



Pro-Natura

Member of IUCN, The World Conservation Union

Innovation to promote community driven sustainable development

Pro-Natura was started in Brazil in 1985 and by 1992 had become one of the very first "Southern" NGO to be internationalized following the Rio Conference, **Pro-Natura International** based in Paris.

Pro-Natura's mission is closely aligned to the objectives of the United Nations conventions on **Biodiversity, climate change** and **combating desertification**. Its efforts are focused on the social, economic and environmental problems facing rural communities in the Tropics. Nearly 20 years of working with rural communities to these ends has allowed Pro-Natura to adapt innovative, poverty-reducing solutions towards the other sustainable development goals of environmental protection and restoration.

Pro-Natura offers viable economic alternatives to people struggling to make a living from these imperilled environments. This Pro-Natura synergy is achieved by linking the preservation and restoration of natural resources to the (re) establishment of participative local government.

In order to be successful, development programmes must be:

- **participatory**, decision making by the members of the Communities must involve all local "stakeholders," thereby encouraging transparency and individual accountability
- **multisectorial**, prioritising economic growth, education, health and natural resources management simultaneously

This "bottom-up" approach has led **many private corporations to support Pro-Natura's innovative and replicable** local development model as it focuses local governance and technical attention on:

- sustainable agriculture and agroforestry
- local management training and institution building
- biodiversity preservation
- carbon sequestration and biomass energy

Innovate... Sustainable farming through Agroforestry



Wilfrid Pineau manages the Agroforestry training projects in Nigeria, Ghana and Ivory Coast.
On his left, Babatunde Akinsinde from the Leventis Foundation.

In the past 30 years, more than half of the world's tropical forests have been destroyed. These forests represent a rich source of biodiversity as well as a means of mitigating climate change.

Unsustainable farming practices are a major cause of deforestation and global warming. To reduce these effects of farming on tropical forests, we must break the vicious circle that drives impoverished people to destroy the environment. Agroforestry solutions build upon traditional farming practices, combining tree farms, farming and/or animal husbandry. Agroforestry technologies allow farmers in heavily populated tropical regions to meet their basic needs and **increase agricultural income while preserving the fertility of their soil**. Pro-Natura has extended and adapted its agroforestry model, developed in **South America**, to **tropical Africa**.

The aims of these programmes are to:

- ensure the local food supply and rural income growth while protecting tropical forests
- design pertinent educational tools for agroforestry and environmental management training
- promote information sharing between southern countries ■

Pro-Natura projects focus on training: environmental education and agroforestry skills in the Brazilian Amazon and on its Atlantic coast as well as in Africa.

In January 2003, Pro-Natura created the **Niger Delta Institute for Sustainable Development (NDISD)**. The

Institute brings together the lessons learned in community development and is designed to improve the management skills and training of local people.

Training is intended for future project managers, university students both local and international, regional administrative employees and decision-makers and company representatives. These efforts are assisted with international mentoring from well-respected institutions.

With many years of experience in industrial and infrastructure projects in developing countries Pro-Natura is creating a unique methodology for the implementation of environmental, social and human **impact assessments**. ■

Innovate... through management training and institution building

Bill Knight
in Akassa,
Nigeria.





Nelson Mandela
Patron Emeritus
of the "Peace Parks"
Foundation.

The Canopy-Glider created
by Dany Cleyet-Marrel.

Innovate... to preserve Biodiversity

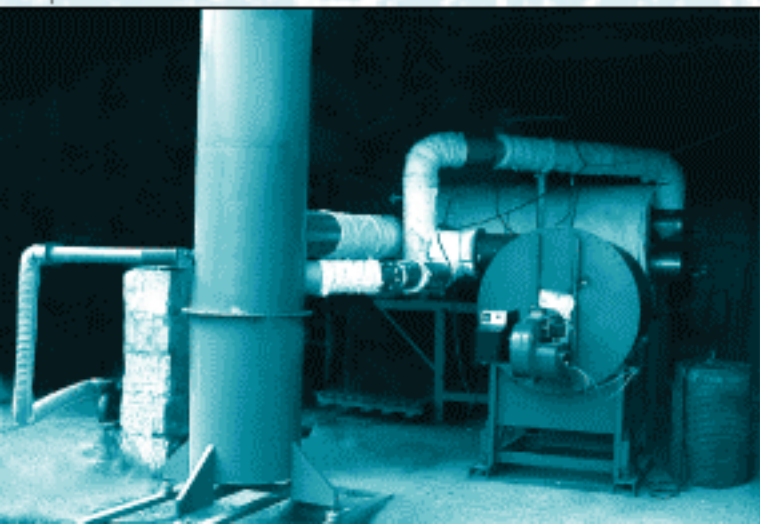
The vast majority of the world's Biodiversity is found in tropical forests. Tropical deforestation threatens the planet's genetic heritage. Aside from protecting ecosystems, forest conservation protects watersheds, reduces soil erosion and promotes economic development. Due to the fact that around 20% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions come from tropical deforestation, forest conservation also plays an important role in preventing global warming.

IUCN, (The World Conservation Union) has developed the concept of cross-border conservation zones. The South African "**Peace Parks**" Foundation is the first organization to systematically implement this concept. Nelson Mandela, in support of the Peace Parks, stated that: "I don't know of any political movement, philosophy or ideology which would not agree with the development of the Peace Parks concept". Pro-Natura has been asked to expand the Peace Parks concept to South America as a means of enriching it with its participatory sustainable development experience.

The **Canopy-Raft**, operated by Pro-Natura since 1996, has been both a media and scientific victory in Africa and South America. The Raft enabled the general public to participate in tropical canopy (tree top) **expeditions** that aimed to promote Biodiversity research and to define a Biodiversity conservation strategy for these previously inaccessible areas. Inspired by the success of the Canopy-Raft, Pro-Natura, in co-operation with the company "Green Ocean", developed the **Canopy-Glider**. This innovative technology which will further improve access to the rainforest canopy is launched in 2004. ■

Innovate... through biomass energy and carbon sequestration

Pyro-6
demonstration
machine
in Camargue.



TWO billion people around the world use wood for household energy needs. This contributes significantly to the world's deforestation activities as well as increasing the risk of droughts and desertification. In an attempt to reduce deforestation, Pro-Natura, in co-operation with the engineering firm Eco-Carbone, has created **Green Coal**. This technological innovation using agricultural residues promises an environmentally friendly and economically competitive alternative to charcoal. It has been awarded the 1st Prize 2002 of the ALTRAN Foundation for technological innovation.

Carbon sequestration is another means of reducing the greenhouse effect. Reforestation and agroforestry practices allow the excess of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to be stored in trees and in soil (in the form of organic matter). The consequent revitalization of the soil also improves agricultural productivity. In this field Pro-Natura also collaborates with Eco-Carbone. ■

Two examples of participatory projects

...with
the Akassas,
a rural community
in Nigeria



Micro-credit meeting in Akassa.



Mané Soto with son in their coffee plantation.

...with
the local people
in Amazonia

Niger Delta: Pro-Natura began working with the Akassa community (population 40,000) in the Niger Delta in 1997. Pro-Natura has since established a **Development Foundation** that assumes responsibility for development activities and includes a Board of Trustees elected by the Community. This democratic structure, built on principles of transparency and responsibility, has inspired great confidence amongst the local people. The participatory development process has permitted the Akassa people to define **their own development plan**.

The plan involves:

- relinquishing large infrastructure projects in order to focus on micro-projects
- a locally managed micro-credit system (\$80,000 lent with 99% repayment)
- the creation of health, education and training institutions
- a natural resources management plan that has resulted in part of Akassa being selected as a RAMSAR site, the second in Nigeria

This development plan has become a model of success that is being replicated in other parts of Nigeria and the World. The funding came mainly from BP and Statoil. ■

North-Western Mato Grosso: Pro-Natura began to battle deforestation in the Mato Grosso state of Brazil in 1990. Local stakeholders, including farmers, foresters and local officials have since been called to take part in the **participatory project "Vidamazônia"**. The project presently involves **100,000 people living on 11 million hectares**. The Global Environment Facility has committed to providing funding for the project until 2008.

This project is also multisectorial and involves:

- environmental analyses to determine the most appropriate usage of land
- establishment of an agroforestry applied research centre
- implementation of a nursery which distributes 300,000 seedlings a year
- set up of agroforestry systems on farms
- collaboration with local businesses to ensure sustainable forest management
- local valorisation of wood by producing furniture and creation of small scale local agro-industries
- creation of an experimental "carbon sink", in the form of reforestation with indigenous species, in partnership with Peugeot and the French National Forest Administration ■

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