



Global
Water for
Sustainability
PROGRAM

Project Brief:

Integrated Water Resources
Management in the Pastaza
River Basin, Ecuador & Peru



The story of the Pastaza River Basin begins high in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador, in a diverse landscape of croplands, urban centers, and protected areas that is home to more than one million people. As it descends from the Andes, the Pastaza winds through a series of spectacular waterfalls and canyons, in one of the most biodiverse regions on earth. Once in the lowlands, the river flows through remote rainforests near the Peru/Ecuador border and into the Abanico del Pastaza, a large wetlands complex covering much of the Peruvian portion of the basin. In this same region, the lives and livelihoods of thousands of native people are intimately linked to the river's resources. The Pastaza's journey ends at its confluence with the Marañon River, which eventually carries its waters into the heart of the Amazon.

At Issue

Contamination of water resources caused by the release of untreated waste into rivers poses a substantial threat to the biodiversity of the Pastaza Basin, and to the well-being of basin residents. Key issues to be addressed are industrial pollution in the headwaters of the Pastaza, the lack of sewage treatment systems throughout the basin, and petroleum exploration and exploitation in the lowlands. Much of the lower Pastaza is inhabited primarily by native people, thus building capacity among these communities for management of water and other natural resources is an essential component of integrated water resources management in the basin.

Partners

To achieve sustainable water resources management in the Pastaza River Basin, GLOWS is supporting the efforts of several national and local partners, including:

- Regional Coordinator of Indigenous Peoples (Peru)
- National Commission of Water Resources (Ecuador)
- Municipal governments of the middle Pastaza (Ecuador)



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Implementing Partners

- WWF Peru Programme Office
- Fundación Natura (Ecuador)



Project Goals

GLOWS and its partners are working toward a future for the Pastaza River Basin that is characterized by well-informed and participatory decision-making, where sufficient water quality is maintained to protect aquatic biodiversity and the well-being of human communities, and where native people have the capacity to manage natural resources. Our key activities are featured below.

Reducing Water Contamination: Water pollution is one of the biggest threats to aquatic biodiversity and the well-being of human communities in the upper Pastaza River Basin. GLOWS is working to gather critical baseline data on water quality throughout the basin and establish a system where information on water quality is collected on a regular basis and used by appropriate management authorities. This effort brings together national institutions, municipal governments, university scientists, and basin residents. GLOWS is also working to explore appropriate options for wastewater treatment for several cities in the middle Pastaza Basin.

Trans-boundary Stakeholder Collaboration: The lower Pastaza Basin is home to thousands of native people in three main communities: Achuar, Kandozi, and Kichwa. Many villages on both sides of the Ecuador/Peru border are facing similar challenges with respect to water and other natural resources management. Through local partners, GLOWS is working to facilitate communication and sharing of lessons learned between native communities on both sides of the border.

Formation of Permanent Participatory Structures: On the Peruvian side of the border, GLOWS is supporting the formation of a Pastaza Basin Coordination Committee to facilitate the active participation of key river basin stakeholders in the effective management of the lower Pastaza River Basin. This committee will integrate representatives of Kandozi, Kichwa, and Achuar communities and will develop and implement a management plan for the lower Pastaza Basin in the coming years.

Community-based Fisheries Management: Fish and other aquatic biota provide the foundation of the diet of native communities in the lower Pastaza Basin. However, overfishing and illegal commercial fishing pose major threats to aquatic biodiversity, particularly in the area around Lake Rimachi, Peru. In response to these stresses, GLOWS is working through local partners and in collaboration with Kandozi fishermen to develop a fisheries management plan that maximizes profits to native communities from fishing and establishes regulations to ensure long-term sustainability of fisheries resources in the lake. As part of this effort, GLOWS and local partners are conducting a market study to improve current business practices and explore opportunities for some commercialization of native fisheries.

Best Practices in Petroleum Operations: An estimated 65% of the petroleum produced in Peru comes from the Pastaza and neighboring basins. Several extraction lots have been developed in recent years and there are detailed plans for expanding petroleum operations in the near future. Promoting sound environmental management in petroleum exploration and exploitation activities is a key component of water resources protection in the lower Pastaza River Basin.

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