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PROPOSAL OF THE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY PROGRAM OF THE AMAZON REGION

(Second draft: July, 2020)

I. PROGRAM JUSTIFICATION

A. Context and regional challenges

The Amazon comprises 44% of the surface of South America, it is home to the largest contiguous rain forest in the world, it is the most important source of fresh water in South America, and it is one of the most important biodiversity scenarios of the world, providing multiple environmental functions / ecosystem services / contributions of nature for people, which are crucial for the survival, well-being and development of the inhabitants of the region and of the Amazon countries. In turn, the Amazon Region has a population of around 40 million inhabitants and is home to more than 400 indigenous peoples, presenting a rich biological and cultural diversity.

The Amazon is recognized for being a complex and heterogeneous region resulting from various geological, geomorphological, climatological, hydrographic and biological processes, standing out worldwide for its variety of ecosystems, species richness and high endemism. It is considered one of the areas with the greatest wealth of biological diversity in the world, with the richest diversity of birds, freshwater fish, primates and butterflies. It is estimated that the Amazon is home to about 10% of known biological diversity, including elements from 56 eco-regions of internationally important ecological systems¹, 6 natural world heritage sites, and more than 10 endemic bird areas. The region is considered the world's last refuge for threatened species such as harpy eagles and pink river dolphins and is habitat for a significant group of known species on the planet. More than 14,000 species of flowering plants from the low and humid forests of the Amazon Region are known² (corresponding to only about 3.6% of the known world flora), not including the areas of montane, savanna and moor forests. We know, however, that the total flora of the Amazon is still poorly scientifically known and recent studies estimate that the total tree species in the low and humid forests of the Amazon should reach between 14,000 and 17,000 species³ (approximately 20% of the world total), well above the approximately 6,700 tree species currently known. It also encompasses a great richness of species in what refers to continental fish, however, the knowledge of the ichthyofauna is still incomplete. It is estimated that there are between 2,200 and 3,000 species of freshwater fish throughout the Amazon, although there are still many species without formal descriptions that are erroneously included under a common name⁴.

Amazon countries have to advance in the consolidation of territories with sustainable and harmonious development, where nature and biodiversity play an important role not only for the provision of environmental functions but also for the social and economic development of the local population. Furthermore, there is the need to take into account that in the Amazon there is an ongoing social and economic agenda that has not ended. In the Amazon, important

¹ Eco-regiones. Global 200.

² Cardoso, Domingos et al., 2017. Amazon plant diversity revealed by a taxonomically verified species list. PNAS 114(40): 10695–10700.

³ Ter Steege, Hans et al., 2020. Biased-corrected richness estimates for the Amazonian tree flora. Scientific Reports 10: 10130, 13p.

⁴ Albert & Reis, 201b en Alho, 2104/OTCA/GEF/ PNUMA; Chaves, 2015.



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infrastructure deficits still have to be covered, generate sustained income for the population, improve access to basic public services, and many other needs related to sustainable development. Thus, the challenge in the Amazon Region continues to be that of promoting environmental and biological diversity management in time to strengthen local economies, reduce gaps in social inequality and control the illegal use of natural resources.

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty, which gives rise to the constitution of ACTO, establishes in its first article that: *“The Contracting Parties agree to carry out joint efforts and actions to promote the harmonious development of their respective Amazonian territories, so that these actions together can produce equitable and mutually beneficial results, as well as for the preservation of the environment and the conservation and rational use of the natural resources of those territories”*. In this context, the ACTO Member Countries-MC have made national progress on biodiversity conservation goals and within the ACTO framework have promoted regional efforts for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity in a sustainable development context, strengthening their capacities to fulfill the commitments agreed in the Convention on Biological Diversity-CBD. It is necessary to continue strengthening regional cooperation actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, strengthening and expanding previous experiences and initiatives that have been successful, both by the MC and by the ACTO in the regional scope.

There are several elements that must be taken into account by a Biological Diversity Program of the Amazon Region/Basin, the most important of which are the following:

- a) The articulation of the management of biodiversity with the approach of sustainable development, taking into account the important link that exists between the social, economic and environmental aspects in the territories of the Amazon countries.
- b) Public management on issues of biological diversity that considers the particularities of the Amazon region and the potential of its biodiversity and contributes to promoting the added value of the products that come from it, also considering the complexity of sustainable management of biodiversity in this region.
- c) Strengthening the capacity of the ACTO MC in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the commitments of the CBD and its new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- d) The need to strengthen cross-border coordination and cooperation between the different Amazon countries, particularly in the area of management and monitoring of biological diversity and the contributions of nature to people.
- e) The creation and/or strengthening of national and regional capacities in biodiversity management issues through the development of implementation mechanisms and instruments, which allow identifying, systematizing and disseminating the successful initiatives and experiences of the ACTO MC on biological diversity.
- f) The need to achieve the integration of environmental functions/ecosystem services in different sectors to reverse the main causes of loss of biodiversity and deterioration of ecosystems.
- g) The need to have sufficient financial resources for the adequate fulfillment of the national commitments of the CBD.

B. The Program in the global, regional and national context

The Program is focused on creating conditions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly of the Sustainable Development Goals related to biological diversity, and strengthening national capacities to advance in the



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implementation of the commitments agreed in the framework of the CBD and its new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Program will enable the objectives of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT) to be met, particularly its Article VII, which refers to the need for the use of the flora and fauna of the Amazon to be rationally planned, in order to maintain the ecological balance of the region and preserve the species. The Member Countries, in the context of this article, decided: “*i) Promote scientific research and the exchange of information and technical personnel among the competent entities of the respective countries in order to expand knowledge about the resources of the flora and fauna of its Amazon territories and to prevent and control diseases in those territories; and ii) Establish a regular system for the adequate exchange of information on the conservation measures that each State has adopted or is adopting in its Amazon territories, which will be the subject of an annual report presented by each country*”.

The Program will support the ACTO MC in the implementation of the Amazon Strategic Cooperation Agenda (ASCA), which is being updated, particularly in areas related to the preservation, conservation, restoration and sustainable use of natural resources and biological diversity, knowledge management and information exchange, and indigenous peoples, local communities and other tribal communities.

The Program is based on the important experience of ACTO in strengthening the management of biodiversity in the Amazon Region/Basin, which has to do with the implementation of regional and thematic forums for dialogue, the development of strategic agendas and regional programs for cooperation in sustainable development, the establishment of information and monitoring systems, and the creation of regional institutional networks for the management of natural resources, among others.

Likewise, there are several ACTO actions currently underway that may be strengthened and articulated within the framework of this Program. The Bioamazonía regional project aims to improve monitoring and regulation of international trade in wild fauna and flora and to support the development of a regional information and knowledge management system, as well as the introduction of a system of electronic permits for trade in species covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). A CITES module is also underway at the Amazon Regional Observatory-ARO that will allow regional monitoring of threatened species of flora and fauna. ACTO has also carried out monitoring actions on deforestation, which has become a successful example for the harmonization of methodological approaches, the reduction of regional asymmetries and the formulation of forest policies by the Member Countries’ organizations.

It is also important to note that all ACTO MC have National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) articulated with the objectives of the CBD and the Aichi Targets, and are committed to building the new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The NBSAP shape an Amazon region with a diversity of efforts in different areas (regional, national, sub-national and local) to achieve the objectives and goals of the CBD, and having an enormous commitment towards conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.



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II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. General objective

Strengthen the capacities at the regional and national level of ACTO Member Countries to improve the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, within the framework of the definitions of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, contributing to the achievement of the harmonious development of the Amazon Region/Basin, to the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as to the objectives and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

B. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the Program are as follows:

- a) Improve regional information and knowledge on the status, threats and trends of biological diversity, and its potential for sustainable use in the Amazon Region/Basin, taking into account scientific knowledge and other knowledge systems of indigenous peoples, local communities and other tribal communities.
- b) Consolidate regional implementation mechanisms and instruments to improve access to information, exchange of experiences, monitoring, and dissemination of models, actions, and initiatives on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Amazon Region/Basin.
- c) Strengthen the capacities of the Amazon countries in the implementation of national actions to advance the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity on the basis of regional cooperation and supported by strengthening the interface between science and policy public.
- d) Contribute to the strengthening of regional strategic planning and cooperation and the consolidation of regional technical capacities focused on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

III. PROGRAM SCOPE

The Program will be implemented within the framework of coordination and cooperation among ACTO Member Countries on issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Amazon Region/Basin, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the priorities determined by the MC. The Program recognizes national needs and priorities, and on that basis, it advances in prioritizing regional mechanisms, instruments and actions that contribute to the development of a shared regional effort for the management of biological diversity and environmental functions/ ecosystem services/ contributions of nature to people.

The Program is aimed at advancing the systematization of scientific information and knowledge and other knowledge systems on biological diversity in the Amazon Region/Basin, particularly of indigenous peoples and local knowledge, under the methodological format of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This process will allow the preparation of coordinated regional evaluations, the identification of knowledge gaps and the articulation with scientific promotion agencies, in addition to allowing better decision-making and guiding more effectively the development of policies, strategies, plans, programs.



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and projects on biological diversity in ACTO Member Countries. The Program will also advance the development of tools for the systematization of scientific knowledge and other knowledge systems of indigenous peoples and local communities, and support for decision-making. It is also hoped that this information can support the processes of mainstreaming the issue of biological diversity to the different sectors of public management of the MC and advance in intersectoral approaches.

The Program will also advance in the consolidation of regional implementation mechanisms and instruments that strengthen the management capacity of the Amazon countries on issues of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Of particular importance is the identification of models, initiatives and actions developed by the countries, within the framework of the implementation of their NBSAP. Mechanisms will be established to carry out the recording of experiences, information exchange, development of indicators and regional monitoring, and knowledge management on biological diversity in the Amazon Region/Basin. This will support the replication and multiplication of successful national processes in the regional sphere of ACTO, and of other countries and regions of the world, thus complying with the principles of the ACT. Thus, the MC will strengthen regional mechanisms and instruments to facilitate their contribution to international commitments on biological diversity.

The Program will support the strengthening of national MC actions, strengthening the development of projects, policies and instruments at different national and local scales, which will allow consolidating national technical capacities to achieve national goals in conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity. Thus, the program will promote concrete cooperation actions at the national and local levels in the MC that would have a national impact. These actions will be disseminated at the level of the ACTO MC, allowing them to gain scale in the area of the Amazon Region through processes of dissemination and exchange of experiences and good practices. In turn, this will make it possible to streamline regional cooperation processes between ACTO MC. The transfer of knowledge and experiences from other countries of the world on the subject will also be promoted. It will also support the strengthening of processes for managing biological diversity in protected areas, as well as in indigenous peoples, local communities, and tribal communities. Likewise, actions will be established to advance with the MC in the identification, evaluation, training and putting into operation of financial mechanisms to contribute financial resources to the achievement of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity and environmental functions/ ecosystem services/ contributions of nature to people.

The Program will strengthen regional capacities in strategic planning on biological diversity in the Amazon Region/Basin, promoting regional dialogues for the formulation of a Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Biological Diversity. Likewise, the Program will strengthen the capacity of the PS/ACTO as a technical entity of regional cooperation for advice, support and technical assistance to the processes of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Amazon Region/Basin.

Thus, as a whole, the Program will make it possible to contribute from the national and regional level to the fulfillment of the objectives and commitments established by the ACTO MC in the Convention on Biological Diversity and its new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



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IV. COMPONENTS, RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The Program is structured in four components that are presented below. In turn, each component identifies one or more products.

a) Component 1: Regional scientific analysis of the state, trends and causes of the loss of biodiversity and deterioration of environmental functions / ecosystem services / contributions of nature to people in the Amazon, as well as advances in restoration and sustainability in the uses of biodiversity.

Expected result: Access to information and the capacity of ACTO MC in political and technical decision-making on conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Amazon have been strengthened, based on scientific, governmental information, and of the various knowledge systems, including the scientific knowledge of indigenous peoples, local communities, and other tribal communities.

Outcomes:

1) *Regional report on biological diversity and contributions of nature to people of the Amazon Region/Basin.* Includes the preparation of a regional report on biological diversity and its relationship with the contributions of nature under the conceptual and methodological format of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). IPBES, where the ACTO MC are participating, has produced a regional report for the Americas, a global report and thematic reports in biodiversity, with advances in the systematization of scientific information and other knowledge systems. The report on the Amazon will have more detail in the analysis of information relevant to the MC, and may include other inputs from national and global initiatives. Brazil has advanced under adaptations of the IPBES format in the preparation of national reports on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and a report from Colombia is in progress. Another regional reporting initiative for the Amazon is also ongoing (e.g. Science Panel for the Amazon/SDSN). In this context, the Program will promote the preparation of a regional report on biological diversity and contributions of nature to people of the Amazon Region/Basin, as an important input for the MC to guide their public policy action in the Amazon territories on the information presented in a systematic and organized way.

b) Component 2. Regional mechanisms and instruments to support the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Expected result: The mechanisms and instruments, which the MC consider important and effective, have been strengthened to support information management, exchange, training, and adaptation for the replicability of experiences, and monitoring, in relation to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Outcomes:

1) *Management of knowledge and information on biological diversity.* ACTO is strengthening the consolidation of the Amazon Regional Observatory-ARO as a platform to develop processes of documentation, systematization, analysis and exchange of experiences among the MC, and with other countries and regions of the world. In this context, the identification, documentation (including lessons learned), systematization, and dissemination of information on models, initiatives and successful actions and innovative practices for managing



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biodiversity in the Amazon will be promoted, fostering regionally shared transformative change actions. This platform will be compatible and will be articulated with the existing ones of the CBD and will take into account such international standards for its operation.

2) *Regional monitoring on biological diversity.* The Program will also support the development of a regional monitoring module on biological diversity linked to the ARO, based on the information existing in the national systems that the MC possess. Biodiversity indicators compatible among the MC will also be discussed for the development of regional monitoring, aligned with the indicators of the CBD and the SDGs, as well as instruments and methodologies for sharing information. With this informatic module, the Program will support the regional and national monitoring on the fulfillment of the MC goals in relation to the commitments of the CBD, the new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through consolidating information and databases, preparing reports, and promoting regional dialogues on the status and trends of biological diversity in the Amazon. In this way, practical tools can be generated to improve the positioning of the MC regarding their efforts in the management of biological diversity.

3) *Promotion of the sustainable use of biological diversity.* The Program will support giving visibility to the successful experiences linked to the sustainable use of biological diversity, including the addition of value in Amazonian products. In particular, the establishment of an Amazon Regional Forum will be promoted for initiatives by micro, small and medium-sized companies linked to the use of natural products from the Amazon, promoting the linkages between producers and buyers of Amazon biodiversity products. In this context, the development of a training initiative for young entrepreneurs in partnership with academia and industry will be promoted. The creation of a catalog of Amazonian products and the opening of a window for the promotion of Amazonian products on the ACTO website are also foreseen, based on the existing information already produced by the MC and the work of their National Trade and Export Agencies.

c) Component 3. Strengthening national capacities for the management of biological diversity with regional impact.

Expected result: The experiences and capacities of ACTO Member Countries have been strengthened to meet the challenges of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity within the framework of the CBD.

Outcomes:

1) *Development of national and local actions for the management of biological diversity towards transformative change.* The Program recognizes the different needs and priorities of the MC, and following a prioritization process, actions will be identified to strengthen national capacities in the management of biological diversity. In this sense, support to the MC is foreseen in the management of national and local capacity development projects, the holding of regional dialogues, training courses, processes of horizontal exchange of experiences, and technical assistance, on regionally prioritized topics. Among the topics to be worked on are referentially the following: management of genetic resources, management of economic and environmental accounts, improvement of productivity and sustainable use of biodiversity, forest restoration, development of value-adding chains for the products of biodiversity and development of new products, change in patterns of production and consumption, gender and inclusion of women, among others to be prioritized by the ACTO MC. Based on national experiences, it will be



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promoted to gain regional scale with the diffusion and exchanges of good practices and processes of learning and technology transfer in the regional sphere through ACTO.

2) *Management of biological diversity in indigenous peoples, local communities and tribal communities.* The program will promote articulated work at the ACTO MC level to launch CBD initiatives in relation to indigenous peoples, local communities and other tribal communities. Special attention will be paid to the issues of fair and equitable benefit sharing, community protocols, strengthening of traditional and local knowledge systems, intellectual property on traditional knowledge, and improving the participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and other tribal communities in the Participatory Mechanism of IPBES.

3) *Strengthening of management processes in protected areas and other conservation measures.* It has to do with the development of national and regional actions for the strengthening of the national systems of protected areas, in articulation with other conservation measures, oriented to the protection of biological diversity and the sustainable development of local populations that inhabit them. Experiences will be shared in establishing surveillance and control systems, including the possibility of their articulation and elaboration of joint norms, with emphasis on protected areas in border regions.

4) *Identification and analysis of options for financial mechanisms and instruments.* The Program will facilitate the identification, evaluation and regional analysis of financial mechanisms and instruments that have been developed in the area of MC at the Amazon regional level and in other countries of the world, on conservation, restoration, sustainable use of biological diversity, and protection of environmental functions/ecosystem services. The feasibility of developing training processes to apply these mechanisms and instruments at different scales and with different actors will be analyzed, as well as their potential impacts on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. For this purpose, exchanges will be promoted to strengthen experience-based learning among ACTO MC and with other countries. Likewise, the Program will be able to support the identification of greater sources of financing for regional initiatives at the Amazon Basin level, including the widest variety of options.

d) Component 4. Strategic planning and institutional strengthening at the regional level.

Expected result: The strategic planning and regional technical capacity of the PS/ACTO to support MC in the management of biological diversity has been strengthened.

Outcomes:

1) *Strengthening of the PS/ACTO as a regional technical entity specialized in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biological diversity.* The PS/ACTO will strengthen its technical profile in the formulation, management of regional financing, and execution of regional projects related to the management and sustainable use of biological diversity. Through the strengthening of the technical team of the PS/ACTO, specialized advice will be provided to the MC in the development of national capacities, promoting a greater balance between the Amazonian countries in this area.

2) *Strategy and Regional Action Plan for Biological Diversity.* Within the framework of the Program, the formulation of a Strategy and a Regional Action Plan on Biological Diversity for the Amazon will be carried out, based on the aggregation of the NBSAP. This will help to



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voor Amazonische Samenwerking
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consolidate the approaches and actions that the countries are developing in the Amazon Region/Basin for the achievement of the global commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable development.