

SUPPORT FOR CERTIFIED CONSERVATION MODELS IN CALAKMUL: AREAS VOLUNTARILY DESIGNATED FOR CONSERVATION (ADVC), MEXICO

» Context and challenges

TL2 MX

The National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) has a scheme to protect natural resources on land, whether in ejidos, agrarian communities or natural or legal persons, where their owners have decided to implement, on a voluntarily basis a territorial planning model called Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC). When CONANP evaluates that a property can be considered an ADVC, it grants a certificate with the same conservation guarantees as any other federal Protected Area (PA), as well as the same attributions to continue fulfilling the objectives of conservation of the natural environments, safeguarding of genetic diversity and development of research, rescue and dissemination of the knowledge necessary for sustainable use. In ecological terms, ADVC favor

landscape connectivity within the territory through biological corridors connecting different protected areas and providing environmental services such as water collection and climate regulation. In the municipality of Calakmul, the certification scheme has been adopted by various ejidos adjoining the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (CBR), which combine traditional sustainable productive activities with a contemporary conservation model. The Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, together with its counterpart, identified and promoted these initiatives, which contribute to the creation of sustainable models of territorial management and land use, as strategies that make an important contribution to the conservation of the CBR.

Beneficiaries

The population of the 10 ADVC certified ejidos, adjacent to the CBR: 2,500 people, 42% of whom are indigenous.



Impacts

- ◆ Extension of the area under voluntary protection of natural resources by 92,699 hectares through the certification of 10 ejidos adjoining the CBR for 15 years.
- ◆ Improved ecological connectivity by expanding the biological corridors between state-managed natural protected areas and community-based managed ADVC.
- ◆ Consolidation of sustainable community models with planned access to land and water use and incorporation of conservation areas for biodiversity conservation purposes.
- ◆ Strengthened capacities for fire prevention and management, prevention of environmental crimes, biological monitoring and surveillance, among administrators and ADVC community guards.



● Identification of alternatives to face the decline in incentives for the conservation of forests in communal property

The CBR is surrounded by more than 80 communities that share natural resources of high environmental value. However, these resources are threatened by the lack of incentives for their conservation or sustainable use, which is why alternatives have been sought, through a planning model based on ADVC, to reconcile the conservation objectives of the PA compatible with the social and economic development objective of the adjacent communities for their sustainable development. Informative meetings were held in the assemblies of the ejidos with the largest territorial extension or that had a strategic location for connectivity with the PA. Finally, after the analysis and reflection of the proposal, ten ejidos showed interest and willingness to work according to this model.

Enabling factors: Local communities, mainly indigenous, have ancestral practices of low environmental impact that have been considered in promoting sustainable development. The active territorial management of the CBR was key to promoting the ADVC.

● ● ● Certification of ejidos as Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC)

The natural resources conservation agreements established in the 10 ejidos were incorporated into the community management plans, which were the technical instruments necessary to obtain CONANP's ADVC certification, which raises the status of protection to the same level as any other federal protected area. The relevance of these ADVC is that they have been promoted by the land owners, indigenous people, social organizations or ejidos, whose properties are sustainable production areas oriented towards a function of public interest.

Enabling factors: The autonomy in the management of ejido lands has enabled rapid agreements to be reached on the sustainable use of resources.

● ● The agrarian community as an organizational basis for the conservation of natural resources

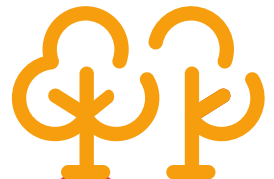
The communities adjacent to the CBR have a collective ownership of the land where they maintain their social organization system legally recognized by the Mexican State. The social property system has regulations that ejidatarios comply with, and an Ejidal Assembly that meets periodically for decision-making. To promote certification as an ADVC, the strength of the ejido, its institutions and regulations have been considered; ensuring that the process of voluntary management of the community's natural resources is sustainable and effective.

Enabling factors: The recognition of the Mexican State of the social ownership of land facilitated community conservation planning and created legal certainty for the process.

● ● ● ● Impulse for a management model for community protected areas

Through direct training and workshops, ejidos certified as ADVC, manage their territory and develop surveillance, fire prevention and monitoring capacities, and in some cases seek mechanisms to participate in the carbon market as an alternative economic strategy.

Enabling factors: The rapid incorporation of the ejidatarios managing the ADVC into CONANP's training and education processes for park rangers strengthened the management of their areas.



The intervention began by recognizing a problem that affected many of the ejidos adjacent to the CBR (1) associated with the reduction of government support for the conservation of forests. Therefore, the organizational strengths of the communities and the cooperation of government institutions were sought to work towards an objective of common interest (2). The ADVC model represented a strategy to certify (3) the conservation efforts of local communities and to promote sustainable development (4).

» Story

“The Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC), in ten ejidos of Calakmul, sought to be a development model that has been well accepted. The ADVC managed to integrate productive forestry activities. The legal recognition of internal governance processes led to a closer relationship of collaboration and support from the authorities, which in turn provided the space to promote integrated management, productive diversification and certification of all the processes. Ejido Nuevo Becal aims to



provide future access to ecosystem services and carbon sequestration markets for which a specific ADVC model is being developed, unprecedented in Mexico. The ejidos have managed their areas well and have received recognition from the Mexican government thanks to the sustainable use of natural resources. Most ejidos have made progress in managing their resources, others are in the process, but all are convinced that it is the right way.”

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