

## **Fundacion Frotera Verde (Argentina)**

### **Point 1:**

The Misiones Province in Argentina, once a marginal place in the Paranaense Forest (or Interior Atlantic Forest) today houses 60% of the last remains of non fragmented pieces<sup>1</sup>, with the adjoining Brazilian Parks of Iguazu and Turvo, this sector embraces 80% of the non fragmented forest.. The strategic importance of its conservation was not translated in significant contributions from the international community, until this project began.

Addressing the public opinion concerns, in Misiones 40% of the native forest remains are formally under same kind of protective regulation, but its results had been not a guarantee of a long term preservation..

A sector in the NE of the Province, in the border with Brazil with the best grade of forest conservation, was declared Biosphere Reserve in 1992 ( in occasion of Rio'92) and incorporated to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the MAB/UNESCO Program in 1995.

It is the Yaboty Biosphere Reserve (YBR) with an extension of 230,000 has, where in 180,000 privately owned ha an it is not allowed the land use conversion but the harvesting had been going on in a non sustainable and unrestricted selective logging.

The regulation for logging harvesting, with no consistent restrictions of quantity and quality, allowed to harvest any log with a market price covering its marginal cost. This regulation was changed last year, seeking for a lower impact logging, but most of this lands have reached a negative profit level point.

To avoid conflicts, neither neighboring agricultural settlement nor the aborigines inhabitants were taken in account. Neither was, until last year, implemented the participatory mechanisms established in the MAB Program.

In the year 2002, following the late Brazilian conservationist Marcio Ayres proposal, the first international cooperation program was implemented in the YBR. This have had a follow up process, being our Foundation, with support of WLT, the formal institutional step to foster its legacy.

In the first phase, funded by the FCO, UNDP, government and private sector, the *Marcio Ayres Field Station* was built and equipped in the Esmeralda Provincial Park , nuclei of the YBR, and a International Advisory Committee (IAC) was settled. The IAC is integrated by well known experts in tropical forest biodiversity and chaired by Sir Ghillean Prance, at present Science Director of the Eden Project.

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<sup>1</sup> It is considered non fragmented sectors that have more than 10,000 ha of continuous forest cover, the minor size that can grant long term survival. There remains in this condition less than 2 % of the original surface.

In 2004, an agreement was signed between the Eden Project and the Misiones Province aimed to establish a permanent program of research and field work of YBR biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement of its Guaranis inhabitants. With this purpose, a project is being executed since 2005, funded by the Darwin Initiative and the Misiones Province.

The program implementation has integrated in common goals researchers and public officer that were working uncoordinatedly in Misiones. It has also influenced the implementation of policy changes which have fostered biodiversity protection and increased Guaranis' rights respect.

During the two years of the program execution the Ministry of Ecology has established in the YBR the Integral Management Unit (YBRIU), which meant putting in place new staff of highly motivated rangers to control and enforce the YBR protection. It has also improved the support of research and environmental education programs.

It was also formed the Management Committee of the YBR with the participation of the main stakeholders, including the aborigines' communities with whom a new relationship of trust was generated. This important advance is very recent, it roused opposition in some sectors and must receive technical, material and political support to be successful. That should include sustainable economic activities for the owners and nearby inhabitants.

In the meeting of October 2006 the IAC proposed to set up a local organization in Misiones to be a counterpart of the WLT and of the Eden Project activities in the province.

In this way as a result, the *Fundación Frontera Verde* (FFV) -Green Frontier Foundation- was created, with Sir Prance as Founder and President.

**Point 2:**

**Previous stage founding sources (USD):**

Government of UK USD	100,000 (FCO)
Government of AR	40,000
Misiones Gov (in goods)	70.000
UNDP	35.000
Corporate	30.000

**Actual Stage: (UKP)**

Government of UK	145.000
Misiones Gov. (Services)	70.000
Eden Project	78.000
Others partners	50.000

WLT

12.000 ( foundation settling, and other costs)

**Point 4:**

The emergence of WLT as a new player and partner implied a quality change in scope and impact of the previous stages. In the advent of institutional changes and the eve of crisis in the management of the Reserve, the impact and legacy of ours actions should be acknowledged.

The objective of the important donation offered by WLT for land purchase was focused in an area in the SE of the YBR, adjacent to the Mocona Park and in front of the Turvo Park in Brazil. This is the most interesting place for conservation, for his strategic location, for been part of a biological corridor connecting the Esmeralda, Mocona and Turvo Parks, and for sheltering four guaranies villages. This sector, due to the negative impact in the livelihood of the Guaranis inhabitants, is under a logging moratorium since 2004, situation that can not be extended any longer.

After a preliminary agreement to buy all the 4,000 ha of this property, a change of ownership forced to begin from zero a more complex deal, with good perspective of success.

**Points 6 & 7:**

**Problems and setbacks:**

Last December a new government administration was elected. It was from of the same political party of the previous Governor, but at the Ministry level the change produced some delays.

In July, the owner of the land passed away two days after we reached a final agreement with the manager of the company.

In December, the National Congress pass a new law of Native Forest protection which requires a Land planning classification of all the forest land of the States, a new Office for Use Land Planning was settled in Misiones.

**Opportunities:**

The new government is in better situation for long term planning and we have a more direct access to the new Governor.

The land we were after returned to the main branch of an important landowner family. They are interested in keep part of the land for eco tourist development (10%) and to solve a conflict with a small peasant village settled near there in their lands as intruders, many years ago.

All this land will have an important value increase due to a new paved road in construction which will pass thorough this land and end in the Mocona Park. Additionally, the only access to the sector is crossing the Park Mocona, so the partnership with the Government must be established, and our role is quite important to achieve this.

If an agreement is reached, the possibility of a very successful and sustainable process is very likely to occur in this sector.

The new national law compels at the government and landowners to face the real situation of the YBR, where the intense selective logging will reach its end in a few years more ( it had been reached in many properties as an profitable activity). If this situations is not well managed and a “soft landing” and new activities are regulated, the intrusion and expansion of the agricultural frontier is inevitable, and only the isolated parks have an opportunity to remain.