

## Coodinated Audit on Protected Areas

### COORDINATED AUDIT ON LATIN AMERICA PROTECTED AREAS

Protected areas (PAs) are territories established by governments as a worldwide strategy of biodiversity conservation.

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) establishes that the 193 signatory countries must protect at least 17% of terrestrial areas and 10% of sea areas by 2020 by means of systems of effectively managed representative protected areas.

#### OBJECTIVE OF THE COORDINATED AUDIT

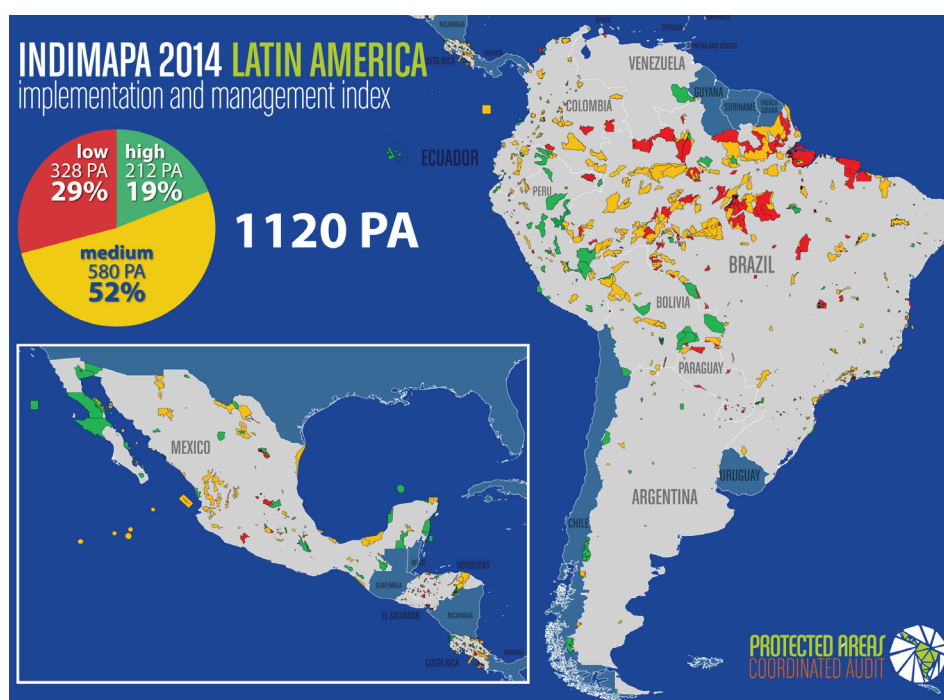
In order to evaluate the governance of Latin America protected areas, especially the implementation and management of these territories, a coordinated audit with the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) of 12 countries was carried out by: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Equator, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. The audit was coordinated by the SAIs of Brazil (TCU) and Paraguay (CGR) and followed the work plan defined by the Environmental Technical Committee (Comtema) of Latin America and Caribe Supreme Audit Institutions Organization (Olacefs). The audit conducted a standardized analysis of 1120 Latin American PAs, which allowed a systemic view of the management of these territories.

#### MAIN RESULTS

The coordinated audit verified that eight countries had already reached the goal of protecting at least 17% of their terrestrial areas. In contrast, the percentage of 10% of sea areas under protection is still far from being attained. Regarding the management of these territories, the international commitment requires that the areas should be efficiently managed in addition to being created.

Thus, to evaluate the PAs management in Latin America, the TCU created the Indimapa, an Evaluation Method of Implementation and Management of Protected Areas. This georeferenced tool uses indicators and indexes represented in maps, which allow the classification of PA management in three levels: red, yellow and green, corresponding to low, average and high levels of management and implementation, respectively.

Currently, 19% of the Latin American PAs are in the green level, indicative of a high degree of implementation and management, whereas almost 30% are still in the lowest management level.

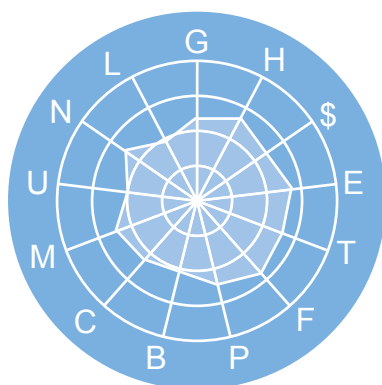


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To obtain this result, indicators arranged in a radar chart allow the identification of the strong points and improvement opportunities in each protected area, also providing a panorama of public policies on biodiversity conservation at the regional level.

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- G** Management Plan
- H** Human resources
- \$** Financial resources
- E** Administrative structure
- T** Territorial consolidation
- F** Environment inspection
- P** Research
- B** Biodiversity monitoring
- C** Managing council
- M** Community management
- U** Public use
- N** Concessions
- L** - Articulation in the protected area

Based on the evaluation of the indicators, the audit concluded that almost half of the protected areas do not have a management plan, which is considered the main planning and management instrument of these territories. Moreover, the audit identified fragilities in the verification of biodiversity conservation effectiveness in these areas, since 44% of the Latin American PAs do not carry out biodiversity monitoring activities.

Concerning human resources, it should be noted that 13% of these territories (149 PAs) do not have a single person in charge of their management, which hinders the accomplishment of essential activities such as research, oversight and public use.

In addition to this, 54% of the areas present problems of territorial consolidation such as land regularization, which affect PA management owing to uncertainties in property ownership and possession. Lastly, articulation problems between the involved parties negatively affect the PA environmental governance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SAIs

Considering the target of creation of protected areas established by the CBD, and in view of the current situation of the countries evaluated, the SAIs reported the panorama found to their national governments and made recommendations for the improvement of environmental governance.

Furthermore, given the low degree of implementation and management of protected areas, the SAIs have recommended that, in the process of creation and consolidation, mechanisms should be established to ensure the resources essential to the effective implementation and adequate management of these territories. It was also recommended to national governments the definition of a strategy of territorial consolidation of PAs that considers the technical, legal, social and environmental issues involved in this process. Finally, it was recommended that national governments should promote local articulations, both institutional and non-governmental, taking into consideration the cross-cutting nature of the topic of protected areas and the need of improvement in environmental governance.

### EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that the interested parties promote, in an articulated way, the measures necessary to develop the use of the economic, social and environmental potential of Latin American protected areas.

In this sense, it is desired that protected areas, if well managed, contribute to economic development through activities such as tourism and scientific research while maintaining their relevant role in biodiversity conservation.

Because of the coordinated audit, society and SAIs will be able to follow the evolution in management of Latin American protected areas, demanding from the persons in charge the improvement of governance of this environmental heritage.

Finally, SAIs engaged in joint evaluations promote the adherence of their countries to international agreements and stimulate the enhancement of environmental management leading to sustainable development.



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