

World Bank Offers a Helping Hand in the Brazilian Northeast

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An agreement signed Thursday, July 14, with the World Bank (IBRD) assures the transfer of US\$ 800 thousand to the municipal government of São Luiz, in Northeastern Brazil.

The money will be used to develop the studies required for the planning of the program to restore the environment and improve the quality of life in the Bacanga River Basin.

These resources, which will come from the Japanese International Fund, will benefit, directly or indirectly, around 220 thousand people.

The operation, which constitutes a grant of funds that need not be repaid, will make it possible to carry out cartographic, topographic, and environmental surveys of the living conditions of the region's inhabitants.

At the end of April, Brazilian state and municipal secretaries of health met in Brasília for the signing of the term of adhesion to the Vigisus II Project, the second phase of a US\$ 600 million loan agreement between the World Bank (IBRD) and the Brazilian government to improve and strengthen the National Health Surveillance System.

The resources will be used to support activities in the areas of epidemiological surveillance, prevention and control of contagious and non-contagious diseases, and environmental surveillance in the health sphere, as well as to strengthen institutional capacity for health surveillance administration in the states and municipalities.

The project also provides for the training of human resources, the improvement of state laboratories, and the purchase of equipment, vehicles, and insecticide sprayers.

The Vigisus project began in 1999 and is being developed in three phases. The first phase, Vigisus I, took place from 1999 to 2004 and was devoted to the organization of the national health surveillance system.

The second phase of the project should go from 2005 up to 2008 and will focus on the modernization of the National Health Surveillance System.

The third phase, Vigisus III, is scheduled for implementation between 2009 and 2011 and will serve to consolidate the system.

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