



SOUTH AMERICAN PUNA

Conservation in the heights



Photo: Stephan Halloy
Sajama National Park, Bolivia

The Challenge

The South American puna is a large ecoregion, distributed along the Andean mountain range in northwestern Argentina, western Bolivia, northern Chile and southern Peru, located between 3000 and 4500 metres above sea level. It is dominated by grasses associated with thicket and shrubs.

In spite of its harsh climatic conditions, the puna has been anciently inhabited by human populations. Traditional management practices such as camelid grazing and agriculture terraces were compatible with natural resources conservation.

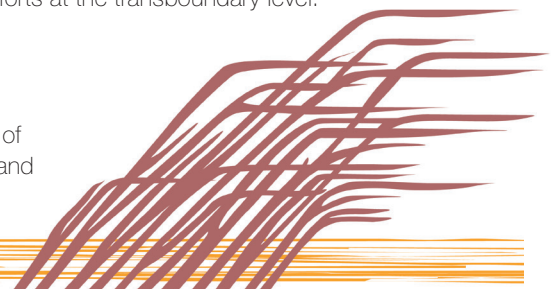
However, fragility of the ecosystems and some inappropriate management practices – such as the introduction of sheep grazing – have resulted in environmental degradation and desertification. Furthermore, global climate change is likely to have a substantial impact on the puna ecosystems and its provision of goods and services. These in turn can have severe consequences on lives and livelihoods of human populations.

Overall, the puna ecoregion is well represented in protected areas (14% without Chile). However, it is known that management effectiveness is quite deficient within a high proportion of these conservation units. Also, the wet puna has a smaller level of protection (6%).

The challenge is to raise the sustainable use, conservation and protection status of the South American puna through an integrated strategy that includes:

- Recovering and valuing traditional sustainable practices;
- Raising capacities of local stakeholders for sustainable grassland management;
- Promoting the designation of protected areas under different land tenure schemes;
- Promoting policy development and adjustment;
- Coordinating efforts at the transboundary level.

It is hoped that by carrying out these actions we can also contribute to the improvement of human well-being, support desertification reduction, and enhance resilience of natural and human systems to the effects of climate change.





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Photo: Marisela Huancaqui
Reserva Natural Junin, Peru

The Opportunity to Make a Difference

International commitments from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, and specific strategies within these agreements, convey the adequate background in which this project could be built on, such as:

- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), particularly the Sub-regional Program for the Sustainable Development of South American Puna;
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR), in particular the High Andes Wetland Strategy;
- The environmental agreements of the Andean Community of Nations, in which Bolivia and Peru are country members;
- The Vicuña Convention endorsed by Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, the vicuña being an emblematic species of the puna.

This project can make a difference by providing an opportunity for multi-stakeholder synergies, both within and between the four countries. Throughout its regional and global platform,

the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) is very well positioned to establish a productive dialogue between different institutions and experts to collaborate and work towards the achievement of common goals.

In particular, TGCI in the South American puna can add value by:

- Involving the IUCN South America Regional Office, Commissions, institutional members and other key regional partners within a common approach, seeking joint actions and solutions to avoid and reduce puna degradation.
- Providing a comprehensive framework that complements and enhances ongoing efforts.
- Building on the capacities and knowledge that already exist in the region.
- Linking partners in puna to other grasslands experts around the world included in the TGCI global network.
- Working towards the achievement of TGCI global target of improving conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands worldwide.

Scope of the Project

The main goal of the project is **to contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of the puna ecoregion in order to improve livelihoods of human populations, reduce land degradation and enhance ecosystems and human communities' resilience to climate change effects.**

The specific objectives are:

1. To recover and value traditional knowledge, experience and productive practices of grasslands sustainable management.
2. To develop and implement an action plan for the puna ecoregion that reduces land degradation and enhances conservation and sustainable use.
3. To improve stakeholders capacities for the sustainable management of puna ecosystems and for adaptation to the effects of climate change.
4. To promote good governance of natural resources in the puna ecoregion by facilitating the development of policy proposals through a participatory approach.

The project will work in the South American puna of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru.

Pilot sites will be selected based on the existence of ongoing conservation efforts; opportunities for institutional alliances; biological and cultural relevance; and experience in sustainable management.

Discussions of progress and continual exchange of knowledge and capacities will take place between partners and key stakeholders of the project from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, in a joint effort towards successful achievement of project goals.

The pillars of the project are: knowledge, field application, adaptive management, human well-being, influence in policy development and/or adjustment, awareness and capacity-building of decision makers and land managers.



From this project, it is hoped that in the puna ecoregion of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru:

- Baseline information regarding conservation, land use, management practices and stakeholders in the four countries is available.
- Knowledge, experiences and sustainable practices for grassland management that could contribute to human well-being are identified.
- An action plan is implemented for the integrated conservation of the puna ecoregion that takes into account environmental, social and economic aspects.
- Local stakeholders and organizations have enhanced their capacities to apply sustainable management practices to the puna grasslands and its species (such as shearing of wild vicuñas).
- Experience and knowledge exchange throughout regional networking is in place.
- Puna environmental threats are adequately identified in national policies.
- The total amount of area under formal protection in the wet puna is almost doubled in order to attain the 10% conservation target.
- Evaluation of management effectiveness and follow-up recommendations are applied in present protected areas within the wet and dry puna.
- Local stakeholders and decision makers acknowledge the conservation value of the puna grasslands goods and services.
- Policy proposals at different scales which aim to improve conservation and sustainable use of puna grasslands are developed through participatory methods.
- Local communities and native ecosystems have a higher resilience and are better adapted to cope with climate change effects.

Puna Humeda (Humid Puna)



Puna Xerofítica (Dry Puna)



Maps publication source:

Josse et al. 2009. Mapa de Ecosistemas de los Andes del Norte y Centro. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru y Venezuela. Secretaría General de la Comunidad Andina, Programa Regional ECOBONA, CONDESAN Proyecto Páramo Andino, Programa BioAndes, EcoCiencia, NatureServe, LTA-UNALM, IAvH, ICAE-ULA, CDC-UNALM, RUMBOL SRL. Lima. Peru.



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Photo: Marisela Huancaqui
Chacamarca Historic Sanctuary, Peru

Implementing Agencies and Partners

The project will be managed by IUCN South America Regional Office in conjunction with linked expert Commissions, institutional members and other key partners in the region.

IUCN

South America Regional Office

World Commission on Protected Areas

Commission on Ecosystem Management

Commission on Education and Communication

ARGENTINA

Administración de Parques Nacionales (APN)

Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA)

Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable (SAyDS)

BOLIVIA

IUCN Bolivia National Committee

Liga de Defensa del Medio Ambiente (LIDEMA) and its member institutions (Prometa, Instituto de Ecología – Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, etc.)

PERU

Universidad del Altiplano

Gobierno Regional de Puno

Funding Requirements and Timetable

The indicative budget for this project is \$8,500,000US over 5 years in the four countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru). Funds are likely to be leveraged by other ongoing initiatives that will be complemented by this project.

ACTIVITY	YEARS					BUDGET PER ACTIVITY (US\$)
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Project administration (salaries for regional and national coordinators, travel costs, communication, office maintenance).	X	X	X	X	X	900,000
Knowledge, experience and sustainable management recovery and value (baseline; best management practices development; dissemination and promotion).	X	X	X			700,000
Conservation action plan (participatory building of the plan; identification of legal, institutional and social context opportunities for protected area designation; consolidation of effective management; environmental management; sustainable management; climate change adaptation).	X	X	X	X	X	3,500,000
Capacity building for sustainable management (baseline of stakeholders knowledge and institutional capacities; communication and education strategies; experience exchange and regional networking; capacity building at institutional level).	X	X	X	X		1,400,000
Participatory building of policy proposals (development of action plan for application at local, national and regional levels; participatory process to formulate policy proposals; implementation of incidence plan).			X	X	X	2,000,000
Budget per year (US\$)	1,400,000	1,500,000	2,200,000	1,900,000	1,500,000	
TOTAL BUDGET (US\$)						8,500,000



Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative



http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_what/wcpa_conserving/wcpa_grasslandstf/

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Acknowledgements

The Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative and the progress that we have made would not be possible without the generous funding support of the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

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