THE SIXAOLA RIVER BASIN: A PERIPHERAL YET GLOBAL Monthly Water Map **HOTSPOT FOR BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Telire

The Sixaola river, serving as a border between the Republics of Costa Rica and Panama, is a cultural and biodiversity hotspot. However, despite its social and environmental richness, the basin is a peripheral and marginal region, a result of its remoteness from the capital cities and decades of limited public investment.

Caribbean

Sea

The Binational Commission for the Sixaola River Basin, created in 2009 in the framework of the 1992 bilateral Agreement on Cooperation for Border Development, has attempted to address this neglect by promoting a space for participatory multi-sectoral management of the basin.

Despite its isthmic configuration - a bridge between two continents and two oceans - Central America is also marked by geographic fragmentation, with two central mountain ranges forming a "backbone" separating the region into two slopes: the Pacific and the Caribbean. While the highlights of the Pacific slopes have concentrated the political and economic power, the Caribbean slopes have served as a refuge for indigenous and Afro-Caribbean peoples and an economy primarily based on export-oriented monoculture. The Pacific-Caribbean dichotomy has been decisive in the development of Costa Rica and Panama, where the western provinces harbor the main urbanized areas and road network.

> covering 2'840 km2 (81% belonging to Costa Rica and 19% to Panama), concentrates an important biological diversity and ecosystems of global importance. 55% of its territory has a protected area status, with the International Park La Amistad (PILA) alone harboring nearly 4% of the planet's terrestrial species. The basin is also home to many indigenous peoples, who represent almost 58% of the population and inhabit 35% of the territory.

The Sixaola is also a hotspot of export-banana production. Concentrated in the lower sub-basin, particularly around the towns of Bribri, Olivia, Margarita and Paraiso, intensive banana agriculture represents the primary economic and employment in the basin. Yet, banana production has become the central issue in the Sixaola: water pollution due to agrochemical runoff.

See the full study at www.bit.lv/3EihiBO Contact

Legend

International border Provincial border Water ways NATIONAL CAPITAL

SAN JOSÉ

Elevation (metres)

0-100

100-500

500-1000

1000-2000

2 000-3 000

3 000-4 000

Pacific

Ocean

WATER

- Province Capital \bigcirc
- Sixaola basin
- Urbanized area
- Primary road
- Secondary road

Ocean

PANAMA CITY

Pacific

Cahuita



