, four amendments to the grant agreement were authorized (July 2003, December 2003, February 2005, and June 2006). (See Section 1.7 for details.)

Personnel Changes - Personnel changes were incurred during implementation. However, this rarely impacted implementation, since most of the core technical staff were retained. Over the course of project implementation, the National Director for the Project changed six times.

2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Design, Implementation and Utilization

M&E design – The project design included performance and impact indicators to monitor the Project's activities. During implementation, one impact indicator was adjusted, and targets and methods modified for some of the progress indicators (See Section 1.3 and "Revised Targets" noted in the Datasheet).

M&E Implementation – The PIU took measurements during the entire project cycle and updated the table of performance indicators annually. During field visits at supervision missions, some of the reported measurements were verified. Most indicators were found to be very straightforward, and could be monitored without difficulty, with the exception of the species-level indicators of biodiversity. Nevertheless, biodiversity monitoring programs of indicators species were established for all of the new protected areas by closure. The first monitoring was finalized by closure in Quebrada del Condorito, San Guillermo, Copo and Monte Leon National Parks. In retrospect, it may have been more practical to monitor biodiversity at the ecosystem level with remote sensing analyses (and field checks) to determine how well habitats for the species were fairing, rather than monitor individual species.

Indicator species selected for Quebrada del Condorito include tabaquillo (*Polylepis australis*), puma (*Puma concolor*), red fox (*Pseudalopex culpaeus*) and ratón plomizo (*Akodon spegazzinii*) and vegetation at landscape level and for San Guillermo the following species were selected: vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*), guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*), andean cat (*Oreaihurus jacobita*), European hare *(Lepus europaeus)*, ratón de las vegas (*Neotomys ebriosus*), chinchillón *(Lagidium viscacia)*, puma *(Puna concolor)*, lagartija de San Guillermo *(Liolaemus eleodori)*, lagarto de cola piche sanjuanino *(Phymaturus punae)*, burmeister´s anole *(Pristidactylus scapulatus)*, Andean flamingo (Phoenicopterus andinus) and horned coot *(Fulica cornuta)*. In Copo, the indicators were: quebracho colorado (*Schinopsis lorentzii y balansae*), vinal (*Prosopis ruscifolia*), zorro gris (Pseudolapex griseus) and insectivorous birds of branches and trunks and of foliage. Indicator specieis in Monte León include Darwin´s rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata*), guanaco *(Lama guanicoe)*, red fox *(Pseudalopex culpaeus)*, puna *(Puma concolor)*, Magellanic penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*), imperial shag (*Phalacrocórax atriceps*), sea lion (*Otaria flavescens*) and herbaceous and bush steppe. Indicator species monitoring showed that populations were

either stable or increasing. These findings are compatible with the high degree of protection afforded through the creation and management of the new protected areas, and backed by M&E reporting showing a decrease in disturbances in them.

M&E utilization – The PSRs and ISRs were regularly updated with the monitoring and evaluation information, which proved to be a useful tool for the team in its supervision and to provide the needed feedback and guidance to the implementing agency on where to focus its efforts. The M&E was particularly important in the post-crisis period to clearly demonstrate to high-level administrators of the line agencies areas to target for improvement. The M&E effort was the first for APN, along with The Protected Areas Component of the Native Forest and Protected Areas Project, and has demonstrated the knowledge obtained through the project by building high-quality indicator sets for the new Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project (SNRM Project).

2.4 Safeguard and Fiduciary Compliance
(focusing on issues and their resolution, as applicable)

Fiduciary

During Project implementation, there were five supervision missions by financial administration specialists from the Regional Office of the Bank: November 2002, March 2006, November 2006, April 2007 and March 2008. In all cases the conclusions were that the project's overall financial management performance was Satisfactory.

The conclusions of the FM supervision missions were that the project´s overall financial management and procurement performance was satisfactory. Some weaknesses, mainly related to the lack of timely counterpart funding, partly caused by the 2001-2002 economic crisis and because this was one of the APNs first experiences with international funding, were identified by the FM supervision mission. Time differences between the counterpart funding according to PIU project financial statements and APN budget execution system were raised by the auditors because information was not timely channeled to the PIU. However, the identified weaknesses were satisfactorily addressed by the Project Unit. However, the identified weaknesses were satisfactorily addressed by the Project Unit.

There were four procurement reviews conducted by the Regional Office Procurement Specialist, in 2006, 2007 (two) and 2008. The procurement review of 2006 included the physical inspection of works in QCNP. The second review in 2007 was a joint review with the financial management specialist, and the others were ex-post reviews. The PIU showed adequate experience in carrying out bidding processes related to civil works, but some weaknesses in the selection of consultants and goods procedures. Though overall, based on the supervision missions and ex-post reviews, the procurement performance for the project was considered satisfactory.

The project had no cases of misprocurement nor accountability issues (financial disqualification problems) in any of the financial auditing reports.

Safeguards

Environment Assessment (OD 4.01): The project was classified as category "B" as the infrastructure developments in protected areas were small and because of the low number of individuals in or around the parks. It aimed to promote improved environmental management of the new protected areas, the effects of which were designed to be overwhelmingly positive.

Infrastructure works were the main focus for environmental management and monitoring. To manage this, prior to the execution of the works, APN carried out specific environmental assessments according to the potential for environmental impacts per National Law 22.351 and APN resolution no. 16/94, which were completely consistent with OD 4.01. The requirements and administrative procedures for the assessments are outlined in APN's *Reglamento para la Evaluación Impacto Ambiental en Areas de la Administración de Parques Nacionales*. EIAs and mitigation plans were reviewed and cleared by the team's environmental specialist for the relevant works. APN performance for the reviews and environmental management was consistently complete and of high quality. The Bank supervision team included biologists and ecologists trained in the applicable Bank safeguards policies. (Prior to the incorporation of the new park, Mburucuyá, during the course of the project, the client presented an EA based on the Park's management plan, which was reviewed and cleared by the team's environmental specialist and SAT on May 26, 2006.)

Involuntary Resettlement (OD 4.30): Significant attention was devoted to ensure that the people who lived in the Quebrada del Condorito, Monte León and Copo National Parks were dealt with fairly and that they didn´t lose their capacity to support themselves. In terms of the World Bank's Operational Directive 4.30 on Involuntary Resettlement, no one was resettled due to the establishment of the parks. Persons living in the parks and supported through the project included six familes in Quebrada del Condorito, one aged (and blind) farmhand in Monte León and five families in Copo. In compliance with the Bank's policies, APN developed and implemented a *Social Mitigation Plan* during implementation that included, in addition to training and housing improvements, hiring one member of each family at Quebrada del Condorito as APN staff, processing an APN retirement for the farmhand from Monte León, and hiring two members of one family at Copo. APN's considerable experience with land purchasing carried out over the last 60 years in other parks has been non-controversial and successful. Land purchase and mitigation arrangements were in full compliance with OD 4.30 – and there was no involuntary resettlement. (In addition to the mitigation efforts, the project developed and carried out specific social participation plans/activities to involve local stakeholders in management plan development and implementation.)

During trips to supervise the Project, mission members had occasion to contact various residents of the Quebrada del Condorito and Copo National Parks. As part of the monitoring and evaluation activities, a survey was taken of the QCNP beneficiaries concerning the mitigation aspects of the project. Results were evaluated as positive because "the status of APN worker places them in the situation of having increased income and a greater choice of productive activities to engage in."

(Prior to the incorporation of the new park, Mburucuyá, the client presented an SA which was reviewed and cleared by the team and SAT on May 26, 2006. The SA confirmed there were no indigenous people in the area, and there would be no nvoluntary resettlement. It provided excellent information for the incorporation of the new park and addressing social issues in the buffer zone. The team was commended by SAT on the quality of the SA and safeguards compliance.)

Natural Habitats (OP 4.04): The protection of natural habitats was a major focus of the BCP and it was designed to have positive impacts on the environment. During the project, five new protected areas were created and strengthened, protecting five ecoregions with biodiversity of global importance. All activities under this project aimed to enhance biodiverstiy conservation, through, inter alia, creation of the protected area, sustainable activities in buffer zones, local community involvement, infrastructure works in national park areas and improved biodiversity information management. Infrastructure works in national parks incorporated Bank standards for

EA and EIA for relevant activities. APN demonstrated excellent compliance with Bank standards, and has a set of protocols for works in Parks which are comparable and applicable for all projects through its *Reglamento para la Evaluacion de Impacto Ambiental en Areas de la Administracion de Parques Nacionales*. These standards apply for all works whether or not they are financed by the Bank. Supervision missions visited each protected area during the course of implementation, and the project was consistently found to be in compliance. In the case of the access road for "Condorito" the Lead Engineer for the QAT reviewed and cleared the environmental assessment and mitigation plan, found it to be satisfactory, and recommended it as a best practice.

2.5 Post-completion Operation/Next Phase
(including transition arrangement to post-completion operation of investments financed by present operation, Operation & Maintenance arrangements, sustaining reforms and institutional capacity, and next phase/follow-up operation, if applicable)

APN has demonstrated a high level of commitment to the sustainability of the project objectives and the Project supported parks are now fully incorporated into the APN system. This includes allocation of the required levels of funding and personnel for the maintenance, care and use of the facilities and equipment provided by the project to support the its objectives to expand and diversify the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS) into globally significant but inadequately protected ecoregions. In addition, APN has recognized the value of the actions carried out in the buffer zones with communities and individuals, and in consultative processes with stakeholders for park management, and is incorporating these instruments into their overall work program for the park system.

Next Phase:

The government of Argentina requested and obtained from the Bank financing for a new IBRD project, *Sustainable Natural Resource Management (SNRM),* that takes into account the experience with protected areas and sustainable activities in buffer zones with the GEF Biodiversity Conservation Project. In addition, discussions are underway for a new GEF project that would focus on rural corridors and biodiversity conservation needs in Patagonia and the Arid Chaco. The SNRM Project was approved by the Bank on March 18, 2008 (Loan No 7520 AR) for an amount of US $60 million and aims to improve the sustainable and efficient management of forest resources, conserve biodiversity in protected areas and forest landscapes, and integrate small producers into forestry development and conservation.

In 2005, the government developed the Federal Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism (PEFTS) that provides the guiding principles for the PA sector over the next few years. Under the PEFTS, national parks are considered a key element in conserving the natural resource base for sustainable economic development. The new project is also underpinned by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and its national level implementation or national action plan (NAP), and the components for biodiversity conservation of the new project are consistent with the National Biodiversity Strategy adopted in 2003 by the Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development (Resolution 91/03). The new project will key on these by aiming to strengthen management capacity of eleven priority protected areas and to upgrade APN's capacity in Buenos Aires. The parks to be supported through the new project were identified as having high potential, but lack the management capacity and infrastructure to provide needed levels of protection to biodiversity while serving increased numbers of tourists.

The 2006 Argentina CAS emphasizes the promotion of agricultural growth, reducing rural poverty, and improving environmental management. The CAS highlights the importance of the

forestry sector, while emphasizing that "Argentina's growth has long been, and will continue to be, based in significant part on its tremendous natural comparative advantages" (Argentina Country Assistance Strategy, May 4, 2006, Report No. 34015-AR). In this respect, the project maintains a high degree of consistency and relevance with the present CAS and concerns of the country.

3. Assessment of Outcomes

3.1 Relevance of Objectives, Design and Implementation
(to current country and global priorities, and Bank assistance strategy)

The project has a **high degree of relevance** to current country priorities and to the overall Bank assistance strategy for Argentina. The project's design, objectives and implementation are completely consistent with current development priorities, including the current Argentina CAS, and that relevance is further reflected by the development and approval of a follow-on operation, the Argentina *Sustainable Natural Resource Management* (SNRM) Project. (The proposed follow-on GEF project, *Rural Corridors and Biodiversity* is presently in the concept identification and description stage.)

The Government of Argentina places a high priority on improving the management and conservation of native forests and protected areas. These sectors are the basis of significant economic activity and are the source of innumerable positive externalities which benefit the economy. Government commitment to the protected areas sector has increased, and APN's budget raised from AR$28 million in 2002 to AR$131 million in 2008.

3.2 Achievement of Global Environmental Objectives
(including brief discussion of causal linkages between outputs and outcomes, with details on outputs in Annex 2)

D.O. 1:
Increase protection of biodiversity in ecological regions of global significance

The Project's objective to preserve biodiversity of global importance by enlarging and diversifying the National System of Protected Areas and creating conditions for its permanent management was fully completed by closure. Five protected areas, encompassing 391,464 ha, were brought under full protection by the project and designated as national parks (the highest level of protection in Argentina); the Quebrada del Condorito National Park (Cordoba Montane Savanna), San Guillermo NP (Central Andean High Puna), Copo NP (Semi-Arid Chaco), and Monte León NP (Patagonian Steppe and Oceanic Patagonian Littoral) and Mburucuyá (Humid Chaco, Iberá Wetlands Ecosystem). All of these parks provide protection to ecosystems with globally important biodiversity and were poorly represented in the system of protected areas at inception. More than 300 different species of fauna have habitats in the parks, sixteen of which are threatened (Appendix I CITES)[1].

[1] First due to economic difficulties caused by the economic crisis of 2001-2003, and later because of legal obstacles, the procurement of the Estancia San Nicolás for the Los Venados National Park (Pampas Grassland) was not completed by closure. Notwithstanding, the project completed the objective of supporting the creation of five new protected areas through the formal inclusion of Mburucuyá NP to the project in 2006. The GEF-financed parks encompassed 391,464 ha of ha of high priority ecosystems at closure, compared to the target area of 358,250 proposed to be protected at appraisal (109% of target).

Conditions for the permanent management of the five protected areas have been successfully created by the project; including legal designation of the parks, infrastructure, vehicles and equipment, boundary surveys, consultative commissions, participatory involvement of local communities in subprojects and management planning, scientific studies and other actions. APN assigned the required personnel to the parks, including rangers, fire-fighters, and administrative staff. Each park now has its own operating budget through APN to ensure their sustainability and the provinces have assigned rangers to the provincial reserves to ensure conservation in the buffer zones.

The Quebrada del Condorito National Park consists of 37,364 hectares of montane savanna in the Chaco Serrano ecosystem. Five properties were purchased by APN between 1998 and 1999 for an amount equivalent to US $ 3.9 million . The Park provides critical protection for many important species including tabaquillo (*Polylepis australis*), maitén (*Maytenus boaria*), andean condor (*Vultur grypheus*), puma (*Puma concolor*), lagarto de Achala (*Pristidactylus achalensis*), red fox (*Pseudalopex culpaeus*), grey fox (*Pseudalopex gymnocercus*), gato montés (*Oncifelis geoffroyi*), Lobito de río (*Lontra longicaudis*), sapo de Achala (*Chanus achalensis*), crowned eagle (*Harpyhaliaetus coronatus*), ratón plomizo (*Akodon spegazzinii*) among others, 4 of which are threatened. Threats surrounding the protected area include overgrazing and fire. The park has 8 guards and 12 administrative personnel, as well as 4 fire fighters. The Biodiversity Conservation Project supported 21 projects in the buffer zone surrounding the park.

The San Guillermo National Park consists of 160,000 hectares of high mountain desert with herbaceous and bush steppe cover, located in the high Andean and Puna ecosystems. The property was purchased by APN in 2000 for an amount equivalent to US $ 110,000, well below its commercial value. The Park provides critical protection for many important animal species including vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*), guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*), andean cat (*Oreaihurus jacobita*), Darwin´s rhea (*Rhea pennata*), red fox (*Pseudalopex culpaeus*), grey fox (*Pseudalopex gymnocercus*), andean condor (*Vultur grypheus*), 4 of which are threatened. Threats surrounding the park include mining and hunting. The park has 6 guards and 2 administrative staff. The Project supported 22 projects in the buffer zone surrounding the park.

The Copo National Park consists of 114,250 hectares of forest and grasslands in the Semi-Arid Chaco ecosystem. A provincial reserve was donated by the S. del Estero Province in 2000, providing the lands for the park. Although, its estimated value was not estimated for procurement, the land has a value of several million US $ equivalent. (Lands adjacent to the park are sold at amounts around US $500/ha. for farming.) With the advent of the soy boom and new high levels of deforestation in the Chaco associated with land clearing for cultivation, this park plays a key role in ecosystem conservation. The Park provides critical protection for many important species including quebracho colorado (*Schinopsis lorentzii y balansae*), quebracho blanco (*Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco*), mistol (*Ziziphus mistol*), vinal (*Prosopis ruscifolia*), tatú carreta (*Priodontes maximus*), three species of peccary (*Catagonus wagneri, Pecari tajacu, Tayassu pecari*), giant anteater (*Mirmecophaga tridactyla*), boa (*Boa constrictor*), yaguareté (*Panthera onca*), Darwin´s rhea (*Rhea pennata*), crowned eagle (*Harpyhaliaetus coronatus*), tortoise (*Chelonoidis chilensis*), 6 of which are threatened. Threats surrounding the park include deforestation for agriculture, fire and hunting. The park has 4 guards and 2 administrative personnel, as well as 2 fire fighters. The Project supported 6 projects in the buffer zone surrounding the park.

The Monte León National Park consists of 62,168 hectares of steppe and 40 km of coast in the Patagonian Steppe ecosystem and littoral and wetland habitat, and is the country's first coastal protected area. The property was donated by the Patagonia Land Trust through FVSL in 2002 for

an amount equivalent to US $ 1.7 million. The Park provides critical protection for many important species including guanaco (Lama guanicoe), Darwin´s rhea (*Pterocnemia pennata*), pichi (*Zaedyus pichiy*), zorrino patagónico (*Conepatus humboldtii*), red fox (*Pseudalopex culpaeus*), puma (*Puma concolor*), the hoarfrosted Hill´s Lizard (*Liolaemus escarchadosi*), Magellanic penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*), three species of shags, including imperial shag (*Phalacrocórax atriceps*), little grison (*Galictis cuja*) gaviotín sudamericano (*Sterna hirundinacea*), coscoroba swan (*Coscoroba coscoroba*), balck necked swan (*Cygnus melanocorypha*), lobo marino de un pelo (*Otaria flavescens*), peales dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus australis*), Commerson´s Dolphin (*Cephabrhynchus commersonii*), coirón (*Festuca pallescens*), Junellia (*Junellia tridens*) and green shrub (*Lepidophyllum cupressiforme*), one of which is threatened. The penguin colony, with a population of apx. 150,000, is the fourth largest in the country. Threats surrounding the park include fishing, hunting and fossil extraction. The park has 5 guards and 3 administrative personnel, as well as 1 fire fighter. The Biodiversity Conservation Project supported 8 projects in the buffer zone surrounding the park.

The Mburucuyá National Park consists of 17,682 hectares of forest, grasslands, palm savanna and wetlands in the Iberá wetlands ecosystem. Two properties were donated by Troels Pedersen to APN in 1991 and the park created in 2002. Although, its estimated value was not needed for procurement, the land has a value of several million US $ equivalent. The Park provides critical protection for many important species including quebracho colorado chaqueño (*Schinopsis balansae*), quebracho blanco (*Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco*), urunday (*Astronium balansae*), viraró (*Pterogyne nitens*), caranday (*Copernicia alba*), timbó (*Enterolobium contorticiliquum*), cañambí guazú (*Baccharis dracunculifoliael*), palmares de yatay (*Butia yatay*), jabirú (*Jabiru mycteria*), pileated parrot (*Pionopsitta pileata*), marsh deer (*Blastocerus dichotomus*), jaguarundi (*Herpailurus yaguarondi*), Geoffroy´s cat (*Oncifelis geoffroyi*), neotropical river otter (*Lontra longicaudis*), yacaré overo (*Caiman latirostris*), toco toucan (*Ramphastos toco*), great rhea (*Rhea americana*), crab-eating fox (*Cerdocyon thous*), maned wolf – aguará guazú (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*), Argentine tortoise (*Chelonoidis chilensis*), azara´s fox (*Pseudalopex gymnocercus*), capybara (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*) and black howler (*Alouatta caraya*), 7 of which are threatened. Threats surrounding the park include fishing, hunting and wildfires. The park has 8 guards and 6 administrative personnel, as well as 4 fire fighters. The Biodiversity Conservation Project supported 8 projects in the buffer zone surrounding the park.

The process of creating new protected areas included procuring lands through purchase or donation, ceding the jurisdiction by the provinces to the federal government through a provincial law, and acceptance of the land acquisitions as national parks through an act of Congress. When activities began, Quebrada del Condorito NP had already been legally designated as a National Park (1996). It was followed by San Guillermo (1998), Copo (2000), Mburucuyá (2002) and Monte León (2004).

Guaranteeing institutional presence in the GEF-national parks has been a priority for APN authorities. Personnel have been consistently assigned throughout implementation, and their number has been growing. Although, the provincial reserves were slower to assign personnel, by the end of 2007, several rangers had been permanently assigned to the provincial protected areas: Quebrada del Condorito, San Guillermo, and Copo. (There are no provincial reserves adjacent to the other parks.) The following table details park rangers and support personnel as of March 2008:

Protected Area	Park Rangers (all classes) at National Park	Park Rangers at provincial reserve area
Quebrada del Condorito	8	3
San Guillermo	6	12
Copo	4	4
Monte León	5	n/a
Mburucuyá	8	n/a
Total	**31**	**19**

The following table details all APN (Federal) Park Personnel assignments in the project-financed parks, as of August 2008:

Protected Area	Park Rangers (I)	Park Rangers (II)	Fire Fighters	Administrative	Total
Quebrada del Condorito	6	2	4	12	**24**
San Guillermo	4	2	-	2	**8**
Copo	2	2	2	2	**8**
Monte León	3	2	1	3	**19**
Mburucuyá	5	3	4	6	**18**
Total	**20**	**11**	**11**	**25**	**67**

This table details the Budget assigned for 2008 by APN for the project-sponsored parks and the annual plan for the Biodiversity Information System (excluding personnel).

Protected Area	$
Quebrada del Condorito	837.050
San Guillermo	1.082.683
Copo	726.289
Monte León	742.726
Mburucuyá	612.955
BIS	71,815

A total of 39 infrastructure projects were completed with project financing, including the renovation of several existing buildings[2]. As a result, each park now has the infrastructure required for protected-area management and visitor services. Works carried out include: two dormitories for researchers in Copo NP and San Guillermo NP; two visitors' centers in Quebrada del Condorito and Monte Leon; administrative offices in Copo, San Guillermo, Monte León, and Mburucuyá; thirteen housing units for park rangers in the five parks and a number of auxiliary

[2] The infrastructure works were of very high quality. In 2006, the Argentine Central Society of Architects (CSA) and the Professional Council of Architecture and Urbanism (PCAU) presented their national award for the Best Institutional Architecture to the Copo National Park Administrative Center during its 11th Bi-annual national competition. (The headquarters at Copo received honorable mention in the competition.) The works were both esthetic and highly innovative, as they were adapted to the harsh conditions and very high temperatures found in the Chaco ecosystem.

structures including sheds, stables, and parking lots. The access road to Quebrada del Condorito was also built. Counterpart funds were used to repair trails and overlooks and do other small repairs. Twenty-four works were planned, and thirty-seven were completed by the end of the Project (125% completion against target values). For more detail, see the list of works for each PA in Annex 2. In addition, each park was provided with vehicles and equipment (for maintenance, camping, GPS, firefighting, AV and IT equipment).

To increase scientific knowledge and improve management of the Project's protected areas, numerous scientific studies were carried out (see Annex 2 for list). These studies stand out: baseline biodiversity studies with associated monitoring plans; participatory creation of management plans; environmental evaluations of proposed works; an audiovisual program to disseminate information relative to the "new GEF-supported parks"; new components that were finalized in the process of institutional transformation; and infrastructure development at the parks.

In conclusion, the development objective of increased protection of biodiversity in ecoregions of global importance was completed. The parks were strengthened through a new and improved institutional presence, protected-area management planning, scientific studies and monitoring of biodiversity, construction and/or renovation of infrastructure, and provision of vehicles and equipment.

D.O. 2: Promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity in areas adjacent to protected areas

Sustainable use subprojects in the buffer zones were key tools for involving local communities, families and individuals in activities that support the parks' conservation objectives. During the course of the project, 568 families living near the parks participated in 65 sub-projects, along with other stakeholders. Buffer-zone subprojects were received with great enthusiasm by the beneficiaries, and the individual park's staff acknowledged their importance in helping to improve conservation, and involve stakeholders in park management objectives. By ensuring that the buffer zone areas adjacent to parks are more sustainably managed the core protected areas are better protected. Sub-projects also helped to sensitize local farmers, students and landowners relative to the importance of conservation and the environment. Thematic categories for subprojects were (i) sustainable production, (ii) applied studies, and (iii) training. Specific themes eligible for each park were identified and prioritized through a socio-economic analysis in park buffer zones. APN promoted the participation of local stakeholders and conducted an open request for proposals to ensure broad participation.

Productive subprojects (21 total) helped to diversify farming systems and make them more compatible with the surrounding ecosystems. Themes included beekeeping, agriculture with native species, fruit and vegetable farming, rearing of small animals, production of photovoltaic energy, water, and eco-tourism services. The subprojects helped strengthen the process of community organization among the beneficiaries as many were executed by groups or communities, which increased the likelihood of their sustainability.

Applied-study subprojects (12 total) covered research themes such as factors affecting livestock production, surveys of exotic species, local knowledge of flora and fauna, water quality and others. Several of the applied studies systematized disparate information about natural resources and are the basis of research theses in Universities, particularly in biological disciplines. Many of the studies published their results and bibliographies for use as teaching material. Cooperative efforts carried out in the project have helped to stimulate partnerships between the parks and other organizations for future efforts as well.

Training subprojects (32 total) covered themes including animal health, environmental education, local use of native plants, and others. Training projects included support for the organization and institutional strengthening of local groups, the creation and management of producer associations, participative resource management, and the identification and formulation of project proposals. Some productive activities were developed in parallel with training events to ensure that residents had the knowledge as well as the resources to complete the work. In addition, the project carried out training in marketing and social organization. Teachers and students received training which helped to increase their awareness of natural resource conservation and sustainable use.

Type of Subproject	QC	SG	C	ML	Mb	Total
Applied Studies	5	5		2		12
Productive Development	9	10	2			21
Training	7	7	4	6	8	32
Total Subprojects	**21**	**22**	**6**	**8**	**8**	**65**
Families Involved (Productive Development)	**125**	**322**	**70**		**51**	**568**

(Annex 2 describes the subprojects in detail.)

The physical progress of subprojects was approximately 400% of the target objectives, and park personnel and beneficiaries showed a high degree of appreciation for them. In the opinion of APN park/project staff working in the program, subproject activities have improved conditions in the ecosystems around the parks and the relationship with the stakeholders in the area. As a result of the successes in the GEF project, APN has decided to include buffer-zone subprojects in the new IBRD operation (*Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*, loan 7520 AR) in 11 other parks.

D.O. 3: Increase of public participation in the creation and protection of each protected area

One key tool for conserving biodiversity is the involvement and active participation of local stakeholders associated with the protected areas (those that live in the area or engage in activities related to the protected area). Because ecosystems extend across frequently arbitrary park boundaries and land holdings, to conserve biodiversity local land owners and other stakeholders need to participate in their creation and protection. Park-specific approaches were developed for public participation, and included establishing and operating consultative commissions and sponsoring training events. Consultative Commissions were created for each of the five areas involved and a total of 53 commission meetings were held.

Participation and Mitigation Activities	QCNP	SGNP	CNP	MLNP	MNP	Total
Public Participation – Consultative Commissions	15	6	17	12	3	53
Social Mitigation – Mitigated Residents	5	0	2	1	0	8

The Consultative Commissions addressed issues including: defining internal regulations; technical assistance, participation and priority setting for subprojects; participatory development of management plans; assistance and participation of technical studies; workshops for training and information dissemination; and evaluation of monitoring plans. During the project, 15 specific workshops were held to provide local stakeholder feedback to proposed park management plans. The workshops helped to address social, economic, conservation and livelihood issues in and around the park and ensured their consideration in the final plans. Participants included APN, residents, technicians, and local government officials. Surveys of Consultative Commission members (2003-2008) in QCNP, SGNP, and CNP indicated a high level of satisfaction by participants. At closure, the commissions in QCNP and SGNP were transformed into Local Advisory Commissions or *Comisiones Asesoras Locales* (CAL), APN's own version of the GEF consultative commissions.

Within the framework of the project and in compliance with Bank regulations (DO 4.30) and APN policy, a mitigation plan was implemented for residents living within the created parks. This plan included training and small improvements in housing, incorporating one family member into the local APN park staff (QCNP), hiring and later processing retirement benefits for a farmhand in MLNP, and hiring two members of one family in Copo to work for APN as park staff. Results from surveys of QC residents (2003-2006) showed mitigation plan participants were satisfied with the mitigation measures and income levels through their participation in the plan. APN has a policy of no involuntary re-settlement, and remained in compliance throughout the project.

This development objective has been fully achieved, and exceeds the targets established at appraisal.

D.O. 4: Increase access to biodiversity data

At the close of the project, the Biodiversity Information System (BIS) was complete and on line at www.sib.gov.ar. The following information is now available through the site; 3,196 source documents, 227 maps, 458 species photographs, and information about 24,267 species, subspecies, and varieties of flora, 13,842 species of fauna, 2,081 of mushrooms, and 244 of bacteria and cyanophytes. The information is fully accessible to both internal and external users through the internet. The BIS website has over 75,000 visitors a year.

The BIS is organized into five geographic nodes. Each is responsible for data entry and database management of regional information, and website management. The main (headquarters) node is of national scope and is overseen by the National Directorate of Conservation of Protected Areas in APN. The other four are of regional scope and are overseen by the four Regional Delegations: Patagonia, Central, Northwest (NOA), Northeast (NEA) and Casa Central (Headquarters). Each node possesses basic computer equipment for data entry (alphanumeric and spatial), processing, and dissemination of information through the BIS website. Each node has three technical specialists, one leader and two for data entry and GIS.

Nodes collect, organize, review, quality control and enter data/information about the protected areas' biodiversity for its respective geographic area; the information is later transferred to the Internet. The BIS supports query functions to support information needs/analyses of the Regional Delegations and other APN users. Various databases include information on public use in park areas, residents, biological surveys (flora and fauna), land registries, fires, etc. and can be linked to support complex analyses or queries.

As a result of the project, in November 2007 (APN Resolution No 548/2007) the BIS organization and management structure was approved, defining the system's primary objectives and responsibilities. Since that time, the BIS project has been operating with APN resources, which, together with the incorporation into APN, 12 former project staff, assures its sustainability and growth. The website currently has an average of 6,521 visitors per month and an average load of 1.5 to 2 GB. Under APN's direction the BIS is still growing and several new activities are now underway, including development of a new webpage with improved accessibility; continued database development and new intra- and inter-operability for external and internal users.

This development objective has been completely achieved, the BIS is fully functioning, supported by APN, and has compiled an impressive amount of biodiversity information which is being used extensively by APN and external audiences (100% of target value). The system's sustainability is assured through the financing and support of APN. The BIS has its own annual budget, operational and long-term plans that guarantee its continued growth and development. The Biodiversity Information Management component contributes to the Argentine National Information Management responsibilities as defined in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3.3 Efficiency
(Net Present Value/Economic Rate of Return, cost effectiveness, e.g., unit rate norms, least cost, and comparisons; and Financial Rate of Return)

During the project appraisal, an economic and financial analysis for the GEF project was not carried out due to the nature of the project – strict biodiversity conservation with limited visitation, as opposed to economic (eg. tourist) development. However, it was agreed at closure that it would be meaningful to conduct such analyses in order to gain insight into the fiscal impacts of the parks, and the extent to which they would be sustainable over time.

Cost effectiveness. The project established five national parks and outfitted them with modern infrastructure, equipment and trained personnel needed to ensure their startup and long-term sustainability. It also established a state-of-the-art biodiversity information system on the internet, which has approximately 75,000 visitors annually. The economic benefits of the project were (i) strengthening and expansion of the national protected area system, (ii) improvement of tourism services through modern park facilities, (iii) the deployment of a biodiversity information system useful for planning and system maintenance of the national parks administration, and (iv) the protection of biodiversity and environmental goods and services; including water, soil and bio-carbon assets.

Efficiency. The principal beneficiary is the government agency, APN, responsible for managing the national parks system. The procurement and management of five parks provide for increased biodiversity conservation in high priority ecosystems of global importance in Argentina. Along with the biodiversity, valuable environmental goods and services in and around the park are also being conserved. This includes the protection of watersheds and wetlands (San Guillermo, Quebrada de Condorito and Mburucuyá), which are important to help regulate water quality, quantity and regimen; protection of soils (Copo, Condorito and Monte Leon), which are prevented from degradation and depletion due to unsustainable cropping and overgrazing; and forests (all areas except Monte Leon) for carbon storage and the regulation of greenhouse gasses. The total area placed under conservation, 391,464 ha, was accomplished at an est. cost of apx. US $58 per ha, including land purchases. Excluding land purchases the costs are about US $43 per ha.

Costs of conservation are a function of many variables; stakeholder consultations, boundary demarcation, land purchase, construction of infrastructure, compensation and planning (Brunner,

Gullison and Balmfold 2004). In addition, the complexity of the ecosystems; frequency, severity and intensity of threats; and the size of area (needed to achieve economies of scale) influence the costs. Because of the wide range of situations, there are no global standards that can be used to measure the efficiency of the project. This said, however, the indication is that the project was *highly efficient* when comparing costs of conservation to, for example, establishment costs of other land uses; with costs of US ~$800 per ha for forestry establishment and US ~$300+ per ha for establishment of grains in Argentina (excluding land, maintenance and harvesting costs).

The BIS has increased the efficiency of APN in many of its system planning and park management activities. This was accomplished by compiling, digitizing and making available a wide range of information on biodiversity and related issues relevant for park managers and administrators to support APNs goals. The BIS supports internal and external queries and enables users to quickly and efficiently find and analyze biodiversity information. In the preparation of the follow-on IBRD project, APN and the Bank preparation teams used the BIS extensively to identify relevant information on protected areas and their biodiversity, threats, and other issues needed to support the formulation effort.

*Financial Analysis.*The five protected areas supported by the GEF project focused on strict biodiversity conservation with limited visitation in five high-priority ecosystems: Cordoba Montane Savanna (QCNP), Central Andean Dry Puna (SGNP), Semi-arid Chaco (CNP), Patagonian Steppe (MLNP) and Humid Chaco-Iberá Wetlands (MNP). At closure, the project had succeeded in placing 391,464 ha under strict protection. The infrastructure investments realized through the GEF project improved the conservation and management of the areas, and helped to "graduate" the parks to comply with APN criteria for charging admissions, and therefore generating revenue. At the end of the project, over 16 thousand people visited the GEF-financed parks each year (excluding SGNP). By comparison, visitation rates were effectively zero at inception, as the parks did not exist. Had APN charged admission to the parks in 2007, the gross income would have been around US $36 thousand. This is however offset by annual operating costs of about US $1.3 million. Consequently, it is no surprise that, as stand alone parks, each of the GEF-financed protected areas was shown to have negative FIRRs. (The best FIRR was for QCNP at -4 percent.) On the other hand, as part of the blending arrangement with the IBRD-financed parks, and as part of the overall APN system the GEF-financed activities are considered to be fully sustainable over time.

Increased revenues generated from the IBRD operation more than offset the operating costs associated with the new GEF financed parks, indicating the blending arrangement was the correct approach. IBRD-financed parks generated over US $ 25 million annually by closure, representing over 50 percent of total park revenues. The protected areas component of the sister-Native Forests and Protected Areas project focused on four high visibility parks in Patagonia: Lanin, Los Alerces, Nahuel Huapi and Glaciares that total 2.1 million hectares; around 75% of the parks system coverage at the time of appraisal. The infrastructure investments realized through the IBRD project enhanced the quantity and quality of infrastructure and services available at the four parks, and improved the visitors' experience. Revenues and visitation rates increased significantly at each.

Revenues from the four (IBRD) parks supported under the Native Forests/Protected Areas project rose significantly from US $5.6 million in 2000 to US $25.3 million in 2006. As a percentage of total park revenues for 2000 and 2006, those figures represent a jump from 35 percent to 53 percent, respectively.

The financial analysis results and comparisons are as follows:

IBRD Project Parks	FIRR At Appraisal (%)	FIRR at ICR (%)
Lanin	16	13
Nauel Huapi	13	32
Los Alerces	36	8
Los Glaciares	11	57

In conclusion, as a result of the blending with the IBRD operation and the incorporation of the GEF project parks into the overall APN system, the goal of ensuring the five new parks are sustainable over time is considered successful. This finding is further substantiated by the fact that each of the 5 Project-supported parks is now receiving annual allocations from APN (see table below), who has assumed all associated costs of the parks from the GEF[3].

Annual operating budgets for target Parks, 2008:

GEF Project-Financed Protected Areas	2008 Budget (US $)
Quebrada del Condorito	270,016
San Guillermo	349,253
Copo	234,287
Monte León	239,589
Mburucuyá	197,727

3.4 Justification of Overall Outcome Rating
(combining relevance, achievement of GEOs, and efficiency)
Rating: **Satisfactory**

The project achieved all of its development objectives. The 2006 CAS reaffirms the relevance of those objectives. The establishment of the five new national parks ensures the protection of 391,464 ha. All these parks belong to ecoregions with globally important biodiversity and were poorly represented in the system of protected areas at inception. More than 300 different species of fauna have habitats in the parks, sixteen of which are threatened (Appendix I CITES). High quality infrastructure works, with designs appropriate to each environment, were completed in all of the new parks. Sustainable activities in buffer areas contributed directly to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity and involvement and participation by stakeholders was high. Argentine biodiversity information is now available on the internet. Although the duration of the project was long (9 years, 9 months), the project was approved with an 8 year timeframe, based on the standard disbursement profile for Argentina at the time of appraisal. Moreover, the 21 month delay was largely due to the impacts of the economic crisis, which could not be predicted at appraisal. The project should therefore be considered **satisfactory**. Achievements were high by the project and continue to provide positive impacts and externalities.[4]

[3] In 2008, APN's budget increased by AR$40 million over the previous year to AR$131 million with important additions in field personnel and infrastructure investments.

[4] While the last ISR rated the project *moderately satisfactory*, a Quality Enhancement Review (QER) for the ICR (Sept. 18, 2008) concluded that this rating was low based on the project's high achievements. The QER recommended an overall rating of *satisfactory*.

3.5 Overarching Themes, Other Outcomes and Impacts

(if any, where not previously covered or to amplify discussion above)

(a) Poverty Impacts, Gender Aspects, and Social Development

Not applicable

(b) Institutional Change/Strengthening

(particularly with reference to impacts on longer-term capacity and institutional development)

The creation of new protected areas, including new infrastructure, provision of equipment and technical studies have strengthened APN by increasing the area and quality of protection the institution provides to high priority ecosystems. APN has fully incorporated the parks into the protected area system, assigned personnel to manage them, and provides for their long-term financing. The 2008 APN budget has increased by AR$40 million over the last year to AR$131 million with important additions in field personnel and infrastructure investments. Infrastructure investments have improved the visitor experience, providing improved opportunities for greater financial sustainability of the parks through revenues generated by tourism.

The development of sustainable activities with local producers and communities in the buffer zone areas of the parks was an innovative for APN, who has now embraced it and is replicating it in the new project with the Bank (Sustainable Natural Resource Management Project, Ln 7520 Ar.) in the 11 protected areas.

The Biodiversity Information System developed by the project is a completely new tool for APN and has helped to increase institutional efficiency and improve the Administration's planning and management of protected areas. The BIS was completely absorbed by APN at closure, who has taken over the responsibility for technical planning/management and the financing of personnel needed to maintain the system and help it grow. The BIS is widely available to APN personnel and external users, and is also helping the country to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

(c) Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts (positive or negative)

The project highlighted the need for increased protection of grasslands, which helped to promote the incorporation of *Campos de Tuyu*, a private grasslands reserve, into the APN system.

4. Assessment of Risk to Development Outcome

Rating: **Low**

The risks to development outcome are low given that the support for the project's activities has been embraced, fully supported and financed by the government. The country approved new legislation for the formal transformation of newly procured lands into national parks, and the provinces approved corresponding legislation to support the transformation. The "national park" designation provides the highest level of protection to the biological resources of the area. In addition, the consultative commissions, which involve non-APN stakeholders and communities in park management decisions, have helped to ensure that development outcomes are supported by the surrounding populations. The Biodiversity Information System is up and running; has a long-term plan for development; and is fully financed by APN. Sustainable development activities are being supported in other APN parks.

5. Assessment of Bank and Borrower Performance

(relating to design, implementation and outcome issues)

5.1 Bank Performance

(a) Bank Performance in Ensuring Quality at Entry
Rating: **Satisfactory**

The Bank's performance in identifying, preparing and appraising the operation was satisfactory and the resulting project was highly pertinent to both Bank and country priorities. The Bank conducted an appropriate diagnosis of the current state of important biodiversity issues, threats and alternatives for confronting them, highlighting the need for a highly participative process, fundamental for a country with diverse environmental systems and potentially conflictive natural resource management issues. The Bank correctly focused its efforts on strengthening the physical and human resources of the protected areas in critical ecosystems. The performance of the Bank staff and technical teams in ensuring quality at entry was highly satisfactory, as it collaborated proactively on issues which arose during preparation. The project was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Group in 2004 and was rated "highly satisfactory" for its focus on development objectives.

(b) Quality of Supervision
Rating: **Satisfactory**

Two task managers managed the project. The Bank team developed a strong collaboration with the Borrower. The team's experience and technical quality contributed substantially to the success of implementation and monitored the progress. On average, supervision missions were carried out two or three times a year with 21 supervision missions in total. (The 2004 QAG Review of Supervision rated supervision overall as *satisfactory*.) The combined knowledge of the Bank team in addressing similar environmental problems in other countries and situations strengthened, enriched, and helped to guide the project's evolution. The FAO-World Bank Cooperative Programme (FAO-CP) made strong contributions to project supervision as well providing key technical supervision that would not have otherwise been available.

During the financial crisis, the Bank team worked diligently with the PIUs to keep the project from failing, when counterpart resources were sharply reduced. The project was one of few Bank-financed projects that made progress and received at least some government counterpart funding during that time. To help mitigate the effects of shortages of counterpart funds, in 2003 the team processed an amendment to increase the percentage of GEF resources required for implementation from 88% and to 100% for "Works", from 82% to 100% for equipment. This had a very positive impact on the project, and helped to boost implementation during the crisis as lesser amounts of scarce counterpart funds were needed to fund the project activities.

(c) Justification of Rating for Overall Bank Performance
Rating: **Satisfactory**

In consideration of the ratings for preparation and supervision (above), the overall rating is considered satisfactory. In addition, the 2004 Quality of Supervision Assessment noted, *"…[that] the panel felt that the solid prospects of achieving the DO … against a backdrop of economic crisis is in no small measure the result of a well-focused project design, a realistic assessment of what progress could be made, as well as a capable and diligent supervision team."*

5.2 Borrower Performance

(a) Government Performance
Rating: **Satisfactory**

In general, the Government of Argentina supported project preparation and implementation. They gave priority to conservation, and collaborated with all work required by the Bank. During the crisis years the government provided counterpart funds to the extent possible, and helped the line agencies when called upon to do so. The federal government, including the President, Senate and the national congress, approved the new laws required to form the national parks, as did the provincial governments.

(b) Implementing Agency or Agencies Performance
Rating: **Satisfactory**

The PIUs were composed of qualified technical professionals and administrative staff. Based on the number and diversity of programs, subprojects, and activities implemented under the project and supervised by the PIU, it was highly efficient in its work. They also collaborated with the National General Auditor in project audits, and incorporated comments received into its operations.

Collectively, the PIU staff demonstrated a high degree of dedication to their work and during the project's lifetime conducted 58 workshops, and processed over 400 separate contracts (for consultants services,and works). During the crisis, APN was able to maintain the project staff, who prevented the project from failing.

(c) Justification of Rating for Overall Borrower Performance
Rating: **Satisfactory**

Overall borrower performance is considered satisfactory given the level of government commitment during the project's tenure to provide the funding for execution, satisfactory performance of the line agencies, including the high levels of results obtained and the high sustainability of impacts generated. There were no cases of corruption, misprocurement nor safeguards violations during the project's tenure.

6. Lessons Learned

(both project-specific and of wide general application)

Wide General Application:

Lesson One: Development is not a linear process, and processes need to be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changes on the ground. Although the project experienced some setbacks, including delays and difficulties during implementation, it managed to produce highly relevant impacts for the protected area sector by closing. The Bank, as an institution, should ensure that its instruments, philosophy and approaches to development are flexible enough to adapt to the changing country conditions, while maintaining focus on the project development objectives.

Lesson Two: The creation of a protected area is a complex process that involves diverse actors and requires substantial coordination. In future projects, sufficient time should be allocated

according to the complexity of participatory processed and taking into account the number of actors and decision makers involved. This is especially important in situations where a diverse spectrum of stakeholders are concerned (private land holders, intermediary agents, stakeholders, federal and provincial governments). Participation is critical at all levels, yet it is time consuming and the outcomes are unpredictable.

Lesson Three: Monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity should be carried out at ecosystem levels. Biodiversity can be assessed at either the ecosystem, species or genetic levels. Because of the operational nature of GEF- and IBRD-financed projects, the use of highly detailed scientific studies is not always feasible. The use of ecosystem evaluations, through, for example, remote sensing surveys, can help to determine the extent to which habitats for key species are being protected. This can be a more practical approach than, for example, monitoring indicator species themselves, which entails costly and difficult field surveys.

Project Specific:

Lesson Four: Local participation in the management of protected areas is a key tool for enhancing conservation. The project generated local participation through the consultative commissions, training events, validation workshops and sustainable use subprojects. Persons in the buffer zone areas showed a high degree of interest in participating and their involvement is considered key to ameliorating threats along the protected area borders, and contributing positively to the protection and integrity of the ecosystems targeted for conservation.

Lesson Five: Because local populations rarely are organized under formal charter organization and "intermediary agents" not found in many remote areas, project implementation arrangements must be sufficiently flexible to correspond to the reality on the ground. Frequently qualified organizations needed to assist local populations in buffer-zone subprojects do not exist in the remote areas, which are frequently the site of conservation activities. Seed funds should be made available for formulation of sub-project activities and their use should be sufficiently flexible to attract qualified intermediary agents to participate in remote rural areas. Sub-project development costs, including travel-related expenses, need to be covered by the seed funds.

Lesson Six: Administrative processes should be agile and compatible with the capacity of beneficiaries and intermediary agents involved in sub-project activities. Administrative processes associated with sustainable use (buffer zone) activities need to be kept simple, as most rural beneficiaries and some intermediary agents are not likely to have experience in funds management. Participants may require training to handle funds. Co-mingling government and project funds can complicate disbursements and should be avoided.

7. Comments on Issues Raised by Borrower/Implementing Agencies/Partners

(a) Borrower/implementing agencies

Comments on Draft ICR from The National Parks Administration (APN):

Comment 1:

APN: The project constructed four rangers quarters in Monte Leon, not two as indicated in the draft report.

***Bank comment**:* APN has verified that four rangers' quarters were built in Monte Leon NP by the project, and this has been corrected in the final version of the report.

Comment 2:

***APN*:** The total number of consultative commission workshops/meetings held was 53 (not 57 as indicated in the draft report), as follows: 15 in Quebrada del Condorito, 6 in San Guillermo, 17 in Copo, 12 in Monte León, and 3 in Mburucuyä.
Bank comment: APN has verified that there were 53 consultative commission meetings and the final report has been amended to include this.

Comment 3:

APN: There were two Task Managers during the course of the project, not three.
***Bank Comment*:** Agreed. The quantity of "three" appeared in the summary of the APN report in order to reflect the accuracy of APN reporting. However, this has now been amended in the final version of the ICR.

Overall Comments/Summary:

APN considers the project and ICR acceptable and the project as satisfactory. A summary of their report is found in Annex 7.

(b) Cofinanciers

(c) Other partners and stakeholders
(e.g. NGOs/private sector/civil society)

Annex 1. Project Costs and Financing

(a) Project Cost by Component (in US $ Million equivalent)

Components	Appraisal Estimate (US $ millions)	Revised Estimate (US $ millions)	Actual/Latest Estimate (US $ millions)	Percentage of Latest Appraisal
Component A. Protected Areas				
(a) Establishment and Consolidation	15.9	16.1	13.1	81
(b) Sustainable Development Activities	1.4	1.7	2.1	124
(c) Participation and Training	1.8	1.4	0.5	37
Component B. Biodiversity Information Management	0.6	0.8	1.1	140
Component C. Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	0.6	0.9	1.0	112
Baseline Costs	20.3	20.9	17.8	85
Physical Contingencies	0.4			
Price Contingencies	0.9			
Total Project Cost	**21.6**		**17.8**	**82**
Project Preparation Fund	0.3		0.3	
Total Financing Required	**21.9**		**18.1**	**83**

*Land costs were an additional US $5,710,000

Financing

Source of Funds	Type of Co financing	Appraisal Estimate (US $ millions)	Actual/Latest Estimate (US $ millions)	Percentage of Appraisal
Component A				
Recipient		10.4	6.4	62
Global Environmental Facility		8.3	8.3	100
Beneficiaries		0.4	1.0	250
Subtotal		19.1	15.7	82
Component B				
Recipient		0.1	0.44	440
Global Environmental Facility		0.5	0.65	130
Subtotal		0.6	1.09	182
Component C				
Recipient		0.1	0.13	130
Global Environmental Facility		0.5	0.84	168
Subtotal		0.6	0.97	162
Physical contingencies		0.4		
Price contingencies		0.9		
Project Preparation Fund		0.3		
Grand Total		21.9	17.78	81
Recipient		11.1	6.97	63
Global Environmental Facility		10.4	9.84	95
Beneficiaries		0.4	1.0	250

*Land costs were an additional US $5,710,000

Annex 2. Outputs by Component

Component A

1. Infrastructure works developed in each new national park

Quebrada del Condorito National Park

1. Renovation of two houses (Casa de Piedra y Puesto de Achala)
2. Visitors Center
3. Two houses for park rangers
4. Stable
5. Storehouse
6. Renovation of two patrol cabins at Trinidad
7. Footbridge over Condoritos River
8. Renovation of the access road (2,5km)

San Guillermo National Park

Rodeo:

1. Visitors Center with administrative office
2. Two houses for park rangers
3. Renovation of one house
4. Storehouse

Agua del Godo (in the park):

1. Control Post
2. Renovation of facilities for investigators
3. Control
4. Two houses for park rangers

Copo National Park

Pampa de los Guanacos

1. Administrative office with visitors area
2. Superintendent's house

In the Park

3. Operative Center in El Aybal (east sector)

Pobladores Area (south sector):

4. Investigators refuge
5. Reception Office and public lavatories
6. Storage house
7. Stable - Robles Area (northwest sector)
8. Control Post
9. Parking
10. Installation services
11. Fences

Monte León National Park

1. Visitors Center
2. Four houses for park rangers
3. Administrative office
4. Public toilets
5. Personnel refuges
6. Installation services

Mburucuyá National Park

1. Reception and administrative office
2. Visitors Center
3. Public toilets
4. Installation services

2. Technical studies

Quebrada del Condorito

1. Baseline study and monitoring plan of the biodiversity of Quebrada del Condorito National Park (PN Quebrada del Condorito) and Pampa de Achala Hydric Provincial Reserve (RHP Pampa de Achala), IMBIV, 2003.
2. Management Plan of PN Quebrada del Condorito and RHP Pampa de Achala, Centro Regional Office, APN, 2004.
3. Assessment of the current situation of the puma, red fox and human conflicts at PN Quebrada del Condorito and RHP Pampa de Achala in relation with tourism and livestock predation, Mónica Pía, 2004.
4. Fish population diversity survey and monitoring of native and exotic fish species in the conservation unit, Jael Dominino, 2005
5. Pilot Project for reintroducing guanacos into the PN Quebrada del Condorito, Tavaronne, 2005
6. Monitoring of biodiversity baseline of PN Quebrada del Condorito y la RHP Pampa de Achala, Fundación Conservación y Desarrollo, 2008.
7. Socio Economic and Productive Assessment of population and communities in the RHP Pampa de Achala, Daniel Cáceres, 2001.
8. Sustentability indicators for monitoring productive systems at the RHP Pampa de Achala, Daniel Cáceres, 2002.
9. Social and productive description of comunities in the northern part of the pobladores RHP Pampa de Achala, Daniel Cáceres, 2004.
10. Sustainable technologies. Adoption by producers at the RHP Pampa de Achala, Daniel Cáceres, 2006.
11. Monitoring program for small farmers in the RHP Pampa de Achala (2002-2006), Daniel Cáceres, 2006.
12. Monitoring Program, PN Quebrada del Condorito and RHP Pampa de Achala, Marcelo Cabido et al. 2008.

San Guillermo

1. Baseline study and monitoring program of the biodiversity of the San Guillermo National Park (PN San Guillermo) and San Guillermo Biosphere Reserve, Universidad Nacional de San Juan, 2007.
2. Preparation of an educational strategy and supporting written material (handbook and leaflets), Centro Regional Office, APN, 2007.
3. Management Plan for the PN San Guillermo and Biosphere Reserve, Centro Regional Office, APN, 2007.
4. Monitoring of the physic-chemical quality of the Rio Blanco water between Junta de la Palca and the Cuesta del Viento dam, Santiago Reyna, 2008.
5. Socio Economic and Productive Assessment of population and communities in the area of influence of PN San Guillermo, Esteban Tapella, 2004.
6. Diagnostic of the Tourism Potential of the Area of influence of PN San Guillermo, Aylen Mereta, 2004.
7. Experiences on development of sustainable activities with people from QCNP and SGNP, Esteban Tapella, 2007.
8. Educational strategy for the Management Plan of PN San Guillermo, preparation of a handbook for instructors and a hand out, Centro Regional Office, APN, 2007.
9. Monitoring of landscape, ecosytems and community indicators in San Guillermo Biosphere Reserve, Sebastaian DeMartino. 2008.
10. Monitoring of Animal Biodiversity Indicators in San Guillermo National Park, Emiliano Donadio. 2008.

Copo

1. Baseline study and monitoring plan on the biodiversity of Copo National Park (PN Copo), Universidad de Salta, 2003.
2. Assessment of the current situation of the conflict “jaguar/puma” – human activities at PN Copo and its buffer area, Pablo Perovic, 2003.
3. Management Plan for CNP and a proposal for the provincial reserve area, Silvia Chalukian et al, 2004.
4. Baseline of the cultural resources of PN Copo and the Copo Provincial Reserve, Universidad de Tucuman, 2007.
5. Monitoring of biodiversity, Pablo Perovic et al, 2008.
6. Socioeconomic diagnosis of land use in the buffer area of PN Copo, Miguel Brassiolo, 2002.
7. Identification of sustainable land units in the Copo Provincial Reserve – Mitigation Area of the PN Copo, 2005.

Monte León

1. Management plan for the future Monte León National Park (MNPonte León), Patagonia Regional Office, APN, 2002.
2. Biodiversity baseline study and monitoring plan of marine avain fauna of PN Monte León, Academic Unit of Caleta Olivia, Universidad Nacional Patagonia Austral, 2004.
3. Biodiversity baseline study and monitoring plan of guanacos and Darwin´s Rhea of the PN Monte León, Fundación Patagonia Natural, 2004.
4. Biodiversity baseline study and monitoring plan of sea mammal of PN Monte León, Fundacion Patagonia Natural, 2005.
5. Monitoring of carnivorous populations. Proposals to reduce conflicts between native animal populations and livestock surrounding PN Monte León, Fundación Patagonia Natural, 2005.

6. Basic information and monitoring plan of the archeological resources of PN Monte León, Department of Prehistorical and Archeological Research, IMHICIHU, CONICET, 2005.
7. A plan for archeological recovery in different sites of PN Monte León, Universidad Nacional Patagonia austral, Academic Unit Río Gallegos, 2005.
8. Baseline study describing the richness and paleontological diversity of the PN Monte León, Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales, Universidad Nacional de la Pampa, 2006.
9. Baseline study and monitoring plan of the vegetal biodiversity of the PN Monte León, Experimental Station of Santa Cruz, INTA, 2006.
10. Baseline study describing the geologic-geomorphologic coastal dynamic of PN Monte León, Jorge Coldignotto, 2006.
11. Baseline study and monitoring plan of the biodiversity of the sea environments adjacent to PN Monte León, CENPAT, 2006.
12. Baseline study and monitoring plan of terrestrial vertebrates for the PN Monte León, 2006.
13. Remedial plan for the areas currently affected and in danger to suffer river erosion en PN Monte León, Kokot, 2007.
14. Basic historical information on ships in MLNP coasts. Instituto Nacional de Antroplogía, 2007.
15. Current status of the different biodiversity monitoring activities in PN Monte León, Patagonia Regional Office, APN, 2008.

Sustainable Development Activities in buffer zones

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
PAMPA DE ACHALA HIDRYC PROVINCIAL RESERVE (RHPPA, QUEBRADA DEL CONDORITO NATIONAL PARK BUFFER ZONE)					
Productive subprojects					
QC 07/01	Rural Houses, alternative tourism	34,897.00	6 families and the "El Manantial" school	The planned constructions were built. Only two (2) were destined to be used for tourism.	Fundación Ideas
QC 08/01	San Mateo - La Ventana	53,098.00	26 families	Improvements in productive infrastructure: lodging for tourism, craftwork, shelters for sheep, fencing and division of paddocks, garden fencing, chicken coops, greenhouses, 2 buildings, 2 shelters, 1,100 meters of fencing, 5 gardens, and 1 chicken coop	APENOC (Asociación Productores del Noroeste de Córdoba)
QC 09/01	Cerro Hermoso - Martín Fierro	59,926.25	18 families	Improvements in productive infrastructure: 4 gardens with fruit trees, 2 goat shelters, paddocks were fenced, 5 storehouses for working on and storing craftwork were built, and improvements in housing for rural tourism in 8 housing units.	APENOC
QC 10/01	Ceferino Namuncurá	59,686.00	17 families	Improvements in productive infrastructure: 4 gardens with	APENOC

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
				fruit orchards, 1 greenhouse, 2 chicken coops, 1 field with a wire fence, 2 goat shelters, and improvements in herds. Built 1 storehouse and supplies for craftsmen. Built rooms for rural tourism in 8 housing units. Purchased 4 horses and accoutrements for tourism services.	
QC 11/01	Potrero de Gero - Río Los Sauces	59,999.25	21 families	Seven gardens with fruit trees and 1 greenhouse were installed. In the livestock area, sanitary posts were established along with building 4 goat shelters and fencing 3 paddocks. In terms of craftsmen, 5 storehouses were built for craftwork and storage. In terms of rural tourism, 4 rooms and 3 bathrooms were built, along with 3 enclosed galleries.	APENOC
QC 03/02	El Manantial	48,660.00	10 families from the Northern area of the RHPPA	Paddocks were fenced and fruit trees and gardens were established, and small water taps for each family were built thereby ensuring water supply to the housing units.	CARITAS
QC 04/02	Volcán I	48,147.00	10 families from the Northern area of the RHPPA	Fenced fields and corrals were enlarged, tanks for irrigation were installed, and animals received parasite treatments.	CARITAS
QC 05/02	Volcán II	48,656.00	10 families from the Northern area of the RHPPA	One thousand meters of fencing, 9 corrals, 500 meters of water pipes, 4 new water taps, and 9 gardens were installed.	CARITAS
QC 06/02	Los Gigantes	48,675.00	10 families from the Northern area of the RHPPA	Eight gardens, 9 fields for goats and sheep, 7 paddocks for pasture reserves, and 300 meters of fencing per domestic unit were established.	CARITAS
Training subprojects					
QC 12/01	Craftwork with wool and fiber from domestic camelids	17,027.00	42 residents participated in 13 training events (which took place at various sites)	Ten English combs, 5 tables, 10 spinning wheels, table looms, llama wool, and sheep wool were provided. Training was provided on the extraction of natural dyes and the recovery of autochthonous designs.	Programa SUPRAD, Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Católica de Córdoba

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
QC 15/01	Reforestation of the Sierras Grandes of Córdoba	18,304.61	Training educators and 105 students at 3 schools: "Nuestra Señora del Valle," "Martín Fierro," and "Ceferino Namuncurá."	Reforestation of the sites of 3 schools (1 to 2 hectares). Various teaching materials on the subject were produced. The largest input involves the educational sphere and working with teachers and students regarding protecting the environment and the rational use of resources.	Asociación Civil Los Algarrobos
QC 16/01	Children's view of the environment through puppets	9,786.00	Approximately 50 students from the school "Ceferino Namuncurá"	Puppet workshops were successfully carried out with teachers at the school Ceferino Namuncurá; these workshops incorporated concepts linked to the QCNP. As a product of the effort, a documentary was put together that was sent to 14 schools in the Sierra area.	Fundación Facultad de Folosofía y Humanidad
QC 17/01	Community organization of the central area of the RHPPA	11,556.00	Over 80 families in the central area of the RHPPA (San Mateo, La Ventana, Cerro Hermoso, Martin Fierro, Protrero de Gero, Rio Los Sauces, Ceferino Namuncurá)	Technical and productive training on marketing and on the management and collective administration of craft sales. As a result of the effort, the "Organization of the Community of Artisans and Producers of Pampa de Achala" was formed.	APENOC
QC 04/04	Bases for developing monitoring and self-management of marketable wild plant resources in the RHPPA	18,328.90	The beneficiary population was smaller than planned due to lack of interest in the subject.	The objectives of identifying threatened species of vegetation and defining collection and processing strategies were met. However, there was little participation from residents. This could be due to the lack of pre-investment work.	Fundación Ecosistemas Argentinos
QC 05/04	Healthy animals healthy families	15,000.00	230 students and 30 teachers at the 13 schools in Pampa de Achala	The principal objective was to eliminate echinococcosis in the region and to keep it free of brucellosis in goats. A book (152 pages) was prepared for teachers and 6 booklets (16 pages) were prepared for students, and 300 copies of each were printed.	Universidad Nacional de Córdoba
QC	Environmental	12,446.40	10 teachers	Twenty-seven educational	Fundación

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
07/04	workshops in rural schools in Achala		and 100 school students of the RHPPA	workshops were carried out at the RHPPA school. Students and teachers were provided with ideas about biodiversity in the mountains. In addition, teachers and students worked on the reforestation of two area schools. All the planned objectives were reached.	Ecosistemas Argentinos
Applied studies					
QC 18/01	Study on the production of camelids	30,700.00	3 families (direct producers) from the departments of San Alberto and Sa Javier.	In total, 51 animals were distributed. Although various adverse situations occurred, livestock management improved. Ideas about adequate management were established.	Programa SUPRAD, Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Católica de Córdoba
QC 22/01	Sustainable Development of Tourism in Pampa de Achala	22,050.00	Originally the entire population of the RHPPA would have benefitted.	The planned objectives were not reached, so the project was ended earlier.	FAOS (Fundación Alternativa Ocupacional Social)
QC 23/01	Historical anthropological studies about the community of Pampa de Achala	9,772.00	Families from the RHPPA.	The first objective (establish the landholding system) was not recognized as necessary by the residents, for which reason the necessary information was not provided. The second objective (history of culture and identity) was completed with a fair amount of success, involving the population. The third objective (organizing a local market) was met by creating and establishing norms for how the sales stall functions in the La Posta area.	APENOC
QC 24/01	Studies on goat and sheep production factors	26,450.00	Families in Cerro Hermoso and La Ventana	It was determined that the goat population in the entire area is free of brucellosis. This added value to the cheese produced from their milk. Information was collected about problems with zoonoses.	APENOC
QC 06/04	Survey and control of exotic species in the RHPPA zone	18,815.00	All residents of the Southern zone of the RHPPA	The objectives of surveying the presence of exotic species and reviewing the bibliography on control and eradication methods. Educational workshops were provided to	APENOC

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
				180 students, parents, and teachers.	
SAN GUILLERMO NATIONAL PARK ZONE OF INFLUENCE					
Productive subprojects					
SG 12/03	Provision of photovoltaic electricity in rural areas	17,653.00	6 families in Carrizal and Tudcum	The objective was met by installing solar panels for 6 families, allowing electricity to be generated and stored in a special battery that can later be used through a regulator. This provided electricity and improved quality of life and production. The availability of electric light means that new activities could be incorporated (cleaning and classifying seeds, spinning wool, leather and wood craftwork, and making preserves).	Dirección de Recursos Energéticos and Unión Vecinal Tudcum
SG 13/03	Biogas for rural areas	6,743.00	6 families from Carrizal and Tudcum	Six biodigesters were installed to produce methane gas from manure from the corrals. However, given the complexity of managing the system, only two families achieved an adequate level of effective use, using them for lighting and to cook. In addition, low temperatures had a negative impact because fermentation is more intense during the summer. Because of this, the objectives were partially met.	Dirección de Recursos Energéticos and Unión Vecinal Tudcum
SG 01/05	Manos de Los Andes	58,063.00	35-40 producers from the communities of Angualasto and Tudcum who work in traditional trades	Equipment, tools, and supplies were provided to optimize the quantity and quality of craftwork. There were improvements in threads, design, dying with natural dyes (from native plants), and finishing and presentation of projects. Work was also done on cost analysis, value of garments, and setting prices.	Unión Vecinal de Tudcum
SG 02/05	Cuyana Hospitality	60,000.00	9 families from Tudcum.	Tools, equipment, and supplies were provided in order to improve infrastructure. Five lodging services were established along with 1 dining room, 1 delivery service, and horses for outings and	Unión Vecinal de Tudcum

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
				excursions.	
SG 05/03	Family beekeeping project in the Valles Iglesianos	63,987.40	17 families in Tudcum	All of the proposed objectives were met: the residents learned about and initiated a sustainable productive activity. There were three honey harvests, which were marketed. Contact was made with the cooperative of Bee Producers and they obtained a local registered trademark for their product, "Cumbre de Tudcum." The establishment was approved and registered with Public Health.	ASPA (Asociación Sanjuanina de Productores Apicolas)
SG 06/03	Family beekeeping project in the Valles Iglesianos	42,143.00	4 families in Angualasto (and the Angualasto school) and 3 families from Maliman (and the Maliman school).	All of the proposed objectives were met: the residents learned about and initiated a sustainable productive activity. There were three honey harvests, which were marketed. Contact was made with the cooperative of Bee Producers and they obtained a local registered trademark for their product, "Cumbre de Tudcum." The establishment was approved and registered with Public Health.	ASPA
SG 16/03	Strengthening the small agricultural production systems in Tudcum	60,667.00	23 families (a total of 125 residents) in Tudcum.	Through the project, Tudcum residents living in poverty have achieved increased food security in addition to creating small surpluses that are marketed. They have done this by strengthening productive activities that they had already been developing on a small scale.	INTA
SG 17/03	Strengthening the small agricultural production systems in Angualasto, Colangüil and Maliman	48,742.00	13 families (a total of 55 people) in Angualasto, Colangüil, and Malimán.	The entire production system was oriented to organic production with a low level of soil disruption. Productive activities included producing potatoes from virus-free seeds, planting fruit trees, sowing alfalfa, reaping and baling machines, draft horses, raising pigs, and producing milk, cows, sheep, and goats (including the production of cheeses).	INTA
SG	Strengthening	53,897.00	14 families (a	To strengthen the livestock	INTA

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
18/03	the small farming systems in Angualasto, Colangüil, and Maliman		total of 62 residents) in Angualasto, Colangüil, and Maliman.	production systems, draft animals (horses) were purchased and distributed as well as breeding animals (cows and goats). Tools such as ploughs, hoes, and animal traction toothed rakes were also provided, along with alfalfa and vegetable seeds for family gardens. The subproject is considered to have met the planned objectives.	
SG 19/03	Development of family farms in Tudcum, Angualasto, Colangüil, and Maliman.	58,490.00	23 families (a total of 99 residents) in Angualasto, Colangüil, Maliman, and Tudcum.	The project involved 23 families and was aimed at increasing farm production. Some families were interested in pig production and others were interested in poultry farming. The provision of farm animals, tools, draft animals and their harnesses, and alfalfa and vegetable seeds was included. The most important achievement was to increase food security.	INTA
SG 20/03	Strengthening the farming systems in Tudcum	62,073.00	15 families (a total of 60 residents) in Tudcum.	This group included goat, sheep, and cattle producers. They were trained in establishing pastures for feed, animal health, and sowing pastures. Work animals, breeding cattle and sheep, plows and toothed rakes, grass mowers, balers, seeds, and wire for perimeter fences were distributed.	INTA
SG 21/03	Strengthening milk production in the irrigated area of Tudcum	35,611.00	10 families (a total of 37 residents) in Tudcum.	The first step was to provide training about installing pastures, livestock management, and use of milk. Wire was provided to fence perimeters, replacing branch fences. Work animals and traction tools were also provided (ploughs and toothed rakes), seeds for pastures (alfalfa), and dairy cows when feed was available. This activity was of significant help to families' budgets.	INTA
Training subprojects					
SG	Encouragemen	16,093,00	24 residents	The subproject managed to	ASPA

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
07/03	t and development of beekeeping in the Valles Iglesianos		who participated in the subprojects SG 05/03 and SG 06/03, in addition to students at the schools in Angualasto and Tudcum.	create a group of small bee producers, incorporating the knowledge necessary for the production process of honey. The group of producers is in the process of consolidating and growing, with the goal of providing a high-quality product to satisfy local tourist demand and eventually develop alternative markets.	
SG 11/03	Appreciation of natural and cultural resources and local history	30,381.00	123 children in school levels EGB 2 and 3, in Tudcum, Angualasto, Maliman, and Colangüil.	The planned objectives were fully met: a space was provided for children to reflect on the value placed on natural resources, their preservation, and their rational use. It also led to the construction of identity by recovering community knowledge (through oral, written, and body expression).	Asociación Quillay para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Rural
SG 10/04	Strengthening of civil society organizations	27,700.00	Residents of Tudcum, Maliman, Angualasto, and Colangüil.	The objective was to strengthen civil society organizations. There was progress in the process of providing training about the dynamics of civil society organizations, participation, decision-making styles, resource management, etc. In three of the locations included in the work program, effective progress was made in creating and consolidating social organizations.	Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Nacional de San Juan.
SG 03/05	Recovery and encouragement of craft working heritage	31,777,00	Those craftsmen who participated in the subproject SG 01/05 and interested residents of neighboring communities.	The project's objective was met, because the project managed to successfully encourage young craftsmen to recover traditional craft working techniques, place higher value on their products, and promote their activity. Work was also done to register the garments under their own brand, "Manos de los Andes." In addition to training them about improving quality and product presentation, materials, booklets, and leaflets were created regarding product design and marketing.	Unión Vecinal de Tudcum

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
SG 04/05	Strengthening and integration of tourism services offered in the Iglesias area	31,079.00	Producers; providers of lodging, food, and/or recreation; local craftsmen; and other people interested in developing (or already carrying out) tourist activities in the area.	Steps were taken through training workshops in which, in addition to those participating in production projects, all residents interested in developing some type of tourist activity could participate. The workshops were aimed at providing knowledge about customer service, quality control, and increasing cooperation among parties affected. The project generated an important process of raising awareness and appreciation of the area's resources and potential.	Unión Vecinal de Tudcum
Applied studies					
SG 01/03	Study on alternative sources to improve water availability in Angualasto	30,723.23	Approximately 70 families in the Angualasto community.	The principal objective was clearly achieved: alternative canals were established to provide the region with water. There is a high probability that the provincial government will implement the knowledge gained.	Fundación Universidad Nacional de San Juan
SG 14/03	Study on flora resources in the Andean valleys from a participatory investigation	37,420.00	Local residents, students, and teachers in the Angualasto and Tudcum areas.	The objectives were to collect and systematize the community's knowledge about flora resources and determine collection and propagation techniques, as well as plants' uses as medicine, food, dyes, and for aroma, among other uses. This valuable information was collected in a book with high quality appearance and content.	Fundación Universidad Nacional de San Juan
SG 15/03	Recovery of areas degraded by grazing in the Cordillera zone	22,780.00	Residents who herd goats, and a smaller number of cows, that graze in the high valleys of the department of Iglesia.	As a result of the investigation, the most promising species for producing grass were selected. Their production capacity was studied and seed quality was determined, as well as systems to increase germination using different treatments, in order to establish the possibility of re-introducing and domesticating these species. This information formed the basis for broader studies undertaken by institutions with a strong	INTA

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
				presence in the area.	
SG 03/04	Optimization of the production system in the Maliman de Arriba area and its zone of influence	34,780.00 (to date)	10 families in Maliman.	The objective was to identify the most favorable sites to collect water from the Rio Blanco. Water quality was studied; native vegetation and its uses were identified; and species that tolerate the water's salinity were identified. An additional water collection point on the river is yet to be completed.	Fundación Universidad Nacional de San Juan
SG 05/04	Biodiversity of the wild fauna in the SGNP's zone of influence, conservation status, current uses, sustainable management proposals	58,010.00	Students, teachers, and residents of all the area's schools.	Workshops were provided to residents, teachers, and students in Colangüil, Maliman, Angualasto, and Tudcum. The first stage was to collect the knowledge of students and residents; the second stage was to present the knowledge collected and reaffirm the importance of the fauna. Teaching materials in the form of booklets were created about the subjects covered in the workshops; this was completed when the book "Fauna in the High Deserts: Characteristics, Uses, and Potentials in the SGNP Zone of Influence" was published.	Fundación Universidad de San Juan
COPO NATIONAL PARK BUFFER ZONE					
Productive subprojects					
Co 05/06	Improving production systems in the South of the Reserve	50,130.20	10 families in the Southern area of the reserve.	Visits were made to seek possible local providers of breeding cattle. Land preparation begun to install fences and posts and wire were purchased.	INTA
Co 06/06	Improvements in production systems in the West of the Reserve	30,075.20	6 families in the Western area of the reserve.	Due to the residents being located inside the area defined as Provincial Park, there are very strong limits on production. The only activity allowed was purchasing breeding cattle.	INTA
Training subprojects					
Co 01/06	Appropriate technologies in the Southern	16,673.00	21 families in the Southern area of the	Work was done with beneficiaries to establish the working schedule. The	MOCASE (Movimiento de

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
	area of the Copo Provincial Reserve		Provincial Reserve.	building location was prepared and materials were purchased to build "a mixed mud drum oven."	Campesinos de Santiago del Estero)
Co 02/06	Appropriate technologies in the Northern area of the Copo Provincial Reserve	16,673.00	14 families in the Northern area of the Provincial Reserve.	Same as above.	MOCASE
Co 03/06	Let's Learn to Produce by Conserving I – Southern zone	39,938.00	25 families in the Southern area of the reserve.	F Goat module was given: goat farming, silvo-pastoril systems – Integrated systems – Health – tanning of hides	MOCASE
Co 04/06	Let's Learn to Produce by Conserving II – Northern zone	41,524.00	11 families in the Northern area of the reserve.	Same as above, plus Forage Balance.	MOCASE
MONTE LEON NATIONAL PARK AREA OF INFLUENCE					
Training subprojects					
ML 01/04	Training on the appreciation of Heritage for teachers residing in the MLNP's area of influence	37,881.00	Approximately 50 teachers in each location (Puerto Santa Cruz and Piedra Buena) and the schools' students.	Training workshops were conducted on the zone's cultural and natural heritage. As a result, 7 projects were presented in Santa Cruz and 6 in Piedra Buena that reflected the work done with students. Of the teachers registered, 89 completed the requirements to receive credit for the points granted by the workshop. Teachers and students presented the projects at a meeting of the Consultative Commission.	Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
ML 02/04	Training about tools and Appreciation of Heritage in areas near MLNP	45,753.00	10 residents of each location (Comandante Luis Piedra Buena and Puerto Santa Cruz)	Training was provided to 6 participants about key elements of graphic design, training on using programs, and developing a joint project to publicize and show the region's heritage. The product was a booklet and a poster for each location. The rest of the participants took an inventory of goods that are heritage. Three sites of cultural and touristic interest were created: Casa del Pionero and Cañadón Misionero (Santa Cruz) and Réplica de Luis Piedra Buena (Comandante Piedra Buena).	Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina
ML 04/04	Participatory Planning Workshop Course in Piedra Buena	56,900.00	43 residents of Comandante Luis Piedra Buena.	Strengthening community organization was encouraged in projects planned by workshop participants aimed at recognizing the value of the town's cultural resources.	CDESCO
ML 05/04	Participatory Planning Workshop Course in Puerto Santa Cruz	56,900.00	86 residents of Puerto Santa Cruz	Various project plans, suggested by participating residents, were developed. These were aimed at community development in recreational areas for young people and at recognizing the value of the town's cultural resources, which is related to the town's status as an urban population center.	CDESCO
ML 06/04	Complete training program for the rural and urban populations of the MLNP's area of influence	Of the budgeted amount, 20,300.00, only 15,885.42 was used	Residents of Puerto Santa Cruz and Piedra buena.	Eight trainings were held: 4 in the town of Puerto Santa Cruz and 4 in Comandante Luis Piedra Buena. They dealt with: pruning urban trees and fruit trees; construction and management of micro-tunnels for cultivating strawberries and gardens; use and installation of windscreens; and organic gardens and biological pest control.	Estación Experimental INTA Santa Cruz

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
ML 07/04	Creation of teaching material related to the MLNP's area of influence	28,336.00	131 teachers from Puerto Santa Cruz; and 146 from Cmte. Luis Piedra Buena.	All the teaching material was prepared. Copies still need to be made. There is a commitment to complete all activities by March 15, 2008.	Consejo Provincial de Educación
Applied studies					
ML 03/04	Evaluation of coastal fishing resources in Puerto Santa Cruz	60,000.00	6 low income fishing families from Puerto Santa Cruz who practice coastal fishing in the estuary of the Santa Cruz river.	A biological evaluation was done and types of fishing were evaluated. A market study was also done. As a result of these evaluations, fresh and conserved products extracted by small-scale fishermen began to be marketed. The last stage seeks horizontal transference to form a work group. There will be exchange trips to visit small work cooperatives.	Undersecretary of Fishing and Port Activities of Santa Cruz Province
ML 01/07	Test program to manage and control depredation of livestock in ranches near the MLNP	6,531.45	Sheep producers in the area bordering the MLNP	Based on a diagnosis of the situation, it was established that the survey of livestock will be concentrated at the Estancia Cañadón de las Vacas. Calving was monitored and deaths due to predation were recorded, as well as predator sightings and information about animals hunted by lion hunting dogs.	Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina
MBURUCUYÁ NATIONAL PARK BUFFER ZONE					
Productive subprojects					
Mb 01/07	Strengthening families' consumption of self-produced food	19,087.00	5 families	Purchase of wire fencing and hand tools, preparation of areas to be used in the project.	Organización para el Desarrollo Comunitario Hebron
Mb 02/07	Production of cane honey	26,409.00	7 families	A sugar cane mill was acquired and honey production began with 130 liters of product.	Asociación de Pequeños Productores de Mburucuyá
Mb 03/07	Strengthening of small-scale corn starch and tapioca production	33,648.90	8 families	All of the planned water pumps were installed and construction began on trays for washing corn starch.	Asociación de Pequeños Productores de Mburucuyá
Mb	Development	33,482.00	8 families	Purchase and distribution of	Organización

Subproject		Total (Ars $)	Beneficiaries	Principal Results Achieved	Implementing Entity
04/07	of management and community raising of pigs			posts and wire. Preparation of installations.	para el Desarrollo Comunitario Hebron
Mb 05/07	Strengthening milk production for self-consumption and sale of its products	24,677.00	4 families	Purchase of components from El Boyero and materials to build installations.	Organización para el Desarrollo Comunitario Hebron
Mb 06/07	Tapioca and starch production in Northern Manantiales	37,131.00	8 families	Water pumps, some with motors, were installed. Trays construction for washing the starch began.	Asociación de Pequeños Productores de Mburucuyá
Mb 07/07	Nursery of native and ornamental plants	35,823.60	10 families	Ground was cleared and the fine wood needed to install the plastic was installed. Palm seedlings were collected and have begun to reproduce.	Asociación de Pequeños Productores de Mburucuyá
Mb 08/07	Recovering what is ours	22,729.50	6 families	Training began on fabric in frames and work began on softening hides.	Organización para el Desarrollo Comunitario Hebron

Component B

1. Argentina's biodiversity data base available on internet (www.sib.gov.ar) and corresponding alphanumeric and spatial (GIS) database
2. Computer equipment for the five nodes of the BIS: Patagonia, Northwest, Northeast, Central and headquarters.
3. Training trips to Costa Rica and Colombia.
4. Training activities for data collection by park rangers.

Component C

The PIU was composed of qualified technical professionals and administrative staff. Based on the number and diversity of programs, subprojects, and activities implemented under the project and supervised by the PIU, it was highly efficient in its work. The PIU staff demonstrated a high degree of dedication to their work and during the project's lifetime conducted 58 workshops, and processed over 400 separate contracts (for consultancy services and works). Each collaborated with the National General Auditor in project audits, and incorporated comments received into its operations.

Annex 3. Economic and Financial Analysis
(including assumptions in the analysis)

During the project appraisal, an economic and financial analysis for the GEF project was not carried out due to the nature of the project – strict biodiversity conservation with limited visitation, as opposed to economic (tourist) development. However, it was agreed at closure that it would be meaningful to conduct such analyses would be useful in order to gain insight into the fiscal impacts of the parks, and the extent to which they would be sustainable over time. Two approaches were taken:

(i) the first was to analyze the GEF-financed parks as stand alone, and
(ii) the second was to analyze the project parks in conjunction with the four parks financed through the IBRD Native Forests and Protected Areas Project, which was semi-blended to the GEF project

As stand alone parks, each of the GEF-financed parks was shown to have negative FIRRs. However, the analyses showed that QCNP and MLNP might begin to show positive net revenue around years 12 and 19, respectively. CNP and MNP were not expected to show positive net earnings. The main driver for increased revenue is tourist income, and the model is most sensitive to this factor. (Insufficient data existed for SGNP to calculate projected cash flows, principally visitor logs.)

While the GEF-financed parks are not self-sustaining, as part of the blending arrangement with the IBRD parks, and overall APN system they are. Increased revenues generated from the IBRD operation more than offset the operating costs associated with the new GEF project parks, indicating the blending arrangement was the correct approach. IBRD-financed parks generated over US $ 25 million annually by closure, representing over 50 percent of total park revenues.

Economic analysis

Component A – Protected Areas

The main achievements of the component included the establishment and management of protected areas and associated technical and legal work needed to ensure their procurement and management.

The principal beneficiary is the government agency, APN, responsible for managing the national parks system. The procurement and management of five parks provide for increased biodiversity conservation in high priority ecosystems of global importance in Argentina. Along with the biodiversity, valuable environmental goods and services in and around the park are also being conserved. This includes the protection of watersheds and wetlands (San Guillermo, Quebrada de Condorito and Mburucuyá), which are important to help regulate water quality, quantity and regimen; protection of soils (Copo and Monte Leon), which are prevented from degradation and depletion due to unsustainable cropping and overgrazing; and forests (all areas except Monte Leon) for carbon storage and the regulation of greenhouse gasses. The total area placed under conservation, 391,464 ha, was accomplished at an est. cost of apx. US $58 per ha, including land purchases. Excluding land purchases the costs are about US $43 per ha.

Costs of conservation are a function of many variables; stakeholder consultations, boundary demarcation, land purchase, construction of infrastructure, compensation and planning (Brunner,

Gullison and Balmfold 2004). In addition, the complexity of the ecosystems; frequency and intensity of threats; and the size of area (needed to achieve economies of scale) influence the costs. Because of the wide range of possibilities and situations, there are no standardized comparable costs to measure the efficiency of the project. This said, however, the indication is that the project was *highly efficient* when comparing costs of conservation to, for example, other land uses; with costs of US ~$800 per ha for forestry establishment and US ~$300+ per ha for establishment of grains in Argentina (excluding land, maintenance and harvesting costs).

While there are presently no revenues generated from the GEF-financed parks, the project has made it possible for them to do so through the provision of new visitor services and facilities to ensure the management of the areas (visitor centers, administration offices, ranger housing, toilets, camping and picnic areas, access roads, etc). Had the GEF-financed parks (excluding SGNP) charged admissions fees, by the final year of the project they would have generated a modest amount of revenue that year, around US $ 36 thousand total for four parks.

One of the benefits of twinning the GEF project with the IBRD Native Forests and Protected Areas Project in a semi-blended arrangement was the possibility to address both conservation and tourism objectives simultaneously. Increased revenues generated from the associated IBRD operation through tourism are shown to substantially offset the operating costs associated with the GEF project-financed parks and validate the original approach. Revenues from the four (IBRD) parks supported under the Native Forests/Protected Areas project rose significantly from US $5.6 million in 2000 to US $25.3 million in 2006. The GEF-financed parks are also fully incorporated into the APN system and now receive an annual budget allocation from APN, totaling about US $1.3 million.

Component B – Biodiversity Information System

The biodiversity information system provides a dynamic tool for internal APN users and external visitors to the website with the best information on biodiversity, available in Argentina. The BIS logs about 75,000 external visitors to its website each year. The system has proven to be a useful tool for APN in the planning and management of its parks. As its single best repository for biodiversity information, internal users can formulate and carryout queries concerning flora, fauna and other information needed for park management. During the preparation of the new IBRD Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project, both the Bank and APN teams used the database to support project development and planning. In this way, the BIS greatly improved the efficiency of APN in bringing new areas under conservation, as well as system-wide costs needed to support the existing protected areas with information needed for their management.

Financial analysis

Stand-alone analysis. The five protected areas supported by the GEF project focused on strict biodiversity conservation with limited visitation in five high-priority ecosystems: Cordoba Montane Savanna (QCNP), Central Andean Dry Puna (SGNP), Semi-arid Chaco (CNP), Patagonian Steppe (MLNP) and Humid Chaco-Iberá Wetlands (MNP). At closure, the project had succeeded in placing 391,464 ha under strict protection.

The infrastructure investments realized through the GEF project improved the conservation and management of the areas, and helped to “graduate” the parks to comply with APN criteria for charging admissions, and therefore generating revenue. At the end of the project, over 16 thousand people visited the GEF-financed parks each year (excluding SGNP). By comparison, visitation rates were effectively zero at inception, as the parks did not exist. Had APN charged

admission to the parks in 2007, the gross income would have been around US $36 thousand. This is however offset by annual operating costs of about US $1.3 million.

The streams of incremental revenue were calculated over a 20 year period for four of the five parks. (Insufficient data existed for SGNP.) Actual data were used up to 2007 for theoretical revenues, based on a 7 peso per person entrance fee, and up to 2008 for individual park's operating costs. The annual rate of visitation, which is assumed to be the main form of revenue, was calculated independently for each park. For CNP and MNP, annual increases in rates of visitation were projected at 10 percent, based on their remote locations.

For QCNP, park officials believe that once the access to the highway is complete next year by the province, visitors could easily triple. This is plausible given the proximity of the park to the major city of Cordoba. After that, it was assumed that rates would fall to the average annual rate of increase for Argentina's parks of about 30 percent, then level off at 10 percent after 5 years. For MLNP, even though the park is remote, the transportation infrastructure to the park is excellent, and the penguin colony is proving to be an important tourist attraction. Visitors frequently travel in groups from Rio Gallegos to the park, spend the day and return. Therefore the average annual rate of increase for visitation to Argentine parks (30 percent) was used for the first 10 years, and the standard worldwide rate of 10 percent thereafter.

Cash flow analysis based on the projected possible revenue show that QCNP is likely to have a positive cash flow in about 10 years, and MLNP in around 20 years. The other parks are not likely to have positive cash flows. FIRRs showed that all of the parks have negative rates of return. QCNP had the best return, but this still was only -4 percent. The conclusion of the stand-alone analysis is that the GEF-financed parks are not financially viable. On the other hand, they were not intended to be.

Semi-blended analysis. The protected areas component of the sister-Native Forests and Protected Areas project focused on four high visibility parks in Patagonia: Lanin, Los Alerces, Nahuel Huapi and Glaciares that total 2.1 million hectares; around 75% of the parks system coverage at the time of appraisal. The infrastructure investments realized through the IBRD project greatly enhanced the quantity and quality of infrastructure and services available at the four parks, and improved the visitors' experience. Revenues and visitation rates increased significantly at each.

Revenues from the four (IBRD) parks supported under the Native Forests/Protected Areas project rose significantly from US $5.6 million in 2000 to US $25.3 million in 2006. As a percentage of total park revenues for 2000 and 2006, those figures represent a jump from 35 percent to 53 percent, respectively.

The financial analysis results and comparisons are as follows:

IBRD Project Parks	FIRR At Appraisal (%)	FIRR at ICR (%)
Lanin	16	13
Nauel Huapi	13	32
Los Alerces	36	8
Los Glacares	11	57

In conclusion, because of the blending with the IBRD operation and the incorporation of the GEF project parks into the overall APN system, the goal of ensuring the parks are financially sustainable is considered successful. This finding is further substantiated by the fact that each of the 5 Project supported parks is now receiving annual allocations from APN (see table below),

who has assumed all associated costs of the parks from the GEF. (The overall 2008 APN budget has increased by AR$40 million over the last year to AR$131 million with important additions in field personnel and infrastructure investments.)

GEF Project - Protected Areas	2008 Budget (US $)
Quebrada del Condorito	270,016
San Guillermo	349,253
Copo	234,287
Monte León	239,589
Mburucuyá	197,727

Finally, although the Project supported parks still do not charge entrance fees, they are now ready to so as the infrastructure investments have improved visitor services and set the stage for APN to begin to generate modest amounts of revenue.

Conclusion

The analysis indicates that the decision to blend the GEF Biodiversity Conservation Project with the IBRD Native Forests and Protected Areas Project was correct. While the GEF project is not self-sustaining in a stand-alone form, its blending with the IBRD and the formal incorporation of the parks into the APN system ensures their sustainability. The 5 Project-supported parks are now ready to generate revenues through entrance fees and some will likely begin to charge them in 2009. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the objective of the GEF was strict biodiversity conservation, and it has achieved this, with the sustainability of outcomes ensured through its incorporation into the wider APN system, including the parks supported by the partially-blended IBRD project, which are the main sources of revenue for APN.

Annex 4. Bank Lending and Implementation Support/Supervision Processes

(a) Task Team members

Names	Title	Unit	Responsibility/ Specialty
Lending			
Robert Kirmse	Senior Forestry Specialist	ECA	TTL, Forests
Random Dubois	Senior Environmental Officer	FAO	Protected Areas
Douglas Graham	Senior Environmental Specialist	EASVS	Biodiversity/Info Systems
E. Gacitua-Mario	Senior Social Specialist	LCSAR	Social and Participation
Rudy V. Puymbroeck	Senior Counsel		Lawyer
Richard Smith	Consultant		Protected Areas
Guillermo Wood	Consultant		Cost Tab
Alejandra Moreyra	Consultant		Buffer Zone Mgt
Gary Costello	Consultant		Social Mitigation Plans
Patricia Parera	Consultant		Social and Participation
Vicente Abreu	Consultant		Biodiversity Info Sys.
Jim Tolisano	Consultant		Institutions
Supervision/ICR			
Robert R. Davis	Senior Forestry Officer	LCSAR	TTL, Forests and Park Administration
Natalia Cecilia Bavio	Financial Management Analyst	LCSFM	Financial Management
Zhong Tong	Agricultural Economist	LCSAR	Economics
Christine Drew Dragisic	Junior Professional Associate	LCSEN	Operations
Ana Maria Grofsmacht	Procurement Analyst	LCSPT	Procurement
Ricardo Larrobla	Consultant	LCSAR	Natural Resources
George Campos Ledec	Lead Ecologist	LCSEN	Biodiversity
Alejandro Roger Solanot	Financial Management Specialist	LCSFM	Financial Management
Francis Fragano	Consultant	LCSAR	Biodiversity
Florencia Reca	Consultant	LCSAR	Protected Areas and ICR

(b) Staff Time and Cost

Stage of Project Cycle	Staff Time and Cost (Bank Budget Only)	
	No. of staff weeks	US $ Thousands (including travel and consultant costs)

Lending		
FY95		129.48
FY96		127.63
FY97		238.49
FY98		27.25
FY99		0.11
FY00		0.00
FY01		0.00
FY02		0.00
FY03		0.00
FY04		0.00
FY05		0.00
FY06		0.00
FY07		0.00
FY08		0.00
Total:		522.96
Supervision/ICR		
FY95		0.00
FY96		0.00
FY97		0.00
FY98		65.30
FY99		69.95
FY00		68.95
FY01		73.16
FY02		66.92
FY03		70.78
FY04		67.20
FY05		56.14
FY06		55.19
FY07		42.02
FY08		41.16
Total:		676.77

Annex 5. Beneficiary Survey Results
(if any)

Not applicable

Annex 6. Stakeholder Workshop Report and Results
(if any)

Not applicable

Annex 7. Summary of Borrower's ICR and/or Comments on Draft ICR

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the GEF Biodiversity Conservation Project (BCP) was approved and began its implementation by APN, under the SRNyAH. Shortly thereafter, APN was transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, where it remains today. The BCP's objectives are to

- expand and diversify the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS) to include several of the country's most globally significant but inadequately protected ecoregions
- create the conditions for their sustainable management through investments in institutional strengthening, refined mechanisms of consultation and participation, and improved biodiversity information management.

The project has three main components (a) Protected Areas, (b) Biodiversity Information Management and (c) Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation. The project's main beneficiaries are

- The government institutions responsible for the management and sustainable development of protected areas;
- Rural populations in the zone of influence (and within the protected areas in certain areas);
- Park visitors (through the provision of improved facilities, management and services in the new parks);
- The tourism sector (through new infrastructure which attracts increased numbers of park visitors to rural areas);
- The education sector (through the development of teaching materials and training programs for rural schools relative to conservation)

RESULTS

Component A "Protected Areas". The main goal of the component was the establishment of five national parks in priority ecosystems, including the

- Pampas
- Central Andean Dry Puna
- Semi-Arid Chaco
- Córdoba Montane Savannas
- Patagonian Steppe and littoral and wetland habitat

During implementation, four parks were established in the above ecosystems, and a fifth in the Humid Chaco. Activities financed by the project included

- Procurement of lands

- Land titling
- Boundary surveys
- Designation of the procured areas as national parks
- Institutionalization of the parks (within APN)
- Investments in works and equipment
- Assigning permanent park personnel to the new areas
- Sustainable Development Projects in buffer zones
- Public Participation
- Mitigation of social situations

Rating for Component A. Satisfactory.

The project supported the establishment of five national parks in priority ecosystems, assigning 31 park rangers and 36 administrative and support staff to them, completing 39 infrastructure works, 53 meetings of consultative commissions, 8 families included in mitigation activities reducing impacts in the parks due to incursions and disturbances, monitoring of biodiversity indicator species, and the completion of 62 subprojects in the buffer zones. (The project did not finalize the establishment of a national park in an area of Pampas grassland, as originally proposed. Instead, it included a national park in the Humid Chaco, also identified as a high priority for biodiversity conservation.)

Component B. Biodiversity Information Management. The main objective of the component was to provide ready access of information for decision makers concerning conservation issues and the sustainable use of biodiversity. The component completed the establishment of five data management nodes in various geographic regions of Argentina, including:

- Headquarters, Buenos Aires
- Patagonia
- Central Region
- Northwest Region
- Northeast Region

Each node now collects, organizes, reviews, quality controls and enters data/information about the protected areas in its respective geographic area; the information is later transferred to the Internet. The Buenos Aires nodes coordinates the work Information is processed at each node using databases developed by the Patagonia node. Several individual databases are supported, including those for public use, residents, biological surveys, land registry, fires, etc. and can be linked to conduct various queries.

Rating for Component B. Highly Satisfactory

The Biodiversity Information System (BIS) was completed and on the internet at www.sib.gov.ar , and includes 3,196 source documents, 227 maps, 458 species photographs, and information about 24,267 species, subspecies, and varieties of flora, 13,842 species of fauna, 2,081 of mushrooms, and 244 of bacteria and cyanophytes. The

five data management nodes are fully operational and BIS personnel have been hired by APN to continue the work. The BIS has an annual budget allocation from APN and participates in annual planning exercises.

Component C Management, Monitoring and Evaluation. This component financed technical assistance, equipment and incremental operational costs needed to strengthen the capacity of APN to manage the overall program. It also supported scientifically sound monitoring of biodiversity at globally significant Protected Areas sites. The PIU staff demonstrated a high degree of dedication to their work and during the project's lifetime conducted 58 workshops, and processed over 400 separate contracts (for consultants services,and works).

Rating for Component C: Satisfactory (see above)

OVERALL PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Rating: Satisfactory. APN considers the performance satisfactory, considering that the project succeeded in the incorporation of over 380,000 ha in five priority ecosystems; the Cordoba Montane Savanna, Central Andean High Puna, Semi-Arid Chaco, Patagonian Steppe and Oceanic Patagonian Littoral and Humid Chaco, Iberá Wetlands. Although the protected areas was not procured at closure, APN has now prioritized the need for protection of this ecosystem. Although the ten-year timeframe was long, this was in large part, due to the economic crisis of 2001-2003.

ASSESSMENT OF BANK PERFORMANCE

Preparation. Satisfactory. The Bank performance in the identification and preparation of the project was satisfactory. However, the Bank did not sufficiently estimate the complexity of procurement and legal designation of new lands for national parks in Argentina.

Supervision. Satisfactory. There were two task team leaders over the course of the project. The experience and quality of the supervision team contributed to the project's success. There were a total of 21 supervision missions. The interdisciplinary nature of the supervision team provided value added to the work. Biodiversity specialists, institutional experts, foresters and economists participated in the supervision missions.

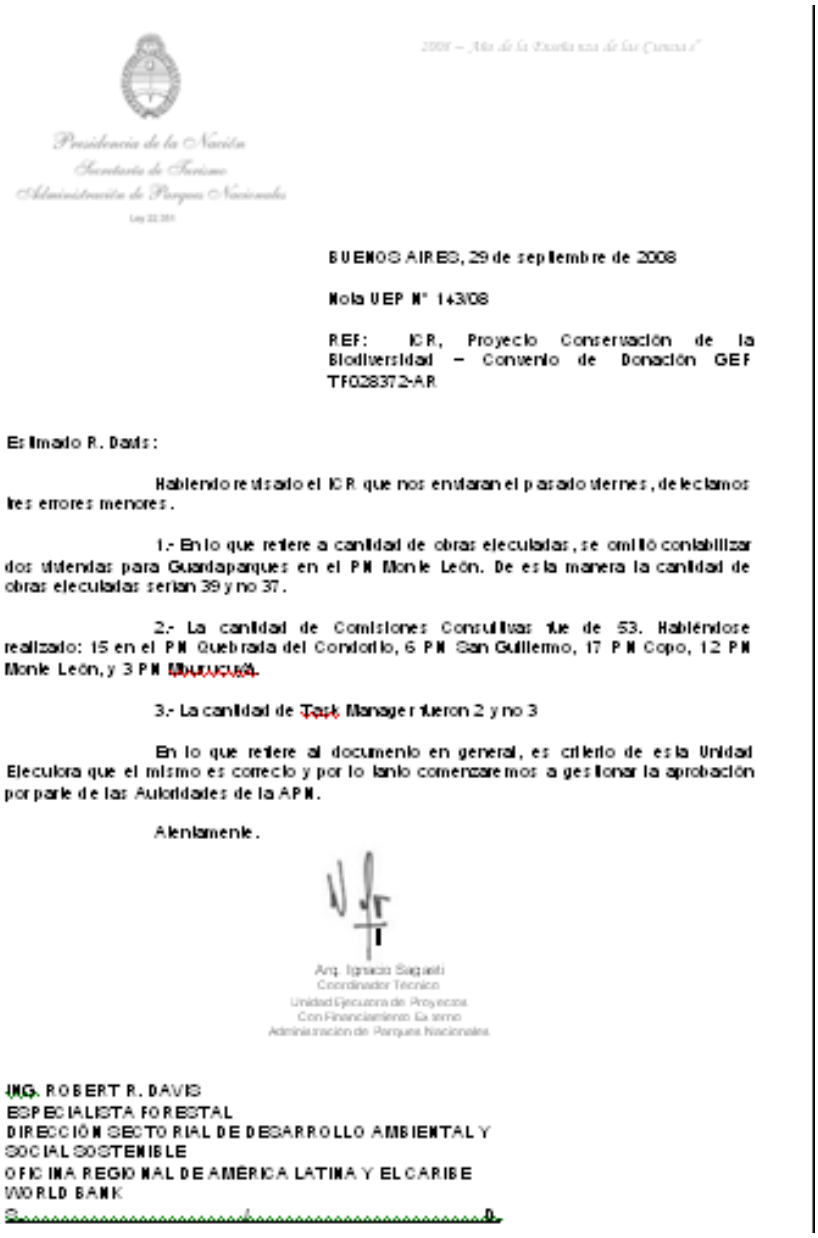
ASSESSMENT OF APN PERFORMANCE

APN Performance. Satisfactory. APN provided the necessary administrative, financial resources (counterpart funds) and personnel to support the project and conducted the work in an efficient manner. APN participated in Bank missions and complied with fiduciary requirements, including audits. They worked diligently to correct or resolve issues during implementation, and kept the project on track. The institution also participated actively in the closure of the project.

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Borrower Performance. Satisfactory. Overall borrower performance is considered satisfactory given the level of government commitment during the project's tenure. The government assigned a high priority to the establishment of five new national parks y collaborated extensively with the Bank in the effort. During the crisis the government was able to maintain the project, and provide some counterpart funds, which kept it from failing.

Letter from APN concerning the Draft ICR:



Presidencia de la Nación
Secretaría de Turismo
Administración de Parques Nacionales

2008 – Año de la Enseñanza de las Ciencias"

BUENOS AIRES, 29 de septiembre de 2008

Nota UEP N° 143/08

REF: ICR, Proyecto Conservación de la Biodiversidad – Convenio de Donación GEF TF028372-AR

Estimado R. Davis:

Habiendo recibido el ICR que nos enviaran el pasado viernes, declaramos tres errores menores.

1.- En lo que refiere a cantidad de obras ejecutadas, se omitió contabilizar dos viviendas para Guardaparques en el PN Monte León. De esta manera la cantidad de obras ejecutadas serían 39 y no 37.

2.- La cantidad de Comisiones Consultivas fue de 53. Habiéndose realizado: 15 en el PN Quebrada del Condorito, 6 PN San Guillermo, 17 P N Copo, 12 PN Monte León, y 3 PN Iguazú.

3.- La cantidad de Task Manager fueron 2 y no 3

En lo que refiere al documento en general, es criterio de esta Unidad Ejecutora que el mismo es correcto y por lo tanto comenzaremos a gestionar la aprobación por parte de las Autoridades de la APN.

Atentamente.

Arq. Ignacio Saguier
Coordinador Técnico
Unidad Ejecutora de Proyectos
Con Financiamiento Externo
Administración de Parques Nacionales

ING. ROBERT R. DAVIS
ESPECIALISTA FORESTAL
DIRECCIÓN SECTORIAL DE DESARROLLO AMBIENTAL Y SOCIAL SOSTENIBLE
OFICINA REGIONAL DE AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE
WORLD BANK

Annex 8. Comments of Cofinanciers and Other Partners/Stakeholders

Not applicable

Annex 9. List of Supporting Documents

APN. 2008. Evaluación de Cierre del Proyecto de Conservación de la Biodiversidad, TF 28372

Bilenca, D. and F. Miñarro. 2004. Valuable Grassland Areas in the Pampas and Plains of Argentina, Uruguay, and Southern Brazil. J.M. Kaplan Fund-FVSA.

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The World Bank. 1997. Argentina Republic. Biodiversity Conservation Project. GEF Project Brief.

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The World Bank. Country Assistance Strategy, Report no. 34015-AR.

The World Bank. Implementation Closure and Results Report, IBRD 4085. Report no. ICR0000437.

The World Bank. 2004 Quality of Supervision Assessment (QSA6) for the Argentina Biodiversity Conservation Project.

IBRD 36492

ARGENTINA
GEF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION
PROJECT PROTECTED AREAS AND ECOREGIONS

This map was produced by the Map Design Unit of The World Bank. The boundaries, colors, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of The World Bank Group, any judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

SELECTED NATIONAL PARKS

ECOREGIONS:
- ALTOS ANDES
- PUNA
- MONTE DE SIERRAS Y BOLSONES
- SELVA DE LAS YUNGAS
- CHACO SECO
- CHACO HÚMEDO
- SELVA PARANENSE
- ESTEROS DEL IBERÁ
- CAMPOS Y MALEZALES
- DELTA E ISLAS DEL PARANÁ
- ESPINAL
- PAMPA
- MONTE DE LLANURAS Y MESETAS
- ESTEPA PATAGÓNICA
- BOSQUES PATAGÓNICOS

PROVINCE CAPITALS
NATIONAL CAPITAL
RIVERS
PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES

SEPTEMBER 2008