



## THE ATRATO RIVER AS AN AXIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIA

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The Atrato River in Colombia has the highest ratio of discharge to catchment area in the world and traverses one of the world's richest catchments in terms of biodiversity. Its strategic location and its natural navigability conditions have made it a central axis in the development of an intermodal transport system to improve trade routes from Colombia to North America and Europe. This transport system is composed of a road from Pereira to Quibdó connecting to the fluvial mode through a port in Quibdó, and the 494 km long fluvial channel of the Atrato river to the Urabá Gulf in the Atlantic Ocean where a maritime port will be implemented. The inclusion of a road from Medellín to Quibdó guarantees the total load that is necessary to obtain a positive benefit-cost ratio of the project. The transport system aims at increasing the competitiveness of Colombian industry as well as at solving problems of poverty, underdevelopment and violent conflicts in the Chocó region. We present the feasibility study which has produced a wealth of new data on hydraulic and morphological functioning of the river as well as the environmental and socio-economic functioning of the Chocó region.