

The MAP Initiative: A Cross-National Network for Capacity Building in the Amazon

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Since 2000, the MAP Initiative, a cross-national network of scientists and practitioners, has promoted capacity building activities for communities and other social groups living and working in the MAP region. This region is located at the Southwest part of the Amazon, which is formed by the states/departments of **M**adre de Dios (Peru), **A**cre (Brazil), and **P**ando (Bolivia). The MAP Initiative activities aim at increasing people's awareness of the socio-economic and environmental changes occurring in the region due to the construction of the Inter-Oceanic Highway, and to promote sustainable development. To implement these activities, the MAP Initiative partners, a diverse group of people, need to interact among themselves and with other social groups, such as community residents, government representatives, and members of NGOs.

The purpose of this research is to explore (1) The current organization of the MAP Initiative and how it has evolved; (2) The interaction among the partners of this initiative and between them and other social groups; and (3) The challenges the MAP Initiative faces to implement its activities. This research will take place this summer. It will be based on semi-structured interviews with the partners of the MAP Initiative and members of other social groups, and direct observation of the MAP Initiative activities. This study is important because it will point to the organizational and relationship challenges that emerge when a diverse group is trying to work collaboratively in a cross-national setting to promote development and conservation, and provide basis for other analysis.

Keywords: social networks, cross-national initiatives, sustainable development, conservation, Amazon.

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