



Meeting Report

First South American Workshop for the World Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative: defining the South American Strategy

San Clemente del Tuyú, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

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- **Administración de Parques Nacionales Argentina (APN)**
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Temperate Grasslands in South America and the World

Temperate grasslands are one of the most extensive biomes on the planet, occupying around 9 million sq. km., the equivalent of 8% of the earth's surface. These biomes are present in all continents, except Antarctica. (White et al. 2000)

Temperate grasslands are indigenous ecosystems found mainly in the middle latitudes where seasonal climates and soils favour the dominance of perennial grasses and other graminoids; and also in areas of tropical and temperate high mountains above the regional tree line where generally similar environments and temperate biogeographic affinities occur ([Peart 2008](#)).

Temperate grasslands were occupied and used by man since early stages of civilization. They are one of the most favourable environments for human settlement, among other motives given their high productivity. In many cases, they are the most important source for food on a global scale (Henwood 2006).

The degree of modification of the biome by human activities was so great that currently very little remains in a natural state. After years of exploitation and non-sustainable use, the temperate grasslands are presently considered the most threatened ecosystem in the world. Examples of this are the North American prairies, the pampas of South America, the grasslands in Southeast Australia and the steppes of Eastern Europe (Henwood 2006).

The elevated animal and plant diversity and the numerous endemism that they harbour, as well as the goods and services they provide to man, give these ecosystems a high conservation value. However, they are one of the most scarcely represented biomes in protected areas. Only 5.5% of the temperate grassland biome is protected worldwide ([Peart 2008](#)).

In South America, there are four temperate grassland eco-regions throughout several countries (Peart 2008): paramos, central Andes, pampas and campos, and the Patagonian steppe. Together, these eco-regions occupy approximately 2.3 million sq. km, which represents 13% of South American continent (Table 1).

In addition to their elevated biological diversity, the ecosystem services that they provide carry out a fundamental role in sustaining the life and livelihoods of millions of people on the continent. In that sense, these are environments of high social and economic importance.

In terms of the formal protection of this biome, 6% of the South American temperate grasslands are included in conservation units. The paramos are the most represented eco-region in protected areas, followed by the high altitude grasslands of the central Andes. On the other hand, the eco-regions of pampas and campos and the Patagonia steppe are scarcely protected (Table 1).

Table 1. South American Temperate Grassland Eco-regions. Countries in which they are represented, total and protected surface.

Eco-region	Countries	Total area (sq km)	Total area formally protected (sq km)	% Protection
Paramos	Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela	35,770	15,515	43.4%
Central Andes	Perú, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile	740,000	68,820	9.3%
Pampas & Campos	Argentina, Uruguay, Brasil	750,000	6,685	0.9%
Patagonian Steppe	Argentina, Chile	800,000	25,000	3.1%
		2,325,770	149,600	6.4%

1.2. The Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN)

The Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) is a project implemented by the Grasslands Protected Area Task Force of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with assistance from the Asian and South American Regional Offices (ARO and SUR). The project team is made up of five people from the WCPA, ARO and SUR. The TGCI has a Steering Committee made up of ten experts from seven countries. The entire taskforce is made up of approximately 75 people from 20 countries ([Peart 2008](#)).

The goal of this initiative is to double the current level of protection of temperate grasslands (5.5%) by 2014. In order to achieve this, TGCI will promote the creation of protected areas of the biome and the wide use of sustainable management practices. In that way the project will contribute to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss and degradation of the temperate grassland biome

In June of 2008, the first TGCI global workshop was held in Hohhot, China. South America and Eastern Asia were confirmed as priority pilot regions for the initiative. More information about the results of that workshop can be found at the following link: http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_puball/wcpa_pubsubject/wcpa_grasslandspub/

1.3. Definition of Temperate Grasslands

The World Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) has adopted the following working definition ([Peart 2008](#)):

“Temperate grasslands are indigenous ecosystems found mainly in the middle latitudes where seasonal climates and soils favour the dominance of perennial grasses and other graminoids; and also in areas of tropical and temperate high mountains above the regional tree line where generally similar environments and temperate biogeographic affinities occur”.

2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

The objective of the first South American workshop of the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) was to define a strategy to increase the level of conservation of temperate grasslands in South America by 2014, through the promotion of the designation and sustainable management of protected areas representative of the biome, and the wide use of sustainable management practices beyond protected areas boundaries.

The primary expected results were:

- A South American network of communication and international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable management of the temperate grasslands of the region created;
- Principal tools available for the conservation of the biome identified;
- Opportunities for transboundary conservation acknowledged;
- Financing strategy for the initiative in the region discussed;
- Action plan and work agenda for the South American initiative established.

Moreover, the hope was that the workshop would permit the establishment of a mechanism to update and correct the South American inventory of temperate grassland areas – inside and outside of protected areas, and priority areas – ([Michelson 2008](#)) as a common starting point for work in the region.

3. PARTICIPANTS

Forty-two people from eight South American countries participated in the workshop: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Each participant represented both their country and one of the four eco-regions defined by the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) in South America: Paramos, Central Andes, Pampas and Campos, Patagonian Steppe.



Only two countries were not represented at the workshop: Venezuela and Chile.

Representatives from Paraguay were invited to comment on the importance of including into the initiative the grasslands in the Southern portion of their country.

The complete participants list can be found in Appendix 1.

4. WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT

The opening ceremony was led by Robert Hofstede, Programme Coordinator of SUR and member of the TGCI Project team; Raúl Chiesa, member of the Honourable Board of Directores of the National Parks Administration of Argentina; Ricardo Cañete, Director of the Protected Areas Department of Buenos Aires State Government; and Diego Moreno, General Director of the Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina.



After the opening ceremony, a presentation about the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative was made in order to set the background to workshop activities, to show progress accomplished by the WCPA/IUCN initiative, and to contextualize the topic of South American temperate grasslands in a global context. Robert Hofstede (IUCN Sur) was in charge of the presentation.

Later, the following participants presented regional diagnostics to provide baseline information about temperate grasslands of South America, with an emphasis on conservation status:

- Páramos: Francisco Cuesta
- Central Andes: Juan Carlos Ledezma and Gonzalo Navarro
- Pampas and campos: Fernando Miñarro and David Bilenca
- Patagonia Steppe: Claudio Chehébar



The exhibitors provided a general description about each eco-region and their conservation status. Thus, complementing and updating the diagnostics elaborated for and presented at the global workshop (Hohhot, June 2008). The group discussions that took place afterwards allowed a constructive exchange of information between participants and at the same time complemented the information presented.

The four presentations and the regional diagnostics templates can be found at the following link:

http://www.iucn.org/es/sobre/union/secretaria/oficinas/sudamerica/sur_proyectos/index.cfm?uNewsID=1455

Workshop moderators Joerg Elbers and Ulises Martínez organized work groups to discuss challenges, opportunities and actions to increase the conservation and sustainable use of the temperate grasslands of each eco-region. Participants were requested to identify other South American temperate grasslands eco-regions that should be included in the initiative. One work group was given the task of discussing

the opportunities, challenges and course of action to promote transboundary conservation. The results from the groups were discussed in a plenary session.



The actions recommended previously were then used as an input to discuss how a South American network of communication and cooperation could improve temperate grasslands conservation and sustainable use. Also, important aspects of the network, such as outreach, operation, objectives, structure, actors and funding were addressed. Results of the work groups were discussed in the plenary.

Finally, based on these results a structural and operational proposal for the network was discussed and agreed, and commitments and responsibilities were established.

During the workshop, there was a half day field trip to visit the future Campos del Tuyú National Park and livestock farms nearby in Samborombón Bay. Participants were able to observe grassland conservation and sustainable use projects carried out by Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA) and National Parks Service of Argentina (APN) in that area.



The complete agenda of the meeting and the instructions for the working groups can be found in the Appendix 2 and 3.



5. WORKSHOP RESULTS

5.1. Recommendation for the inclusion of additional eco-regions

On the basis of the objectives of the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) in South America, the participants agreed upon the need to include all the temperate grassland eco-regions of the continent in the project. The following eco-regions that are currently not part of the project were suggested for further inclusion:

- Grasslands of the Jesuit ruins of Paraguay
- Campos Sulinos of Southern Brasil
- High Andes grasslands of Patagonia Argentina
- Grasslands of the hills in Pampas of Argentina
- Patagonian steppe of Chile

It was proposed that the information of these eco-regions be assembled and included in the regional analysis elaborated for the global workshop (Hohhot, June 2008). For the grasslands that can not be included in any pre-defined eco-region, an independent description document must be elaborated.

5.2. Transboundary Cooperation and Coordination

Transboundary cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands is crucial. It allows the integration of efforts made separately by government and non-government organizations of different neighbouring countries. It facilitates the action over natural, cultural, and social processes that transcend national borders (i.e. bird migration, indigenous people movements, cultural heritage continuum). In addition, it allows coordinated and joint actions aimed to face threats, such as the implementation of similar development plans for the conservation and sustainable management of the biome.

A set of themes were identified that are important to develop mechanisms for trans-border articulation in order to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands. For each topic, some specific examples for each eco-region were mentioned (Table 2).

Table 2. Themes and examples of transboundary cooperation identified in the workshop.

Ar: Argentina; Br: Brasil; Ch: Chile; Py: Paraguay; Uy: Uruguay
Common and scientific names are provided.

TOPIC	Eco-region		
	Patagonian Steppe	Pampas and Campos	Central Andes and Paramo
Important bi or tri-national geographic areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lago Buenos Aires Steppes • Magallanes Steppes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Río Negro (Br, Uy) • APA Ibirá Pytá (Br, Uy) • Espinillo - tres fronteras (Ar, Uy, Br) • Palmares de Colón (Ar-Uy) • Yacyretá (Ar-Py) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There´s a need to identify these areas, especially in the case of the Southern Andes. • In the Northern Andes they are already identified. • San Guillermo (Ar, Ch)
Control of invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castor (<i>Castor canadensis</i>) • Mouseear Hawkweed (<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capim Annoni (<i>Eragrostis plana</i>) (Ar, Uy, Br) • Wild Boar (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) (Uy, Br) • Pine tree invasion (<i>Pinus</i> spp.) (Br, Uy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donkey (<i>Equus asinus</i>) • European Hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>)
Conservation of threatened species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condor (<i>Vultur gryphus</i>) • Huemul (<i>Hippocamelus bisulcus</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pampas deer (<i>Ozotoceros bezoarticus</i>) • Yatay palm forests (<i>Butia yatay</i>) • Yellow cardinal (<i>Gubernatrix cristata</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condor (<i>Vultur gryphus</i>) • Andean Bear (<i>Tremarctos ornatus</i>) • Lesser Rhea (<i>Pterocnemia pennata</i>) • Andean Duck (<i>Oxyura ferruginea</i>) • Amphibians
Areas of connection routes for migratory species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geese (<i>Chloephaga</i> spp.) • Grassland shorebirds (Fam. Charadriidae) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed eaters (<i>Sporophila</i> spp.) • Grassland shorebirds (Fam. Charadriidae) • Upland Sandpiper (<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>) 	
Sensitivity of big impact projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas pipelines • Dams, Reservoir (HidroAysen) • Mining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermoelectric • Dams, Reservoir (Garabi) • Gas pipelines • Paper Mills (Botnia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining • Gas pipelines
	IIRSA		
Cultural interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapuche nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaucho • Jesuit ruins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great INCA trail • Aymará axis • Capac Ñam
Productive interest/Shared economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport routes • Soya, Forestation, and rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ----

It was suggested that diverse international action must be implemented for better transnational integration of work within temperate grasslands. International areas where these actions could be promoted were detected.

International Actions:

- Harmonize concepts and criteria between different countries (terminology, eco-region classification, etc.);
- Adjust management situations in neighbouring protected areas;
- Create new trans-border protected areas;
- Implement buffer zones in the borders of a country where adjacent protected areas exist in a neighbouring country;
- Elaborate international action plans (Pampas deer, Upland Sandpiper);
- Adjust financing lines;
- Integrate and articulate scientific investigation projects;
- Promote alternative sustainable strategies (tourism, product certification, livestock management, Palm Tree exploitation):

Areas of International Cooperation:

- Andean Community of Nations (Comunidad Andina de Naciones, CAN).
- Southern Cone Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur, MERCOSUR): ministerial agreement about grasslands.
- Global Environmental Facility (GEF): financial mechanism for countries.
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP): Memorandum of Understanding related to the conservation of migratory birds of southern South America grasslands and their habitats.
- RAMSAR Wetland Convention.
- UNESCO: Man and the Biosphere Programme.
- International and bi-national agreements.
- Bi and multi-lateral meetings on science, technology, and society.
- Shared management of basins: Cuenca del Plata, Acuífero Guaraní, Lagõa Mirim, Río Bermejo, Lago Titicaca.
- Entidad Binacional Yaciretá (EBY).
- Southern Cone Grassland Alliance (an Initiative of BirdLife).

It was established that the articulation mechanisms of this initiative with these transnational institutions will be defined in the future.

The coordination of action with groups that look after cross-border conservation of emblematic species inhabiting temperate grasslands was recommended. Some of these groups are the Andean Cat Alliance (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru), the Group for Conservation of High Andean Flamingos (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Perú), the North Andean Huemul (Argentina).

There was special mention in regards to the use and availability of shared water sources in trans-national high Andean zones, for example waters shared by Argentina and Chile. This topic was left open to future discussions with the proposal to include a special component about water in the international actions.

5.3. Challenges and Opportunities

The regional work groups identified challenges and opportunities to increase the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands of South America.

These groups worked with an eco-regional/country focus. There were numerous coincidences between different eco-regions and countries in regards to the challenges acknowledged, even though in some cases the themes raised are already being dealt with by different organizations. On the other hand, the opportunities mentioned were mainly specific to each country or eco-region.

The results of this working session provided a general outlook of the needs and possibilities that exist in the region for improving the state of conservation of the temperate grasslands.

Challenges

Below, the principal challenges to increase the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands in South America are presented:

- Increase the appreciation and perception of temperate grasslands as an environmental good with a long term vision.
- Identify priority areas for conservation in each eco-region.
- Create protected areas that represent each eco-region, taking into account their internal heterogeneity and the different management categories of the IUCN.
- Promote the creation of private protected areas and mechanisms for their long term protection.
- Achieve effectively managed protected areas.
- Overcome the lack of knowledge for sustainable management and conservation (for example, produce information and/or knowledge about ecosystems functioning).
- Homogenize the various classification systems for high Andean ecosystems (especially for Argentina and Chile).
- Develop technology packages for restoration and conservation.
- Promote conservation policies (governability).
- Promote an adequate management of agriculture, livestock, controlled burning and mining activity.
- Encourage development policies that take into account the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands.
- Promote the elaboration of integral plans and proposals for the sustainable management of grasslands (i.e. livestock management, tourism, etc.).
- Incorporate the conservation issue of temperate grasslands into the regulation of Environmental Impact Studies.
- Propose productive and profitable activities which are economically, socially and environmentally viable, as alternatives to the degradation of the temperate grasslands.
- Promote spatial planning that has restrictions to total alteration or replacement of temperate grasslands.
- Promote policies that favour conservation of natural grasslands by restricting the use of alien grasses.
- Increase the productivity and profitability of livestock activity compatible with conservation.

- Encourage education institutions specialized in production to prioritize training that harmonizes biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Overcome the deficit in the transfer of information and technology to the producer.
- Promote the development of best management practices of temperate grasslands.
- To value and communicate the importance of environmental services (for example, water from the paramos).
- To take advantage of private investment (tourism industries, mining, etc.)

Opportunities

The main opportunities to increase the conservation and sustainable use of South American temperate grasslands are presented below:

- Currently, there is public sensitivity and awareness for the environmental theme.
- Valuable and priority areas for the conservation of temperate grassland are already identified or under evaluation in some eco-regions (Pampa and Campos completed; Patagonian Steppe in process).
- A National Protected Areas System has been created in Uruguay.
- There are large, abandoned stretches of land in the Patagonian Steppe, but they are highly deteriorated.
- International and national NGOs are already working in the creation of private protected areas (FVSA, TNC Patagonia).
- Brazil and Uruguay have mechanisms that guarantee the long term protection of private protected areas.
- Some government institutions and international NGOs are working on the evaluation of effective management of protected areas and on the generation of mechanisms to improve their effectiveness (APN, TNC Patagonia).
- Various academic and technical institutions are developing investigations about temperate grasslands (for example: IFEVA-UBA, INIA, INTA).
- There are research and restoration experiences in the Patagonian Steppe and the Pampa eco-region.
- There is some legal framework compatible with the conservation of temperate grasslands. For example, Sheep Husbandry law in Patagonia; Spatial Planning law in Uruguay; new proposal of Spatial Planning in Río Grande do Sul, Brasil; Supreme Decree of Spatial Management with Shared Responsibility in SERNAP protected areas, Bolivia; Management Plans for Protected Areas.
- There are some existing experiences of knowledge transfer, for example the one developed by INTA (although it focuses on agricultural supplies and replacement of natural grasslands with pastures).
- Some institutions have developed information and knowledge about temperate grasslands management (INIA, INTA, EMBRAPA).
- Some best management practices have been developed (Manual of Best Practices for Livestock Management by FVSA and Aves Argentinas).
- An emerging market for natural products exists. Also there is a FAO mandate regarding to food quantity vs. quality.
- Carbon markets and green certification exist.
- International conservation agreements exist.
- Regional conservation strategies exist (Regional Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of High Andean Wetlands).

5.4. Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the South American Temperate Grasslands

Scope and Advantages of a Continental Focus

The participants of the workshop expressed interest in the elaboration and implementation of a South American strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of the temperate grasslands. A continental strategy will allow the following:

- Increase public attention around the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands.
- Strengthen, complement and stimulate local, regional and national initiatives.
- Identify common regional threats and contextualize them on a regional and continental scale.
- Generate a shared vision.
- Focus on the conservation efforts towards common goals and obtain advances at a level of each eco-region.
- Position the importance and value of temperate grasslands and influence the national and international political sphere.

This strategy must have a political reach. Therefore, it must be based in technical and scientific information, but it must also use simple and straightforward language.

The local and national initiatives work in specific themes at a local, national or eco-regional scale. On the other hand, a continental strategy operates with a cross-border and continental focus. Therefore, a South American strategy would not likely smother or overlap local projects; instead, it could complement and empower them.

Towards the Elaboration of the Strategy

The general goal of the workshop was to begin to define a South American strategy to raise the level of conservation and promote the sustainable use of the temperate grasslands in the continent. Additionally, it was expected that during the meeting a communication and cooperation network would be formed.

The network of regional actors will be in charge of developing and implementing the strategy.

There was a consensus that the results of the workshop, detailed in this section, are useful inputs for the South American strategy. Nevertheless, the details of the strategy should be adjusted as soon as the network is functioning.

Central Themes of the Strategy

During the workshop, the regional work groups proposed a course of action to increase the conservation and sustainable use of the temperate grasslands in South America, in order to deal with the principal challenges and to take advantage of the existing opportunities in the region (see point 5.3).

We present here the suggested actions grouped under six core central themes: protected areas; sustainable use and management; research and knowledge transfer; policy adjustment and application; communication, dissemination and education; regional cooperation and coordination.

These central themes offer a general outlook of the work that must be done in South America to stop the deterioration of temperate grasslands and improve the conservation and management. For this reason, it is important that said elements are included as frame components in the future South American strategy.

PROTECTED AREAS

To promote the conservation and formal protection through the creation, expansion and effective management of public and private protected areas.

- Identify priority areas for the conservation in each eco-region.
- Promote the creation and expansion of public protected areas that have as a principal objective the conservation of temperate grasslands.
- Promote the creation of private protected areas that have as a primary objective the conservation of temperate grasslands.
- Promote the increased connection between temperate grassland protected areas.
- Explore innovative mechanisms for the acquisition of land for protected areas.
- Propose mechanisms for the construction and the long term protection of private protected areas.
- Promote the evaluation of protected areas management effectiveness.

SUSTAINABLE USE AND MANAGEMENT

Promote sustainable use and management practices compatible with the conservation of natural resources.

- Promote the elaboration of best management practices for agriculture, livestock management, controlled burning, mining activity, etc.
- Identify, disseminate and promote best practices toolboxes for each eco-region.
- Propose productive and profitable alternatives which are economically, socially and environmentally viable, and that are compatible with conservation.
- Promote the elaboration of integral plans and proposals for the sustainable management of grasslands.
- Promote the implementation of payment for environmental services, certification of meat, value added¹.
- Integrate the production and conservation in protected areas buffer zones.
- Integral management of watersheds and soil.

¹ The adding of value can be viewed in two different ways: a) the adding of environmental and cultural values through the highlighting of grasslands products; and b) the adding of value by the work/transformation of grasslands products. In both cases, the goal is to raise economic competitiveness of grasslands use, as opposed to the alternative of replacing the ecosystem with other land use.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Promote the generation of scientific and technical knowledge and its adequate transfer for better decision making.

- Establish a common ecological classification for all of South America.
- Identify knowledge gaps about grasslands in relation to sustainable management and conservation, and promote corresponding research.
- Promote the development of research and the generation of tools for the restoration, sustainable management and use, monitoring of status and condition of temperate grasslands.
- Analyze the bio-geographic representation of the ecosystems in the priority conservation areas.
- Study temperate grasslands functioning and the threshold of use of the principal resources.
- Analyze the economic and social functions of each eco-region.
- Generate knowledge about ecosystem services of temperate grasslands.
- Elaborate the red list of critical ecosystems of the temperate grasslands.
- Assist existing efforts of transfer of information and technology to the producer, or generate new programs where required.
- Encourage education institutions specialized in production to prioritize training that harmonizes biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
- Promote participative research with producers on aspects of sustainable use and management of temperate grasslands.

ADJUSTMENT AND APPLICATION OF POLICIES

Promote the adjustment and application of policies and national and institutional laws that incorporate measures of conservation and sustainable use.

- Encourage the inclusion of conservation and sustainable use practices for temperate grasslands in the development policies.
- Promote spatial planning that considers guidelines for the conservation of temperate grasslands.
- Promote the incorporation of specific steps for the conservation of temperate grasslands in Environmental Impact policy.
- Urge the national governments to comply with international agreements (CBD, Ramsar).

COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND EDUCATION

Generate and consolidate dissemination, communication and education processes to improve the perception and increase the value of the biome among general public.

- Promote environmental awareness, communication and education focused on different actors.
- Incorporate an education and dissemination strategy in the curriculum and study plans of field professionals.
- Promote the reinforcement of basic education, at a university or non university level (i.e. community or society level), related to conservation and sustainable management of native temperate grasslands.

- Establish channels of communication and knowledge transfer between institutions and research groups.
- Promote innovative and traditional management practices through training, dissemination and communication activities.
- Encourage the production of didactic material for dissemination and communication that highlights the importance of temperate grasslands.

REGIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Establish regional mechanisms of cooperation and coordination.

- Build and implement the South America Network for communication and cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands.
- Elaborate and inventory of actors of the conservation and production of each eco-region.
- Explore opportunities for interaction with international organizations (UNDP, WWF, WCS, CI, GEF) and governments interested in the cooperation and financing of priority themes.
- Develop transboundary conservation strategies and projects in countries that share eco-regions (examples in Table 2).

5.5. South American Network of Communication and Cooperation

Scope of the network

Different levels or scales exist where work is needed to improve and promote the sustainable use of temperate grasslands: local, eco-regional, national, continental and global.

The cooperation and communication network will operate at a transnational and continental level. That way, it will favour the interactions between countries and between different eco-regions, and strengthen the interactions towards the interior of each eco-region.

In spite of the fact that the scope will not be local or national, the network is expected to have impact at those levels, though strengthening local initiatives and influencing national policies.

Also, the network will have an influence on a global level, because through the advances of conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands in South America, it will contribute to a world goal of conservation of the biome.

This way, the South American network will become an important component of the world Temperate Grassland Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN).

Goals and objectives of the network

The participants agreed that the purpose of the network must be in harmony with the goal of the world Temperate Grassland Conservation Initiative of the WCPA/IUCN (see title 1.2).

In this context, the goal of the South American network for communication and cooperation is to increase the effective conservation of temperate grasslands in South America, by promoting the creation of protected areas representative of the biome and the use of sustainable management practices.

The specific objective of the network is to contribute to the goal through the promotion and facilitation of the communication, the exchange of information, and the transnational cooperation between actors and institutions, in order to improve the knowledge and abilities, create public awareness about the importance of the biome, and influence national and international policies. The specific objectives should also be framed in the South American strategy to be developed by the network.

Areas of work

The network will work in the following areas:

1. COMMUNICATION

Facilitate the communication and information exchange between people and institutions that work in the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands in the different eco-regions of South America.

2. TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION

Promote the collaboration between people and institutions that work in the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands in the different eco-regions and countries, and encourage the joint elaboration and implementation of transnational projects and activities (examples in Table 2).

3. KNOWLEDGE

Promote the integration and homogenization of existing knowledge, and the generation of new research and tools that revolve around the conservation and sustainable management of South American temperate grasslands. Evaluate information and conservation gaps, and promote the research of these themes.

4. DISSEMINATION AND EDUCATION

Create awareness about the natural, social, and economic value of South American temperate grasslands through the communication and dissemination of the goods and services they provide. Spread information about the threats to conservation. Promote the transfer of knowledge and tools necessary for better decision making.

5. POLICIES

Influence national and international policies through the elaboration and implementation of a South American strategy.

6. FUNDRAISING

Obtain financing for the operation of the network.

Network Structure

Initially, the network will be integrated by all of the participants of the first South American workshop (Appendix 1).

The members of the network have a technical/academic profile related to the conservation and sustainable use of temperate grasslands in South America. They are representatives of government and non-government organizations and universities.

Participation in the network is open to the general public; it is not restricted to IUCN institutional members.

In the beginning, the network will have a simple, horizontal and informal structure.

It is important that the network has a central node that propels the project assuring the monitoring of the planned actions. For the moment, this technical secretariat functions at IUCN SUR, and is financed by the world Temperate Grassland Conservation Initiative (WCPA/IUCN) until December, 2009.

It was agreed that at the beginning, the network will have a focal point for each eco-region, in order to demonstrate that it is a continental network that crosses borders and has a continental focus. In the medium term and following the dynamics of the network, the need to incorporate focal points for each country will be evaluated.

The duties of the focal points will be to facilitate the communication and to speed up the discussions towards the interior of the eco-region, with other focal points, and with the technical secretariat.

The focal points are people with support from their institution to be able to carry out their entrusted role. It is not a permanent role and can be changed according to the necessities of the network or at the request of the focal points.

In the workshop, the following focal points were designated:

- Paramos: Francisco Cuesta, CONDESAN, Ecuador.
- Centrales Andes (including high andean grasslands in Patagonia): Juan Carlos Ledezma, Conservation International, Bolivia.
- Pampas and campos: Fernando Miñarro, Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina.
- Patagonia Steppe: Javier Beltrán, The Nature Conservancy, Argentina.

In the medium term, the necessity of including people from political institutions, production, or the financial sector into the network will be analyzed.

Baseline information for the network

The formation of a scientific-technical steering committee was decided in order to supervise the basic information of the initiative (for example: diagnostics, maps).

Various organizations can contribute more information to subsidize different actions of the network. For example, some organizations are Ministério de Méio Ambiente de Brasil, Fundação Zoobotánica de Río Grande do Sul de Brasil, Nodo SIB de la Delegación Regional Centro de APN.

The need to establish another work group with a technical-scientific profile to elaborate the red list of temperate grasslands ecosystems was discussed. It was proposed that this group is initially made up of the following institutions.

- Rumbol SRL, Bolivia
- SERNAP, Bolivia
- Nodo Sib del NOA- APN, Argentina
- Fundación Moises Bertoni, Paraguay

5.6. Financing

Discussions about fundraising for the initiative were centered on the functioning of the South American network.

It was considered unnecessary to count on large amounts of funding at the beginning of network operation. Initially, funds are only required to cover the wage of one person in the IUCN SUR to coordinate the initiative.

In the future, it will be necessary to search for more financing to achieve the network goal through work in the six areas (see 5.5).

There was agreement that the first amount of funding that is raised should be destined to the homogenization of information (guideline 4).

5.7. Action Plan

The action plan for the South American network can be found in a separate document.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The regional analysis presented at the workshop and the subsequent conversations allowed for each participant to gain basic knowledge about temperate grasslands in South America and their conservation status. Additionally, the workshop was able to update and complement the information that the initiative had prepared for the global workshop in Hohhot.

The discussions about challenges, opportunities, and guidelines allowed the participants to identify the common needs and areas of work and other specifics for each eco-region.

The importance of an integral conservation framework for temperate grasslands of South America was agreed upon. This will be achieved through the construction of a common strategy for the entire continent.

The future South American strategy will be based in the following central themes: protected areas; sustainable use and management; research and knowledge transfer; adjustment and application of policies; communication; dissemination and education; regional cooperation and coordination.

A viable South American strategy that contemplates the necessities and requirements of the region should be built by a work group that knows the problems of the different eco-regions and can think about strategic solutions as a whole.

Therefore, a scientific-technical network of communication and cooperation will be formed, whose initial members are those present at the workshop.

The network will base its activities on guidelines that will contain the following lines of work: communication; transboundary cooperation; dissemination and education; knowledge; policies; fundraising.

The results of this meeting provide the bases for the elaboration of a strategic framework for the operation of the network and the achievement of its goal: to increase the effective conservation of the temperate grasslands of South America.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Participants List

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Appendix 2. Workshop Agenda

November 18th		
7:00	14:00	Participants arrival to Buenos Aires City
14:00	19:00	Bus to San Clemente del Tuyú
21:00	23:00	Welcome dinner
November 19th		
Morning		
9:30	10:00	Welcome speech (IUCN Sur, APN, FVSA)
10:00	10:15	Workshop presentation
10:15	11:00	Participant Introduction
11:00	11:30	Coffee Break
11:30	12:00	TGCI summary
12:00	13:00	Regional Overview (description, status, threats): (1) Páramos; (2) Central Andes
13:00	14:30	Lunch
Afternoon		
14:30	15:30	Regional Overview (description, status, threats) (cont.): (3) Pampas and Campos; (4) Patagonia steppe
15:30	15:45	Instructions for working groups
15:45	17:00	Challenges, opportunities and course of action for each eco-region and transnationally (5 groups)
17:00	17:20	Coffee Break
17:20	18:20	Challenges, opportunities and course of action – plenary session.
November 20th		
Morning		
8:30	8:45	Explanation of second day
8:45	9:30	Presentation of yesterday's results and discussion
9:30	9:45	Instructions for working groups
9:45	12:15	Groups discussion about Southamerica's network for comunication and cooperation
12:30	13:00	Bus to General Lavalle
Afternoon		
13:00	14:30	Lunch
14:30	18:30	Field visit to future National Park and neighbouring fields
November 21st		
Morning		
9:00	9:15	Explanation of third day
9:15	10:30	Presentation of yesterday's results and discussion about regional network for comunication and cooperation and a South America Strategy
10:30	10:50	Coffee Break
10:50	11:30	Network building, Action plan, commitments
11:30	12:00	Workshop closure
12:00	14:00	Lunch
Afternoon		
14:00	19:00	Bus to Buenos Aires City

Appendix 3. Instructions for working groups

Challenges, opportunities and guidelines

- Identify conservation problems present in the región that have not been considered in the presentation.
- Discuss and prioritize the principal challenges and opportunities of each eco-region depending on the presentation and previous discussion.
- Discuss and propose guidelines to deal with the principle challenges and opportunities
- Discuss what other grasslands should be included in the initiative

Cross-border conservation

- Identify areas of interest for cross-border conservation (areas or network areas) and discuss viable actions in each case.
- Identify transnational processes/institutions/and agreements that promote or develop common policies and actions (work groups of MERCOSUR, Secretariat of the CAN etc., Alianzas del Pastizal, transnational development projects, related events, etc.).
- Discuss and propose articulation mechanisms for the initiative with these transnational processes/institutions.
- Discuss what other grasslands should be included in the initiative.

South American communication and cooperation network

- What reach can the South American strategy have? What value added does it have?
- Why do we need a network?
- What will its duties be? (short and long term)
- Who should be a part of the network?
- What organizational structure is required to carry out these duties?
- What resources are required to carry out these duties? How will they be financed?
- Who is committed to take on a determined role in the network? (monitoring)