



RESOURCE SHEET 4A: 'Development'

The IIRSA has more than 50 infrastructure schemes planned for the Amazon, including 16 ports, 13 stretches of road, four airports and four hydroelectric power plants, and opening seven rivers to commercial traffic.

Issues

- Opening up previously inaccessible forest areas leads to increased illegal logging and forest clearance for colonisation by farmers.
- With Amazonian beef and soy increasingly in demand on the international market, the pressures for forest clearance will be greater than ever.
- The Madeira Hydroelectric Complex will generate electricity 2500 km away from where it will be used – power is lost as the electricity travels along the power lines.
- Roads will be built in order that the line of electricity pylons can be built and maintained – this opens up previously inaccessible forest to loggers, farmers and illegal wildlife traders.
- The natural flood cycle of rivers make the land alongside the rivers very fertile. Hydroelectric dams prevent this cycle.
- Dams can disrupt fish migrations and threaten species like the Boto.
- The reservoirs created by dams produce large amounts of methane – a greenhouse gas.
- Dams create areas of stagnant water where mosquitoes breed – incidents of malaria have increased by 63.6 % in the local area since work began on the Jirau dam.
- Waterways attract soya and cattle farmers - A 600% increase in deforestation took place around Rio Madeira after the preliminary license for the dams was granted in July 2007.
- The health and welfare of indigenous groups will be affected by thousands of migrants arriving in search of work on construction crews.
- Dams in the Amazon often suffer from a build-up of sediment that limits their effectiveness - the average Brazilian dam produces 50-65 per cent of its proposed capacity.



RESOURCE SHEET 4A: 'Development'.....Continued

- An estimated 100,000 construction workers and their families will move into the Amazon to work on the Madeira Hydroelectric Complex – these people will need houses, food, schools, fuel, drinking water, schools, health services – things that result in further deforestation and pressure on the ecosystem.
- The Madeira Hydroelectric Complex will disrupt the livelihoods of thousands of people who depend on the river and forests – fishermen, farmers, rubber tappers and indigenous people.