

Corredor Azul Programme

Connecting People, Nature and Economies along the Paraná-Paraguay River System

Wetlands INTERNATIONAL

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The objective of this Programme, which began in 2017, is to preserve the health and connectivity of the Paraná-Paraguay wetland system as a natural heritage site that is key to the region's sustainable development and the livelihoods of communities throughout the system.

In order to achieve our objective, we implement activities at local, regional and national levels. We collaborate and establish partnerships with governments, the private sector, civil society organisations, universities and research institutes, and local communities. We generate knowledge and exploit it for capacity building. By developing pilot experiences, we demonstrate new ways to preserve and sustainably use this wetland corridor as an environmental, social, and economic asset.

Programme Goal

Safeguard the health and connectivity of the Corredor Azul and its iconic wetlands for the benefit of people and nature.

We promote a regional and landscape approach and we develop activities from an integrated perspective, taking into consideration the interconnectivity of wetlands between themselves and their surroundings and understanding them as territories of life. In this way, our work aims to generate impact that goes





beyond the specific intervention sites in which our activities take place.

We push to create a shared understanding of sustainable development in the region. We encourage stakeholders to recognise the importance of the system for the wellbeing of the millions of people who inhabit the area. Preserving the wetlands' ecosystem services is of vital importance, as they form the basis of the region's sustainable development and play a key role in climate change adaptation.

Through understanding, we value; through action, we protect. With this as our focus, our objective is to create a lasting, long-term pathway that goes beyond the end of the Programme.

Programme Objectives

1. Policies and plans at local, national and regional levels safeguard the free/flowing and connected Corredor Azul, and ensure that developments both avoid diminishing wetland values and, where possible, enhance them.
2. Innovative approaches and measures for sustainable livelihoods that safeguard wetlands are enabled through capacity strengthening of local stakeholders and scaled up through policies and investments.
3. Key knowledge about the values, opportunities and threats facing wetlands along the Corredor Azul is compiled and communicated as a basis for improved wetland management and maintaining its connectivity.
4. Key civil society, government and private sector actors along the Corredor Azul are informed and able to use knowledge and best practice to influence policy, investment and management.



Current status

The Paraná-Paraguay Fluvial Corridor is characterised by the huge volume of water that it carries, creating a continuous wetland landscape. It is one of the world's last free-flowing fluvial corridors. Forming part of the La Plata Basin, it extends 3,400 km from its origin in Pantanal, located in the cross-border region between Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay, towards its outlet in the Paraná Delta, located in Argentina.

Aside from its natural beauty and significant biodiversity, the Paraná-Paraguay Fluvial Corridor is of global heritage value and its natural functioning is vital for the region's future development. The area benefits

The La Plata Basin

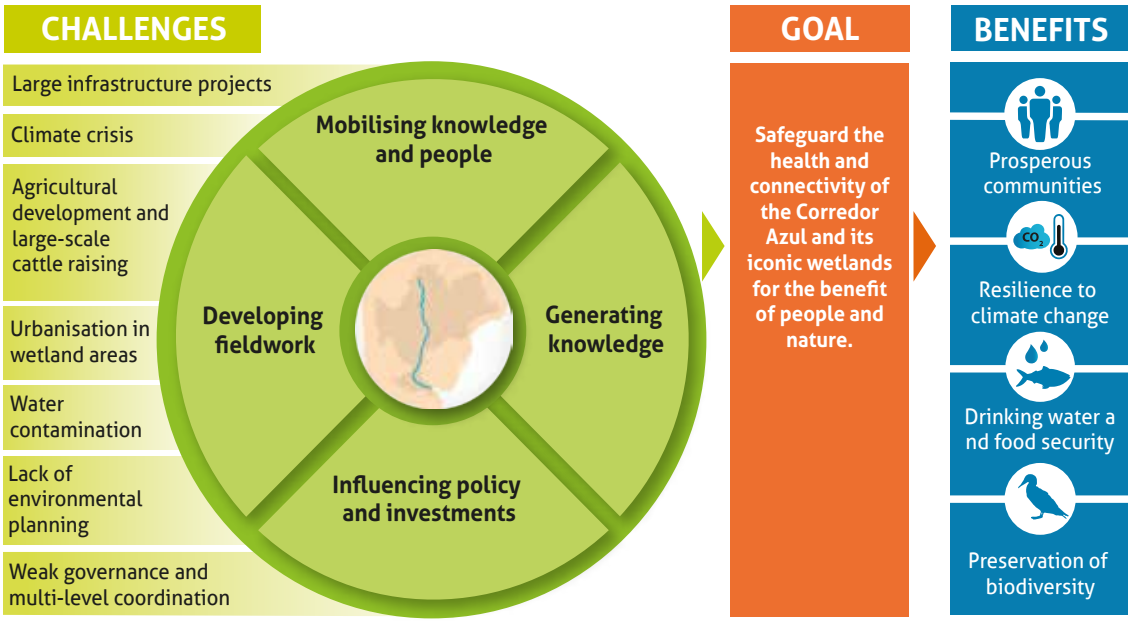
With an area of 3,100,000 km^2, the La Plata Basin is the second largest basin in South America, behind the Amazon Basin. It covers 18% of the continent and its main rivers are the Paraná River, the Paraguay River and the Uruguay River. Spanning one of the continent's most densely populated areas, approximately 128 million people live in and around its area of influence and depend upon the goods and services provided by its rivers and wetlands.



from a huge quantity of sediments, nutrients, seeds, and a variety of organisms which the water transports, generating and maintaining its productivity and diversity. The system's wetlands provide a supply of drinking water, contribute to flood and extreme drought regulation, and are carbon stores, thus mitigating the effects of climate change on the region. In addition, they form the foundation of various small, medium, and large-scale production activities, especially fishing, cattle raising and a buoyant ecotourism industry.

The communities based along the corridor depend directly or indirectly on the goods and services that this wetland system provides. If the connectivity of the system were to be lost, activities that depend on the nutrient cycle and natural pastures - from fisheries to extensive cattle raising - would be impacted, threatening the livelihoods of local communities.

In addition to the effects of climate change and the lack of environmental planning, the health and connectivity of the Paraná-Paraguay wetland system is impacted by changes in land use (driven by agricultural development and large-scale cattle raising), water contamination, urbanisation, and infrastructure works that modify the rivers.



Focus areas of work

Our work focusses on three wetland macrosystems that were selected for the role they play in preserving the health and connectivity of the corridor: Pantanal, located in the cross-border region between Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay, and the Iberá marshes and Paraná Delta, both of which are located in Argentina. Furthermore, these macrosystems provide us with the opportunity to undertake pilot experiments that can later be replicated in other areas of the system.



Where we are

PANTANAL

It is the planet's largest freshwater wetland. It is located at the border between Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay. Owing to its wealth of biodiversity, it has been designated as a Natural Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.



IBERÁ

The Iberá marshes include forests, marshlands, grasslands, lagoons, and swamps. They are one of Argentina's main sources of surface freshwater and are highly biodiverse, possessing great ecological value. Due to their natural beauty, they have become an important ecotourism destination.



PARANÁ DELTA

This wetland macrosystem is located in the south of the fluvial corridor in the Argentina's largest urban industrial harbour and export zone. It is distinguished by its offering of natural resources for production activities and provision of key ecosystem services, its ecological integrity, and its capacity to house biodiversity, sustain socioeconomical activities, and mitigate the effects of climate change.



BOLIVIA

BRAZIL



PARAGUAY



Pantanal

- Size: 179,300 km²
- Location: 78% of its area is in Brazil, 18% in Bolivia and 4% in Paraguay
- Home to more than 2,000 species of flora and 1,200 species of vertebrate fauna

Iberá

- Size: 12,300 km²
- Location: Corrientes, Argentina
- Home to more than 1,600 species of flora and 600 species of vertebrate fauna

ARGENTINA

Paraná Delta

- Size: 17,000 km²
- Location: in the final 300 km of the Paraná River, in the provinces of Entre Ríos, Buenos Aires and Santa Fe
- Home to more than 700 species of flora and 500 species of vertebrate fauna



Main achievements

The work of the Corredor Azul Programme sets out to increase the visibility of the value of wetlands for nature, people and regional economies. Some of the Programme's main achievements in preserving the health and connectivity of the Paraná-Paraguay wetland system include:

Livelihoods

We promote local communities' resilience by valuing traditional and innovative uses of the wetlands' resources. If based in sustainable production processes, resource use can contribute to the conservation of the wetlands as territories of life. Wetland communities have an intrinsic capacity to preserve the fundamental link between humans and nature. These communities understand the value of the wetlands and they benefit from harmonious development between the ecosystem and its surroundings.

For this reason, we have established alliances with stakeholders who are fundamental to the area's governance and we aim to reduce its vulnerability in the context of this landscape's rapid transformation, made worse by episodes of extreme weather. We build local capacity by adding value to the fish products and native flora, creating alternative marketing channels, and developing complementary activities such as ecotourism. Technical knowledge is a central tenet of our work and this allows us to articulate the value of the wetlands' ecosystem services that sustain these valuable livelihoods to society at large.

The Programme is already working with qn communities, ecotourism associations and artisanal fishing cooperatives.

Better productive practices

Recognising that traditional activities have played an important role in the development of the corridor's production culture and identity, we work with different sectors of the economy to achieve better production practices by encouraging more sustainable processes.

We start by drawing attention to how wetlands function and their natural cycles in order to improve the performance of the region's production activities, such as cattle raising and forestry. We have designed and implemented a Dialogue Platform as a space for meeting and networking that supports the construction, development, and creation of workplans and agreements to conserve the wetlands in production. With technical support from universities, we have produced solid evidence, developed baselines, protocols, and monitoring programmes, and have provided support to producers in



the implementation of better production practices in order to minimise their impact on how the wetlands function and their biodiversity. We have promoted and developed incentive mechanisms such as certification schemes, in order to promote better production practices, scale up, and offer a differential service for those who work to conserve the wetlands in their productive practices.

The Programme is already working to improve productive practices in a cattle raising and forestry area of **139,017** ha.

Protected Areas

We preserve wetlands by developing and updating management plans for large wetland areas in Pantanal, the Iberá marshes and the Paraná Delta. Effective implantation of these plans contributes to the conservation of wetlands and biodiversity corridors, preserves fundamental ecosystem services, and strengthens the resilience of communities to climate change.

To achieve this, we prioritise the creation of formal participation and consultation spaces, incorporating the voices and knowledge of all stakeholders who form part of the landscape: traditional populations, indigenous communities, producers, administrators, and leading figures from scientific and decision-making areas. We build capacity by delivering training that provides tools for long-term management and implementation. We draw on technical information produced with our partners. The knowledge generated by the Wetland Inventory and its classification as a macrohabitat allows us to advise on zoning processes, intensities of use, restoration, and activities that are adapted to the natural functioning of the wetlands.

Regarding Protected Areas, the Programme is already supporting better management of **1,578,031** ha of wetlands, including key areas such as the Ramsar Site PRNH Sesc Pantanal, the Kadiwéu Indigenous Territory and the Network of Protected Areas of the Sierra del Amolar (Pantanal), the Ramsar Site Lagunas y Esteros de Iberá (Iberá marshes), "Victoria's Wetlands and Islands" Multiple-Use Reserve, the Ramsar Site Paraná Delta, and the San Fernando Biosphere Reserve (Delta del Paraná).



Our Achievements (2017-2022)



Management plans

- Management Plan for the Ramsar Site Delta del Paraná
- Life Plan for the Kadiwéu Indigenous Territory in Pantanal

Multisectoral Dialogue Platforms

- Dialogue Platform for the Sustainable Development of the Paraná Delta Wetlands
- Regional Development Agency Movimenta Pantanal

Civil Society Organisations

- "Humedales en Red": Support platform for civil society organisations in the Paraná Delta

Capacity Building

- Training for wetland managers: Management tools for the conservation and sustainable use of the wetlands

Livelihoods

- Community restoration of the Pantanal ecosystems
- Ecotourism as a livelihood in wetlands of the Iberá marshes
- Artisanal fishing and adding value to fish products in the Paraná Delta

Evidence

- Future scenarios for the Paraná-Paraguay wetlands system
- Paraná Delta Wetland Inventory
- Early Warning System for fires in El Pantanal – LASA
- Map of Ecosystem Services in the Pantanal Wetlands
- Legal and institutional analysis of the Paraná-Paraguay Fluvial Corridor
- Paraná-Paraguay Waterway impact evaluation

Impact

- Wetlands environmental impact assessment guide

Our work in numbers*



4,783 people

Participants in the Multisectoral Dialogue Platforms, livestock producers applying better practices, wetland professionals and members of distinct organisations.



136 organisations

Working with us, building ties and exchanging knowledge for our shared goal: a future with protected and healthy wetlands.



1,142 managers and practitioners

Trained in management for the conservation and sustainable use of the wetlands.



139,017 hectares

Of productive wetlands applying better management practices with our support and advice.



1,578,031 hectares

Protected Areas where we collaborate on management and conservation.

*Numbers correct as at June 2026

Programme Implementation

The Corredor Azul is a regional programme of Wetlands International implemented by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean based in Buenos Aires. In Brazil the Programme is implemented by the Wetlands International Brazil office.

When developing Programme activities, we work with a wide network of partner institutions at national and international level, including universities, research institutes, and civil society organisations.

At national level, we collaborate with governments and private sector stakeholders to establish formal cooperation agreements regarding policies and strategic plans focussed on the preservation and sustainable use of the wetlands of the Paraná-Paraguay Fluvial Corridor.



About us

We are a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands worldwide. We work on technical matters together with communities, civil society organisations, universities, and the public and private sectors. Our mission is to inspire and mobilise society for the conservation and restoration of wetlands for people and for nature.

We are an International Organization Partner of the Ramsar Convention, which allows us to advise States that are part of the Convention on promoting the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

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