

Further efficiency for Arpa (2012)

Arpa Program is one of the best examples of public-private partnership in Brazil and it will improve its achievements during its 2nd phase.



The leader of Arpa Program, Trajano Quinhões, analyses the achievements made in ten years of work in the Arpa Program and foresees that the 2nd Phase, which started in the second semester of the past year, will be the moment to improve what is done. He considers that there was a jump in the protected areas management quality and says that this is the time to increase the efforts to achieve full consolidation levels in the Pas. Read the interview:

Which was the main progress achieved in the past ten years, regarding the PAs with Arpa support?

The program was created in 2002, but the investments started to be made in a more effective manner in 2004/2005. Actually, it has been seven years of investments in the protected areas. And a lot was accomplished in those seven years. The program invested significantly in the structure and operation of the protected areas. Regarding the structure, the investments went to equipments, signalization, demarcation, construction of headquarters, management plan implementation. In the PA operation, the investments allowed them to have their own financial funds to buy fuel and administrative materials, to carry out field operations – particularly protection operations – and to operate their management councils. In comparison to the PAs having no Arpa support, those PAs which are supported by Arpa have better structure, better operation conditions, and more integrity as well. This is due to a more effective and efficient presence of their managers, who were able to give them more protection.

Did Arpa investments in the PAs go beyond financial resources?

Yes. Besides financial resources, Arpa provided capacity building for the PA managers. The managers took part in capacity building for management for results, and were able to improve their qualification in protected area management. We will strengthen this kind of benefit during the 2nd Phase of Arpa, and will expand the investments to achieve full level of consolidation in the PAs.

Is there a marked difference between Arpa 1st Phase and the 2nd Phase, which started in the second semester of 2010?

Yes. In the 1st Phase we got protected areas which had very little structure and we build their structure to a medium level. Only a few of them were concluded, but most of them achieved an intermediary level, between medium and complete – which we call 2nd degree consolidation. Now we will address those PAs which participated in the 1st Phase and decide what is needed for to complete them. In this 2nd Phase, the amount of PAs with Arpa support increased by 50%. We had 63 PAs and now we have 32 other PAs receiving Arpa support. This means we will finish what we did in the 1st Phase, and start the process in 32 other areas.

Does the 2nd Phase introduce innovations?

From the 1st to the 2nd Phase, most of the innovations in the project were maintained. There is progress, but they were foreseen in the 1st Phase. The highlight of the 2nd Phase is the investment in biodiversity monitoring, and in social and environmental monitoring. One other highlight is the fact that Arpa investments are combined with other projects -- for instance, the Terra do Meio Project. This capacity of using Arpa as model for other projects is an innovation. Arpa investment model, the structuring logic, which was only used by Arpa, is now being used in other projects. This means an expansion of this project.

Which is Arpa's innovation regarding other public policies pertaining to protected areas?

Arpa innovates in many ways. Firstly, Arpa is implemented through a public-private partnership; i.e., the funds donated to the Brazilian government, donated by governments and by private partners in the program, do not go into the federal budget; they are deposited in a private institution, a civil society organization of public interest (OSCIP), which is the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (Funbio), in charge of implementing the public-private arrangements. This ensures a lot of flexibility in the use of the financial resources, and it makes it easier for the government, which will not need a heavy administrative-financial structure to implement the project. This is not the only innovation, yet it is the top of mind. Arpa investments are all based on target achievement. This is a very important point. The investments designed for consolidation are based on consolidation targets. The protected areas receive funds to design their management plan or to buy equipments, for instance.

Are the targets very specific?

Yes, they are specific targets for the PA operation. Arpa supports 17 targets. All of them are pre-designed and estimated. For instance, we do not support the management plan design and its review in the subsequent year. We do not support the acquisition of cars above what we estimate as necessary for the PA operation. We only support that set of inputs which are related to that target. Another innovation is that targets achievement supposes estimated values for the protected areas. For each target, which we call indicator (milestone), we have an estimate, varying according to the PA size and to its easy or difficult access. For every target there are costs which were previously studied for the implementation of the investments and for the operation of each protected area.

Which criteria is Arpa support based on?

Arpa support is based on a conservation and investments strategy. If a management agency presents a proposal for an application, it does not mean that that PA will be necessarily selected for support. In order to ensure that Arpa resources achieve the maximum outcome, there is a certain competition among the application proposals. Arpa selects the proposals offering the best conditions. Among the proposals for the creation of PAs, Arpa chooses those which require lower costs of creation studies, those which have the largest areas, those which have the highest levels of ecological relevance and of external pressure. Among the proposals for PA consolidation, Arpa's choice is based on the criterion of the necessary cost; this means that those PAs having some structure start with a better chance, since their consolidation costs will be lower.

Arpa is supported by decision forums, is that correct? How do they operate?

Arpa relies on decision forums having great transparency in their decisions and offering the opportunity for a strong involvement on the part of other government levels, the civil society, and the academic sector. The program relies on a panel for scientific follow up providing support through scientific evidence, composed of experts from the scientific community in the various conservation themes. There is also a technical forum composed of PA managers from the Amazon biome. Other than the Instituto Chico Mendes (ICMbio), which is the agency for federal protected areas, there are agencies in the state level, in all the states located in the biome -- with the exception of Roraima and Maranhão, where there still are no PAs with Arpa support. Furthermore, we have the Program Committee, which is a decision body, the top level of the program, with equal participation from government and the civil society. The Program Committee helps to set the course of the program and to monitor its implementation. Arpa's institutional design is a very interesting one; it allows for many partnerships with society and with other levels of government.