



THE PILON LAJAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE AND INDIGENOUS TERRITORY BENI, BOLIVIA



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RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

La Reserva de la Biosfera y Territorio Comunitario de Origen (TCO) Pilon Lajas ubicada en el departamento del Beni, Bolivia fue creada a inicios de la década de 1990 y tiene la característica de precisamente contar con el doble estado de Reserva y TCO. Un elemento de importancia en la gobernanza del Área se traduce en el rol que el Concejo Regional Tsimane Moseten (CRTM) desarrolla, representando a las comunidades y en la toma de decisiones sobre el manejo del la TCO y de iniciativas comunitarias. Este factor permite dar una mayor estabilidad a la estructura del Área y representación legítima a las comunidades.

A partir de este proceso, se ha logrado fortalecer al Concejo Regional y se apoya el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de las capacidades de gestión indígena en el manejo del territorio y de iniciativa económicas, las cuales son consideradas de importancia por las mismas comunidades indígenas que han desarrollado iniciativas propias de gestión y manejo de recursos forestales no maderables y turismo indígena, iniciativas que son reconocidas a nivel local y nacional. Tales iniciativas tienen como base de la oportunidad de contar con la tenencia del territorio indígena

No obstante, todavía existen amenazas particularmente relacionadas a procesos de colonización, asentamientos ilegales que las comunidades temen se acentúen con la Marcha al Norte. En este contexto, una de las mayores preocupaciones sobre la sostenibilidad del Área se relaciona con la necesidad de cumplir con los planes de zonificación del territorio, evitando que el mismo sea vulnerado por potenciales invasiones de colonos u otros actores.

Asimismo, uno de los temas de interés es la creación de redes a nivel local y global que fortalezcan las gestiones desarrolladas en este territorio indígena. Pilon Lajas puede ser un ejemplo de un Área Comunitaria de Conservación que cuenta una gestión y manejo propio de iniciativas económicas y de manejo de recursos naturales, las cuales coadyuvan a la conservación del territorio y al uso sostenible de los recursos y de la biodiversidad.

The Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory located in the department of Beni, Bolivia, was created at the beginning of the decade of 1990s and has a significant characteristic to hold a double status. The communities represented by Regional Council are represented in decision-making through this indigenous body. Hence, the role of the Regional Council is equally significant in the governance structure of the Area, which also poses greater responsibilities for the indigenous organisation. This framework provides the basis and significance for the double status of the Area.

Through this process, the Regional Council role has been strengthened, which supports local capacity-building for own territorial management and economic initiatives. These initiatives have been considered by indigenous peoples themselves as important for their own management, including non-timber forest products and community-based tourism.. An important topic discussed is the opportunities to undertake own self-managed initiatives based on land tenure. In this context, the role of the Regional Council is significant in providing self-management and decision making for the indigenous communities in the Pilon Lajas region.

Nonetheless, threats still exist and may increase in the medium and long term, which may poses additional challenges for the communities and the governance of the Area. The major threats are related to pressure on natural resources by new human settlements and colonists from Highlands, and therefore, intrusions into the indigenous territory. One aim of the indigenous communities is to enforce land management decisions in order to prevent threats from potential land invasions, which could materialise in the medium or long term.

Significant interest in national and international networking with other CCAs was clearly expressed by indigenous participants. The opportunities to create regional, national and international networks has been widely discussed and well received during the discussion. It was considered by indigenous people that any alliance that is formed and supports indigenous efforts and aspirations is completely useful in every level. Pilon Lajas could be an example of a CCA with own sustainable livelihood and economic initiatives based on the self-management of the indigenous territory and the community-based activities being implemented. As decisions within the indigenous territory are taken by the Regional Council and communities, power lies in their hands to promote all the activities discusses.

1. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF PILON LAJAS

The Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory is located 350 kilometres northeast of La Paz, in the Department of Beni. It is located at the encounter of two biogeographical subregions: montane cloud forests and humid forest. Most of the Reserve is formed by the Pilon Mountain Range reaching an altitude of 2,000 meters and flanking the wide alluvial valley of the Quiquibey River.

These mountains are the last of the Andean foothills before the floodplains of the Beni department, with an average elevation of 300 meters above sea level. Of the reserve's great variety of ecosystems, the most remarkable for their richness in species and endemism are the Sub-Andean rain forests, pluvial piedmont forests, seasonally moist basal forests, and riparian forests and swamp (Ribera, 1999).

Map 1 & 2: Location of Pilon Lajas



Pilon Lajas is flanked on its eastern side by the country's main road to the North, and the colonization zone. On its western side, the Beni River forms a natural border with the Madidi National Park-Integrated Natural Management Area (SERNAP, 2005). It has similar species than those located in the well-known Madidi National Park but in different habitat conditions and characteristics, making these two protected areas complementary to each other.



Map of Pilon Lajas

Yet, because of the area's geological heterogeneity and climatic conditions, biological diversity and endemism are believed to be high. As a matter of fact, the reserve's floristic richness is estimated to include between 2,000 and 3,000 vascular plants (Killen, 1993). Of the approximately 162 timber species found in the reserve, 26 valuable timber species are also known to exist in the reserve including precious hardwoods such as mahogany and cedar (Bascope et al, 1996). Estimates suggest that the protected area harbours more than 700 bird species. In addition, 73 mammal, 58 reptile, 36 amphibian, and 103 fish species have been recorded in the Reserve. (Ribera, 1999).

2. LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Chimane and Tacana communities have occupied the zone in a semi-nomadic way for over 150 years. Traditionally, the Tacana's ancestral territories extended towards the north and northwest. Four indigenous ethnic groups, Tsimane, Mosesten, Tacana, and Esse-Ejja inhabit today the Pilon Lajas territory.

In addition to indigenous peoples, colonists settled in the area during the quinine bark, rubber, fur, and logging booms in the past century. Over the last 25 years, and since the opening of the Yucumo-Rurrenabaque road, the region has also undergone changes associated with the arrival of large numbers of colonists from the highlands region.

While indigenous communities live inside the Indigenous Territory and the Reserve, colonists have settled in some buffer zones and outside this territory. As boundaries of both the indigenous territory and the Biosphere Reserve have been officially demarcated, there are not yet violent conflicts between indigenous communities and colonists settlements. However, many indigenous people fear that if further migration persists, it will lead to the invasion of the indigenous territory.

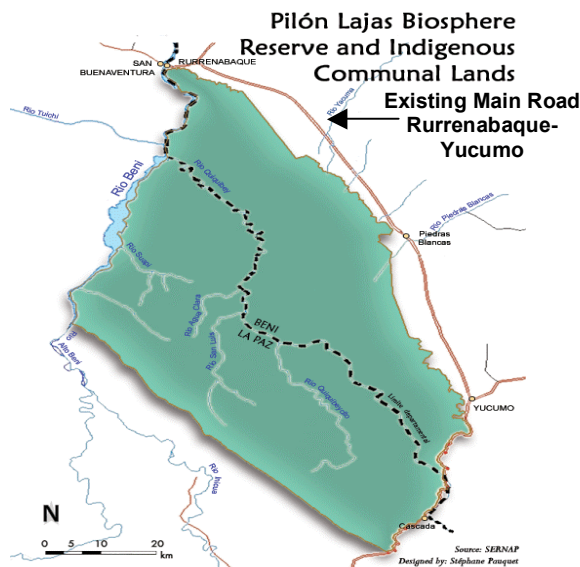


Tsimane children with a spider monkey

According to the Reserve Management Plan (1996), the reserve's population is divided in the following demographic categories: 36.4% Tsimane, 10.8% Mosesten, 33% Tacana, and 19.8% other *mestizo* or colonists (Robinson, 2000). A census carried out in 1996 showed that 1,380 indigenous people live in approximately 25 communities within the reserve and indigenous territory (VSF, 1996). Of the 25 settlements included in the 1996 census, 59% claimed that the abundance of bush meat attracted them to the zone (Silva, 1996).

Besides the indigenous territory and the four major indigenous groups, the Reserve and its buffer zone used to have a complex structure of social and economic interests including colonisation areas, timber concessions and small scale chain loggers. The Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory lies within the area of influence of the Rurrenabaque-Yucumo Colonization Project developed by the Bolivian government at the end of the 1970's promoted the arrival of human settlements to nearby zones. This scenario still shapes some of the threats to the conservation of Pilon Lajas in terms of colonisation and unplanned settlements.

Map 3: Map of Pilon Lajas and main road



3. THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

During the 1980s, the Bolivian government promoted colonization in the region in the framework of the “Yucumo-Rurrenabaque Colonization Project”. Overall, due in part to widespread corruption in the land granting process, the government failed to comply with many aspects of this policy, including technical assistance and provision of infrastructure and services.

On April 9, 1992, as a result of the 1990 Indigenous March for Territory and Dignity and subsequent demands by the local indigenous communities for the creation of a National Park and Indigenous Territory, the Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve was declared by the Supreme Decree N°23,110, comprising an area of approximately 400,000 hectares.

In 1997, the government titled the land as Indigenous Territory under the legal scope defined as Original Community-Based Territory (TCO: Spanish acronym for *Territorio Comunitario de Origen*) to protect the Tsimane and Mosesten territories and culture, giving Pilon Lajas a unique status of both a biosphere reserve and a TCO.

Pilon Lajas was created because its biodiversity values as well as the cultural diversity represented in the indigenous communities living in this territory before the creation of the Reserve. Hence, it was created and organised under a biosphere reserve with conservation goals in order to maintain the coexistence of natural and cultural elements.

Pilon Lajas (or Pilon, as it is also generally used) is known locally and nationally as a Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory. There is broad awareness by indigenous and local communities of the double status as both a Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory.

However, it is not known specifically as a community conserved area (CCA) by the indigenous communities, particularly because the Indigenous Territory represents a direct community liaison in terms of self-management and conservation through indigenous institutions and practices. When questioned about the CCA term for this report, many indigenous people never heard of this term before.

Nonetheless, although Pilon is not known or referred specifically as a CCA, it is generally known within the two categories mentioned. Hence, the name Pilon is commonly used as reference of the Reserve and the indigenous territory, which is used indistinctively. The term **Area** will be used hereafter to describe the double status in the report.

The Biosphere Reserve is recognised as an official protected area of the State under the jurisdiction of the National Service of Protected Areas (*from the Spanish acronym SERNAP*). It is listed amongst the official protected areas of the country within this specific category. The Indigenous Territory is under the jurisdiction of the official indigenous organisation, the Tsimane-Moseten Regional Council (*from the Spanish acronym CRTM*), which represents the indigenous communities in the Area.

Different initiatives and activities have been supported in the Reserve since the last decade in terms of ecosystem conservation. These initiatives were supported by the government sectoral agency and some international NGOs. Although such activities had initially a low participation of indigenous communities, this situation changed since the strengthening of the Regional Council. As a result, indigenous communities were able to make decisions and undertake their own management and conservation activities of the territory and self-management of their own community-based initiatives.

The Area is clearly demarcated and has official boundaries. Everyone in the communities know the Area but not all the members of the



Indigenous women are part of the economic initiatives

communities know in greater detail about the management plan and the general regulations and rules of the Biosphere Reserve provided by the National Service of Protected Area, and other relevant planning instruments, such as the tourism management plan.

However, it was also considered by some informants in the discussion was the consideration that even when there is knowledge and awareness of the existence of regulations and plans, lack of diffusion, promotion and awareness of the Biosphere Reserve’s regulations persist.

Another aspect acknowledged and regretted during the discussion that Pilon is not known at a regional or international level. Therefore, indigenous people considered necessary to share the outcomes obtained in the management and conservation of this Area and the self-managed initiatives undertaken in the indigenous territory within the conservation community.

The self-managed indigenous Tsimane-Moseten Regional Council makes decisions for the management of the indigenous territory. All the activities to be developed in the Area are based on ideas and proposals presented by the communities to the Regional Council for discussion and approval. Hence, this process is organised and participatory, which provides better coordination between the Regional Council and the communities.

As the official representation of the Indigenous people in the Area, the Regional Council makes decision on the Biosphere Reserve jointly with the Director of the Biosphere Reserve in representation of the National Service Protected Area. This scenario leads also to coordination schemes between the Reserve management and the Regional Council. Moreover, decisions pertaining management of natural resources, community-based tourism and other initiatives in the indigenous territory are taken by the communities and/or the Regional Council and then discussed and shared with the Biosphere Reserve if that is the case.

Most of the decision power concerning management of resources in the declared indigenous territory is made by the communities and the Regional Council. For example, in terms of the community-based tourism initiative, decisions are taken by the indigenous board and representatives of the communities involved. Afterwards, decisions are communicated and shared with the Director of the Biosphere Reserve.

4. VALUE, EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Area is considered by the indigenous people engaged in the discussions to be in good conservation status. It is perceived that a positive interaction between conservation and livelihoods exist, which supports the voluntary conservation of the Area, including wildlife conservation and the sustainable use of non-timber forest products.

The positive conservation status is referred both to biodiversity and cultural status of indigenous communities living inside the Area. However, a topic discussed is related to the sustainability of the Area. It was acknowledged that the indigenous territory and the Biosphere Reserve in particular could face a process of change in the long term. This is related to potential problems in terms of colonisation and human settlements.



Unplanned settlements are feared by indigenous peoples

Problems identified during the discussion are related to unplanned and illegal intrusions into the indigenous territory. These actions would lead to increased hunting and land clearing by other colonists and local invaders or land speculators. It was also considered that some local invaders are undertaking these activities due to poverty, lack of alternatives and to satisfy daily basic needs.

These perceptions are illustrated by the following statement of one indigenous participant; “It would be important to implement viable productive or economic alternatives that can alleviate this negative process. More importantly, this has to be accompanied by an adequate territorial management and enforcement of the land use zoning and other plans formulated for territorial management within the region. This mean that zoning has to be respected by outsiders and surveillance is important for that” Indigenous peoples monitor within the indigenous territory and the Reserve’s staff are theoretically in charge of the Biosphere Reserve.

The Area is highly valued by the indigenous communities as it is known as the *big house*, the ancestral territory for the Tsimane, Moseten and other indigenous groups in the Pilon Lajas region. In addition, it was also discussed and expressed that some indigenous members are increasingly valuing more the Area in recent times, as they can now see and witness results and outcomes of the conservation programmes and economic initiatives and projects undertaken.

There is the perception that community-based alternatives are possible because of the existence of the Area. This is strengthened when the information and recognition of the outcomes achieved are delivered to the local communities. These outcomes include self-managed projects and activities in support of participating local communities. This complements the cultural and ecological value of the Area with the perceptions of land security through the existence of an own-managed titled territory and own economic initiatives for indigenous peoples living in the Area.

Accordingly, it was considered by the discussants that the Area is also effective for the communities because is providing a stable space to undertake initiatives. This was expressed by a local representative: “There is a process of support to community-based initiatives. Now we have more opportunities to undertake our own initiatives thanks to the indigenous territory and biosphere reserve”.

A key component of the local actions in terms of the community conserved area is related to the implementation of a self-managed indigenous tourism project. This initiative provided additional support for biodiversity conservation, and the project is also guaranteed by the Area, in a dual process that provides benefits both for the communities involved and the Area itself. Moreover, the Regional Council is also promoting initiatives regarding non-timber forest products (NTFPs), which have been recently achieving results.

The activities of indigenous tourism operating in the area since the beginning of the decade of 2000 led to some positive results, including the strengthening of self-management, decision-making, participation and the role of the Regional Council, as the enterprise is entirely owned by the indigenous communities and managed by indigenous people from the communities. Mapajo is the local name for a massive tree (*Ceiba pentandra*, Bombacaceae) that overshadows nearby trees and vegetation, in a protective manner.



Jose Caimani,
manager of Mapajo

This name was chosen as it was hoped that the community-based tourism enterprise would provide similar protection to seven indigenous communities living in the shore of the River Quiquibey: Asunción, Gredal, Bisal, Corte, San Bernardo, San Luis Chico and San Luis Grande. The beginning of ecotourism in this Reserve follows other protected areas in the region. Jose Caimani, the indigenous manager of Mapajo says that “before the creation of the Reserve, this area was under severe exploitation of timber resources. This resulted in increasing deforestation and the exhaustion of precious timber such as mahogany. In this context, indigenous people worked as guides, carriers, hunters and in few cases as chain-saw operators under poor working conditions but having some opportunities for local income as viable alternatives for other sustainable initiatives were non-existent”.

A representative of the local indigenous council adds: “Early in the reserve history, some private tourism agencies led groups into the Reserve without environmental and cultural considerations. In October 1997, the Tsimane and Mosesten Regional Council, received grants to undertake learning exchange trips to other Amazonian communities. The purpose of these learning exchanges was to understand how environmentally and cultural friendly initiatives and ventures could provide alternatives for income generation”.



A Mapajo tree providing shadow in Pilon Laias

Based on the successful experience of Chalalan, -the first indigenous enterprise in the nearby Madidi region-, and the consolidation of the indigenous territory, a community-based tourism project was developed and approved by the National Service of Protected Areas. The goal of the project was to improve livelihoods and environmental conditions of the Tsimane and Mosesten indigenous communities through the implementation of ecotourism practices in their territory.

Funding from different agencies (including the British Embassy, the Regional Programme in support of Indigenous Communities in the Amazon [PRAIA], UNDP, Conservation International, and CUSO) was provided to the community, totalling USD 250,000 in different phases. The creation of the Mapajo Indigenous Tourism Enterprise followed five steps:

1) Creation of the community-based enterprise: The participating communities established an organisation structure, chart and statutes as well as the business and operational plan, including a job rotation system and benefit-sharing within the communities in a participatory approach.

2) Training and Infrastructure: Basic infrastructure was built for an ecolodge with four cabins, a kitchen, a dining hall and an interpretation centre, showers and bathrooms and a motor boat for river transportation. Training and service provision for community members participating were developed as well as managerial, project management and administrative training for the leaders who were part of the Board of Directors.

3) Economic alternatives through income generation and land use planning: some economic alternatives and benefits were produced resulting in diminishing pressures on wildlife and timber resources. The community of Asuncion implemented a land use zoning plan which designated areas for tourism. In the plan, forest clearing and hunting are prohibited and less land clearing per family is taking place due to labour diversion.



Gender participation was an important outcome in this process

4) Gender and other Economic diversification Programmes: A Community Mother’s Club was created to foster handicraft production. These activities motivated women about their role and participation in income generation, as well as recovering traditional practices and knowledge, which also promoted cultural revalorisation.

5) Publications: a range of publications were developed, from promotional activities and information about the enterprise to publications on the Tsimane and Mosesten culture, traditional knowledge, and its relationship to their land, habitat and biodiversity. These publications were designed not only for the promotion of the enterprise but to inform and document the Tsimane and Mosesten culture.

The enterprise became recognised, both nationally and internationally, as an important destination in the region¹. Therefore, it helped to establish a position for community-based tourism at a national level, and particularly an established concept of indigenous tourism, which was legally included in the registration of the enterprise.

These steps strengthened the position of community-based tourism in Bolivia. Mapajo had a clear leadership represented by the Caimani family, notably Jose Caimani who became the manager of the enterprise. Furthermore, in terms of gender participation, a step forward was achieved as a woman, Lucia Canare, was elected as the president of the board of Directors of the enterprise.

In addition, it was widely acknowledged during the discussion that the Area is effective for biodiversity conservation, particularly in terms of wildlife and reduced illegal logging. It is agreed that illegal deforestation by loggers has been reduced dramatically. According to one leader of the Regional Council, “there is a good level of fauna and flora conservation inside the Area. This is affirmed both by direct observation as well as some preliminary monitoring registries, although there is the need to update them”.

This is also correlated to the results obtained in the control activities undertaken by the Reserve’s park rangers. Although there are no official studies and data developed, the Director of the Biosphere Reserve considers that a correlation exists between the creation of the indigenous tourism enterprise and a reduction in deforestation and hunting.



View of the indigenous community of Asuncion del Quiquibev

Amongst the most important conditions discussed that are crucial to maintain the Area locally valued and effective are: the enforcement of land tenure security and land zoning and the strengthening of the Regional Council. It was also considered essential to strength alliances with the National Service of Protected Areas and other government agencies.

Finally, another condition discussed is related to obtain the necessary resources for the implementation of such activities in the Area. One indigenous representative stated that: “This is important because in many other territories, conservation and sustainable plans or programmes are just being paid lip-service and are ultimately ineffective for both the conservation of the area and sustainable livelihoods of indigenous communities”.

5. THREATS AND NEEDS

Threats identified are related to oil and hydrocarbons exploration and exploitation, migration of highland colonists to the Area and political instability. Pressure for land and natural resources in the surrounding areas may cause land invasions, which was identified as the principal threat to the Reserve.

In relation to human settlements and colonisation, there is fear that the construction of a main road from La Paz to the northern Amazon (known as the *March to the North*), will bring additional numbers of colonists. Other threats identified are related, therefore, to landless movements and land speculators, illegal logging and hunters in the indigenous territory.

The communities wish to conserve the area, but discussants considered the need for more economic support and training of indigenous people in the communities. One of the positive aspects informed by

¹ The official web site of the Mapajo indigenous tourism is www.mapajo.com

the indigenous people in the discussion is related to the opportunity to undertake self-management and decision-making in the indigenous territory, which has support by the National Service of Protected Area in the Biosphere Reserve. This is also acknowledged in terms of land tenure, as it is expected that the State would provide support to avoid potential land invasions through the reserve's legal status.

In addition, training of community participants was also suggested for the management of the area, as



Communities are involved in decision-making through the Regional Council

it was stated by a indigenous representative: “Each zoning plan for all the communities needs to be respected in order to avoid conflict between communities. Therefore, we need economic and institutional support and training to implement all the activities proposed in terms of land zoning”.

Furthermore, another aspect considered that will provide support for the area is to achieve a greater recognition of the accomplishments, objectives and goals at an international level, which could bring additional resources to undertake all the aforementioned initiatives and proposals.

6. FORMAL RECOGNITION

The Tsimane-Moseten Regional Council is the recognised indigenous institution that makes and support decision-making in the Area. The Regional Council is seen as a legitimate organisation, which encompasses traditional structures and represents all the Tsimane and Moseten indigenous communities in the Area. Afterwards, the Council was recognised under the legal reforms promoted in the Popular Participation Law as community-based territorial organisation. It is composed by indigenous members and provides a direct structure to promote the views, opinions and participation of indigenous peoples in the governance and management of the Area. Representatives of the Council were actively engaged in the discussion.

Both the Regional Council and the Indigenous Territory (TCO) are recognised by the government and national and international agencies, as they are formally recognised by Bolivian Laws. Government support is provided by the National Service of Protected Areas. In addition, the Area is also recognised for its biodiversity conservation value and in terms of sustainable livelihoods through the aforementioned ecotourism and NTFPs initiatives being undertaken in the Area.

The people and structures undertaking decision-making under the Tsimane-Moseten Regional Council are considered as legitimate. This is illustrated by an indigenous member: “Initially, meaningful participation was not always achieved and had some difficulties in the early days of the reserve. That changed with the strengthening of the Regional council and self-management of the indigenous territory. That is why we have the council which represents us, makes decision and is composed by our own people”.

The formal organisational structure for activity planning is both recognised and accepted within the area. The people representing the communities act in this legitimate view, by also representing the Regional Council and the Reserve. Decisions are taken aiming at the benefits of the territory. Community leaders work with local people to respect these decisions.

Furthermore, there is some support from some international NGOs and from national organisations, working both in conservation programmes and local development projects. This support is delivered through funding and technical assistance to the Regional Council and the communities.

7. NETWORKING

One of the most interesting topics discussed and perceived by the participants was networking. It is considered a key factor for the management of the Area, which also provides support for the community-based initiatives being implemented. Currently, networking is being developed in two areas:

- i) Networking for the management of the Area with local, national and international organisations;
- ii) Networking between other indigenous and community-based tourism and NTFPS projects, which represent an important step forward for the consolidation of such initiatives.

Networking in this topic also involve the development of linkages with private agencies and tourism operators promoting operations in the region, as well as with other foundations and NGOs supporting community development and NTFPS projects and ecotourism practices.

Communities within the Area tend support each other and have been linked and connected. A coordinated work has been undertaken but there is also awareness that there is the need to strength this work in order to avoid potential problems, inequality, lack of information and communication. Moreover, there is a positive coordination and networking between the Regional Council with the Biosphere Reserve management.

Finally, there was absolute interest in the opportunities to create regional, national and international networks. This topic was widely discussed and well received during the discussion. It was considered that any alliance that is formed and supports indigenous efforts and aspirations is utterly useful in every level. Furthermore, if alliances in each level are built, it will be a decisive and key step forward to strengthen community-based initiatives.

At the moment, the alliances and proposals at different scales are the following: i) At a local level: There are some concrete initiatives already being pursued, particularly as an alliance of indigenous tourism enterprises has been built in the region; ii) At a regional level: some ideas are being only discussed but without achieving concrete mechanisms; iii) At a national and international levels: nothing already established despite intentions.

However, there is huge interest to develop alliances at an international level in particular, both for economic and political reasons. It was considered by the participants that the opportunity to get recognised beyond a local scale and the construction of a positive image of the Area based on the activities and outcomes achieved in the management of the indigenous territory and the biosphere reserve would be the best way to promote institutional alliances and a better process for fundraising for the medium and long term.



Alliances and networking are considered as significant

In this context, the following topics have been identified during the discussions as the most important areas to develop in terms of networking and alliances:

- Organisational strengthening of the Regional Council with other indigenous and self-managed indigenous bodies at different levels
- Networking on territorial management with other indigenous communities and organisations in different countries
- Economic and productive initiatives through sustainable mechanisms based on the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. This is reflected clearly in terms of non-timber forest products, community-based tourism and other similar initiatives
- Culture and education
- Health and gender

8. CONCLUSION

The Indigenous Territory is considered to be in good conservation status and it is highly valued by the indigenous communities. An important topic discussed is the opportunities to undertake own self-managed initiatives based on land tenure. In this context, the role of the Regional Council is significant in providing self-management and decision making for the indigenous communities in the Pilon Lajas region.

The communities represented by Regional Council are represented in decision-making through this indigenous body. Hence, the role of the Regional Council is equally significant in the governance structure of the Area, which also poses greater responsibilities for the indigenous organisation. This framework provides the basis and significance for the double status of the Area. One aim of the indigenous communities is to enforce land management decisions in order to prevent threats from potential land invasions, which could materialise in the medium or long term. It was discussed and widely considered that there is the need for better economic and trained resources to achieve this goal.

The Area does not have problems in terms of official recognition, both as a territory and under the governance structure represented by the Regional Council and the Biosphere Reserve. There is also a clear relationship between the opportunities for economic alternatives and the conservation status in the Area. This case could be an example of a CCA with own sustainable livelihood and economic initiatives based on the self-management of the indigenous territory and the community-based activities being implemented. As decisions within the indigenous territory are taken by the Regional Council and communities, power lies in their hands to promote all the activities discusses.

Nonetheless, decisions over the Biosphere Reserve are taken jointly within a scheme of shared governance that has been implemented not only in the Reserve, but in most of all protected areas of Bolivia. This is because the existence of the double status of indigenous territory and Reserve, which does not undermine capacity of decision-making by the communities, although there is the need for close coordination between the indigenous organisations and representatives and the Reserve management. As it has been identified by the Biosphere Reserve, the implementation of community-based tourism in the Area has led to a reduction in illegal logging and deforestation. This voluntary management decisions and efforts of the indigenous communities are providing not only positive benefits to species and habitat conservation in the Area, but are also aiming at providing livelihoods benefits and a better participation in decision-making.

The experience of an own tourism enterprise is significant in terms of the contribution to the Area and it is positively recognised by the Biosphere Reserve. Mapajo contributed to affirm and strength the concept of indigenous tourism, which complemented the initial nature-driven context of community-based tourism in the region. A positive relationship has been identified between the indigenous communities living in Pilon Lajas and the conservation of the Area, its ecosystems and species, particularly as wildlife increased after the implementation of territorial management and economic activities such as community-based tourism.

Nonetheless, threats still exist and may increase in the medium and long term, which may pose challenges for the communities and the governance of the Area. The major threats are related to pressure on natural resources by new human settlements and colonists from Highlands, and therefore, trespassing into the indigenous territory. These challenges must be addressed in the short term.

Finally, significant interest in national and international networking with other CCAs was clearly expressed by indigenous participants. The opportunities to create regional, national and international networks has been widely discussed and well received during the discussion. It was considered by indigenous people that any alliance that is formed and supports indigenous efforts and aspirations is completely useful in every level. Moreover, if alliances in each level are built, it will be a decisive and key step forward to strengthen community-based initiatives and the management of the indigenous territory.

9. ANNEX

Format for the preliminary database of CCA sites being tested for UNEP/WCMC

Basic data

| | |
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| Site Name (in local language and in English) | In Spanish: Reserva de la Biosfera y Territorio Comunitario de Origen Pilon Lajas Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve and Indigenous Territory |
| Country (include State and Province) | Beni, Bolivia |
| Area encompassed by the CCA (specify unit of measurement). | 400,000 hectares |
| GIS Coordinates (if available) | The Area lies between latitudes 14°25' and 15°27' South and longitudes 66°55' a 67°40' West |
| Whether it includes sea areas (Yes or no) | No |
| Whether it includes freshwater (Yes or no) | Yes |
| Marine (Y or N) | No |
| Concerned community (name and approx. number of persons) | Asunción de Quiquibey, Gredal, Bisal, Corte, San Bernardo, San Luis Chico and San Luis Grande. 1300 indigenous person |
| Is the community considering itself an indigenous people? (Please note Yes or No; if yes note which people) | Yes, in 4 ethnic groups: Tsimane, Moseten, Tacana, and Esse-Ejja |
| Is the community considering itself a minority? (Please note Yes or No, if yes on the basis of what, e.g. religion, ethnicity) | Yes, based on ethnicity |
| Is the community permanently settled? (Please note Yes or No; if the community is mobile, does it have a customary transhumance territory?) | Yes |
| Is the community local per capita income inferior, basically the same or superior to national value? (please note how confident you are about the information) | Yes. Available data for the region shows that rural per capita income is lower than the national average. |
| Is the CCA recognised as a protected area by governmental agencies? (Yes or no; if yes, how? If no, is it otherwise recognized?) If yes, legal document? Establishment date? | Yes, as a Biosphere Reserve by a National Supreme Decree No. 23110. It was established on April 9, 1992 |
| Conflicts with land tenure, natural resource use? | Potential land tenure invasion and colonisation schemes affecting boundaries of the indigenous territories by colonists coming from the Highlands region in particular. Interest in timber resources by illegal loggers |
| What is the main management objective (e.g. livelihood, cultural, spiritual...) | Conservation of natural and cultural components. This is complemented by management objectives related to sustainable livelihoods through the implementation of |

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| | NTFPs and community-based tourism |
| By definition, a CCA fulfils a management objective. To which IUCN management category do you consider it would best fit (this does not imply that the management objective is consciously pursued by the concerned community, but that it is actually achieved) | Category VI: Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural resources |

Additional qualitative information

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| 10. Main ecosystem type | Montane cloud forests and humid forest. |
| Description of biodiversity & resources (ecosystems, species, functions) conserved by the CCA | Pilon Lajas is likely to harbour an exceptionally rich flora and fauna, and is probably a hotspot for endemic species. Estimates suggest that Pilon Lajas may harbour between 2,000 and 3,000 plant species. As of this writing, 73 mammal, 485 bird, 58 reptile, 36 amphibian, and 103 fish species have been recorded in the reserve. However, Area-wide, systematic inventories of Pilon Lajas' biodiversity have yet to be conducted |
| Description of local ethnic groups and languages spoken | Tsimane, Mosenen, Tacana, and Esse-Ejja. Spanish and the indigenous language of each ethnic group |
| Broad historical context of the CCA | The Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve was created in 1992 by a national supreme decree comprising an area of approximately 400,000 hectares. In 1997, the government titled the land as Indigenous Territory (TCO) |
| Governance structure for the CCA (who takes management decisions, how?) | The Tsimane-Mosenen Regional Council representing the indigenous communities living in the Area and the Director of the Biosphere Reserve takes management decisions in a joint process |
| Length of time the governance model has been in place | Less than 10 years with a new approach of shared management since 2006 |
| Land and resource ownership in the CCA | Land and resources of the indigenous territory are owned by the indigenous communities based on the TCO legal framework recognised by the Bolivian Law |
| Type of land use in the CCA | Small-scale subsistence agriculture, non-timber forest products management and traditional uses |
| Existence of written or oral management plans and specific rules for the use of natural resources in the CCA | Yes. Management Plan, Tourism Plan, Land Zoning and other management instruments |
| Map and zoning of the CCA (please attach if available and relevant,) | Yes, Maps inserted in the text. No zoning plan in this document |
| Relevant pictures with captions (please attach if available) | Yes |
| Major threats to biodiversity and/or the CCA governance system | Heavy pressure for land and natural resources in the surrounding areas has made land invasions the principal threat to the protected area. In fact, if deterioration continues at its current pace, it is feared that its most accessible areas will be colonized and many important conservation targets will disappear over the mid-term. |

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| | Social conflict, population growth, illegal timber exploitation, poaching, unauthorized fishing, the landless peasant's movement, and a number of infrastructure development projects. Indigenous peoples know that there may be threats by colonisations and they require, therefore, the application of land zoning plans respecting the boundaries of the indigenous territory. Indigenous peoples are worried about the infrastructure development projects that may take place in the medium term in the region |
| Local CCA-relevant features, stories, names, rules and practices | The most significant and relevant features are the indigenous tourism enterprise MAPAJO and the functioning of the Tsimane-Mosten Regional Council |

10. CREDITS

- Photos: Bernardo Peredo
- Enormous Assistance provided by Lina Zambrana, Mapajo Indigenous Tourism
- Prior Informed Consent: It was asked to the representatives of the Regional Council but not to the communities' participants. Although, representatives of the Regional Council were happy to promote the report, due to this fact, PIC was not obtained from all the discussant. As a result, it would be important to diffuse summaries of this report but probably not the whole report.