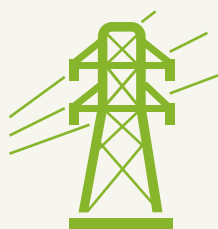




## Living Amazon Initiative

# FREE-FLOWING RIVERS AND FOREST-FRIENDLY ROADS



# 140

**HYDROPOWER  
PROJECTS AT SOME  
STAGE OF PLANNING IN  
THE AMAZON IN 2011**

Investments in infrastructure development projects, particularly in the transportation and energy sectors, are on a steep rise in the Amazon. Remote areas with little contact with the global economy have become the new frontiers for development, compromising the future of these fragile regions as well as the communities who have no prior experience in dealing with transformations of this magnitude.

WWF seeks to influence both the construction of new infrastructure and the improvement of existing infrastructure by promoting the improvement of the social and environmental criteria that are used to screen and design the construction of road and hydropower development projects in the Amazon.

In addition, the aim is to advocate for national and regional transportation and energy policies to incorporate the need for alternatives and truly assess the suitability of infrastructure location. Lastly, WWF aims to enhance the capacity and participation of civil society in the infrastructure development process, in order to ensure that their considerations are incorporated into the design and implementation of such projects in the Amazon.

## WWF's vision for the Amazon

WWF shares a vision for an ecologically healthy Amazon Biome that maintains its environmental and cultural contribution to local peoples, the countries of the region, and the world, within a framework of social equity, inclusive economic development and global responsibility.

## WWF's Living Amazon Initiative

Built upon 40 years of conservation experience in the region, the Living Amazon Initiative is one of WWF's global initiatives, and it concentrates some of the organization's most promising and challenging efforts which aim at promoting a biome-scale conservation vision for the largest rainforest and river system on Earth. One of the five transformational strategies identified to achieve this is "Free-flowing rivers and forest-friendly roads".

Amazon biome

Amazon basin





## Our aim

Under the framework of its Living Amazon Initiative, WWF aims to influence both the construction of new infrastructure and the improvements of existing infrastructure in critical areas of the Amazon Biome, and to reduce the direct and indirect impacts brought about by new and existing developments.

## How we plan to make it happen

- Improving social and environmental criteria for road and hydropower development in the Amazon
- Incorporating socio-environmental criteria into national and regional transportation and energy policies
- Enhancing civil society capacity and active participation during the infrastructure development process

## Our proposal: Science-based, technically solid, and socially just energy and transportation projects

Investments in infrastructure development projects, particularly in the transportation and energy sectors, are increasing rapidly in the Amazon. However, if designed and implemented correctly, infrastructure development projects need not be destructive and can bring economic benefits to the region while minimizing the potential for negative environmental and social impacts.

To achieve truly sustainable infrastructure development, WWF promotes science-based, technically solid, and socially just energy projects in the Amazon. We also sponsor participatory decision-making systems to support a number of critical infrastructure initiatives, and promote the adoption, harmonization, and rigorous application of environmental and social standards for infrastructure development in the Amazon by investors and governments.

## Promising experiences: FOSTERING A GREENER ENERGY MODEL IN THE AMAZON

In South America, 65% of the region's energy mix comes from hydropower. With most of the accessible sites within the region already exhausted, developers are increasingly looking to the Amazon's potential, as evidenced by around 140 dams at some stage of planning. Key issues such as social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts of related projects must be properly addressed, both individually and cumulatively.

The Amazon Basin comprises a network of over 100 000 km of rivers and streams, which connect ecosystems with one another. If the natural flooding patterns of the rivers are significantly altered, life in the Amazon is disrupted and the system as a whole is imperiled.

This is why WWF scientists have worked with partners to develop groundbreaking Decision Support Systems (DSS), which enable to accurately collect and analyze relevant spatial and geographical information as to assist more sustainable and participatory development plans for the Amazon. DSS applications, like the Hydrological Information System for Amazon River Assessment (HIS/ARA) - which help identify freshwater conservation priorities -, provide great opportunities for better informed dialogue on issues like sustainable hydropower criteria and determination of less impacting locations for infrastructure.



### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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### WWF's Living Amazon Initiative

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