



SOUTH AMERICAN TEMPERATE GRASSLANDS

Building the regional case for their conservation



Photo: Bridget Besaw
Guanacos on the Patagonian steppe

The Challenge

The temperate grasslands of South America form a vast and heterogeneous biome distributed in four ecoregions – paramos, puna, pampas and campos and the Patagonian steppe. These grasslands occur in every country (except the three Guianas) and occupy about 13% of the continent (2.3 million square kilometres).

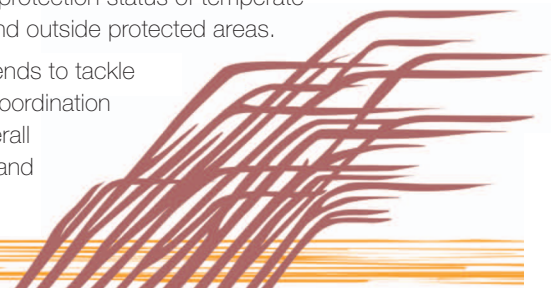
The four ecoregions of South American temperate grasslands play a key role in sustaining the lives and livelihoods of millions of people living in urban and rural areas. As such, these ecosystems have been subject to profound land conversion and intensive use for crop production, afforestation, grazing, water use (irrigation and hydropower generation), mining and oil extraction.

Today, almost half of South American temperate grasslands have been converted to other land uses or degraded, and only 6% are included in protected areas.

During recent years, much progress has been made in terms of research and direct action for the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands. However, as the ecoregions within this biome are big producers for national economies and they have not been perceived as important ecosystems from a biological perspective, a lot of effort still needs to be made to raise their conservation profile. Moreover, in the current context of global climate change, the global financial crisis, regional integration projects and national development policies, new threats have emerged and urgent action is needed if their long-term conservation is to be guaranteed.

The challenge from a regional perspective is to contribute to an overall increase in the protection status of temperate grasslands and a widespread use of sustainable management practices both inside and outside protected areas.

The Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) working in South America intends to tackle this challenge from a regional perspective. By facilitating transboundary cooperation, coordination and communication, TGCI in South America will act as a regional node to examine overall progress in the ecoregions, enhance actions executed in the countries or ecoregions and influence decision makers and policy building at a regional level.





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Photo: Francisco Cuesta Paramos

The Opportunity to Make a Difference

The Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) is a project of the Grassland Protected Areas Specialist Group within the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

In November 2008, the first TGCI South American workshop was held in San Clemente, Argentina. At the meeting, the need for an integral conservation framework for temperate grasslands of South America was acknowledged. A scientific and technical network for communication and cooperation between temperate grasslands practitioners in South America was formed. Network members and other key stakeholders of the region reunited again in August 2009 to develop a project portfolio for the South American temperate grasslands. As a result, one regional and four ecoregional projects were developed.

This TGCI regional project can make a significant difference by promoting coordination among the four distinct temperate grassland ecoregions of South America and by establishing a productive interaction between different government and non-government institutions and experts throughout the region. By synchronizing activities and outputs of the TGCI ecoregional projects that will be carried out within the four ecoregions, this TGCI regional project seeks to examine and support overall progress in South America by performing general diagnoses, systematizing common results and lessons learned, encouraging and coordinating communication and experience exchange, enhancing sub-regional and national influence in decision makers, and improving policy at international and regional levels.

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

In particular, TGCI in South American temperate grasslands can add value by:

- Involving the IUCN South America Regional Office, Commissions, institutional members and other key regional partners in a common approach, seeking joint actions and solutions.
- Providing a comprehensive framework that complements and enhances ongoing efforts at ecoregional scales.
- Building on the capacities, knowledge and legal framework that already exist in the region.
- Linking partners in South America temperate grasslands to other grassland experts around the world included in the TGCI global network.
- Working towards the achievement of the 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 improve the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands by facilitating the development of adequate policy and financial frameworks, influencing key decision makers and enhancing regional coordination of conservation efforts.

The specific objectives are:

1. To facilitate the regional, ecoregional and transboundary coordination and knowledge exchange of stakeholders related to the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands.
2. To raise awareness and knowledge of national and international decision makers about the economic, political, social and environmental key role and value of the South American temperate grasslands.
3. To support the development of national and international policy for the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands.
4. To encourage the identification, evaluation and implementation of financial mechanisms that support the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands.

This project will work with a regional scope, seeking to complement parallel TGCI projects at ecoregional levels in the paramos, puna, pampas and campos and Patagonian steppe. The regional component will coordinate progress with ecoregional components, with the intention of functioning as a central node that can visualize, evaluate and follow-up overall progress in the South American temperate grasslands as a whole.

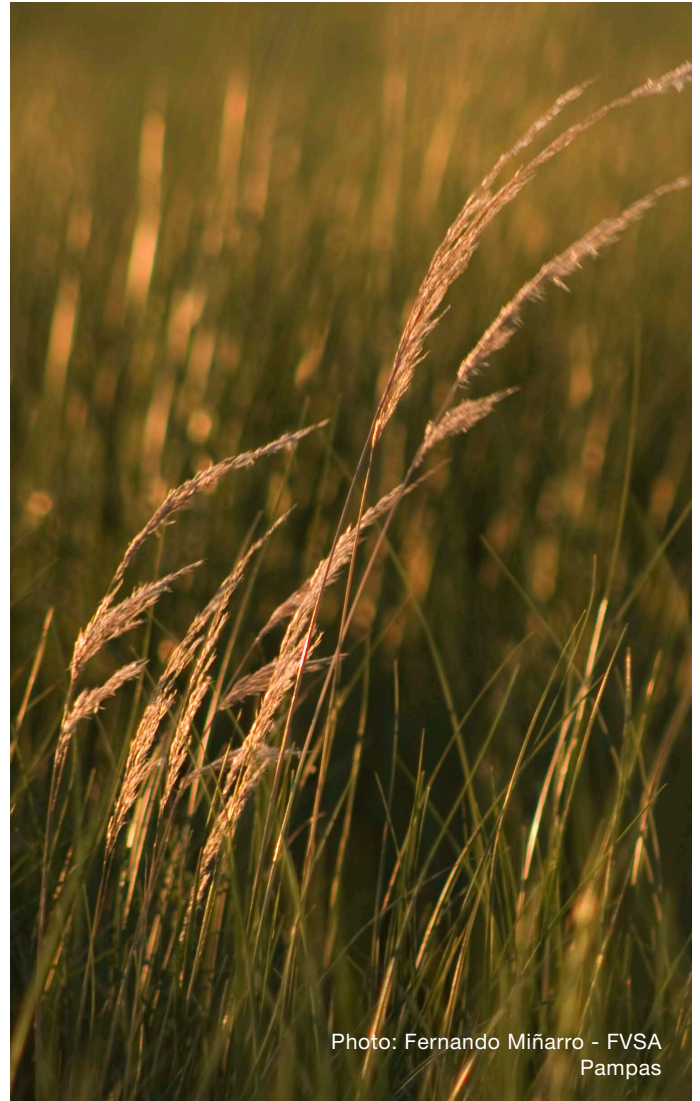


Photo: Fernando Miñarro - FVSA Pampas

From this project, it is hoped that in the four temperate grassland ecoregions:

- Transboundary, ecoregional and regional coordination between different stakeholders related to conservation and management of temperate grasslands has increased.
- The key role and value of the South American temperate grasslands as assessed by this project has been communicated to the national and regional authorities.
- Governance of temperate grasslands has improved through the development of national and international policy proposals and the enhancement of institutional capacities of different stakeholders for policy building and negotiation.
- Financial mechanisms that support the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands have been identified and implemented.

Ecoregional Projects

The TGCI is seriously and strongly committed to temperate grasslands conservation. Thus, while this regional project provides the umbrella for South American temperate grasslands conservation at a broader level, TGCI ecoregional projects need to be carried out in the paramos, puna, pampas and campos, and Patagonian steppe to guarantee conservation at local, national and transboundary levels.

Therefore, parallel to this regional concept note, TGCI and its partners have prepared a project portfolio that includes the following proposals:

Concept Note #1:

Paramos: Enhancing capacities and coordination to cope with climate change effects

This four-year project proposes activities to enhance resilience of Paramos ecosystems and people under the devastating impacts of climate change.

Target area: paramos of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela

Concept Note #2:

Puna: Conservation in the heights

The development of an action plan to reduce land degradation and enhance conservation and sustainable use of the South American Puna ecoregion is proposed in this five-year project.

Target area: puna of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru

Concept Note #3:

Pampas and Campos: Supporting coordination to enhance conservation and sustainable management

This five-year project addresses issues such as sustainable management and green commerce, formal protection, policy building, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and development of financial mechanisms for conservation.

Target area: pampas and campos of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay

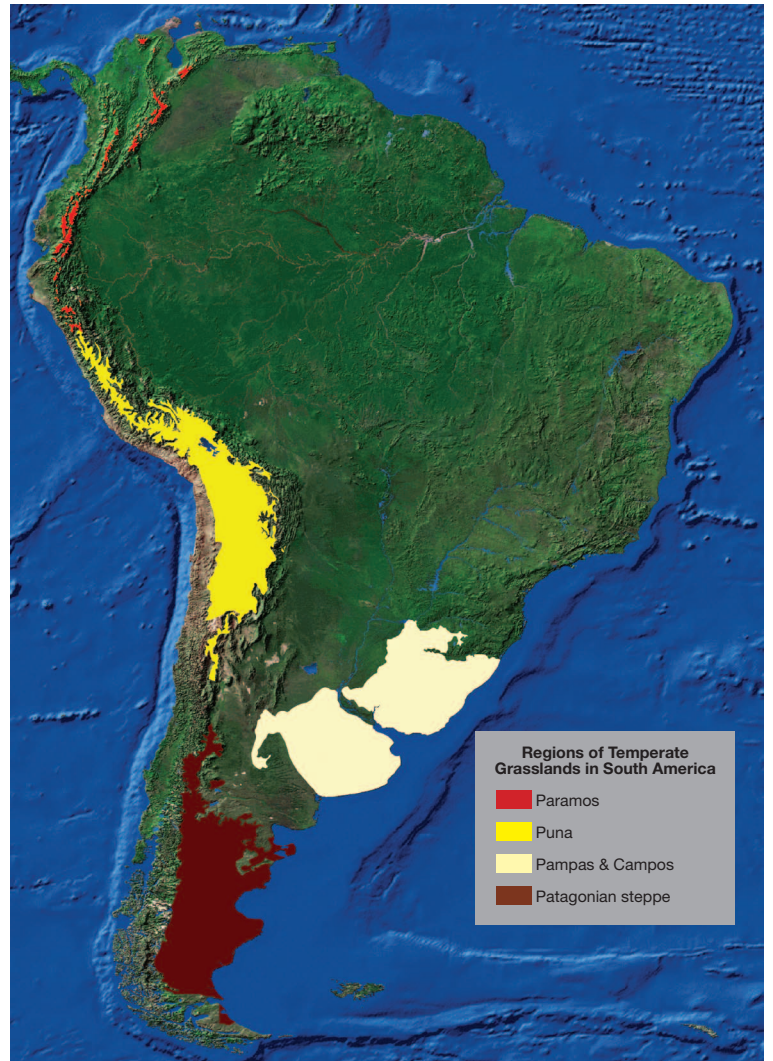
Concept Note #4:

Patagonian steppe: Developing a transboundary strategy for conservation and sustainable management

This five-year project seeks to address sustainable management and green commerce, formal protection, policy building, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and development of financial mechanisms for conservation.

Target area: Patagonian steppe of Argentina and Chile

South American Region



Fernando Miñarro – FVSA

Implementing Agencies and Partners

This regional project will be managed by the TGCI through the IUCN South America Regional Office, in collaboration with linked expert Commissions, institutional members and other key partners in the region.



Photo: Marisela Huancuqui
Vicúñas on the puna

Funding Requirements and Timetable

The approximate budget for this regional project is \$1,025,000US over 5 years. Funds are likely to be leveraged by parallel TGCI projects working at an ecoregional level.

ACTIVITY	YEARS					BUDGET PER ACTIVITY (US\$)
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Project administration	X	X	X	X	X	225,000
Enhancing regional coordination and communication	X	X	X	X	X	250,000
Raising decision makers' awareness and knowledge	X	X	X			160,000
Strengthening national and international policy			X	X	X	170,000
Supporting financial mechanisms identification and implementation		X	X	X	X	220,000
TOTAL BUDGET (US\$)						1,025,000



Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative

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

Contact:

Joerg Elbers
 TGCI South America
 IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature
 South America Regional Office
 Quiteño Libre E15-12 y la Cumbre, Sector Bellavista
 Quito, Ecuador
 Tel: +(5932) 2261075 ext. 27 / Fax: +(5932) 2463713
 Email: pastizaletemplados@iucn.org

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