

# Towards the Municipal Decentralization of Forest Management in the Chaco and Yungas Eco-Regions of Bolivia (US\$ 94,500) (Bolivia)

## Final report summary

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### **PPD 98/04 Rev.1 (F)**

#### **I. Introduction**

This 6-month pre-project was submitted by the Government of Bolivia and was approved during the Thirty-seventh Session in Yokohama, Japan in December 2004. Full financing for the pre-project was made available by the Governments of Japan and Switzerland at the same Session of the Council. The Agreement regulating the implementation of the pre-project was signed on 19 July 2005. The Executing Agency further submitted the detailed Work Plan and a multilateral agreement/memorandum of understanding with the municipalities involved in the pre-project and the first disbursement of funds was released in March 2006.

#### **II. Pre-Project Objectives**

This pre-project envisioned contributing towards the development of the forest sector in two Bolivian eco-regions (Chaco and Yungas) by promoting sustainable forest management and strengthening the forest management capacity of municipalities with a view to improving the quality of life of the population. More specifically, it was to assess the current status in the implementation, operation and equipment of Municipal Forest Units in the Chaco and Yungas regions (Andean and Bolivian-Tucuman Regions) in order to establish and effectively operate these MFUs as required by the Forestry Law, and further develop the final design for a project proposal in accordance with the needs of MFUs and forest stakeholders (ASLs, communities, TCOs) in these two eco-regions, prioritizing activities and outputs and providing a methodology for the provision of technical support for forest management.

#### **III. Pre-Project Achievements and Outputs**

The pre-project was reported as completed in October 2007. In accordance with the pre-project document, all planned activities were carried out and can be summarized by major outputs and achievements as follows:

- Background information was compiled for all the municipalities in the Departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Tarija that have Municipal Forest Units in their jurisdictions, and further analyzed and documented in four diagnostic reports, one for each of the following four Bolivian Departments: La Paz, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, and Tarija;
- A training programme was developed and documented by the Forest Sciences School of the Universidad Mayor de San Simon for the municipalities in two Bolivian Eco-Regions: Yungas and Chaco, with a view towards enhancing their role in the management of their Municipal Forest Units (MFU);
- 23 Municipalities were selected in the two Bolivian Eco-Regions and strategies were developed for the management of their Municipal Forest Units. A publication, entitled “Auto-Management Models for the Municipal Forest Units of Chaco-Yungas” containing the aforementioned strategies was further distributed to all the municipalities;
- Inter-institutional collaboration was established with the Bolivian Forest Superintendence as regards the development of Municipal Forest Units; and
- A draft project proposal was prepared and further reviewed, after several participatory review meetings held with the Association of Tarija municipalities, MFUs, pre-project staff and other stakeholders, so as to incorporate the recommendations gleaned from these meetings; and
- The pre-project’s main output was presented to the Secretariat by the executing Agency, namely a project proposal entitled “Forest Management Development in Four Municipalities of the Bolivian Chaco”. This proposal, however, cannot be assessed by the Expert Panel for the appraisal of Project Proposals until Bolivia’s Official Contact Point officially submits it and further lifts some administrative observations that currently impede the assessment of the proposal by the said Panel.

#### **IV. Lessons Learnt**

The main lessons learned from the implementation of the pre-project include the following:

- The implementation of the pre-project took longer than expected, due mainly to the participatory nature in the formulation of the project proposal,
- A common denominator among municipalities was the inadequate staffing and financing of their MFUs, due mainly to the lack of importance given to forest resources by the municipalities authorities. Greater stability is needed at the various governmental authority levels and more resources must be provided immediately to the MFUs if change towards sustainable forest management is desired, and
- There is an inherent belief among forest, rural and indigenous communities in Bolivia that it is far more profitable to cultivate coca leaf and other subsistence crops than to manage natural forest resources, and therefore the tendency to continue with slash and burn practices.

## **V. Concluding Remarks**

The Executing Agency has submitted an extra-official final report and draft project proposal to the Secretariat prior to the Thirty-ninth Session of the Committee and indicated that it had submitted the pre-project's completion report, technical report and its main output, a project proposal, to ITTO's official contact point in Bolivia for its review, approval and formal submission to ITTO. As the Secretariat has also received the Final audited Report, this pre-project was reported as completed.