



## LAST STEPS

Halfway last September the documentation for the land application was finally completed. These documents were specifically meant for region 2, which is displayed on the landmap in newsletter 103. The package with all the documentation has been send to the ministry of internal affairs and at the moment of writing we are expecting the visit of a representative from the ministry anytime, in order to confirm the ecological function of the land. This certificate will mean that the end of this long process will be in sight since the next and final step will be the application being send forward to the highest commission for land applications. Many different government authorities are part of this commission and together they judge the applications. It was about this whole procedure that a meeting took place with the ANT in Bogotá last September.



The staff of the Colombian land agency (Agencia Nacional de Tierras – ANT) is following the developments closely and we hope to be able to celebrate the results with them. However, with the election of a new president this year it could happen that their contracts will not be renewed and that new staff members will be taking their places.

## THE AREA OF THE FIVE COMMUNITIES

Meanwhile, there is also a lot of work being one on the land application for the area around the five other communities (Ticoya, Patrullero, Veinte de Julio, Puerto Esperanza en Valencia), which is a very complex task. The first reason why it is so difficult, is that the municipality of Puerto Nariño wishes to expand the existing city center (region 1 in newsletter 103) while the five communities mentioned above and all the other 18 communities in the TICOYA reserve do not agree with this. The municipality of Puerto Nariño, in turn, does not agree with the total recognition of region 1, since it would mean no expansion of the city if possible.





The reason why the indigenous communities do not agree with the expansion of Puerto Nariño is because the lands will become taxable property of the municipality instead of lands belonging to the indigenous reserve under collective management of the communities. In order to solve this complex situation it might be the only solution to agree with a certain expansion of the city. Maybe some surrounding private properties can be bought by Puerto Nariño for the enlargement of the town? COYA reserveert en de gemeente Puerto Nariño om de stadskern met een bepaald aantal hectares uit te kunnen breiden om uit deze situatie te komen. Mogelijk kunnen aanliggende privé terreinen gekocht worden door de overheid voor de uitbreiding van Puerto Nariño?

The second aspect that makes the application for the five communities so challenging concerns the non-indigenous people living in region 1. These people own pieces of land where they have been living already for many years. They wish to sell their lands to the government thereby making it possible for these lands to belong to the future recognised indigenous reserve. This procedure whereby

the government buys the pieces of land is something that usually takes years. Not the least because there are so many documents that have to be fixed even before the lands can be sold. Some owners think that the selling of their lands can be done in a couple of weeks and they try to contact the local task force who is in charge of the land application. In this situation it is very important to explain the procedure without making these people lose the will to sell their lands.







This task force has been working very intensely in the last six months and most of its members are from San Martin de Amacayacu. Their tasks include visits to the communities to collect all kinds of data, writing down GPS coordinates and to inform the locals about the land application. Overall there seems to be a lack of knowledge on land rights among the people living in the communities and it is very

important that they are informed and involved in the procedure. The last months were particularly challenging regarding the extreme low water levels during the dry season in the Amazon, making transportation really difficult. Often the boats had to be pulled over the river holding the motor up. Therefore every journey. Therefore every journey to another community took a lot of time.



Luckily the work of this task force was supported by Nataly Rojas, who did incredible technical work: writing minutes during the meetings, making landmaps, writing workplans, and so much more. Her salary was paid by the Small World Foundation. Despite her leaving in October, this work will have to be continued for still a few years to come. The

task force, whose costs are being covered by Small World Foundation as well, will have to be the driving force to make sure this work is done since it requires not only money but also qualities of leadership, diplomacy and knowledge which do not exist in most of the other communities. If it did, how far would this land application be by now?

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