

## CHALLENGES AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

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In 2004 the initiative to create a functional inter-municipal mechanisms for watershed management is at a crossroads and must surmount various obstacles and confront the challenges of the new social conditions in the valley. Its future is uncertain. To assure institutional and social continuity the initiative must address the following challenges:

1. Political/administrative changes in municipal governments that occurred in January 2004.
  - a. The newly elected municipal presidents initiated their three-year term in January 2004. The elections brought new individuals, new parties and new social stakeholders to the leadership seats in each municipality. Unión de Tula xxx are still ruled by member of the PAN, El Grullo xxx are still ruled by members of the PRI, Autlán changed from PRI to PAN, xxx changed from PRI to PRD, and xxxxxchanged from PAN to PRI. The governmental environment will increasingly become more politicized as the upcoming 2006 elections approach, making inter-party collaboration difficult. These elections will be significant because not only will the post of municipal president be decided but also that of State Governor of Jalisco and of President of Mexico (state and federal congress???). Political strife, competition and acrimony will be more marked than when the inter-municipal watershed initiative was initiated at the beginning of the decade and the president and state governors had just been elected for 6-year terms. A related additional change, that increases uncertainty was that the Director of the Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural of the Jalisco State Government, who had supported the initiative during three years and had cooperated with the DRBSM for almost a decade was substituted. This was interpreted as changes preparing the different groups towards the 2006 elections.
2. Changes in leadership and administration at the two institutions that have served as catalyst for the project (IMECBIO at the CUCSUR-UdeG; and DSMBR at the CONANP).
  - a. On May of 2004 a new Rector to the UdeG's CUCSUR campus was designated by the General Chancellor of the University of Guadalajara. On June of 2004 a new Chair of the DERN-IMECBIO was named. On August of 2004 a new Director of the Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve was named by the President of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP). All three cases involve individuals that have not been participating or directly involved in the intermunicipal initiative in the past. In the case of the Rector and the Director of the reserve, they come from outside of the region. The personal and institutional commitment they stamp on the project will be important in determining how fast the project proceeds.

3. Delivering concrete results that improve the environmental, social, economic and political conditions of the municipalities, both individually and regionally. The project has had major achievements which have been recognized locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. However, the ability to assure permanent or long-lasting effects on the local social, political, economical, and environmental dynamics and conditions of each municipality will depend on its ability to deliver immediate results to cover pressing local needs. Specifically, “success” might be measured by the following parameters:
  - a. Ecological parameters:
    - i. improved water quality parameters sustained
    - ii. increase in biological diversity and population of indicator species of aquatic biota
    - iii. hectares of riparian vegetation restored, with at least 5% of the riparian target restoration areas in El Grullo and Aultán under some sort of formal restoration agreement and management plan
    - iv. increase in wildlife living in riparian habitat
    - v. solid wastes along the river are reduced
  - b. Social parameters.
    - i. reduced water-related public health problems
    - ii. reduced pollution-related agricultural problems
    - iii. reduced pollution-related cattle management problems
    - iv. riparian recreation areas recovered and new recreational opportunities emerge with clean and attractive river that improve local quality of life
    - v. restoration experience is-formally linked to training and educational programs
    - vi. local inhabitants feel better about the river and manifest that the situation has improved to their benefit
  - c. Political or institutional parameters. The institutional capacities of the association of municipalities as well as of each individual municipality is strengthened through the formalization of administrative and political mechanisms, structures and regulations to deal with environmental issues.
    - i. regionalization of the experience of El Grullo and Aultan solid waste recycling program, with recycling centers established in most of the 8 participating municipalities, and these operate in coordination with others that belong to the intermunicipal initiative
    - ii. implementation of ad-hoc water treatment systems in most of all eight municipalities according to population size and pollutant loads
    - iii. new municipal environmental and land-use regulations along the riparian areas and elsewhere are approved after undergoing a consensus-building process of public consultation

- iv. specific ad-hoc administrative structures and citizen participating mechanisms are established in at least two municipalities to address environmental and watershed management issues
- v. effective and formal mechanisms for inter-municipal coordination are approved and operating-new forms of collaboration across governmental levels (federal, state, municipal) consolidated for environmental and watershed management.
- vi. new levels and mechanisms of citizen participation in environmental and watershed management achieved and sustained as it becomes ingrained in local culture
- vii. -new forms of interacting between local academic institutions and local governments are formalized
- viii. the economic viability of the initiative and the stability of the intermunicipal fiduciary fund is assured through the establishment of a financial strategy and formal funding commitments from the federal, state and municipal governments, as well as from foundations to help consolidate key projects or stages of the initiative
- ix. environmental education program is formalized with specific activities and its effect is documented by way of citizen support for the watershed and environmental programs in general

d. Economic and Production parameters

- i. healthy river and attractive landscape increases value of land and provides regional advantage for selecting Autlán-El Grullo area for living, industrial and commercial activities
- ii. increased fishing production
- iii. increased recreational activities generate new economic dynamics in certain locations