

Project Name Brazil-Amazon Region Protected (@)...
Areas (GEF)

Region Latin America and Caribbean Region

Sector Other Environment

Project ID BRGE58503

Implementing Agency

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Environment Category B

Date PID Prepared May 8, 2002

Auth Appr/Negs Date May 15, 2002

Bank Approval Date October 7, 2002

1. Country and Sector Background

a. Overview and Government Responses Among the key environmental issues in Brazil, is deforestation of the biologically rich Amazon forest regions, which is driven by a complex set of forces including agricultural expansion, ranching and logging. Vested interests, poverty, and an absence of environmentally sustainable alternative economic activities exacerbate the situation. Consequences of these factors are increased clearing and burning of tropical forests, degradation of watersheds and coastal areas, and over-exploitation of wildlife and fisheries. In the Amazon landless rural people continue to be settled in inappropriate areas, timber extraction has increased with growing participation by foreign (mostly Asian) logging companies, and large tracts of forest are being converted to cattle pastures and monocultures such as soybeans. Long-term solutions will require measures to reduce poverty, provide economically feasible and environmentally sustainable alternatives, and strengthen effective protection of priority ecosystems. Deforestation in the Amazon and other environmental problems in Brazil have received growing government attention in recent years, driven mainly by an increasing public awareness of the deleterious effects of deforestation in Brazil. As a result, federal and state governments are moving towards adopting environmentally friendly policies for sustainable development. Major reforms that are relevant to the Brazilian Amazon include: adoption of a "Green Protocol," which requires banks and lending agencies to incorporate environmental criteria in the projects they finance; ratification of the Convention on Biodiversity and preparation of