

The Project

The goal of ProBenefit is to work out a model procedure and agreement for a fair and transparent sharing of benefits from the sustainable use of biodiversity in the Amazon lowland of Ecuador. These will be developed in transparent negotiations with local communities in Ecuador, relevant NGOs, the Ecuadorian authorities and a medium-sized pharmaceutical company from Germany.

ProBenefit operates on the basis of the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which provides guidelines for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

ProBenefit aims at creating a foundation of trust and mutual understanding for fair negotiations. The project hopes to provide suggestions and standards for working out similar agreements in the future.

The Objectives

Scientific Objectives

- Development of a transparent process for reaching a fair agreement on benefit-sharing, with particular attention to dialogue processes among rights-holders and interested actors,
- Improvement of the methods for locating plants with pharmacological uses,
- Successful interdisciplinary integration of project team,
- Improvement of the botanical (systematic), ethnological and ecological bases for exploring medical plants,
- Eventual production of a plant extract with documented pharmacological properties.

Process-Related Objectives

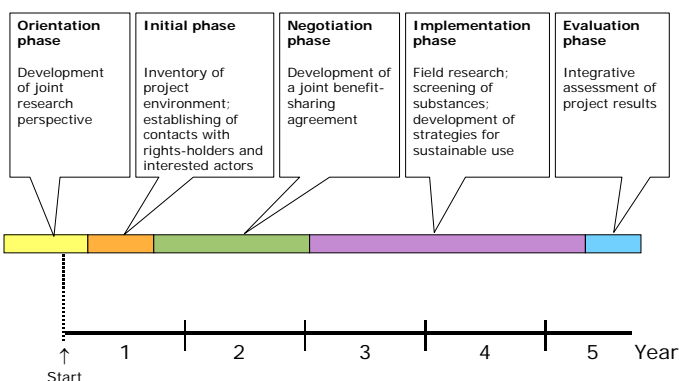
- Development of a participatory process and a benefit-sharing agreement acceptable and sustainable for all involved actors,
- Development of a transparent and satisfactory communication process among all relevant actors.

Overall Objectives

- Preservation of indigenous knowledge,
- Incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the project area.

Schedule

ProBenefit started in June 2003 and will run for five years. It will comprise five phases of work.



The Project Members

The participating German institutions are charged with the following tasks:

Albrecht von Haller-Institute of Plant Sciences, University of Goettingen

- Documentation of species serving as useful and medicinal plants,
- Analysis of the habitat and ecological properties of vegetation, classification of pharmacologically relevant species,
- Experiments on the germination and cultivation conditions of relevant species.

Dr. Willmar Schwabe Pharmaceuticals, Karlsruhe

- Negotiating party in the negotiations on a fair benefit-sharing agreement for the use of biological resources,
- Analysis of samples for extracts with pharmacological or food-supplementary properties,
- Selection and financing of a Ph.D. student from Ecuador after the negotiation phase.

Institute for Biodiversity - Network (ibn), Regensburg

- Initiation, moderation and documentation of a transparent and comprehensible negotiation process comprising all relevant actors and interest groups,
- Training and capacity-building for the development of strategies for the participation of local communities in the sustainable use of biodiversity,
- Ethnological studies of indigenous knowledge about biodiversity,
- Structural characterisation of forest types.

Institute of International Law, University of Goettingen

- Information on and analysis of national and international legal foundations and requirements concerning the issue of cooperative research and use of biological resources for pharmaceutical purposes,
- Development and monitoring of a strategy for the project and for the stakeholders in order to engage in successful discussion, negotiation and agreement,
- Analysis of legal parameters and rules suitable for similar negotiations.

VDI Technology Center, Future Technologies Division, Duesseldorf

- Internal coordination and documentation of the project,
- Initialisation and monitoring of the interdisciplinary process,
- Public relations in Germany,
- Support to the project's advisory board.

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Contact

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