

CITY PROFILE: ENTRE RÍOS

A fictitious city located in a Latin American country

Entre Ríos is the second-largest city in the country. Situated on a major riverway, it was a thriving center of manufacturing and agricultural processing until the 1960s, and still serves a regional commercial hub. It is home to a mid-sized university, the country's largest soft-drink manufacturer, Fizzco, and La Pescadorita, a canned fish company.

Entre Ríos has a moderate climate and is surrounded by a patchwork of suburbs, farmland and the remnants of indigenous subtropical dry forest. Temperatures in the summer usually peak at 25-28°C, but the past few years have seen as many as ten consecutive days with temperatures hitting 33°C. Few homes in the city have air conditioning, and six people died of heat in their homes last year. Rain is heaviest in April and May, with instances of low-level flooding in neighborhoods situated along the river. However, flood projections predict more serious flooding in the coming decades. Even more worrying are the algal blooms that occur at the mouth of the river every two to three years, significantly reducing the quantity and quality of fish available to the La Pescadorita cannery.

There is a great deal of wealth inequality in Entre Ríos, and, as in many cities, wealthy neighborhoods exist alongside poor neighborhoods. There are also a few slums on the edges of the city, and nearby neighborhoods have been complaining about odors and unsanitary conditions in these areas.

Most residents of Entre Ríos love the city. They like the mild climate, the cultural amenities provided by the university, and the economic opportunities offered by Fizzco, La Pescadorita and other businesses. The city's small but growing indigenous population adds further richness to the social fabric. When residents complain, it's about how quickly the city is growing. Traffic congestion has been worsening, and with it, the usual ills of car-dense cities: smog, noise and dangerous driving.

There are several ecologically and economically important species in and around Entre Ríos. The university can provide information about these.



GRANT

The city of Entre Ríos is receiving a grant of \$50 million (USD) to spend on one or more new initiatives to protect or enhance biodiversity. The city is free to decide how to define biodiversity and the various strategies to protect or enhance it.

INSTRUCTIONS

Game session 1

Read your dossier and begin to formulate ideas for biodiversity initiatives to propose to the Mayor. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are my worries and goals, and how can biodiversity help? What species or ecosystems are relevant to me? What would a city initiative to protect or enhance biodiversity look like?
- Are there any other actors whose interests might align with mine, or be opposed to them?
- Are there any opportunities for a collaborative initiative?
- How can I convince other actors to support my idea?
- What data do I need to make a compelling proposal? Who might have that data?

Game session 2

Create a specific proposal and prepare a short presentation. Use your blank city map to illustrate the proposal. Along the way, consider:

- Collaborating with other actors on a joint proposal
- Substantiating your proposal with data (maps)
- Asking the Budget Director for an estimate of your proposal's cost. The grant may be divided among several small projects or allocated entirely to one large project.

Game session 3

- Pitch your project to the Mayor. You will have two minutes, but different actors may add up their time to present a joint proposal. Your pitch could include a map drawn on the blank map of Entre Ríos.
- The Mayor will rank the projects based on the information presented in the pitches, any benefits and advantages accrued for the city, and political considerations she decides are relevant. The Mayor does not reveal her rankings.
- Winners will be decided when the Budget Director allocates the grant money among the highest priority projects, as ranked by the Mayor. If the highest ranked project costs the entire grant amount, then it will be the only winner. The Budget Director has discretion to underfund certain projects in order to create more winners.
- Participants discuss the processes and outcomes of the game, sharing similarities and differences with their own experiences.



MERCEDES MONTEVERDE

Mayor



POWERS

- Sets the priorities for the local government
- Has the authority and political weight to convene actors, facilitate decision-making, and impose planning processes on actors that differ from the rules laid out in the game instructions
- Participates in project selection for the biodiversity grant by ranking all proposed projects



WORRIES

- The city and the climate are changing – what does the future hold?



GOALS

- Taking credit for a locally popular, nationally prominent project like the biodiversity grant
- Re-election
- Possible election to national office



WEAKNESSES

- Gets blamed for everything bad that happens in Entre Ríos



GASTÓN DE LA PLATA

Director of Budget
and Taxation



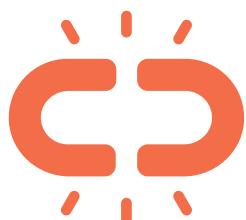
POWERS

- Determines the cost estimate for all large initiatives
- Able to broker deals and find ways to cut costs



WORRIES

- Everybody underestimates how much things will cost



WEAKNESSES

- Gets blamed for all macroeconomic trends



GOALS

- Gathering tax revenues to pay for everything that makes the city great



HERNÁN VEREDAS

Director of Transportation



POWERS

- Controls budget for all transportation infrastructure projects
- Sets design standards for transportation infrastructure
- Sets bus routes



WORRIES

- The Transportation Department gets blamed whenever there is congestion, or whenever a resident is injured or killed in a vehicle collision



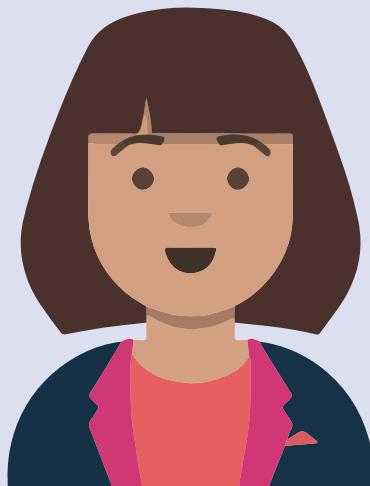
WEAKNESSES

- Drivers follow their own rules and don't obey street signs
- Drivers only seem to respect bollards, speed bumps and police officers
- Drives complain incessantly



GOALS

- Making sure the city's roads and bus network support all residents and businesses in their day-to-day needs



CLARA RÍOS

Director of the Water Department



POWERS

- Controls budget for water treatment facilities, water distribution infrastructure and stormwater infrastructure
- Owns rivers and land up to 10 m from all river edges
- Creates regulations for maintaining water quality



WORRIES

- Floods seem to be intensifying and occurring more frequently
- Storms can overwhelm the water treatment system, and during heavy rains, storm water mixed with raw sewage flows directly into the river
- Water quality in the river has been worsening in general



WEAKNESSES

- Not enough money to maintain riverside lands
- No power to police informal riverside settlements
- No power to enforce water quality regulations



GOALS

- Ensuring reliable access to safe water for all
- Limiting the impacts of flooding
- Purifying river water



JOÃO DE BARROS

University Biodiversity Expert



POWERS

- High level of knowledge of important species and local ecosystems
- A role in management decisions regarding the university grounds



WORRIES

- Specific locations of endangered species must not be made public for the safety of the species



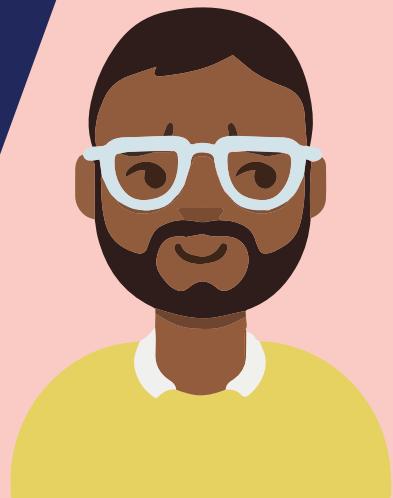
WEAKNESSES

- Knowledge isn't really power!



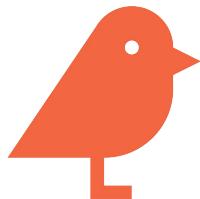
GOALS

- Science-based protection of all important species and ecosystems in and around Entre Ríos
- A high-profile project that could attract international funding for a new biodiversity research center



JOÃO DE BARROS

University Biodiversity Expert



Important species and ecosystems in Entre Ríos

- **Chickenberry:** Shrub whose berries are a popular food source for migratory songbirds. Also used by local indigenous people to make a delicious wine. Grows well in the shade.
- **Blubber bat:** Important pollinator of an economically important mango species (the mango provides the flavor for Fizzco's most popular product). Very ugly creature. Found mostly on dead trees in forests, including urban forests.
- **Razortooth jaguar:** A globally endangered species. Looks beautiful on calendars. Almost never seen within city limits, but Entre Ríos is situated right in the middle of jaguar habitat. Adult jaguars have been known to kill domestic animals and attack humans who approach them. Requires large expanses of dense forest, which have been shrinking all over the region.
- **Fluffgrass:** Neither beautiful nor ugly. Its pollen exacerbates asthma. Grows well in the open and along rivers. Excellent for filtering pollution from runoff water, absorbing stormwater and reducing flood intensity.



HELENA FLORES

Director of the
Department of Parks
& Recreation



POWERS

- Controls management of all parks, including vegetation management, playground maintenance, and security
- Influences decision-making on creation of new parks
- Responsible for planting and maintaining street trees



WORRIES

- Indigenous people sometimes engage in unauthorized activities in parks after dark, which makes them vulnerable to crime
- Increasingly frequent reports of asthma attacks in parks



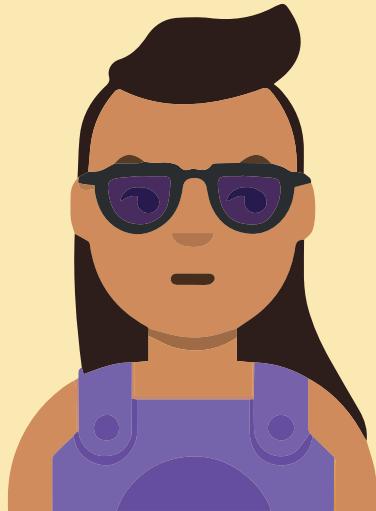
WEAKNESSES

- No power to control activities outside park boundaries



GOALS

- Creating and maintaining beautiful, accessible and safe parks for all residents
- Creating at least one nationally prominent park in Entre Ríos



URBANO CASAGRANDE

Community Activist



POWERS

- Trusted by youth, labor, residents of informal settlements, and much of the indigenous community



WORRIES

- People falling sick or dying of heat in their homes
- Slum dwellers facing harassment and discrimination by their employers or the police
- Indigenous people facing harassment by the police for engaging in culturally important activities in city parks



WEAKNESSES

- No formal role in government (yet)



GOALS

- Safety, opportunity and dignity for all



RENÊ FRESCANTE

President of Fizzco



POWERS

- Controls a company that provides jobs, tax revenue and prominence to the city. Fizzco is nationally beloved. Its newest flavor, Mango Magnífico (made from a variety of mango special to Entre Ríos), might open overseas markets for the company.



WORRIES

- The quality of river water has been declining. Concentrations of water pollutants have been steadily rising, and purifying the water is getting very expensive. After heavy rains and floods, the water is so polluted that it is unusable for days.



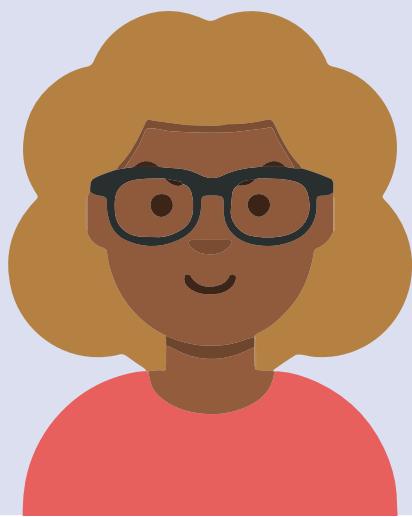
WEAKNESSES

- Fizzco is completely dependent on the river for water to make its products. Water purification is becoming more expensive every year, and the company could go out of business or be forced to relocate if water-related expenses continue to increase.



GOALS

- Reliably clean water, happy workers and economic vitality for the city.



ANDREA OBRERO

Representative of the Union of Cannery Workers

URBAN
SH/FT



POWERS

- Union members are voters, and the cannery union is large.



WEAKNESSES

- The union and the cannery owners have a poor relationship.
- La Pescadorita is dependent on fishing that occurs at the mouth of the river. If the reliability or quality of fish declines, the company will probably move the cannery elsewhere.



WORRIES

- La Pescadorita has been struggling with unreliable fish supply because of algal blooms. You know that algal blooms are largely caused by polluted water. Vegetation alongside the river can filter out pollutants. Stormwater being absorbed into the soil instead of flowing overland into the river can also reduce water pollution.
Additionally helpful: banning use of chemical fertilizers in gardens, lawns and golf courses.



GOALS

- Economic security and better health for all union members.