

PROTECTED AREAS

LATIN AMERICA

COORDINATED AUDIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMTEMA - OLACEFS, 2015

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The evaluation of the coordinated audit of Latin American Protected Areas was carried out based on the audit reports and other information provided by the participants in the joint project.

More information can be found at:

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Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions.

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The coordinated audit in protected areas was carried out under a cooperation arrangement between the Federal Court of Accounts – Brazil (TCU) and SAls of eleven Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

1. Audit. 2. Protected Area (PA). 3. Environmental governance. 4. Environmental management I. Series.

Dear reader:

We are very pleased to present the result of the audit coordinated by the Federal Court of Accounts – Brazil (TCU) and the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic of Paraguay (CGR) in protected areas of Latin America.

It was a joint project carried out within the framework of the Special Technical Commission on the Environment (COMTEMA) of the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS). It involved twelve Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

With the support from the members of the Audit Institutions and relying on the efforts of the technical teams involved, we were able to evaluate, in a standard manner, 1,120 protected areas and produce an unprecedented diagnosis of the public policy on biodiversity conservation adopted in the region.

With the aim of analyzing the governance of protected areas, the TCU created the INDIMAPA, a Method for Evaluating the Implementation and Management of Protected Areas. This georeferenced tool uses indicators and indices that can be visualized in maps and allows classifying protected areas under three categories: red, yellow and green, corresponding to low, medium and high level of implementation of environmental management arrangements, respectively.

Based on the findings of the coordinated audit, society and Control Institutions will be able to monitor how the management of protected areas, which constitute a public environmental heritage, will evolve over time.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that, by promoting joint evaluations, Supreme Audit Institutions foster compliance with international agreements and promote improvements in environmental governance toward sustainable development.

I wish you a good reading!

MINISTER AROLDO CEDRAZ DE OLIVEIRA

President of the Federal Court of Accounts – Brazil (TCU)

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INTRODUCTION

Coordinated Audit

Coordinated audits have been used by Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) as one of the tools available to contribute to improving the management and governance of the public sector.

Therefore, coordinated oversight activities are presented as an alternative to foster improvements in public policies, particularly in environmental policies, which involve cross-sectoral and cross-border issues requiring joint efforts with different countries and regions.

In this context, the coordinated audit on protected areas was proposed as a result of the collaboration between the Federal Court of Accounts - Brazil (TCU) and eleven SAIs of Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

This project was carried out within the framework of the Special Technical Commission on the Environment (COMTEMA) and was supported by *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and the Capacity-Building Committee (CBC) of the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS).

Protected Areas

Protected Areas (PAs) are created considering relevant natural characteristics of territories, with defined geographical limits, and in response to the need for biodiversity conservation.

These areas are recognized by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as globally strategic for the conservation of biodiversity. According to the international commitment, goals related to the protection of land and marine areas must be achieved through the implementation of systems of ecologically representative and effectively managed protected areas.

In addition to the conservation of biological diversity, other objectives have been planned for protected areas to take advantage of the social and economic potential of these territories, for which purpose effective implementation and proper management of these areas are required.

With this perspective, the audit coordinated by the SAIs of Brazil (TCU) and Paraguay (CGR) evaluated whether protected land areas in Latin America have the required institutional, regulatory, and operational conditions to achieve the objectives for which they were created.

As a result of this joint project, we were able to evaluate, in a standardized fashion, 1,120 protected areas and to produce an unprecedented diagnosis of the public environmental heritage represented by Latin American protected areas.

Therefore, this publication is a consolidation of the evaluation carried out by 12 Supreme Audit Institutions. It presents the main improvement opportunities identified and addresses the weaknesses in the governance of public policy on biodiversity conservation.

Results of the coordinated audit

Captions of the photo: Nahuel Huapi National Park, Argentina. David. (CC - BY)

Evaluation of the Aichi Target 11

The starting point of the joint project was an assessment of compliance by National Governments with the agreement established by the Aichi Target 11 within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

This assessment was intended to check the scope of the target set in the international agreement and to make a systemic analysis of protected areas in Latin America.

Qualitative aspect of target 11

According to Aichi Target 11 of the CBD, quantitative and qualitative objectives are to be achieved by the 193 signatory countries to the convention by 2020. The quantitative part of the agreement sets conservation percentages for protected areas at 17% for continental areas and 10% for marine areas in each nation.

According to data from the United Nations List of Protected Areas, the coverage of protected areas in the world in 2014 amounted to 15.4% for land areas excluding Antarctica and to 8.4% for national marine areas.

The coordinated audit on protected areas of Latin America found figures close to those reported by the United Nations (UN) when evaluating the quantitative aspect of Target 11.

The average found in the 12 participating Latin American countries was 16.2% for the land/continental part of the target.

The data presented in the table shows marked differences in the percentages of protected land areas in the countries that took part in the coordinated audit. However, most countries, 8 of 12 (Brazil, Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay and Venezuela), are in a good position in relation to the quantitative element of the continental part of Aichi target 11.

On the other hand, in relation to the establishment of marine areas, national reports for the CBD showed that some countries are far from reaching the target agreed upon, such as Brazil, where only 1.5% of all marine areas are protected. Thus, this panorama indicates the need for greater efforts on the part of national governments to create marine territories.

Captions of the photo: Jabiru, Costa Rica. Environmental Management Agency of Costa Rica

Evaluation of Aichi Target 11

Country	National territory (km2)	Number of Protected Areas	Protected Areas areas (km2)	Percentage of protected land areas
Argentina	2,791,810	436	215,150	7.7%
Bolivia	1,098,581	130	255,666	23.3%
Brazil	8,515,767	1,966	1,460,918	17.2%
Colombia	1,141,748	633	141,851	12.4%
Costa Rica	51,100	168	13,286	26.0%
El Salvador	21,041	72	5,260	25.0%
Ecuador	256,370	50	51,106	19.9%
Honduras	112,492	91	31,086	27.6%
Mexico	1,964,375	176	206,681	10.5%
Paraguay	406,752	91	83,378	20.5%
Peru	1,285,216	79	185,506	14.4%
Venezuela	1,075,987	400	390,458	36.3%
Total	18,721,239	4,292	3,040,346	16.2%

Qualitative aspects of target 11

With respect to the qualitative aspect of Aichi target 11, the international commitment provides that protected areas must be effectively managed with a view to achieving the purposes envisaged for these territories. Thus, good management is relevant for fully achieving the many objectives set for protected areas, in particular that of biodiversity conservation.

For this purpose, the challenge for the coordinated audit team was to find a method for the 12 SAIs to qualitatively analyze target 11. The solution was the creation, by the TCU, of Indimapa, a product that enabled standardized evaluation of protected areas management in Latin American countries.

The Indimapa-based evaluation carried out by the SAIs indicates that almost 30% of the 1,120 protected areas (328 of them) fall under the lowest management level, while 19% of these territories in Latin America (212 of them) fall under the highest implementation and management level. Finally, the consolidated result of the evaluation shows that over half of the protected areas (580) fall under the medium implementation and management level.

The way these results were obtained and an explanation of the method used (Indimapa) will be presented below.

Captions of the figure: **29% Low 52% Medium 19% High**
Level of Implementation

Indimapa

Indimapa is an instrument created to evaluate protected areas on the Latin American continent. The tool uses indexes and indicators for protected areas and, based on georeferenced maps, provides results for the 1,120 areas evaluated.

The instrument was based on two internationally recognized methodologies: Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Areas Management (RAPPAM) and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT).

Using the Indimapa tool, radar charts providing a multidimensional view of the evaluations carried out can be created. This way, by considering up to 13 indicators for each protected area, the method produces individualized data that are instrumental for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the management of these territories.

An indicator is available for each aspect of management whose purpose is to indicate the degree of achievement of the objective related to the management aspect in question. All the indicators are calculated on the same scale, varying from 0 to 3 points. Zero corresponds to no achievement of the objective, while three corresponds to full achievement of the analyzed objective.

The general result of the evaluation of the 1,120 protected areas can therefore be visualized in a radar chart, which shows the average obtained by each indicator, as can be seen in the table.

In addition to the indicators, an implementation index was created for each protected area for the purpose of reporting the results of the evaluations at a consolidated level. The result of the indexes allows classification of management of protected areas under three categories: red, yellow and green, corresponding to low, medium and high level of implementation of management arrangements, respectively.

Therefore, the Indimapa serves as a tool for individualized diagnosis of each protected area and as a more accessible mechanism for reporting the results of the audit, which will make it possible for the various stakeholders to monitor how the management of these territories evolves over time.

Thus, applying the Indimapa to the coordinated audit made it possible to systematize the information generated by the 12 SAIs in a single document. This systematization provides an overview of public policies on biodiversity conservation in Latin America and can be used to support decision-making for improving environmental governance.

From the next page on, maps for Latin America and for the 12 countries will be shown with the results of applying the Indimapa to the coordinated audit.

Result

		Indicators
G	1.30	Management plan
H	1.65	Human resources
\$	1.38	Financial resources
E	1.71	Administrative framework
T	1.55	Territorial consolidation
F	1.67	Environmental oversight
P	1.46	Research
B	1.06	Monitoring of biodiversity
C	1.18	Managing committee
M	1.37	Community management
U	0.91	Public use
N	1.43	Concession
L	0.89	Coordination in the protected area

CAPTIONS OF THE MAPS:

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
ECUADOR

1,120 PAs

Low
328 PAs
29%

High
212 PAs
19%

Medium
580 PAs
52%

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
BRAZIL

Low
137 PAs
30%

High
49 PAs
11%

Medium
267 PAs
59%

Reference
Index range (i)

High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
COSTA RICA

Low
56 PAs
44%

High
20 PAs
16%

Medium
52 PAs
40%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
ECUADOR

Forty-four protected areas were evaluated in Ecuador. However, some of these areas are managed by more than one agency, for which reason 48 agencies were evaluated.

Low
7 PAs
14%

High
8 PAs
17%

Medium
33 PAs
69%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
EL SALVADOR

Low
13 PAs
59%

Medium
9 PAs
41%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA

Implementation and management index
HONDURAS

Low
29 PAs
45%

High
6 PAs
9%

Medium
30 PAs
46%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
MEXICO

Low
37 PAs
22%

High
58 PAs
35%

Medium
72 PAs
43%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
PARAGUAY

Low
31 PAs
82%

Medium
7 PAs
18%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
VENEZUELA

Low
1 PA
25%

High
1 PA
25%

Medium
2 PAs
50%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
ARGENTINA

High
14 PAs
39%

Medium
22 PAs
61%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
BOLIVIA

High
7 PAs
32%

Medium
15 PAs
68%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
COLOMBIA

Low
5 PAs
9%

High
13 PAs
22%

Medium
40 PAs
69%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

2014 INDIMAPA FOR LATIN AMERICA
Implementation and management index
PERU

Reserved zones

Low
5 PAs
38%

High
4 PAs
31%

Medium
4 PAs
31%

Remaining categories

Low
4 PAs
6%

High
32 PAs
50%

Medium
28 PAs
44%

Reference
Index range (i)
High
Medium
Low

CONCLUSION

Captions of the photo: Torotoro National Park, Bolivia. Gaumut. (CC - BY SA)

Protected areas are part of the international strategy for biodiversity conservation and constitute an important element of the environmental heritage for humanity.

Therefore, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides that the 193 signatory countries to the agreement must protect at least 17% of their land areas and 10% of their marine areas by 2020 through systems of protected areas that depend on efficient management.

In this context, when analyzing compliance with the international commitment, the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of the 12 countries of Latin America assessed 1,120 national protected areas and produced an unprecedented regional diagnosis on their public policy on biodiversity conservation.

Captions of the photo: Yaxchilán Natural Monument, Mexico. Jacob Rus. (CC - BY SA)

It was seen that the goal of protecting continental areas had been reached by eight countries, while the percentage of protection of marine areas is still far from being achieved. However, in order to achieve the objectives for which those territories were created, implementing and managing these areas efficiently is as important as creating them.

Consequently, the consolidated results of the evaluation carried out by the SAIs show that more than half of the protected areas fall under the category of medium level of implementation and management. On the other hand, 19% of the territories fall under the category of the highest degree of implementation.

Almost 30% of the protected areas fall under the category of the lowest level of implementation, as indicated by structural shortcomings found in the management of protected areas in Latin America such as:

- Lack of a management plan in 47% of the areas evaluated;
- Lack of a manager in 13% of the territories;
- Biodiversity is not being monitored in 44% of the protected areas evaluated;

and

- Difficulties in terms of territorial consolidation, such as land regularization, in 54% of the areas.

In addition, lack of appropriate coordination between the parties involved in managing the areas also contributed to the current level of implementation of protected areas in Latin America.

Recommendations

Considering the target for protected areas set forth in the CBD and taking into account the current scenario in the countries evaluated, the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) reported their findings to the national governments and issued recommendations for improving their environmental governance.

In addition, given the low level of implementation and management of protected areas, the SAIs recommended that, as part of the process of creating and consolidating them, mechanisms should be established to ensure the availability of indispensable resources for the effective implementation and proper management of those territories. It was also recommended that these governments should adopt a territorial consolidation strategy for protected areas that takes into account the technical, legal, social, and environmental aspects involved in this process.

In conclusion, it was recommended that national governments should take measures to promote coordination actions at the local, institutional, and non-governmental levels, considering the cross-cutting nature of the issue of protected areas and the need to improve environmental management.

Expected benefits

By implementing the recommendations issued by the SAIs, stakeholders are expected to jointly take the required measures to promote the economic, social, and environmental use of protected areas in Latin America, ensuring the fulfillment of their conservation objectives.

Along these lines, it is expected that protected areas, if well managed, may contribute to economic and socio-environmental development through activities such as tourism and scientific research, while preserving their important role in biodiversity conservation.

Based on the findings of the coordinated audit, society and SAIs will be able to monitor how the management of protected areas in Latin America evolves over time, demanding improved governance of this environmental heritage from those in charge.

Finally, by promoting joint evaluations, SAIs promote compliance with international agreements and foster improvements in environmental management toward sustainable development.

Acknowledgments

The effective participation and mutual assistance of the stakeholders played a key role in ensuring the success of the coordinated audit on protected areas in Latin America. In addition, the success of such a comprehensive audit is due to the dedication of the technical teams involved in its different stages.

The support provided by *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) deserves special mention in this regard. It is also important to acknowledge the collaboration of environmental agencies that provided data and recognized, in carrying out this project, the opportunity it afforded for improving environmental conservation and preservation actions.

Finally, this document is intended for all those who, aware of the importance of protected areas for a healthy environment, believe in the possibility of reconciling biodiversity protection with sustainable development.

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