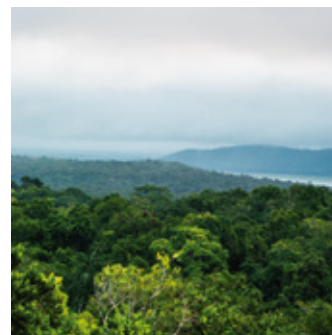
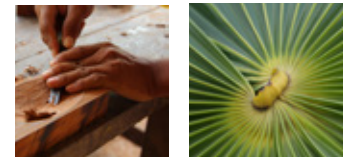


PROJECT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SELVA MAYA

PROCESSES



EXPERIENCES

RESULTS



CONTACT

**CENTRAL AMERICAN
COMMISSION FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT (CCAD)**
Central American
Integration System (SICA)

Final Boulevard Cancillería,
Distrito El Espino Ciudad Merliot,
Antiguo Cuscatlán, La Libertad
El Salvador

seccad@sica.int
www.sica.int/ccad

FOREST DEPARTMENT (FD)
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries,
Forestry, the Environment,
Sustainable Development and
Immigration (MAFFESDI)

Forest Drive,
Belmopan
Belize

secretary@forest.gov.bz
www.forest.gov.bz

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
PROTECTED AREAS (CONAP)**

5a. Avenida, 6-06,
Edificio IPM 5, 6 y 7 Nivel.
Zona 1, Guatemala
Guatemala

info@conap.gob.gt
www.conap.gob.gt

**NATIONAL COMMISSION OF
NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS
(CONANP)**

Ejercito Nacional 223,
Anáhuac I Sección,
CDMX C.P. 11320
Mexico

info@conanp.gob.mx
www.conanp.gob.mx

Published by Selva Maya Programme

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 - 5 Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40
65760 Eschborn 53113 Bonn, Deutschland
T +49 (0)6196 79-0 T +49 (0)228 44 60-0
F +49 (0)6196 79-11 15 F +49 (0)228 44 60-17 66

E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Responsible Lisa Steurer

Edition Jorge Uribe & Sabeth Tara Bayer

On behalf of

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and
Development (BMZ)

Postal address of
the BMZ Office

BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn
T +49 (0)228 99 535-0
F +49 (0)228 99 535-3500

BMZ Berlin | Im Europahaus
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin
T +49 (0)30 18 535-0
F +49 (0)30 18 535-2501

poststelle@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de

Updated

October 2019

Summary.....	1
Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project.....	2

Thematic Line 1: Protected areas and biodiversity

1.1 Institutional review of the Forest Department, BZ.....	4
1.2 Providing an enabling environment for responsible stewardship of the natural resources of Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary (CTWS), BZ.....	6
1.3 Strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the forest concession management units in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, GT.....	8
1.4 Strengthening capacities in biological diversity, environmental legislation and sustainable tourism, GT.....	10
1.5 Integrated Fire Management (IFM) in Protected Areas: Strengthening the Forest Fire Control and Prevention Strategy in Petén, GT.....	12
1.6 Muuch Kanaan K'aax Community Surveillance Network: Towards the consolidation of a voluntary community support scheme to strengthen the conservation and surveillance of the Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protection Area, Quintana Roo, MX.....	14

Thematic Line 2: Land use planning under consideration of the environment

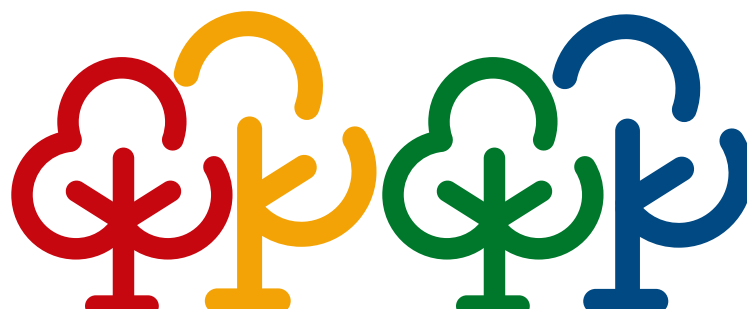
2.1 Promotion of territorial planning in the municipality of Poptún and the Department of Petén, with a focus on protected areas, GT.....	16
2.2 Support for certified conservation models in Calakmul: Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC), MX.....	18
2.3 Promotion of local governance for conservation through the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS), MX.....	20
2.4 Strengthening tourism as a strategy for territorial planning and municipal management in Calakmul, MX.....	22
2.5 Community participation in the management of the Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protection Area, MX.....	24
2.6 Territorial planning for the municipal development of Calakmul, MX.....	26

Thematic Line 3: Sustainable income generating alternatives

3.1 Promoting and strengthening the agroecological transition for the protection of the Maya Mountain Massif, BZ.....	28
3.2 Promotion of the Ramón seed value chain in Petén, GT.....	30
3.3 Promotion of the beekeeping sector within communities in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, GT.....	32
3.4 Promotion of the chicle sector in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, GT.....	34
3.5 Promoters of integral rural development as multiplying agents of agroecological processes in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, GT.....	36
3.6 Integrated Silvopastoral Systems, reconversion of cattle farms for landscape restoration in the Buffer Zone of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, GT.....	38
3.7 Development of a model for certified sustainable products and services: Sello Colectivo Calakmul (SCC), MX.....	40
3.8 Promotion of the organic honey value chain: the organic beekeepers network of the Bala'an K'aax protected area, MX.....	42

Thematic Line 4: Environmental governance in the Selva Maya region

4.1 Fostering regional governance of the Selva Maya: The Operative Coordination Group (GOC) as a technical articulating agent.....	44
4.2 Strengthening regional cooperation: The Strategic Coordination Group (GEC), a steering and incidence platform for the conservation of the Selva Maya.....	46



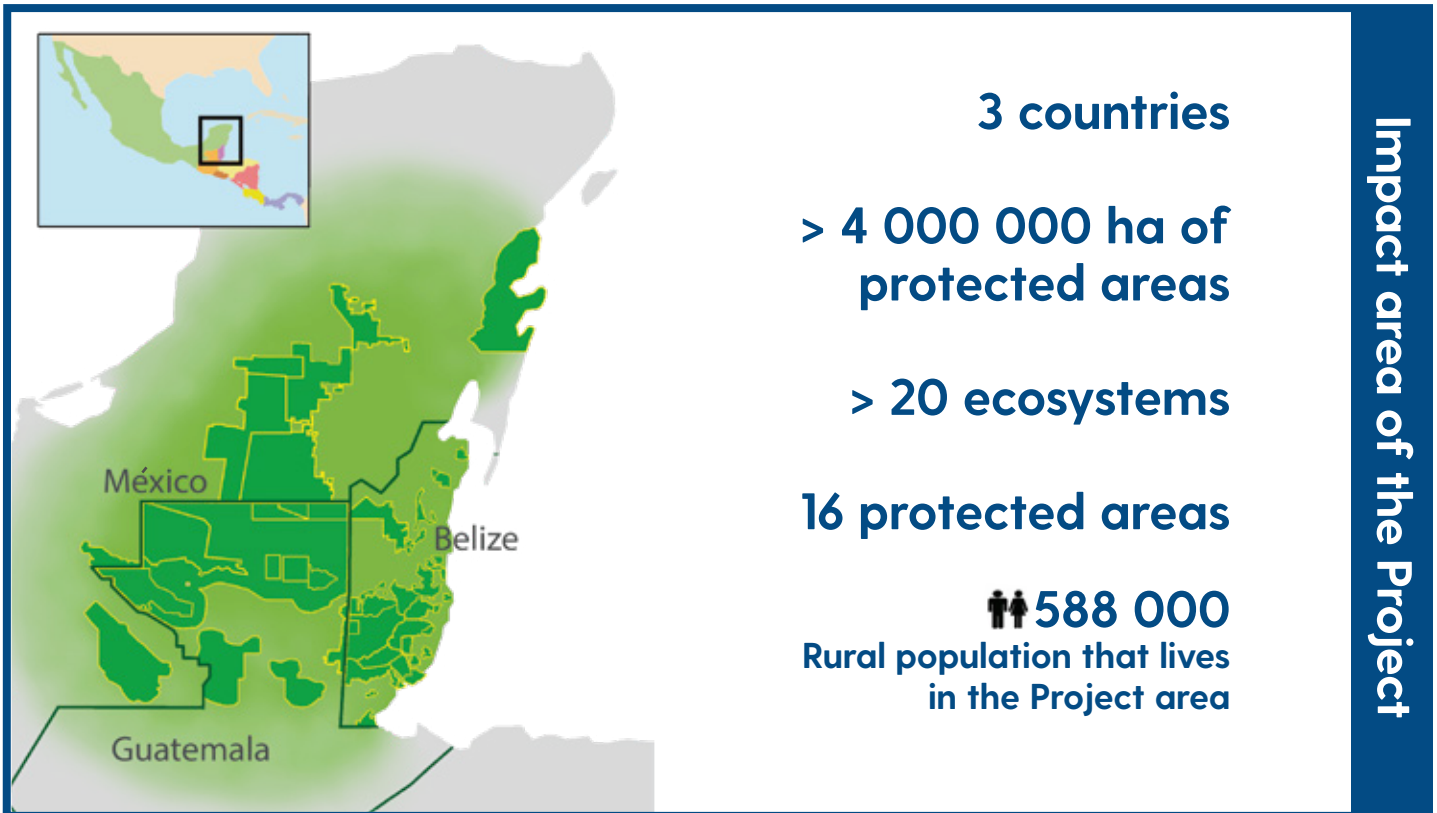
Summary

The Selva Maya, shared by Belize, Guatemala and Mexico, is one of the most important ecosystems worldwide. It is considered the largest contiguous forest massif of humid and sub humid tropical forests in Mesoamerica, covering more than four million hectares of protected areas. Ecological and environmental factors have favored the distribution of more than 20 ecosystems in the Selva Maya, which play a significant role in providing important ecosystem services to the population. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in cooperation with the *Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo* (CCAD), the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH carried out the regional

Project "Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya" (2011-2019).

At the national level, the Project cooperated with the institutions responsible for the protection and conservation of protected areas: the Forest Department (FD) in Belize, the *Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas* (CONAP) in Guatemala and the *Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas* (CONANP) in Mexico.

In order to disseminate the experiences and lessons learnt, this compilation contains a selection of 22 systematized processes, which are intended to be made accessible and serve as a model for future efforts to strengthen the development of the region.



Impacts

- Income increase
- Landscape connectivity
- Institutional development
- Empowerment of women
- Organizational capacity building
- Technical capacity building
- Strengthening coordination and cooperation
- Strengthening management capacity
- Increase of the conserved surface area
- Effective management of protected areas
- Management and control of forest fires
- Protection of biodiversity
- Sustainable use of natural resources

PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE SELVA MAYA PROJECT

» Context and challenges

The Selva Maya is a tropical forest region extending over Belize, northern Guatemala and southeastern Mexico of global importance. It covers an area of more than four million hectares of protected areas and is the most extensive tropical rainforest of Mesoamerica. The Selva Maya hosts an extraordinary biological diversity in over 20 different ecosystems, these reach from the evergreen rainforests of Petén to the dry forests of the northern Yucatán peninsula. The forest is a natural habitat to a large number of species, many of them endangered and is of great importance to all three countries, as a safeguard for ecosystem services (water, biodiversity, natural resources and landscape connectivity).

However, the Selva Maya is exposed to extreme

pressures that strongly compromise its short and long-term viability and operability. The main reasons are forest fires, illegal logging and exploitation of flora and fauna as well as the fragmentation of the ecosystems. Land degradation and land-use changes through agricultural activities, use of pesticides and development of new roads pose further threats. On the other hand, the borders between the three countries that share the natural resources of the Selva Maya, emphasize the challenge of implementing joint and coordinated strategies to mitigate these threats.

The central challenge in the region is therefore the protection and conservation of the Selva Maya and the sustainable, long-term use of its resources.

Our approach

On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*, together with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), implemented the regional Project "Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya" in two consecutive phases (Phase I: 2011 to 2015; Phase II: 2015 to 2019). The Project focused on the protection and sustainable use of tropical forests that extend over part of the territory of Belize, Guatemala and Mexico.

The Project fostered activities along four thematic lines:

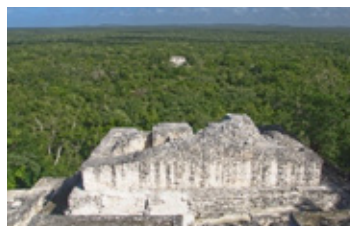
- ◆ **Thematic Line 1:** Protected areas and biodiversity
- ◆ **Thematic Line 2:** Land use planning under consideration of the environment
- ◆ **Thematic Line 3:** Sustainable income generating alternatives
- ◆ **Thematic Line 4:** Environmental governance in the Selva Maya region

On a regional level, the official project partner was the CCAD. On the national level, the Project worked with the institutions responsible for the protection and the conservation of protected areas: The Forest Department (FD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration (MAFFESDI) in Belize, the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) in Guatemala and the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) in Mexico. Furthermore, the Project cooperated with non-governmental and civil society organizations that share a common objective: to contribute to the protection and sustainable use of the Selva Maya. The activities in Belize were implemented by IP Consult, in cooperation with the ECO Consulting Group.

Project name	Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya
On behalf of	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Belize Petén, Guatemala Campeche and Quintana Roo, Mexico
Lead executing agency	Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD)
Duration	05.2011 – 12.2019

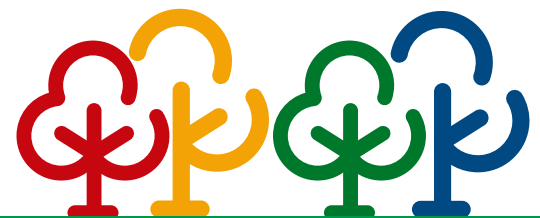
Project objective

Key actors of governments and civil society implement concerted measures for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources in the Selva Maya region.



Selected impacts

- ◆ Five protected areas in the Selva Maya have updated management plans which are implemented, and the Forest Department (FD) has a five-year Strategic Action Plan.
- ◆ An environmental planning approach has promoted the development and implementation of territorial management tools such as the Municipal Development and Territorial Planning Plan (MDTPP) of the municipality of Poptún, Petén, Guatemala, and strengthened social participation spaces such as the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS) in Calakmul, Mexico.
- ◆ Various instruments and models are being developed and implemented to improve the management of the Selva Maya, including the local certification model for sustainable products and services: Sello Colectivo Calakmul (SCC), Mexico.
- ◆ Directly, at least 30 target groups in the three countries have enhanced technical, organizational and management capacities.
- ◆ More than 10,000 hectares of forest fires have been combated due to the increased capacity of more than 200 community brigades in Bala'an K'aax and Calakmul, Mexico. In seven municipalities, agricultural fires were prevented by the introduction of the Forest Fire Early Warning System (FFEWS) in Petén, Guatemala.
- ◆ In Calakmul, Mexico, the certification of "Areas Designated Voluntarily for Conservation" (ADVC) has increased the area of protected tropical forests by almost 100,000 hectares, thus improving ecological connectivity.
- ◆ More than 700 people have improved their skills in handling non-wood products (honey and Ramón seeds). More than 3,000 families in the three countries benefit from the economic strengthening of these value chains.
- ◆ Under different training models based on participatory methodologies and an Integrated Silvopastoral System Model in Guatemala and Belize, more than 300 families have diversified their family gardens by farming them agroecologically, reducing the use of chemicals and agricultural burns. In Petén, Guatemala, 60 producers implement sustainable animal husbandry practices on 400 hectares of land.
- ◆ The Selva Maya Strategic Coordination Group (GEC), formed in 2015, provides a platform for incidence and coordination for decisions at the regional level.
- ◆ With the formation of the Operative Coordination Group (GOC), integrated by directors and deputy directors of protected areas of the Selva Maya, a platform for the representation of interests at the technical and operational level is active, fostering cross-border coordination.
- ◆ Between 2012 and 2019, more than 90 cross-border activities were carried out, including training and exchanges of experiences, which led to various inter-institutional agreements and cooperations.



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF THE FOREST DEPARTMENT, BELIZE

» Context and challenges

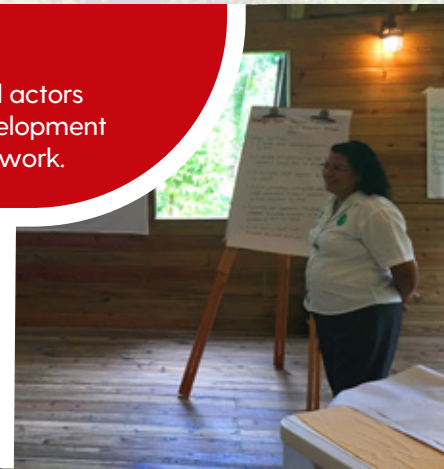
TL1 BZ

The Forest Department (FD) was established in the 1920s with the overarching responsibility to oversee the sustainable management of Belize's forest estate and the resources therein, the administration and management of protected areas (PA) and the management of wildlife for present and future generations. However, the FD has experienced considerable change over the last two decades. Some of the most significant changes have been the decrease of timber stock, thereby reducing the Department's revenue generating capacity and the major damage caused by the bark beetle infestation in the country's pine forests. At another level of changes are the technological advances that have also propelled the FD to

evolve to meet the challenges that follow the changes caused by the pressure on the forest resources. Having recognized these changes and the need to adapt the management, the FD, in 2015 decided to conduct an institutional review to analyze the existing organizational structure and identify areas for organizational improvement. This process as well as the subsequent development of a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF), setting priorities and anticipated results for the next five years (2019-2023) was supported by the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project.

Beneficiaries

Directly, the staff of the Forest Department. Indirectly, stakeholders and actors across the country which participated in the review process and the development of the Strategic Action Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.



Impacts

- ◆ Today, the FD has an improved positioning in relation to other public institutions.
- ◆ Leadership positions in key areas of the FD have been identified and the institution has a more strategic vision for the future and a common work agenda.
- ◆ Measures are established that allow the identification of best practices for the operation of the Forest Department.
- ◆ Confidence among staff is strengthened and cooperation within the FD improved.
- ◆ The FD staff are more aware of their shortcomings and are willing to work with the limited resources available to them.



Through a participatory process led by two consultants (one international and one national specialist) an institutional assessment of the FD was carried out. Through an extensive and intensive consultation process the FD and stakeholders across the country were interviewed and participated in various stakeholder consultation workshops during which they presented, analysed and discussed their needs and visions of/for the FD. An extensive report was compiled outlining the mandate of the FD based on the current legislation and funding as well as the current operational (institutional) structure including tasks and shortcomings of each department (programme) and recommendations. Once the report was presented, the FD reviewed the report and its feedback was incorporated into the final result.

Enabling factors: The FD and its leadership were open to the analysis and had identified the need for change. In this regard, the consultants had full support and a clear mandate to conduct interviews and workshops in which opinions were voiced openly from the Chief Forest Officer.

Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

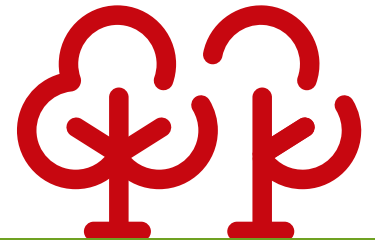
Based on the SAP a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) was developed. The objective of this Framework is the tracking of the process in the future implementation of the tool and included the founding of a group of staff responsible for the monitoring and evaluation. The process was led by a team of two consultants (one regional and one national) in coordination with a liaison officer the FD had appointed. A Workplan to develop the Framework was established by the consultants and one two-day workshop was conducted where the SAP was reviewed, and indicators formulated. After the workshop the consultants compiled the MEF for the FD to review before its finalization.

Enabling factors: By the time the Framework was developed, the FD staff were already acquainted with the consultants and the participatory process, and had full ownership of the process. Therefore, participation was high and active, enabling a rapid and effective development.

Strategic Action Plan (SAP)

Taking the Institutional Assessment as a basis, a five-year Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) for the FD was developed in participatory workshops. The process was led by a team of two consultants (one regional and one national) in coordination with a liaison officer the FD had appointed. In order to define the strategic objectives and the action plan, two two-day workshops with the FD staff were conducted within three months. After each workshop the consultants compiled the results for the review of the FD before the next meeting. The result was a Strategy for the FD including a five-year plan with concrete and reachable objectives.

Enabling factors: The participatory workshops allowed the FD staff to engage fully in the entire process garnering support and ownership of the process and the resulting documents.



The Institutional Assessment (1) forms the basis for the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. In this sense, the development of the Strategic Action Plan (2) can be understood as the second step that can continue while the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (3) begins.

Story

"Every institution which has a legal mandate to carry out national actions in service to its country should be guided by a Strategy. This is vital for good governance, reporting and accountability. The Forest Department Strategy is an important strategic planning tool which aims to guide the Department in the next five years in various strategic areas, in forest management, protected areas and wildlife management, institutional and partnership development and especially in its



contribution to the Selva Maya Region. It has great promise given the vested interest by the Governments of Belize, Guatemala and Mexico. It remains central in our culture, traditions and our conservation goals. It is without a doubt that in order for us to be successful in implementing our plans for the Selva Maya/Maya Forest, we need to continue to be strategic in involving our local communities who are the primary beneficiaries but also who significantly impact and alter the Selva Maya. As we move forward, the future of the Maya Forest lies in our hands and it is a task we take on without hesitation."

Wilber Sabido, Chief Forest Officer, Forest Department.



PROVIDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF CROOKED TREE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (CTWS), BELIZE

» Context and challenges

TL1

BZ

The Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary (CTWS) which was established in 1984 as a protected area (PA) in recognition of its importance for waterfowl is the largest freshwater wetland in northern Belize and a globally recognized RAMSAR site. The Village of Crooked Tree itself has been in existence for more than 200 years, however, the establishment of the CTWS did not take its existence into account although the villagers are dependent on the resources of the lagoon. On December 2013, the Belize Audubon Society (BAS) signed a co-management agreement with the Forest Department (FD) to co-manage the CTWS. The Sanctuary has potential to generate social, economic and environmental benefits for nearby communities. More specifically, the fishing resources of the lagoon have long been a local source of income. However, with its current national designation (Wildlife Sanctuary Category 1) the law

does not allow for resource extraction, thus not considering traditional rights and usage. Nevertheless, as the Crooked Tree lagoon system has been traditionally of great importance to the local communities, continued extraction of natural resources has been permitted, albeit with restrictions. This contradiction between the legislation and the aims of the PA has caused confusion and has exacerbated tensions between BAS and local community members. After the National Protected Areas System (NPAS) Act was amended to provide the option for Wildlife Sanctuaries to be re-categorized to allow traditional community-based resource extraction based on sustainable use plans, the re-designation process from Wildlife Sanctuary Category 1 to 2 was initiated in 2018, facilitated by the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project.

Beneficiaries

The actors and stakeholders involved in the re-designation process, including the Forest Department (FD), as the entity responsible for protected area management, the co-management authority Belize Audubon Society (BAS) and the local community of Crooked Tree, inhabiting parts of the Sanctuary.



Impacts

- ◆ The management planning process provided a positive entry point to moving forward towards a more collaborative management regime under a multi-sectoral management committee.
- ◆ A five-year Management Plan considering the input of government agencies, the BAS and community representatives is in place.
- ◆ Measures are established that allow the identification of best practices for the operation of the Forest Department.
- ◆ A shift in the attitudes of community members has taken place, with natural resource users becoming increasingly positive in their interactions and engagement in the process and a high degree of awareness and willingness to engage the enforcement agencies to curb illegal extraction of resources by the Crooked Tree Village.
- ◆ Re-designation from a Wildlife Sanctuary 1 to Wildlife Sanctuary 2 on December 2018, allowing established, traditional community use, based on a sustainable use plan.



Memorandum of Understanding for the protection and sustainable use of the CTWS

In the context of the challenge that resource extraction in the CTWS under its designation as a category 1 Wildlife Sanctuary was not allowed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was negotiated and signed between the parties involved in the management of the protected area. These are the Forest Department, the Belize Audubon Society (BAS), responsible for the administration of the area, as well as the community of Crooked Tree. The Memorandum was to make provisions for the Crooked Tree Village and the BAS to work hand in hand in the protection of the Sanctuary and allow the sustainable extraction of resources from within the area as embraced in the recently updated National Protected Areas System Act. The intent, signed in the MoU, was a re-designation of the Sanctuary category for which a roadmap was drawn up.

Enabling factors: The signing of this MoU was only possible because the NPAS Act had recently been updated to include the possibility of sustainable natural resource extraction within certain Wildlife Sanctuaries categories. Furthermore, the value identified by the FD and BAS in working with the community for the protection of this RAMSAR Site as opposed to without it.

Formalization of the CTWS Steering Committee

Based on the MoU between FD, BAS and Crooked Tree Village, and as part of the road map to re-designate the Wildlife Sanctuary, a Management and Natural Resource Use Plan had to be developed as well as a governance structure to facilitate the process. For the latter, a Steering Committee (SC) was formalized chaired by the FD and composed of representatives from the following organizations: Crooked Tree Village Council, Fisheries Department, BAS and FD. The SC objective was to oversee the implementation and to serve as technical advisor throughout the process and proved to be extremely useful in increasing transparency and coordination.

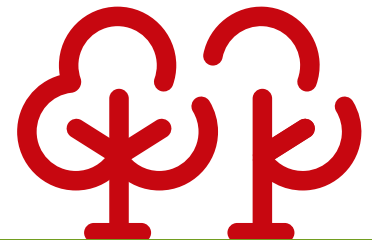
Enabling factors: The formation of the Steering Committee was possible since all involved parties had identified the need for a re-designation of the PA and were aware that this could best be achieved with a representative and operational steering structure to lead the process.



Development of the Management Plan for the CTWS

For a re-designation of the CTWS a Management Plan was necessary. The management planning process used a series of consultation workshops and meetings facilitated by a local consultant that brought together all key stakeholders from both the Government and the community, and was designed to promote an enabling environment to provide the foundation for collaborative management of the Wildlife Sanctuary. Five workshops were held in the community using the Conservation Measures Partnership Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, supported by the Conservation Action Planning excel tool to identify and assess viability of seven management targets, to identify the stresses and sources of stress to the targets and identify priority targets and threats for the focus of conservation action strategies. The result was a five-year Management Plan for the PA including objectives and responsibilities.

Enabling factors: The MoU and the steering structure allowed for a coordinated implementation in which all views were considered. To ensure the availability of the villagers, the workshops were all held during weekends which showed commitment from the governmental institutions. This contributed to the community feeling to be taken seriously and increasing their ownership.



The Memorandum of Understanding (1) formed the basis for the development of the Management Plan (3) and the Steering Committee (2) as a governance structure for this process enabled coordination and transparency.



STRENGTHENING THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR THE FOREST CONCESSION MANAGEMENT UNITS IN THE MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, PETÉN, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL1 GT

One of the tasks of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) is to approve concession contracts for the use and management of protected areas (PA) of the Guatemalan System for Protected Areas (SIGAP) and to ensure compliance with the standards contained in the regulations. Current regulations include the establishment and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system for the use of timber and non-timber resources within concession areas. To comply with these standards, instruments and/or monitoring and application tools are required. In this sense, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project has advised on the design of the analysis instrument or standard for the monitoring and evaluation of the resource use in the forest concessions in

the Multiple Use Zone (MUZ) of the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR). The standard has been established and applied as a monitoring and evaluation system by the members of the boards of directors who have signed the concession contracts. In this way, the standard is an analytical tool that allows the decision-making process to adequately guide the policies, actions, management and operative guidelines for the different actors involved in the co-administration of the MUZ. At the same time, it generates reliable information for assessing and monitoring the performance and management evolution in the biophysical and socio-economic components of the management units, and for steering the actors involved in co-administration.

Beneficiaries

Technical staff of the CONAP MUZ Petén region, the boards of directors and forest regents of the concessions. Indirectly, community groups, industrial companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that support and implement the concession model.



Impacts

- ◆ The application of the Standard of the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the management units now facilitates collecting information from different CONAP departments and integrating them into an annual report, which facilitates the identification and definition of strengths, weaknesses and problems for a better management.
- ◆ This tool provides clearer information for decision-making through 5 principles, 16 criteria and 69 indicators. These five principles are: 1) Sustainable Forest Management, 2) Territorial Management, 3) Administrative-Financial, 4) Social Responsibility and 5) Institutional Regulations; which together allow CONAP to evaluate the performance of the concessions.
- ◆ Through its institutionalization and implementation, the standard supports better governance of forest concessions in the MUZ and promotes dialogue between the parties involved.



Design of the Standard for the Monitoring and Evaluation System

In order to design the current standard, it was necessary to analyze the pre-existing standard (2002), discuss it, and find consensus between the different actors in identifying weaknesses and proposing corrective actions, including technical and administrative aspects. With the support of the Project, consultation workshops with the Boards of Directors and regents of the concessions were held to identify weaknesses and gaps in the monitoring and evaluation system (e.g. the inclusion of the principle of Social Responsibility taking into account administrative, financial and social aspects). Based on the analysis of the pre-existing standard and its application, as well as the information gathered in the workshops, a draft of the new standard was prepared.

Enabling factors: The Boards of Directors of community organizations and forest regents provided relevant information for this update. The environmental and community authorities that benefit from the concessions showed interest and willingness to improve the pre-existing standard for sustainable forest use.

Socialization of the Monitoring and Evaluation System

Through meetings and consultation workshops, the System was socialized and validated with the directors and technicians of CONAP as well as accompanying NGOs, regents, technicians and Boards of Directors of community and administrative organizations of industrial concessions. Involving external actors and experts in specific topics, who were unaware of the concession model, allowed to visualize aspects that strengthened the model and improved the instrument.

Enabling factors: The consensus among stakeholders involved facilitated the implementation of the tool allowing the orderly collection of information and facilitating its integration into a report on the performance of the management of forest concessions.

Establishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation System baseline

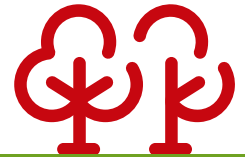
Through close communication, coordination and collaboration between CONAP, concessionaires and accompanying NGOs, the Monitoring and Evaluation baseline was established, allowing the implementation of the tool in forest concessions, as of 2018 and with the necessary adjustments for its improvement.

Enabling factors: Inter-institutional support and international cooperation facilitated the coordination to provide the instrument for monitoring and evaluating the concession process.

Approval of the Monitoring and Evaluation System

CONAP's openness to develop the Monitoring and Evaluation System through a participatory and consultative approach, strengthened the tool and the administration of the concessions, so that the Honorable National Council of Protected Areas, as the governing authority, approved the Monitoring and Evaluation System as a valid and functional instrument by resolution.

Enabling factors: The good disposition and dialogue of CONAP with the rest of the actors created a solid basis of trust, which enabled the instrument to be improved and approved.



The Standard for Evaluation and Monitoring (1 and 2) for sustainable forest use, which was agreed upon with the different actors and tested in the field (3), facilitated the identification of gaps and areas for improvement, which created a basis of trust for approval and empowerment (4) by forest concessionaires.

Story

"The Selva Maya has an unquantifiable value, so I still can't imagine how much biological, natural and cultural diversity there is on this surface, from flora, fauna, ecosystems and landscapes. The ecosystem goods and services provided to us as inhabitants of the region are very important. For example, for my home, it represents several things: living in stable climatic conditions, protecting ourselves from natural diseases and disasters, being a solid natural barrier and, above all, the opportunity to develop as a



human being. Through the Project, relevant actions that had a positive impact in some sectors and in the management of protected areas were generated. Its presence generated confidence and harmony, which over the last three years has resulted in a positive net rate of forest coverage changes in most of the management units. As a reflection we must continue working strategically and inter-institutionally. On the one hand, it is important to create governance capacity through control and protection, and on the other, to work with communities, with projects that generate knowledge, opportunities and commitment to conservation; to minimize pressure on natural and cultural resources."

Allán González Díaz, Director of the MUZ of the Maya Biosphere Reserve.





» Context and challenges

For the management of protected areas, the active participation of society is required, therefore, it is essential to develop educational, formal and informal programs that emphasize the recognition, conservation and appropriate use of the natural and cultural heritage of Guatemala. In this sense, annually, the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), Petén Region, carries out a Training Plan aimed at technicians, forest rangers, and community members whose objective is to promote the proper management of protected areas, based on a wide range of topics aimed at strengthening conservation actions in the territory. In addition, it seeks to modify attitudes to contribute to the proper coordination of intra and inter-institutional actions within the community, while also aiming to raise the level of

coordination between CONAP and its target audiences. The main challenge is the implementation of that Plan due to the scarce financial and technical resources of the institutions, which in the past made it difficult to carry out the training in a timely manner. The Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project developed, between 2015 and 2019, a strategic line of strengthening technical capacities for the management of protected areas, as well as the development of sustainable productive projects, aimed at CONAP and partners. The intervention consisted of providing support in advice, planning and intra and inter-institutional coordination, for the training development (methodology, content, topics review and logistics).

Beneficiaries

Both the staff of public institutions that develop and implement the training, as well as those who receive the training, among others, decision makers, technical staff, forest rangers, and community groups.



Impacts

- ◆ 280 technicians, 35 forest rangers, and 591 community members were trained in legal and managerial aspects of protected areas, facilitating their openness to CONAP to report illegal activities, better manage natural resources and comply with the legislation.
- ◆ Through workshops, 140 women increased their knowledge about the preparation of food based on the Ramón seeds, traditional preserves and products for personal hygiene and health, generating additional income.
- ◆ 25 young people from the communities on the road to Carmelita were trained in the manufacturing of handicrafts.
- ◆ 50 young people improved their skills in the production of organic fertilizers and fungicides by reducing the use of chemicals harmful to the environment and health. They also improved their knowledge in agroforestry systems management and organic beekeeping, allowing production diversification in their plots and promoting forest conservation.
- ◆ 50 teachers today have more information and environmental legal knowledge to protect and manage the natural and cultural resources of protected areas, and they transmit that knowledge to their students.





Preparation of the Training Plan

Together, CONAP department directors and partner organizations defined the topics and dates of the training sessions. This programming has prevented the participants from spending too many days on the trainings to the detriment of their daily tasks. In addition, it was very successful to plan the trainings in consensus with the communities, taking into account forest management, the fire season or the preparation of the land for cultivation, among other things.

Enabling factors: The willingness of CONAP departments, partner and community organizations to jointly develop the Training Plan.

Reflection and incorporation of men, women and youth in the Training Plan

Regarding the participation of the communities, especially women and youth were interested in receiving training on productive projects, which would allow them to improve their income. Among other aspects, skills and knowledge in artisanal production, agroecology, use of the Maya nut, agroforestry systems and organic beekeeping were strengthened. To increase participation, formal and personal calls for training were made. In addition, it was important to clarify to the management boards of the Community forest concessions that these training courses are independent of the those contemplated in their Annual Operational Plans.

Enabling factors: The identification of training topics of interest to the community groups allowed a greater participation commitment.

Implementation of the Training Plan

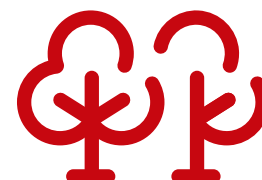
Identifying the target audience -to whom the training is directed- and the participant's subjects of interest, according to CONAP training plans, was crucial for the process. In order to ensure the participation and involvement of key CONAP personnel, close internal coordination was carried out with the departments of CONAP, Petén Region. The trainings were an integral process of continuous education that enabled the target groups to develop knowledge and experiences based on their skills.

Enabling factors: The involvement of CONAP staff and partner organizations, as well as the interest of the target groups favored the successful implementation of this Training Plan.

Theoretical – Practical Teaching: “Learning by doing”

The exchange on-site of productive experiences and good practices was an effective method of knowledge transfer. The community members showed a high motivation using the “Learning by doing” methodology. They also developed skills and abilities to produce handmade products and prepare food, the sale of which generates income for their families.

Enabling factors: The shift towards the “Learning by doing” methodology, as a mechanism of knowledge transfer, provoked greater interest and generated benefits.



The training for target groups (2), carried out with the support and coordination of CONAP departments and partner organizations, based on a Training Plan (1) has improved knowledge to mitigate threats to the ecosystem, improve the management of protected areas and promote the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources (3). The skills acquired through the “Learning by doing” methodology (4) favored the generation of additional income.

» Story

“I see the Selva Maya as a natural and cultural resource that should be used rationally for the benefit of families, so that it will last for future generations. I believe that the work supported by the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project ensures the conservation of this forest massif. What we have learned in the training contributes to minimizing the deterioration of natural resources, which should be better used to secure the long-term livelihoods of families. Planning the trainings, involving men,



women and the youth in the workshops supported by the Project, and providing tools to transform the natural resources in a sustainable way, were important measures that allowed us to reflect on how we can develop. The future of the Selva Maya will depend on the local population and their willingness to manage natural and cultural resources in an environmentally friendly way, to preserve our ancestral traditions, and to use resources in a way that does not deplete them.”

Miguel Ángel Pereira, in charge of Environmental Awareness and Education of MUZ.



INTEGRATED FIRE MANAGEMENT (IFM) IN PROTECTED AREAS: STRENGTHENING THE FOREST FIRE CONTROL AND PREVENTION STRATEGY IN PETÉN, GUATEMALA

TL1 GT

» Context and challenges

Agricultural activities carried out by community members in and around protected areas (PA), specifically within the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR), can lead to forest cover loss, fragmentation, deterioration and loss of ecosystems due to land-use changes. Fire is used as a tool for ground preparation and bears the risk of causing forest fires and damage to the health and economy of the population. Although there are technicians, forest rangers and community members trained to implement preventive and forest fire control activities, it is not enough to inhibit forest fires. Both climatic conditions and anthropogenic pressures make it necessary to have better trained human resources to implement a work plan aimed at strengthening the institutional presence in high-risk areas, developing community extensionism and promoting

compatible productive alternatives to the territory. The Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, in cooperation with the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), contributed to the implementation of the Integrated Fire Management Strategy of the Department of Petén, through three actions: 1) development of an Integrated Fire Management (IFM) Training Guide and its implementation through the strengthening of technical and operational capacities; 2) technical advice for the development and implementation of Forest Fire Prevention and Control Plans and 3) advice on the systematization and implementation of the Forest Fire Early Warning Systems (FFEWS) to reduce fire risks by agricultural burns in communities in the Multiple Use Zone of the MBR.

Beneficiaries

Groups of technicians, forest rangers and community members that have strengthened their knowledge and skills at the technical-operational level. Institutions, civil society organizations and rural population, through specific workshops and awareness activities on fire management.



Impacts

- ◆ CONAP's technical field staff, 204 forest rangers and 334 community guards improved their basic technical skills to deal with forest fire emergencies (accidents, snake bites, sunstroke).
- ◆ At the institutional and inter-institutional levels, particularly among technicians and decision makers, coordination and planning for the development of field actions derived from the Forest Fire Prevention and Control Plans has been improved and strengthened in an orderly and efficient manner.
- ◆ The implementation of Forest Fire Early Warning Systems (FFEWS) has improved the management of controlled burns for agricultural activities in seven community committees
- ◆ 445 members of community groups and 10 technicians strengthened their technical and operational capacities to attend and control fires, as well as their response ability to suppress forest fires and reduce affected areas, resulting in no forest fires in their communities in 2018.



Elaboration and implementation of the Training Guide for Integrated Fire Management (IFM)

With the support of the Project, the IFM Training Guide was developed and implemented, which, based on a “Classrooms in the Field” model, trained technical personnel and forest rangers in immediate attention to forest fires, resource management and interpersonal relations. The application of this model facilitated communication between institutions and communities and motivated communities that had not been involved in the conservation of natural resources before to be interested in improving their relationship with government institutions.

Enabling factors: The training through the “Classroom in the field” model facilitated the understanding of the problem and improved relations between communities and government institutions in coping with forest fires.

Implementation of the Forest Fire Early Warning System (FFEWS) in pilot communities

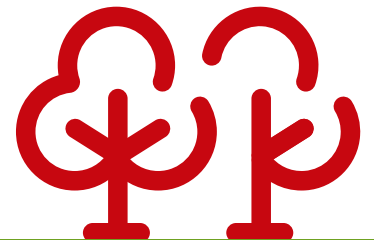
The Forest Fire Early Warning System is a community tool for the prevention of forest fires caused by agricultural burns advised by CONAP. The Project supported the characterization of 28 Systems identified in the MBR that were socialized with neighboring communities for implementation. In order to institutionalize and implement it, CONAP prioritized the monitoring of systems in seven pilot communities, which have received training, in the four Forest Fire Early Warning System components: organization, training, equipment and accompaniment of the communities.

Enabling factors: The socialization of learning between community has had a multiplier effect.

Preparation and Presentation of the Forest Fire Prevention and Control Plans

For the annual forest fire season, the CONAP-Petén Regional Directorate prepares and presents the Forest Fires Prevention and Control Plans, focusing on the prevention and the strengthening of community organization and management. With the support of the Project, technical assistance has been provided, contributing to inter-institutional organization and coordination, leading to orderly planning and objectives aimed at reducing impacts of forest fires through sensitized communities.

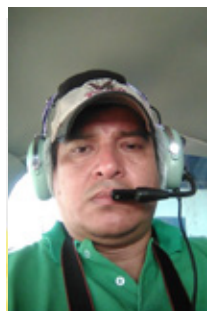
Enabling factors: Communities, institutions and authorities have shown willingness and commitment to prevent and attend forest fires.



The training of technicians, forest rangers and community members based on the Integrated Fire Management Training Guide (1), which is anchored in the plans for prevention and control of forest fires for Petén (2) has promoted inter-institutional coordination and organization as well as the involvement of municipal and local authorities, improving the prevention of forest fires with the application of FFEWS (3) in the pilot communities.

» Story

“Taking into account the current climatic conditions, the Selva Maya is key in mitigating the effects of climate change and at the same time is one of the most important ecological niches in the entire region. Strengthening the capacity of technical and operational personnel is one of the most important foundations for decision-making in the event of forest fires. The integration of organizations from society and communities is of great importance in the development



phase of forest fire prevention plans. Early warning systems are an essential part of good planning and immediate response as long as strategic alliances are sought and the communities implementing these systems are strengthened through adequate equipment. For the future of the Selva Maya, we must consider the involvement of communities to maintain forest cover, while at the same time increasing the political will to invest more efficiently in the management and conservation of protected areas.”

Nery Franco, forest firefighter in charge of the forest fire unit, CONAP Petén.



MUUCH KANAAN K'AAX COMMUNITY SURVEILLANCE NETWORK: TOWARDS THE CONSOLIDATION OF A VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME TO STRENGTHEN THE CONSERVATION AND SURVEILLANCE OF THE BALA'AN K'AAX FLORA AND FAUNA PROTECTION AREA, QUINTANA ROO, MEXICO



» Context and challenges

The Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protection Area (BKFFPA), administered by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), is located in the Mayan zone in the center of Quintana Roo and conserves 128,390 hectares of medium-sized forests and fauna representative of the tropical ecosystems of southern Mexico. In its area of influence (approximately 230,000 ha) there are 37 ejidos and an estimated population of 10,000 inhabitants. Even though CONANP began managing this natural area in 2005, the lack of operative personnel and the complex network of roads that cross the area, hamper adequate surveillance, increasing threats and environmental illicit acts on the site, including forest fires, poaching, extraction of wildlife, illegal logging

and land-use changes for agricultural activities. However, the presence of the ejidos surrounding the Protected Area (PA) can be an opportunity to reinforce surveillance and monitoring tasks, as they are located near the area and know the places where such illicit events occur. In the framework of the PA Strategic Plan 2015-2020, promoted by the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, within the operational axis of Community Surveillance, it was agreed to join efforts to promote and strengthen community surveillance committees through the creation of the Muuch Kanan K'aax Local Community Surveillance Network in order to reinforce the strategy of protection, management and conservation of the PA's biodiversity.

Beneficiaries

80 ejido brigade participants of the Network, through measures that strengthened their technical skills and personal development. In parallel, the population located in the 37 ejidos in the zone of influence of the PA.



Impacts



- ◆ Formation of a local community surveillance Network composed of 80 brigade members from 10 key ejidos, whose organizational and cooperation capacities were strengthened by increasing coordination for planning inspection and surveillance routes.
- ◆ Technical skills strengthened through workshops on fire management and firefighting, reducing time for control, forest fire eradication and affected areas.
- ◆ Strengthened capabilities in topics such as biodiversity, environmental legislation, biological monitoring, human development and the use of specialized equipment for inspection and surveillance.
- ◆ Through exchanges of experiences with national (Calakmul, Xcalak) and international (Belize, Guatemala) PAs, the member's knowledge was increased, and voluntary cooperation agreements were established, specifically between the BKFFPA and the Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative in Belize.
- ◆ The communication between the Network and the BKFFPA improved, homologating knowledge and consolidating an assertive dialogue.



Development and implementation of the Protected Area Strategic Plan

In 2014, a Strategic Plan was developed with the intention of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the Protected Area, identifying the areas of intervention and drawing up a roadmap for the next five years, defined in operational axes, support axes and lines of action to be developed, allowing to identify the potential of allied ejidos to foster cooperation with the PA.

Enabling factors: Following a change in the direction of the PA, interest in supporting key communities to trigger community surveillance actions was reinforced. The interventions that CONANP staff already carried out and the economic support programs were decisive aspects.

Development of good community surveillance practices

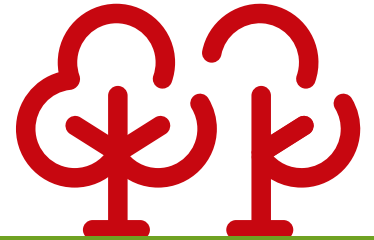
Since the participation of brigade members is voluntary, it was important to evaluate the viability and sustainability of this system and the feasibility of its institutionalization. Through a consultancy, the perceptions and motivations of the community brigades to carry out their activities were analyzed, together with an analysis of intra and inter-brigade social networks. This analysis was the basis for the PA to have a more defined intervention horizon.

Enabling factors: When the network was formed, trust among the community brigades increased and subsequently the preexistence of a Community Surveillance Program in Protected Areas in Mexico was relevant as the brigade members had a high level of awareness of the necessary tasks. The participation of brigades that incorporate other economic activities (e.g. beekeeping), increased the level of commitment towards the conservation of the PA.

Facilitation of participation spaces for setting up a surveillance network

Through the constructive dialogue with key ejidos in the area of influence, those interested in participating in inspection and surveillance actions have been identified. Thus, in 2014 through a participatory workshop, the Muuch Kannan K'aax Surveillance Network was formally established (which in Mayan language means "Together we take care of the forest"), composed of 80 brigades of 10 ejidos. Together they defined their Mission, Vision and the foundations of their organizational and operational structure, through a first action plan, in addition to generating an analysis to identify technical training and personal development needs.

Enabling factors: Several of these ejidos and their local residents have already had an important degree of rapprochement and work with the PA, raising the willingness and interest to participate in inspection and surveillance actions by recognizing the environmental services that the PA provides.



Despite the change in the direction of the PA and the lack of operational staff, having a Strategic Plan (1) helped to define inspection and surveillance priorities in key ejidos. Promoting the dialogue between the AP management and representatives of those ejidos (2), allowed leveling expectations, interests and aspirations, resulting in a solid commitment to voluntary collaboration. Being a voluntary community participation system, an analysis of its viability and sustainability (3) was key.

Interaction

» Story

"Being part of a community brigade represents for me to take care of the environment, take care of the forest, the animals which live there and the ecosystems. I am not only a brigadist but also a beekeeper and therefore we understand that if we take care of the forest, we also take care of the bees that produce honey. That is why we conserve the forest, so the bees do not leave. The creation of the Community Surveillance Network has helped us a lot, because before we worked in a dispersed way and now we are 80



brigades who work as a team, we have better work standards that allow us to plan our actions, for example, to fight fires faster. The Project helped us a lot to improve our knowledge about the jungle, to get to know my teammates better, but also to communicate better with other brigades from other ejidos. I also feel better trained in using devices like GPS and sharing experiences with park rangers from other countries helped me learn about other ways of working. Bala'an K'aax is the place where we live and where our families, our children live, so we must conserve it for the future."

Ricardo Tun, Member of the community brigade of the Ejido Sabana San Francisco, and beekeeper.

Find out more:
www.selvamaya.info



PROMOTION OF TERRITORIAL PLANNING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF POPTÚN WITH A FOCUS ON PROTECTED AREAS, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL2 GT

The management of planning and territorial organization at the municipal level contributes to the process of coordination and organization to implement the country's priorities and its strategic development goals. In the case of the municipality of Poptún in the department of Petén, 61% of its territory is located in the protected area Complex III. For this reason, land use planning requires special attention in order to protect its natural resources, which are threatened by strong pressures such as land-use change, derived mainly from agricultural activities. Additionally, the budget allocation linked to municipal strategic planning poses an additional challenge. In this context, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project accompanied the

participatory process of elaborating the Municipal Development and Territorial Planning Plan (MDTPP) of Poptún as an instrument of territorial management to link the land use with the priorities and objectives of the municipality. This process is composed of four phases: 1) generation of conditions, 2) territorial diagnosis and analysis, 3) territorial planning and 4) management and follow-up. Within this planning framework, the Project strengthened the technical capacities of municipal staff and provided advice for the strengthening of other spaces that promote the appropriation, coordination and implementation of this instrument, such as the Municipal Directorate of Territorial Planning and the Municipal Territorial Planning Board.

Beneficiaries

Directly, the technical personnel and decision-makers of the municipality of Poptún through technical advice on the development of this instrument of municipal territorial planning and indirectly to the general population of Poptún.



Impacts

- ◆ As an institutionalized instrument in the municipality, a Municipal Development and Territorial Planning Plan (MDTPP) is in place.
- ◆ The Municipal Directorate of Territorial Planning is technically and legally strengthened and in operation, which allows an improvement in the implementation of the Instrument.
- ◆ Through the creation of the Municipal Territorial Planning Board, integrated by the municipal units and governing institutions, issues and problems related to territorial planning are addressed.
- ◆ The internal operating guidelines of the MDTPP that regulate the implementation of the Plan are approved and applied.
- ◆ With the approval of the MDTPP, complementary planning instruments have been approved, such as: municipal territorial analysis, municipal land use plan and municipal road classification map.



● **Creation of framework conditions for territorial planning**

Since 2012, the preparation of the Municipal Development and Territorial Planning Plan as well as the creation of the Municipal Territorial Planning Board have been approved on the basis of the Municipal Development Council Act. The Project provided the Council with technical advice on the phases of management of the Territorial Planning Plan, laying the foundations for the planning of the territorial planning of the municipality. It thus created an enabling scenario for rapprochement between municipal authorities, government institutions and civil society represented in the Municipal Territorial Planning Board.

Enabling factors: The involvement of the members of the municipal council and the main stakeholders from the outset was relevant to strengthening the process by facilitating the sharing of a common vision for the development of the municipality.

● ● ● **Consultation and institutionalization of the MDTPP**

As part of the institutionalization of the MDTPP of Poptún, the Project facilitated meetings and consultation workshops with representatives of different sectors of society to inform them about the instrument, its application, the regulatory framework for action, as well as benefits, implications and corresponding penalties contemplated in its regulations. This allowed generating a discussion and reflection that resulted in collecting complementary information, and thus strengthened the document. Once socialized and agreed with representatives of different sectors of society, the MDTPP was approved by the municipal council.

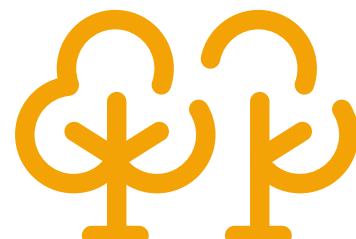
Enabling factors: Having the MDTPP of Poptún properly agreed with different stakeholders and approved by the municipal council facilitates its articulation and implementation by the different municipal administrations. On the other hand, the promotion of citizen participation committed to changes and development in the territory, ensures the sustainability of the process.



● ● **Elaboration of the Municipal Development and Territorial Planning Plan (MDTPP) and its regulations**

For the development of the four phases contemplated in the development of the MDTPP, the Project provided technical assistance through different participatory workshops; using the "METAPLAN" methodology and through detonating questions, actions, interventions and problems were identified as well as possibilities that should be considered in the definition of territorial development strategies. For the formulation of the regulation, the Project supported the Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN) in the process through consultation and revision workshops, in which the involvement of the different sectors in the Municipal Territorial Planning Board was achieved and roles and responsibilities were defined.

Enabling factors: The joint participation of civil society and government institutions contributed to increase the level of communication and coordination for the development and elaboration of the MDTPP and its regulations, as it had the technical, legal and logistic resources necessary for its preparation.



The technical approach with the areas of municipal planning (1), allowed to approach different stakeholders, who, by consensus, determined as a priority the elaboration of a planning instrument (2) that linked the visions and aspirations of development of the municipality with the needs of the population; the socialization of the instrument (3), through the active involvement of the different actors, allowed to integrate and strengthen vacuums, prior to its approval and publication.

» **Story**

"I visualize the Selva Maya as a set of natural elements that form an essential and systemic whole for the existence of Guatemalans, Mexicans and Belizeans. The natural elements of this forest ensure the sustainability of future generations living in this region. For my family and myself, the sustainability and existence of the Selva Maya means that our children and grandchildren can have access to resources such as water, which is essential for our existence. The conservation, research and management of resources, such as soil, must be a State strategy in each of the countries that make up the Selva Maya.



The territorial development planning process carried out by the municipalities is one of the activities that directly creates the best conditions for a management of the territory oriented towards social, economic and environmental protection development. The future of the Selva Maya depends on the position of each governments with regard to the development of their countries, which is why technical and financial support of international cooperation is key to promote articulated territorial management processes."

Noemia Hernández. Territorial planning specialist of the Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN).



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.”

Lucio López. Field Technician, Society of Technical Services Selvas de Calakmul SC de RL (SOSETEC).



PROMOTION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE FOR CONSERVATION THROUGH THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CMDRS), MEXICO

» Context and challenges

TL2 MX

Calakmul is the youngest municipality in the Mexican state of Campeche, where more than 60% of its area is part of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (CBR), administered by the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP). In the remaining 40% of the territory, 84 communities reside, that exert pressure on the resources of the protected area due to a strong agricultural and forestry tradition as a means of subsistence. The main dilemma for local development has been the struggle between conservation and exploitation of natural resources. More recently, efforts have been made to promote sustainable production practices, to promote territorial planning instruments that organize access to resources, and to manage agreements between stakeholders interested in adopting a sustainable vision of

development. For all the above, Calakmul has a governance space in place: The Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS), in which governmental, sectoral and territorial representatives participate. Its objective is to support the municipal government in the orientation and procurement of local development, for which it is essential to promote social dialogue among the actors. In this context, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, in cooperation with the CBR, promoted the strengthening of representation and organization capacities of the CMDRS, to increase cooperation and dialogue among local actors in order to maintain social incidence on the protection of the CBR and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Beneficiaries

Directly, 34 representatives of the most important productive sectors of the municipality. Indirectly, 28,000 inhabitants of the municipality who are represented in this participation space.



Impacts

- ◆ Cooperation and territorial representation among the productive sectors is strengthened by the ongoing work of the CMDRS, which has become an indispensable space for consultation and decision-making regarding rural development, forestry and environment in Calakmul.
- ◆ Civil society organizations are better coordinated and have a greater impact on the well-being of communities.
- ◆ CONANP's presence in the CMDRS has allowed for the development projects in Calakmul to adopt a vision of sustainability and protection of the protected area.
- ◆ The CMDRS Assembly meets regularly and continuously with a high level of participation of representatives, influencing the public policy decisions in the Municipality of Calakmul.



CMDRS Diagnosis

An analysis of the operation of the CMDRS was conducted, which allowed to detect areas of opportunity in the leadership of the Board of Directors, as well as in the participation and representation mechanisms. An Organizational Manual on the operation of the Assembly was designed, the Internal Regulations were updated to improve participation and decision-making, and the councilors were gradually trained. This has strengthened the leadership, dialogue and consensus skills of social representatives; raised awareness of democratic participation and created conditions for social dialogue for the protection of natural resources.

Enabling factors: The interest of the municipal authorities and the historical presence of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve Directorate were key to strengthening this space of representation and increasing the environmental awareness of local actors.

Accompanying the steering of the multi-stakeholder municipal dialogue process

The presence of CONANP and GIZ in the CMDRS has increased awareness of sustainability in sectoral projects. Their presence began as an organizational strengthening strategy and became a cooperation mechanism for the sustainable use of natural resources among community representatives, civil society and federal, state, and municipal governments.

Enabling factors: The joint coordination between CONANP and GIZ generated a space of trust and credibility in the Council, favoring assertive and effective dialogues.

Technical assistance to the CMDRS

In order to support the strategic activities of the CMDRS, permanent assistance was promoted, which proved to be an important resource to strengthen the Assembly leadership, organization, advisors training, monitoring, and fulfillment of agreements. The link between the technical advisor and the social representatives created effective communication bridges with civil society institutions and organizations.

Enabling factors: Given its temporary nature, the presence of the Technical Advisor was a strategy for cooperation and not a measure to substitute the responsibilities of local actors.

Leadership strengthening

An effective and well represented organization can influence the processes of planning and decision-making on local development. In this sense, the Council members and former Council members play an important role in the region having been empowered through their work in the CMDRS. This is proven by the fact that they are taken into account in the processes of consultation and elaboration of municipal development plans, as well as in most of the municipality public order issues.

Enabling factors: The transparency in which the representatives' election processes have been carried out has strengthened local leadership.



The initial diagnosis allowed the understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the CMDRS (1). In a second step, various local influential actors could coexist and engage in dialogues to discuss matters of public interest (2), go through an organizational ordering process, update the rules of participation and train advisors in processes of participation and democratic decision-making (3). After several years, the intervention involved an accompaniment to the leaderships developed in this process, including women, indigenous people and community authorities (4).

Story

"In any position that I have been lucky enough to be appointed, I always tell my colleagues that I don't offer them anything, because I have nothing; what I do have is a great heart to support those who speak to me to find some solution to their problems or to visit and confront the authorities and give them support to the solutions of my female colleagues. When I was proposed to be a woman's councilor, I was the only known candidate in the region, a defining factor to be chosen. The Council is like the heart of the



municipality, because it is where things get approved and disapproved. Sometimes we cannot achieve everything, but we must take advantage of the opportunities to influence in favor of women, children, older adults. Women are here, and they put one here to defend those who cannot come. It doesn't cost me anything to get up early the day there is a meeting, get ready and arrive half an hour before the Council meeting begins, because if I accepted something, it is to comply."

Olga Asensio Torres, Councilor of the Women's Committee of the CMDRS.



STRENGTHENING TOURISM AS A STRATEGY FOR TERRITORIAL PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT IN CALAKMUL, MEXICO

» Context and challenges

TL3 MX

Calakmul refers to the municipality, the archaeological zone and the Biosphere Reserve; overall, it denotes the cultural region of the southern territory of the state of Campeche, which has historically been a place of strong attraction and interest for national and foreign visitors. Tourism as an economic activity in Calakmul has an incipient development, despite the increasing numbers of visits due to the important natural, archaeological and cultural attractions that can be found in the area, but above all after it was declared a Mixed World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2014. In this sense, the greatest challenge for tourism in Calakmul is to overcome the limited capacity of local actors and competent institutions in the sector. Therefore, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project aimed at promoting the organizational capacities of diverse

actors in the tourism sector. The Tourism Committee (TC) represents a first organizational basis for the tourism service providers in the municipality, which is represented in the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS) of Calakmul. The objective of the Tourism Committee is to promote and manage a sustainable and prosperous tourism development in the municipality as well as to promote the destination and the participation in the Municipal tourism activity planning. Part of the intervention included the strengthening of institutional capacities of actors and stakeholders such as the Tourism Directorate of the town of Calakmul, the communities that have ecotourism sites and Civil Society Organizations with similar objectives, in addition to supporting a Study on Limits of Acceptable Change (SLAC).

Beneficiaries

Directly, 65 tourism services providers, 10 local representatives of the same sector, municipal government agencies dedicated to tourism, environment and economic development, and more than 200 families offering products and/or services in Calakmul (handicrafts, hoteliers, etc.).



Impacts

- ◆ The Tourism Committee (TC) is strengthened as an instance of representation and organization that fosters cooperation between the government, civil society organizations and local tourism entrepreneurs. Today, it is the promoter of a sustainable tourism model in the protected area.
- ◆ The Study on Limits of Acceptable Change (SLAC) defined criteria to regulate visits in 13 nature and archeology trails.
- ◆ For the first time, a map of Calakmul's tourist services has been developed in a participatory manner, promoting natural, archeological and cultural destinations.
- ◆ The Technological University of Calakmul and the communities with visiting potential strengthened their capacity to design tourism products, including seven cultural and environmental routes.



● Reactivation of the Tourism Committee of the municipality of Calakmul

In view of the weak structures of municipal tourism organization and representation, a wide call was made to reconstitute the Tourism Committee, whose task is to promote the development of tourism in the municipality with the participation of the majority of tourism service providers in the municipality. At the same time, this has enabled working in the organization of the most representative municipality sub-sectors, such as artisan groups, tourist guides, transporters, hoteliers and restaurant holders, mainly from the social sector or community projects.

Enabling factors: The growing demand for local tourism services and the establishment of a new municipal government allowed tourism service providers to reactivate their interest in reorganization.

● ● ● Experience exchanges as a learning strategy

To promote the learning of the representatives of the Tourism Committee and their representatives, various experiences exchanges took place between tourism service providers in Mexico and with their peers in Guatemala and Belize. This resulted in learning based on greater awareness of the nature of tourism in protected areas, building capacities for tourism product design and forming alliances with other destinations.

Enabling factors: The possibility to combine experiences between tourism service providers from two countries or regions facilitates the perception of new improvement opportunities.

● ● Improving the internal organization of the Committee

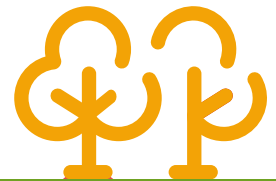
In order to strengthen the Committee organizationally, once new representatives were elected, a discussion of the organization's operating mechanisms and their objectives took place. The result was the development of internal regulations which laid the foundations for the functionality of the Committee. Likewise, the sub-sectors gained strength in their organization and representation.

Enabling factors: The organized sub-sectors managed to incorporate the most incipient, which generated a balance in participation among tourism service providers.

● ● ● ● Promotion of the design of tourism products

Tourist service providers have jointly promoted the design of various materials for public use and value chains, such as the Calakmul Tourist Map and the seven Tourist Routes on culture, nature and history of Calakmul. This allowed the strengthening of the capacities of community companies for the design of tourist products and thereby expanding the offer of services organized in Calakmul.

Enabling factors: The possibility to work towards the same objective and to obtain the expected products increased the certainty about the effectiveness of the collective work.



The intervention considered three strategic elements: organization, innovation and product design skills. Each of these elements constitutes a logical sequence starting from the need to have an organization that represents the tourism sector, followed by the critical formation of its tourism vision based on the knowledge of other similar experiences and finally with the application of knowledge and skills to reflect on their own tourism products.

» Story

"In 2015 we started working with the Tourism Committee in cooperation with GIZ. Today, we have seen its development, especially when it comes to its organization. Although much remains to be done, considerable progress has been made. We have started from scratch and are now organized into sub-sectors. Given the importance of the municipality for what it represents worldwide, I believe it was more than necessary that all sub-sectors worked and joined efforts to be better organized and do a better job, not only for the benefit of



entrepreneurs, but also for the protection of nature of the municipality. Tourism represents a very important and responsible activity. It is not only a matter of providing a service (accommodation, food or guidance), but also of preserving and balancing the resources. Our commitment, in addition to providing a good service, implies having a good image by assuming a co-responsibility for the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, the mixed heritage and the municipality itself, and by trying to consolidate Calakmul as a tourist destination."

Luis Navarrete, President of the Tourism Committee of Calakmul.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BALA'AN K'AAX FLORA AND FAUNA PROTECTION AREA, MEXICO

» Context and challenges

TL2 MX

The Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protection Area (BKFFPA) administered by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) was decreed in 2005 and covers an area of 128,390 hectares. It is located in the municipality of José María Morelos, Quintana Roo and has 37 neighboring ejidos, of which 28 belong to Quintana Roo, three to Campeche and six to Yucatán. The northern and southern part of the protected area are under strong pressure from mechanized agricultural activities and extensive livestock farming. Irregular settlements also represent a major threat to the balance of the ecosystem, as so does the sale of land to people from other regions of the country with productive practices that intensify land-use changes. Only some

communities in the municipality of José María Morelos have experience of sustainable use that is compatible with the conservation purposes of the Protected Area (PA), which are part of a protection and containment of threats belt. In view of this situation, and in line with CONANP, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project has identified the need to strengthen the processes and tools for producing useful information for territorial planning and, the need to strengthen awareness processes and local capacity building through workshops or forums, to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and contribute to reducing the accelerated change in the use of agricultural land and livestock.

Beneficiaries

Directly, 250 persons who have three territorial ordinances promoted by the project, and 450 ejidatarios from nine ejidos, who attended awareness-raising workshops during their ejido assemblies. The indirect beneficiaries were around 1,800 people living in in these communities.



Impacts

- ◆ Through the design and implementation of the tool “Guide for the development of Community Territorial Planning (CTP) for Quintana Roo”, the construction processes of three CTPs of adjacent ejidos of the BKFFPA are strengthened, allowing the organization of possible uses of the land in the community.
- ◆ A land-use diagnosis was also prepared, with information from the 37 ejidos adjacent to the BKFFPA, which allowed knowing the threats and opportunities for this PA.
- ◆ In terms of awareness-raising and disseminating information on the sustainable use of resources, an exchange of experiences with the agricultural authorities of the neighboring ejidos (2017); a forum on traditional knowledge and sustainable land-use in coordination with the Intercultural Mayan University of Quintana Roo (2018); as well as community workshops for strengthening the capacities of the ejidos adjacent to the BKFFPA (2018 and 2019) were held.



Generation of strategic information on planning

In order to better operationalize the processes of information generation on land use in ejidos and communities, and to achieve the construction of strong, comparable and homologated CTP, the "Guide for the elaboration of Community Territorial Planning for Quintana Roo" was developed. This tool provided more specific criteria to guide and facilitate the work on the contents of the CTP. The implementation of the Guide in ejidos adjacent to the BKFFPA, allowed to generate adaptations to this territorial planning tool

Enabling factors: The active participation and involvement of technical firms providing territorial planning services was key in sharing experiences and knowledge on ejido planning.

A second step was to conduct a detailed analysis of land-use in all communities adjacent to the BKFFPA, leading to findings of high relevance for conservation purposes, including: increasing pressure on the PA through land sales and rapid land use changes for extensive livestock farming and mechanized agriculture; gradual reduction of ejidos engaged in low environmental impact forestry and agricultural activities such as traditional milpa, beekeeping and non-timber forest activities; and absence of local governance spaces.

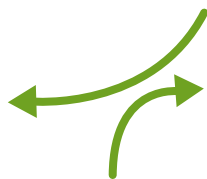
Enabling factors: The participation of specialists and researchers from higher education institutions in the region contributed to the understanding of challenges and opportunities for improved territorial planning.



Awareness-raising of ejidatarios in ejidos alongside the BKFFPA

Workshops with ejido assemblies of nine neighboring communities of the PA with different land-use, have encouraged reflection on the importance of living together with a PA and the contribution of communities to its protection, including rights and obligations for the management of the territory. Graphic information was provided on climate change in the communities and the possible negative effects of not changing current consumption models by improving production practices in line with conservation in the area of influence of the PA.

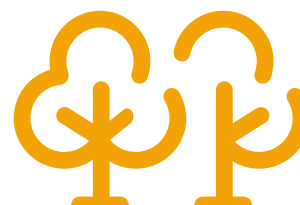
Enabling factors: Conducting the workshops in the ejido assemblies ensured the broad participation of the ejidatarios and promoted joint reflection on productive options with less impact such as silvopastoral agroforestry systems.



Contribution of the communities to the protection of BKFFPA

To support the management of the natural protected area, CONANP has managed to involve local communities in surveillance, fire-fighting and monitoring activities. These successful experiences of territorial management occur in the part closest to the municipal capital of José María Morelos, where a network of community brigades for surveillance, monitoring and beekeeping has been consolidated as part of a unique working model organized with the CONANP.

Enabling factors: The community work and the consolidation of resource competition carried out by CONANP has strengthened the brigade network.



The intervention has a logical sequence that began with the strengthening of the Community's territorial planning processes through a Guide and its implementation in key ejidos (1); the diagnosis of land-use allowed characterizing in detail the formal and/or traditional land-use for productive use, conservation and /or preservation of natural resources (2); continuing with the detection of strengths and weaknesses of the PA management and awareness of ejidatarios (3), culminating in reflection processes derived from community surveillance activities for better territorial management (4).

» Story

"Being next to the protected area gives many benefits to those of us who live from bees and land, from which we also get air and water. Sadly, we also see people coming from other places to extract the wealth of the mountain without giving anything back. Our communities are not forbidden to cut wood, make coal, but they do ask us for many procedures that we cannot fulfill; on the other hand,



outsiders are not being watched and take advantage of what we take care of. Something must be done, at least we are already voluntarily taking care of the forest because we feel it belongs to us, but we need others to do so and have the support of the government. Thanks to the awareness-raising workshops, I was able to better understand what the threats in the region are and how we are linked to the natural protected area."

Eduardo Morales, Commissioner of the ejido 18 de Marzo.



TERRITORIAL PLANNING FOR THE MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OF CALAKMUL, MEXICO

» Context and challenges

TL2
MX

With the creation of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (CBR), on the 23rd of May 1989 and the subsequent establishment of the municipality of Calakmul, on the 1st of January 1997, an intense governance process began among the different community actors, municipal governments, academic and research institutions, civil society organizations and the CBR Directorate, among others, in order to promote the appropriate design of territorial planning instruments both for the protection of the region's natural resources and for their sustainable use. Today, there are several territorial planning instruments that are constantly updated, in which the Selva Maya Programme has been supporting its development for several years. Although significant progress has been

made in terms of environmental categorization of the territory and development planning, the main current challenge is the implementation, articulation and use of instruments for managing the use and exploitation of resources. In this sense, and in cooperation with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), the intervention of the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project focused on strengthening the processes of participatory environmental planning of the territory or strategic planning with implications for the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to have available criteria, guidelines or standards that guide long-term sustainable practices in the different productive sectors of the region.

Beneficiaries

Directly, the last three municipal administrations of Calakmul, through technical advice on the implementation of consultation processes and the development of municipal planning instruments. Indirectly, 28 thousand inhabitants of the municipality, recipients of local public policy.



Impacts

Calakmul now has territorial planning instruments in force that are used by representatives of various productive sectors to increase the knowledge of local society and the receptivity to sustainable practices:

- ◆ Great Vision Development Program for the Municipality of Calakmul [PDGV (2013-2040)]; its approach marked a reference as an articulating instrument for subsequent planning processes.
- ◆ Municipal Development Plans (2012-2015, 2015-2018, 2018-2021) of a participatory nature, highlighting environmental, territorial and gender approaches.
- ◆ Study on Limits of Acceptable Change (SLAC), which provides scientific criteria to establish load capacities and for avoiding impairments of natural attractions by intensive tourism.
- ◆ Management strategies for Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC), which included the re-planning of 10 ejido communities, adding more than 92 thousand hectares in protected areas.



Municipal development planning with an environmental focus

Advising the municipal government on the preparation of its Municipal Development Plans (MDP) contributed to improve the process of conducting public affairs. Instruments were provided to conduct comprehensive, democratic and inclusive citizen consultations and to position strategic environmental and social inclusion topics; to this end, the use of binding planning instruments that were socialized and included into the MDPs was promoted.

Enabling factors: Municipal governance with a sustainable approach allowed broad processes of participation in designing territorial planning instruments.

Long-term development planning

A joint initiative between the City Council of Calakmul, the Directorate of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve and the Project was the PDGV (2013-2040). This regulatory instrument is a roadmap for compliance with long-term development indicators. Its strength lies in being a product derived from a broad exercise of participation in which all the communities of the municipality have been consulted.

Enabling factors: The culture of democratic participation of local communities allowed generating this planning instrument.

Planning based on limits of acceptable change for tourism

A pioneering study on tourist carrying capacity inside and outside the CBR (SLAC) allowed the definition of planning criteria for better access and tourist use of destinations and providing important recommendations for the better use of tourism resources.

Enabling factors: The wide participation of nature tourism service providers and the knowledge of the CONANP Park Rangers, enabled the first load capacity measurement of the visiting destinations in Calakmul.

Territorial planning linked to the development of regulatory norms for land-use change

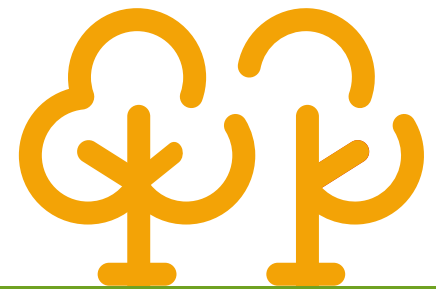
The Project's contribution to updating and disseminating the Calakmul Territorial Ecological Management Programme (TEMP), the only binding planning instrument at all government levels, allowed the regulation and reduction of land-use change. The TEMP together with the CBR Management Plan are the strongest natural resource protection instruments in the region.

Enabling factors: The cooperation of various government actors and civil society ensured the validity of this territorial planning instrument.

Voluntarily community planning for conservation

Models of voluntarily participation in conservation can contribute to more effective management for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources. In this regard, ten communities decided to establish their ejido lands as Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC) to promote the protection and connectivity of the CBR.

Enabling factors: The large areas of land ownership by ejidatarios and the culture of care of natural resources have allowed large portions of land to contribute voluntarily to conservation.



The different blocks represent elaborated or updated planning instruments that provide references for the access and organized use of land and water in the municipality of Calakmul. There is a specific or legally binding relationship between each planning instrument. Non-binding but technically important instruments are the PDGV (3), the SLAC (5) and the ADVC Management Strategies (4); the binding ones are the TEMP (2) and the MDP (1). The relevance lies in the fact that they have been adopted by local authorities and actors in order to facilitate dialogue between them.

Story

“On behalf of the Municipal President and President of the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development, we thank the Selva Maya Programme for all the efforts made by GIZ and its counterpart CONANP. The support to the Municipal Council and to the municipal development planning processes of recent years has been of great benefit. In the last three municipal development plans, GIZ has accompanied and advised the consultation forums until the final preparation of the document. The results are visible in the micro-regions, the



communities and the current representatives of the Municipal Council, the heirs of the work initiated by GIZ practically 10 years ago. The results of the Selva Maya Programme will be part of the memory of the Municipal Council. It is also to remember what has already been done in the production of the planning instruments, which are already designed and available to be used as a working tool, mainly in the Council Assembly, which follows up the planning of the municipal development. We are grateful for the valuable support of the Selva Maya Programme.”

José Contreras, Director of Planning and Social Development, Municipality of Calakmul.



PROMOTING AND STRENGTHENING THE AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MAYA MOUNTAIN MASSIF, BELIZE

» Context and challenges

TL3 BZ

The Chiquibul/Maya Mountain Massif is a conglomerate of protected area of over 50,000 hectares including a variety of habitats that contribute to its valuable environmental services and high aesthetic value. Despite its protected area status, the area is under increasing pressure from extraction of natural and cultural resources and increased land-use changes from industrial activities that include mechanized agriculture and logging. To reduce the impact of farmers adjacent to the protected areas, constructive dialogue and the promotion of sustainable and ecological income generating activities was

initiated; among others by the Forest and Agriculture Department, Yaaxche Conservation Trust (YCT) and Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD) and since 2013 supported by the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project. Through technical assistance regarding agroecological practices, including pest control and production of bio-fertilizer, experience exchanges and market investigation, farmers in Cayo and Toledo District improved their skills, output and sales, thereby reducing their environmental impact.

Beneficiaries

Over 70 farmers in the Cayo District, specifically members of Friends of Vaca Forest Reserve and San Antonio Green Growers association as well as residents of the Maya Golden Landscape in Toledo benefitted directly from the activities as well as indirectly, the population around the Maya Mountain Massif.



Impacts

- ◆ Farmers acquired agroecological skills such as pest identification and management, multicropping techniques, production and application of bio-fertilizers and farm planning. This has, for example, contributed to a reduction of the use of synthetic fertilizers by 75%, diversification of production and increase of income up to 30%.
- ◆ The Green Growers Association developed a Business Plan that outlines the way forward for the Cooperative and established market for their agroecological produce in the Cayo District.
- ◆ The groups have improved their internal organization and improved their working relationships with governmental institutions such as the Forest and Agriculture Department.
- ◆ An agroecological manual based on the experience developed in the Vaca Forest Reserve and San Antonio is available and used for the replication of the approach.



● Status Quo and needs assessment

Having identified small scale agriculture as one of the drivers for forest degradation in and around protected areas, a needs assessment was carried out. This assessment was initiated by scoping existing extension services and approaches to identify areas of opportunity. As such, the organized farmer group Friends of Vaca Forest Reserve as well as three other groups of farmers residing around protected areas in Cayo District, including San Antonio Green Growers Association were identified and expressed interest in agroecology along with farmers in the Maya Golden Landscape in Toledo. In a series of workshops and farm visits, as well a thread and needs assessment was conducted, during which, areas for capacity building were identified.

Enabling factors: The alignment of expectations with stakeholders through the needs assessment allowed the identification of concrete intervention actions.

● ● ● Organizational strengthening

All farmers involved in the capacity building are organized in groups, some of them registered as cooperatives. Although this can be beneficial regarding economies of scale and marketing as well as peer learning, the groups identified organizational weaknesses. To address these, individually workshops for each group were facilitated during which visions, internal relations and guiding principles including rules were defined and revised.

Enabling factors: The focus of the Project intervention in these workshops was on technical advisory for preparation and facilitation. Simultaneously, the improvement and building of relations with governmental entities and other stakeholders was advised and accompanied.

● ● Capacity building

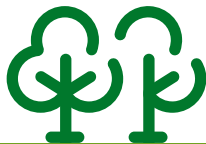
Based on the needs assessment, capacity building activities were implemented with the different groups including pest control and production of bio-fertilizer, experience exchanges and market investigation. For technical skills the Farmer-Field-School approach was applied, which allows participants to learn as they implement and share experiences within the group, favouring the development of collaborative networks. Experience exchanges between the different groups and with farmers in Guatemala were carried out to promote learning and networking. Based on the experiences, a manual for agroecological production was developed and is being used as a reference by farmers as well as for dissemination of the approach.

Enabling factors: The content of trainings and workshops were adapted to the skills and needs of each group and implemented in collaboration with specific stakeholders such as the Agriculture Department and FCD. The activities in Toledo were led by YCT.

● ● ● ● Market investigation

Agroecological products were generally not being marketed as such in Belize in 2014. Hence, there was no price premium to encourage ecological production. To identify possible markets for organic vegetables and derivatives, a market analysis was conducted. The study reviewed the current situation as well as areas of opportunity and a way forward to seize them. These recommendations formed the basis for the development of a business plan by the San Antonio Green Growers Association which is currently being implemented.

Enabling factors: The results in terms of improved yields and savings by reducing inputs such as chemical fertilizers, obtained from organic production, were an incentive to replicate the models with other groups of producers.



Based on the needs assessment (1) which identified farmer groups interested in agroecology as well as their areas of opportunity, capacity development for technical and organizational skills was conducted (2) and (3), accompanied by a market investigation to identify points and/or channels for produce sales (4).

» Story

“In my small-scale plots I used to use a significant amount of agrochemicals to fertilize the soil; but with the technical assistance of the Project advisors I can now produce my own organic fertilizer and no longer need the chemicals, which pollute the soil and contaminate my production or cause damage to my health or



that of my family. The use of organic fertilizers has also helped me to improve my production because I have a better yield on my cabbage, chili and tomato crops and have reduced production costs by 30%.”

Mr. Carlos Serrano, Vegetable producer in Vaca Forest Reserve.



PROMOTION OF THE RAMÓN SEED VALUE CHAIN IN PETÉN, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL3 GT

In the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR), the Ramón tree is one of the species with the highest abundance and distribution. Its seeds, known as "Ramón nut" or "Maya nut", are recognized for their nutritional and healing properties. Its unique taste makes the Maya nut a food with increasing consumption. The collection of this non-timber resource is a way of sustainable forest use without damaging the forest ecosystem. Both, the collection and the transformation into flour (to produce cookies, tortillas and drinks), are activities in which women are particularly involved. The use and commercialization of Ramón has the potential to generate income among the local population while promoting the protection of the forest. However, the difficulty in complying with environmental regulations, the lack of working capital,

poor social organization and limited technical capacity have prevented sustainable and profitable use in the past. Furthermore, productivity of Ramón in the forest depends on biotic and abiotic factors, so that its harvest is not always feasible. In this context, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, together with the Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP) and in coordination with other actors such as NGOs, supported an income promotion initiative through a Value Chain approach to promote the sustainable use of this resource. As a result, the Ramón Seed Board (CdR) was formed and strengthened, composed of community producer organizations, support organizations and regulatory authorities.

Beneficiaries

Local communities in and around the protected areas of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Directly, more than 300 women and 10 Ramón seed producing organizations, which increased their income.



Impacts

- ◆ The Ramón Seed Board (CdR) today is composed of 10 Community producer organizations, and is strengthened at the organizational level, improving its local and national positioning and recognition, as a platform for coordination among actors, facilitating the involvement and empowerment of a significant number of women who have assumed leadership in the management and exploitation of Ramón seed in their communities.
- ◆ Through technical training and development of management plans, the potential area for exploitation was increased, benefiting more than 500 collectors.
- ◆ The CdR currently has a better infrastructure for processing and refining seeds (drying and collection cellar, industrial dryers, blower, mill, sealing machine for packaging flour), adding value to the product (e.g. the price at which fresh seeds were sold improved by 25% and that of dried seeds by 44%).
- ◆ In 2017, the CdR received its first organic group certification, which increased interest in the products at national and international level.



● Analysis for the use of the Ramón seed

With an initial analysis, work lines and areas of opportunity for the promotion of the Ramón seed value chain were visualized as a priority product. The mapping of the actors in the chain was key to identify and facilitate their inclusion.

Enabling factors: The experience of two community organizations, represented by women who were already harvesting and selling fresh and dried seed, allowed the understanding of the production and nutritional potential of Ramón seeds.

● ● ● Strengthening community organizations

The Board's community organization producer groups have been strengthened through training, exchanges of experience at national and international level, support, and technical, administrative and legal advice. To ensure sustainable management, it was crucial for the organizations to have management plans. The research on permanent sampling plots promoted by the Project helped plan harvesting and sales, since production is temporary and depends on environmental factors.

Enabling factors: The development of management plans with an integrated approach - including all non-timber products used by the communities- optimized the financial investment.

● ● ● ● ● Management to add value to the Product

The management and investment made by the community organizations facilitated a drying and collection center owned by all partner communities. For the proper use of the equipment, they receive support and technical advice from ACOFOP/FORESCOM, which train personnel for operation and maintenance. Additionally, a group organic certification has been achieved, that adds value to the product.

Enabling factors: Having a demand for dry product, ACOFOP gave land to build infrastructure in which the organizations managed the construction.

● ● Organization of the Ramón Seed Board (CdR)

In order to strengthen governance in decision-making on the sustainable use and commercialization of Ramón, the creation of the CdR was advised to facilitate dialogue and collaboration spaces between producer organizations, allowing the involvement and empowerment of more than 300 women from four community organizations.

Enabling factors: ACOFOP, a recognized entity, took up the challenge of leading the promotion of the value chain, from mapping the actors to setting up the Board.

● ● ● ● ● Integration of other organizations to the CdR

The CdR established a sense of confidence in the value chain, thus contributing to the positioning of the product and the Board itself, which led to the integration of six other community organizations and an increase in production and market presence.

Enabling factors: The interest, participation and experiences of managers of community organizations were key for the integration of other producers.

● ● ● ● ● Access to local, national and international markets

The joint work of the organizations allowed promoting the product, generating national and international interest. The integration of Ramón as food can increase the demand of the population. In this context, the Ministry of Education was approached in achieving the inclusion of the Ramón seeds in the menus of the schools in the region.

Enabling factors: Tastings, participation in fairs and congresses and radio promotion captured interest in natural and nutritious products.



To promote the Ramón seed VC, an initial analysis was carried out (1) that identified challenges and opportunities, as well as actors in the chain to organize them later in a Board (2), which was strengthened with technical advice, achieving the elaboration of Sustainable Management Plans (3). With the sum of more producer organizations (4), the management capacity was strengthened, facilitating the construction of a drying center and obtaining a group certification (5) achieving a price increase and a better positioning on local, national and international markets (6).

Interaction

» Story

"In 2012, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, ACOFOP and Rainforest Alliance, invited the communities that at that time used the seeds of the Ramón tree, with the purpose of organizing ourselves better. Through workshops, we were able to promote the value chain, from which we had many benefits, including the creation of a vision and mission. Over time, more organizations that also had Ramón in the region, as well as support organizations, were added, achieving the



promotion of Ramón seeds at local, national and international levels. Another benefit was the joint investment among all those involved, which helped us obtain the Ramón drying center, better trained personnel, achieve a better price and a greater participation of women. To ensure the future of the Selva Maya, it is very important that the state support us in renewing contracts. If in 25 years we have been able to work without knowing anything, now that we have learned to do it sustainably, we can contribute to the better future of other generations."

Magdalena Peralta, Vice-president of the Ramón Seed Board, OMYC, Uuactún leader and Ramón seeds collector.

Find out more:
www.selvamaya.info



PROMOTION OF THE BEEKEEPING SECTOR WITHIN COMMUNITIES IN THE MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, PETÉN, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL3 GT

In Guatemala, beekeeping represents an important economic activity for income generation, and constitutes an alternative for agricultural diversification. Due to the climatic characteristics and the different ecosystems in the department of Petén, beekeeping production has a lot of potential, considering also that for the Maya people the collection of honey from native bees was traditional. Unfortunately, land-use changes for intensive agricultural and cattle raising purposes implies the use of agrochemicals, affecting the productive potential of beekeeping. In addition, legal restrictions in protected areas (PA) that occupy a large part of the Petén department have limited the development of the activity. In this context, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the

Selva Maya Project has been promoting beekeeping in the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) since 2012. Through a participatory strategic planning process, honey was selected as one of the products with the potential to improve income, community well-being and forest conservation. The intervention led to the creation of the *Mesa de Miel*, a multisectoral platform for the political, economic and commercial management of the beekeeping sector in Petén. The platform successfully advocated a change in the legal framework for the activity in protected areas and strengthened the technical and organizational capacities of existing groups of beekeepers, as well as new ones.

Beneficiaries

Local community groups in and around protected areas dedicated to and interested in beekeeping.



Impacts

- ◆ The consolidation of the *Mesa de Miel*, which is recognized at the local and national level, provides a coordination and governance space for decision-making aimed at the development of the beekeeping sector in Petén.
- ◆ Thanks to the political impact achieved, today beekeeping is included in the MBR Master Plan, as a productive activity allowed in forest concessions with resident population.
- ◆ By strengthening capacities through workshops, training courses and exchange of experiences with some 50 producers from six communities, beekeepers now have more knowledge about beekeeping, which contributes to the diversification of their activities and to increasing their income.
- ◆ Didactic material has been created that guarantees the dissemination of knowledge while promoting awareness among other community groups.
- ◆ Equipment and operating resources have been purchased to promote and strengthen the activity in the three concessions within protected areas with local communities.





● Formation of the inter-institutional working group and analysis of the legal basis of beekeeping

To foster the beekeeping sector in Petén in 2012, an inter-institutional working group was formed, and to visualize the legal basis and opportunities for the development of beekeeping within PAs in the department of Petén, an analysis was conducted in 2014. In this diagnostic it was confirmed that the Africanized bee (*Apis mellifera*) was classified as an “exotic species” in Guatemala, so that the existing legal framework restricted honey production within protected areas as it was considered as an illegal activity. In view of the economic and ecological potential of beekeeping in the MBR, the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) was presented with the analysis and a proposal to change the status of *Apis mellifera* from the black to the white list in 2014 and to include beekeeping in the Master Plan of the MBR.

Enabling factors: Interest of institutions and organizations in supporting beekeeping as a trigger for local economic development. Commitment and coordination between governmental and civil society institutions.



Formation of the Petén Mesa de Miel

The inter-institutional working group formed the *Mesa de Miel*, a multisectoral platform led by the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGA) and integrated by regulators and support organizations. The *Mesa de Miel* developed a normative proposal to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) to implement beekeeping in PAs.

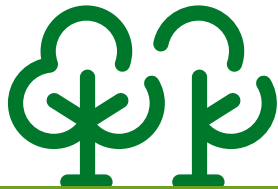
Enabling factors: The openness of MAGA, as well as the involvement of non-governmental organizations have been very valuable in financing, training and providing technical and legal assistance to beekeepers.



Creation of the Petén Beekeepers Guild Association and development of beekeeping in forest concessions

The *Mesa de Miel* supported the consolidation of beekeeping groups through the creation of the Petén Beekeepers Guild Association (AGAPI). Its objective is to consolidate the beekeeping sector by establishing agreements with governmental and non-governmental bodies, as well as through the integration and organization of producers, also serving as an information, training and representation space. Additionally, support for equipment and technical assistance has strengthened the beekeeping activity in forest concessions.

Enabling factors: AGAPI has enabled progress in the proper management of hives and in the management of needs and demands. The exchange of experience between beekeepers fostered an atmosphere of solidarity and trust.



The analysis of the legal situation of beekeeping in protected areas (1) allowed to visualize areas of opportunity which led to the formation of an inter-institutional working group and to the inclusion of beekeeping in the MBR Master Plan. The *Mesa de Miel* (2) proposed the regulations to the legislative entities, supported the creation of AGAPI and facilitated the implementation of exchanges, workshops and training; promoting beekeeping within forest concessions (3).

» Story

“The support of the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project was important to diversify productive activities through integrated sustainable management and administrative capacity building. One of the relevant actions of the project was to promote, together with MAGA, NGOs and producers, the creation of the *Mesa de Miel*, a space for coordination and political advocacy. Among the concrete results of the *Mesa de Miel*, it is worth mentioning the inclusion of beekeeping in the MBR Master Plan; the creation of AGAPI, which consists of eight grassroots organizations; and support for the



strengthening of beekeeping management capacities through workshops and exchange of experience in the Community Forest Organizations within the Multiple Use Zone of the MBR. International Cooperation must be considered in the political agenda to support the continuity of the community forestry process within the Selva Maya. As long as the communities have direct economic benefits from forest management there will be conservation of the Selva Maya!”

Julio Javier Madrid Cruz, Coordinator for Non-Timber Products, Association of Forest Communities of Petén ACOFOP/Community Forest Company FORESCOM.



PROMOTION OF THE CHICLE SECTOR IN THE MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, PETÉN, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL3

GT

The chicozapote (*Manilkara spp.*) is a tropical tree native to Mesoamerica, appreciated for its durable wood, its bark with medicinal properties, its edible fruits, but above all for its latex (commonly known as chicle), used as the basis to produce chewing gum. According to various sources, the Petén department, specifically the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR), has one of the largest populations of Chicozapote in the world. In the past, latex extraction was one of the best paid productive activities in Guatemala. In order to regulate the use and commercialization of chicle and protect this species, Decree 99-96 of the Congress of the Republic was published in 1996. However, according to the analysis of the Environmental Justice Forum, it represents an obstacle, considering that over-regulation hinders proper product handling and the generation of benefits from latex

extraction. Additionally, high bureaucratic processes have led to conflicts with buyers, placing the region at a commercial disadvantage. The low chicle activity has reduced local jobs and marginalizing the sector. The Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, together with the counterpart, the Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP), and partners, supported an analysis of the limitations to the chicle sector derived from Decree 99-96 through a participatory consultation process. The objective of this process was to propose changes that would facilitate the sustainable management of chicle. Through exchanges and training, the reactivation of the chicle activity as an economic alternative for the forest communities of Petén was promoted.

Beneficiaries

The local population and chicle producers in the Petén region.



Impacts

- ◆ Preparation of a proposal for the repeal of Decree 99-96 and a new proposal for a law that allows the use of chicle along with non-timber resources.
- ◆ Through the proposal decision makers were sensitized to the topic and relevance of adapting the Law.
- ◆ Through workshops, trainings, exchanges and development of teaching materials on good practices for the sustainable use of chicle, target producers improved practices that helped them meet the harvesting requirements requested by the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), as well as the FSC forest and organic certification.
- ◆ Through an exchange of experiences with the Chicza chicle consortium in Mexico, Petén producers have strengthened their knowledge of organizational aspects.
- ◆ The formalization of a contract with a German company represents an important step in the commercialization of the product and expands the producer's knowledge in matters of exportation.



● Law proposal development

Through a consultancy supported by the Project and carried out by the Forum of Environmental Justice, an extensive review and discussion of the Decree 99-96 was carried out, involving various key actors, including the productive sector, ACOFOP, NGOs and regulatory bodies (CONAP, National Chicle Council, Single Union of Chicle producers and Woodworkers). The result was an updated, agreed upon and validated law proposal.

Enabling factors: Recognizing the historical relevance of the chicle activity, both productive and economic, enabled the actors to have an objective discussion on the proposed Law.

Communication for the repeal of the law

The approval of a new law initiative to promote and strengthen the chicle activity depends on the support of key actors, particularly the deputies. In this sense, it was important to offer them accurate and easily understandable information. ACOFOP contacted the Association of Chicleros of Alta Verapaz which, with the intention of continuing the activity, had a rapprochement with the local deputies of their department to support the repeal. Likewise, visits were made to Congress to reach an agreement with the federal deputies and a common front.

Enabling factors: The ACOFOP involvement allowed maintaining a regional leadership to operate a political advocacy plan.

● ● ● Capacity building for latex utilization

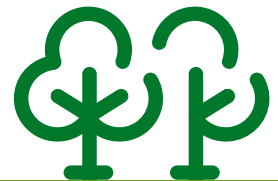
Although the use of chicle is stalled by Decree 99-96, reducing benefits to the producer, during the intervention period of the Project, exchanges of experiences between experienced and young producers were supported. This allowed to strengthen capacities for good practices of chicle use, and knowledge of older chicle producers was rescued to be transmitted to the new generations. The exchange in Mexico, which included a visit to the Chicza company, allowed to get to know other forms of organization.

Enabling factors: Chicle companies that promote sustainable harvesting practices and have well-defined markets, have been instrumental in motivating Petén producers with their organization forms.

● ● ● ● Market research

With the objective of not losing the benefits of the chicle use, due to the limitations of the law, the search for markets and the formalization of contracts was of the utmost importance. This can also contribute to obtaining better arguments for a new law, as a growing demand for the product is noted. Through efforts made at different levels, in 2018 the formalization of a contract with a German company was achieved.

Enabling factors: The growing interest in the United States and Europe for natural and organic products motivates Petén's chicle groups to renew the activity with greater determination.

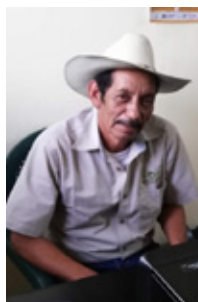


In order to reactivate the chicle activity, Law 99-96 was analyzed and concluded that it disadvantages the sector. Based on this, a proposal for a law was developed in a participatory and consensual manner (1) with actors from the productive sector, government and support institutions. To repeal the previous law and propose a new one (2), that would enable sustainable use, ACOFOP led a political advocacy plan in 2018. Additionally, it was sought to strengthen the activity through exchanges (3) and market research (4).

Interaction

» Story

"The Selva Maya has been very important for my family, since it has provided us with resources such as the latex of chicozapote. Its use since the 1950s brought us daily support and enabled the development of many families not only in Petén, but also in the neighboring departments of Verapaces. Thanks to this resource, many of us were able to study and provide study to our children. During the development of the project, the alliance and coordination between ACOFOP and the German Cooperation / GIZ was strategic, to involve actors and



promote the modification of the chicle law, seeking the benefit of future generations and the sustainability of the resource. Looking ahead, the following steps are: continue strengthening organizations, follow up on repeal of the law and demonstrate the contribution of chicle activity to climate change through technical studies. With these actions, it will be more likely to obtain the endorsement of the State to approve the extensions of the concession contracts."

Don Jorge Sosa, Chicle producer in his youth and non-timber technician at ACOFOP/ FORESCOM, founding partner of the AFISAP concession and shareholder who served as the first president of business development at FORESCOM.

Find out more:
www.selvamaya.info



PROMOTERS OF INTEGRAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS MULTIPLYING AGENTS OF AGROECOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN THE MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, PETÉN, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL3 GT

Within the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR), the Buffer Zone (BZ) has been and is the area most affected by deforestation and unsustainable agricultural and cattle raising practices, mainly by large landowners and small-scale producers. Agricultural production is characterized by traditional practices and mostly self-consumption. Over time, biodiversity and ancestral knowledge have been lost, while the use of agrochemicals has increased, as has slash-and-burn to create new cultivation areas, degrading forests and soil. In terms of yield, monocultures are unprofitable, with low development expectations in the communities, which encourages families to move to extensive cattle ranching or sell their land to livestock landowners. In this context, the Pastoral Social, a non-profit organization, through the

Comisión de la Tierra, together with the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project have formed and accompanied since 2013 a series of promoters in integral rural development in the ZAM. The objective has been to sensitize, train and empower community representatives as agents of change, capable to transmit and promote agroecological proposals. The accompaniment has focused on developing an agroecological proposal so that productive systems (agricultural/cattle raising) move to different sustainable models more efficient in space and resources, thereby improving the living conditions of communities and their income and reducing the impact on forest and environmental resources.

Beneficiaries

Community representatives linked to parishes in the Pastoral Zone Riberas del Itzá and Brisas del Mopan, equivalent to the Maya Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone.



Impacts

- ◆ 70 graduated promoters of the training processes.
- ◆ More than 30 promoters carry out actions to replicate four agroecological models and promote social-ecological processes.
- ◆ After their training, 42 active promoters retain 286 hectares of forest in their plots.
- ◆ With the implementation of agroecological practices, burning after harvesting or to establish new agricultural areas has stopped.
- ◆ Promoter's reserve areas are now spaces for recreation, learning and awareness for other people.
- ◆ 30 Mixed Orchards and Integral Family Agricultural Systems, covering 26.2 hectares produce an average of 15 different species, which have improved food security of the families and diversified their income.





Methodological approach: training processes

In order to implement an agroecological community development proposal, three training models based on participatory methodologies have been promoted:

- ◆ Integral Rural Development Promoters Training: oriented towards agroecological production, rational management of natural resources and community organization.
- ◆ Train the Trainer Training: oriented to deepen and strengthen communication, knowledge transmission, leadership and community project management skills.
- ◆ Farmer Field School: aimed at strengthening and leveling knowledge and capacities in participatory silvopastoral and agroforestry systems, based on the experiences and lessons learned from the promoters in their respective territories and farms.

Enabling factors: The previous local work carried out by Pastoral Social, has helped to sensitize different actors in the territory and promote community interest in joining these formation processes. Graduate promoters raise awareness and invite other community members to participate in the schools.



Accompaniment and promotion of Agroecological Models and socio-environmental processes

Consolidation and maturation phase: The promoters are encouraged to lead processes of multiplication of agroecological models and promotion through workshops or meetings in their communities, accompanied by the technical team of Pastoral de la Tierra.

Enabling factors: Exchanges of experiences were key to empower them and give them confidence in their role as multipliers and community leaders. "Chain passes" are a methodology or practice in which the promoter delivers, seeds or breeding animals to members of their communities as a loan or donation, thus creating trust.

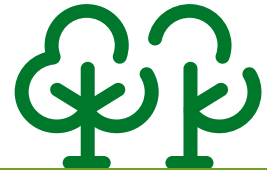


Implementation of a technical proposal: Agroecological Models

The technical proposal, transmitted through training processes and implemented by the promoters, consists of four agroecological models, often adapted to their reality.

- ◆ Family Mixed Orchard: intensive production of various plant species, mainly for food security purposes.
- ◆ Integral Family Agricultural System: integration of agricultural and livestock species in a simple way that can be done in backyards and/ or in family plots.
- ◆ Sustainable Agroforestry Systems: integration of fruit species and profit crops to areas of forests or guamiles already existing in the plots.
- ◆ Silvopastoral Systems: diversification of extensive livestock monoculture grazing systems towards more productive and intensive systems with forest and forage tree species.

Enabling factors: The implementation with species of animals and plants of use adapted to the climatic conditions of the territory, in the short and medium term, ensured success. The models built in a participatory manner with the producers based on the experiences and crops they were already producing were key to progress in implementation.



The training processes (1) are the basis for raising awareness and changing the mentality of future promoters, so that they can understand the approach and importance of the agroecological models they will implement in their plots (2). Once they begin to see results and progress on the plot, producers feel confident and able to start the promotion and multiplication (3) of these practices and processes with other members of their community.

» Story

Jose María Romero is a farmer, cattle breeder, beekeeper and promoter of Pastoral de la Tierra of the parish of Melchor de Mencos. Known as Chemita, in 2014 he graduated from the Integral Rural Development Promoters Training and four years later from the Farmer Field School in agroforestry systems. Since he started as a promoter, he has worked hard to develop more sustainable production and promote forest conservation among his family and neighbors. He has also been



responsible for disseminating beekeeping as an economically sustainable activity in harmony with the forest: "The forest represents wildlife and human life, where there are species that serve as food, medicine, protection and construction. Protecting the forest, its resources and biodiversity represents not only an economic value but all the services it provides. It is not correct that we think only of ourselves, we must carry out a sustainable agriculture for the present and future generations, we cannot live without forest and without nature. The first step that must be taken is to be convinced of the importance of the forest and that it can be produced sustainably."



INTEGRATED SILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS, RECONVERSION OF CATTLE FARMS FOR LANDSCAPE RESTORATION IN THE BUFFER ZONE OF THE MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, PETÉN, GUATEMALA

» Context and challenges

TL3 GT

The Buffer Zone (BZ) of the Maya Biosphere Reserve is one of the areas most affected by deforestation due to agricultural practices and mainly cattle raising practices, characterized by inadequate pasture management to control weeds and pests (i.e., overgrazing and burning). The traditional model of livestock production, in addition to animal wear, causes loss of fertility and soil compaction, reduction of the forest massif and loss of biodiversity; generates high costs for the conservation and restoration of pastures and is exacerbated by the effects of climate change. These practices lead to a degradation of the agroecosystem and economic losses that negatively impact the families of local livestock farmers. Due to the large scale of this activity in the region, the decline in forest cover has been accelerated and the

forest landscape in the BZ has become significantly fragmented, impacting on its function to mitigate impacts and anthropogenic threats towards the Core Zones or Multiple Use Zones of the Biosphere Reserve. In this context, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project has joint forces with various local institutions to address this problem through a proposal for the intensification and reconversion of cattle farms. The proposal was based on the concept of Integrated Silvopastoral Systems as a strategy to increase productivity and improve the connectivity of the forest landscape, facilitating the implementation of sustainable productive models and the training of replicating agents of this model in the territory.

Beneficiaries

Producers belonging to cattle ranching committees of the Buffer Zone and surrounding areas, as well as Promoters of Integral Rural Development. Technical representatives of the public institutions that accompanied the process.



Impacts

- ◆ Formation of a platform for sustainable cattle ranching and silvopastoral systems, constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), Municipality of Flores, Pastoral Social, Rainforest Alliance (RA), and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).
- ◆ Consolidation and validation of a Sustainable Intensification model for Cattle Ranching, including a participatory replication methodology.
- ◆ 60 sensitized and empowered producers under an intensive livestock management approach in line with the environment, who manage 400 hectares under various sustainable livestock practices.
- ◆ Producers who are aware of the importance of forest conservation define protection and regeneration areas in their plots.
- ◆ Producers with greater productive resilience to adverse climatic effects (prolonged droughts).
- ◆ Farm Plan Adoption as a tool to order the implementation of sustainable livestock practices in the plot.



● Design of an Integrated Silvopastoral System Model (ISPSM), sustainable livestock and promotion of inter-institutional coordination

Based on coordinated work and technical support at the inter-institutional level, an Integrated Silvopastoral Systems Model (ISPSM) was designed with the vision of increasing food quality and production on farms, reducing grazing areas, increasing forest cover and improving forest landscape connectivity through: 1) intensive silvopastoral systems, 2) mixed forage banks, 3) management of trees dispersed in pastures, 4) live fences, 5) pasture division, 6) establishment of protection and regeneration areas, 7) manure management, 8) nutritional improvement practices and 9) good water quality management.

Enabling factors: Commitment of each participating institution to capacity building and resource allocation. Providing technical advice to a small number of producers per year, facilitated adequate technical support and consolidation of the systems.

● ● ● Training methodology

In order to consolidate the processes of training, sensitization, and empowerment for the producers of their sustainable livestock farming schemes, the teaching model "Farmer Field Schools" was implemented, understood as collective learning spaces, in which knowledge is generated from the experience developed by producers in their respective territories and farms.

Enabling factors: Due to its participatory and popular education approach, FFS have been spaces for effective collective learning.

● ● Socialization of the ISPSM with target groups and participatory selection of producers

The ISPSM was socialized with two cattle ranching committees, located on the routes to the Tikal National Park and the Yaxhá - Nakum - Naranjo National Park. The selection of interested producers was voluntary and participatory, assuming the commitment to participate in the entire training process and its application in the field.

Enabling factors: The promotion and socialization of the proposal was carried out from the perspective of improving productivity and performance, crucial elements to provoke the interest of producers.

● ● ● ● Technical support

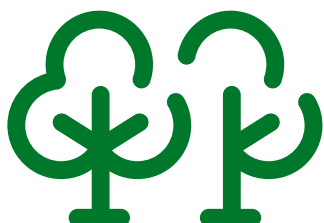
To consolidate the changes, the institutions involved provided continuous technical support. This is relevant both in the implementation phase and in the use of the model.

Enabling factors: Adequate inter-institutional coordination. Technicians have been trained through courses and experience exchanges with leading institutions with great professional experience in Mexico and Cuba.

● ● ● ● ● Socialization and escalation of experiences through the "Open Days" initiative

To expand and socialize with farmers who have not initiated these practices, field days or open days are coordinated to exchange experiences and lessons learned from producers who have implemented the practices and obtained results.

Enabling factors: Obtaining good productive results in the short term has helped to persuade producers to replicate these practices. Mixed forage banks and silvopastoral systems have proven to be an excellent alternative to cope with food crisis caused by prolonged drought, encouraging other producers to establish these systems.



To empower farmers with farms in a process of reconversion, it was necessary to articulate a proposal inter-institutionally (1), to socialize it afterwards with the groups and select the livestock farmer who would promote it (2). A process of awareness raising and training for this sustainable livestock model was then initiated (3). The technical support (4) of the institutions involved was important for the establishment and monitoring on the farm. Once the first results were obtained, the "Open Days" (5) contributed to the consolidation the process through the exchange of experiences with other producers.

» Story

Pedro Mancilla Ruano, originally from Morales, Izabal and now living with his family on the route to the Purusilha village, 8 kilometers from the municipal capital of Flores, has dedicated himself to meat and dairy farming on his 21-hectare farm. Don Pedro represents a group of producers who have changed their way of seeing and doing cattle ranching, understanding that trees are allies of their farm and their livestock, giving them priority and opportunity for



regeneration. "Trees and the Selva Maya are the foundation of life, they provide shelter, oxygen and food to every living being on this planet. The project has helped us to become aware of the importance of trees and that it is possible to reconcile animal husbandry with environmental protection through silvopastoral systems. These practices have benefited us, obtaining better yields and income for our families, even in times of drought. A key point in this process has been the union and joint work of all supporting institutions."



DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: SELLO COLECTIVO CALAKMUL (SCC), MEXICO

Context and challenges

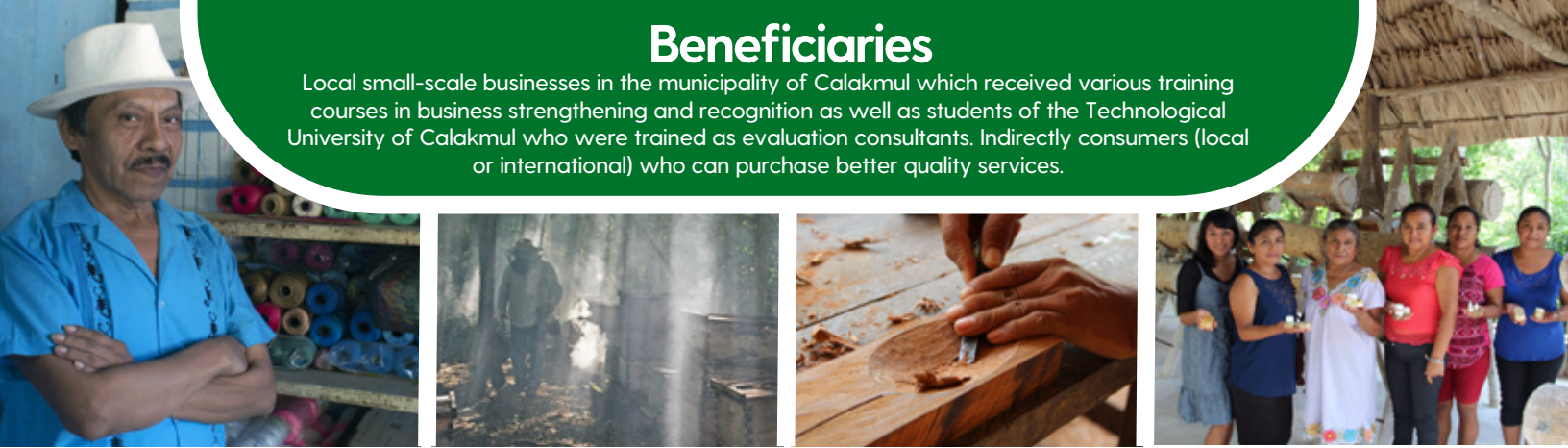
TL3 MX

In Mexico, the municipality of Calakmul, Campeche currently receives around 40,000 visitors per year. The main attraction of the region is the archaeological site of Calakmul, located in the core zone of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (CBR) which is considered one of the most important “green lungs” in the country and part of the Selva Maya. Due to its cultural and natural importance, the CBR has received recognition as a Mixed World Heritage Site from the UNESCO. The protected area is home to high biological diversity and Calakmul as a municipality has a large cultural mosaic. However, the visitation and recognition that has been achieved nationally and internationally still do not lead to a significant increase in the income of the families living in the municipality, highlighting, among others, the insufficient infrastructure network, the lack of adequate provision of services, as well as the poor business

development of groups offering services and / or products. Therefore, the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), through the CBR, promotes both businesses and community organizations that develop products and services in a sustainable manner that not only protect and promote the mixed heritage of Calakmul, but also contribute to local development. Since 2015, CONANP and the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, have agreed to join efforts for the development and implementation of a local sustainability certification model, called “Sello Colectivo Calakmul” (SCC), which is awarded to companies that offer products and /or services developed according to sustainability criteria, which include good governance practices, activate the local economy and act with environmental co-responsibility.

Beneficiaries

Local small-scale businesses in the municipality of Calakmul which received various training courses in business strengthening and recognition as well as students of the Technological University of Calakmul who were trained as evaluation consultants. Indirectly consumers (local or international) who can purchase better quality services.



Impacts



- ◆ Development of business and organizational capacities to strengthen local businesses and increase their income, 16 enterprises were evaluated of which nine obtained the SCC Certificate, which benefits 232 families.
- ◆ Creation of opportunities for self-employment as consultants and evaluators, where 67 students were trained as SCC Certificate consultant-evaluators and 18 were accredited.
- ◆ Coordination of the Technical Certification Commission for the implementation of Certification.
- ◆ Certification at different levels (gold, silver, bronze) where 50 members of 13 Calakmul enterprises were trained to strengthen their business
- ◆ Appropriation of a vision of sustainable development. Businesses and authorities at municipal and federal level integrate the certification model as a development strategy: local economic and sustainable tourism promotion.
- ◆ Interest in replicating the strategy of the Certification Model at regional and national level.



Certification model design

With the aim of designing a model that fosters sustainable development in the region, standards, procedures and criteria were developed for the implementation of the Process of Certification. Through a Working Group with key actors, a constant revision of the model and scope was carried out, allowing for continuous adaptation to the context and needs of Calakmul.

Enabling factors: To have strategies linked to the development of sustainable businesses, such as CONANP's National Strategy for Sustainable Social Enterprises 2014-2018.

Human capital development for certification

To promote the implementation of local certification, a Training Program to assess and evaluate compliance with the SCC criteria has been set up in cooperation with the Technological University of Calakmul to ensure the sustainability of the process of formation of the required human capital for training processes while contributing to the creation of local jobs.

Enabling factors: Having an academic entity that develops and fosters the training process of evaluators, consultants and the certification body members has been paramount.

Dissemination and promotion

To ensure its positioning, cooperation and coordination between the different public, private institutions and civil society was sought, which contributes to having more spaces for dissemination and promotion. As an instrument already tested in the region, it has the potential to generate interest in replicating and / or expanding the model in other regions / contexts.

Enabling factors: Networking and coordination with local, state and national authorities enabled the initiative to be widely disseminated. That instances consider certification as a benefit for the region, contributed to be part of it and promote the Certificate and good business practices in their environment.

Formalization of the Management and Operating System

With the support of a consultancy, the Management and Operating System was developed that defines the elements included in the Certification Process. At the same time, the Technical Certification Commission was established, defined as a model of social and institutional representation responsible for implementing the Certification Process, through a direct link with the social participation body (Municipal Council for the Sustainable Rural Development of Calakmul (CMDRS), ensuring the validation and sustainability of the certification, as well as acceptance and approval in the region.

Enabling factors: To have a governmental instance of social, operational and functional participation, such as the CMDRS.

Promoting good business practices

Through training, enterprises and local groups acquired skills and knowledge for the administration and management of their businesses, incorporating various approaches such as gender equity, fair trade and sustainability, and facilitating mechanisms to incorporate certification criteria. Recognizing its scope, the City Council incorporated in the Municipal Development Plan 2018 - 2021, the CCS Certification of businesses as an objective and indicator of economic development and competitiveness.

Enabling factors: Linking the companies' fulfillment of the CCS criteria with the advice and development of training offered by institutions whose mandate is to develop sustainable business practices through human capital development.



The Certification arose in the local population's interest to "Create a sustainable society, from Calakmul to the world". To this end, an intervention model was promoted to ensure that the Certification Process was transparent, impartial and sustainable (1). In this sense, the consolidation of the Technical Certification Commission (2), the training of evaluators/ consultants (3), the strengthening and continuous promotion of certified jobs (4) contributed to the consolidation of the SSC as a local development strategy (5).

» Story

"Through the Sello Colectivo Calakmul we visualize multiple benefits, we wanted something formal to give our product an identity of origin, to tell people that this honey they bring to their table is a product of Calakmul. Many of the criteria that the SSC evaluates, are things that we have already developed, but we have polished the details we need, we have improved the processes in the company."



Antonio Ek, Manager of USAEC Beekeepers, Cooperative Society and Gold Certification Level of the SCC.

"The three criteria promoted by the SCC are key to the functioning of a company. For example, the criterion of (1) good administration, gives transparency and confidence in the organization; through (2) environmental co-responsibility, beekeeping contributes to the pollination of productive crops and safeguards wildlife nutrition, and the (3) local economy, in which the SCC offers added value, shows that the product is sustainable and comes from Calakmul. All this contributes to having a fair price of the product, higher sales and thus to the performance and sustainability of the company."

Anastasio Oliveros, President of the USAEC Board of Directors.

Find out more:
www.selvamaya.info



PROMOTION OF THE ORGANIC HONEY VALUE CHAIN: THE ORGANIC BEEKEEPERS NETWORK OF THE BALA'AN K'AAX PROTECTED AREA, MÉXICO

» Context and challenges

TL3 MX

The Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protection Area (BKFFPA), managed by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), is located in the municipality of José María Morelos, Quintana Roo, Mexico. It has 37 neighboring ejidos where beekeeping is one of the most important economic activities of the local population, not only for income generation, but also for its benefits in agricultural production, biodiversity protection and ecosystem services, if carried out in a sustainable manner. An opportunity was identified to promote practices that ensure the safety and quality of honey, the health of hives, as well as the organizational model for the fair marketing of apiculture. Considering the potential for economic development derived from beekeeping in the

region, its link with the conservation of natural spaces, in accordance with the Bala'an K'aax Strategic Plan, and promoted by the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, in 2015 the BKFFPA management proposed the creation of a Network of Organic Honey Producers as a sustainable business strategy. In conjunction with the Project, the objective was to promote organic honey production with a value chain approach in order to contribute to the fair marketing and equitable distribution of benefits, to increase the income of beekeepers in the region, as well as to protect the biodiversity and ecosystem services surrounding the protected area (PA).

Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries are the 35 beekeepers from the Bala'an K'aax Beekeepers Network who improved their skills in managing production and organizational processes and have sufficient infrastructure to market their products.



Impacts

- ◆ The Beekeepers Network has appropriated the vision of sustainable management and is today a reference in the region for the promotion of organic honey production techniques.
- ◆ They have developed skills and capacities for teaching pest control, feeding, hive sharing and harvesting techniques.
- ◆ The members of the Network practice sustainable beekeeping that promotes equitable and fair sharing of benefits, reduces damage to biodiversity and ecosystem services, and aims to conserve the protected area.
- ◆ The Network is a strengthened organization with defined tasks, which allows the members to ensure the continuity of activities necessary in organic production.
- ◆ The Network has a corporate identity which improved the presence in the packaged honey market and generates resources for the distribution and sale of the product in formal markets at regional, national and international levels.



Capacity development for the organization and production of organic honey

Exchanges of experiences at local and regional level, training in good practices and assistance visits in apiaries have been fundamental in raising awareness, acquiring knowledge and building trust among producers. Today they are a model of self-management of basic operations such as wax stamping and internal control.

Enabling factors: The knowledge of the producers and their experience in beekeeping has been the starting point for the development of new practices according to organic production criteria. The process was seen as an exchange of knowledge and not as a one-side transfer of information and knowledge from experts to the target group.

Marketing promotion of bulk and packaged honey

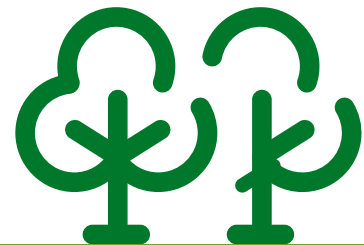
Working for conservation, generates direct benefits and advantages for sustainable economic activities: beekeepers develop their activities in the area of influence of the BKFFPA, enabling the production of quality honey, free of contaminants and with ideal organoleptic qualities (taste and smell), adding value to the final product, which has been the basis for marketing of the product through specialized fairs and points of sale. Additionally, the development of a corporate identity of the Beekeepers Network ensures that packaged honey has a better presence on the market by communicating the values and messages of conservation and sustainable production of the Network thus contributing to the cohesion and identity of the producers.

Enabling factors: Organic honey is marketed in large quantities through the EDUCE Cooperative, which operates at a regional level, promotes the production of organic honey, carries out fair trade collection and sells honey to trading partners in Europe. Having partners that connect the value chain with equitable distribution of benefits is key.

Internal management of the Beekeepers Network and infrastructure

The definition of the Beekeepers Network's tasks and the appropriate assignment of responsibilities and roles of each member of the organization, has been a key to ensure operational sustainability. Likewise, maintaining a co-investment in kind and money from part of the Network, as well as support from BKFFPA-CONANP, has been fundamental to develop production processes, such as collection and stamping, without relying on external parties, and ensuring the fulfillment of the criteria of organic production.

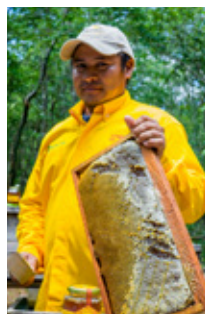
Enabling factors: The simultaneous participation of the beekeepers in the protected area's community brigades for the monitoring and control of the PA, has contributed to promoting coordination and communication between them and the recognition of the importance of the area for beekeeping.



The success of the strategy derives from the fact that most members were already experienced beekeepers with common activities and interests, including community-based surveillance and monitoring for the protected area (1). This promotes an integrated and organized Network that, together with the BKFFPA Directorate, designs and implements integral and effective planning for the conservation and use of natural resources and ecosystem services (2). This results in benefits such as commercialization of packaged honey in specialized markets (3), sensitization from a peer perspective, and avoidance of the development of inadequate agricultural practices.

» Story

For many people in the region, honey production is a source of income. In addition to carrying out this economic activity, the members of the Beekeepers Network also carry out forest protection efforts, they have established a voluntary monitoring and surveillance team to support the work of CONANP. In this sense, **Luis Ariel Ongay Carrillo** emphasizes that "what we do is a job [beekeeping] that does not damage the forest, we are a committed



community and do not want to destroy the forest that we have in our ejido, because from there comes the flower that gives us honey". The work of the community brigade plays a crucial role in the protection of the Selva Maya, they carry out patrolling and monitoring through camera traps, to know and protect the biodiversity of the area. In this context, **Ricardo Tun González** concludes that "the area has something valuable that we must continue to conserve."



FOSTERING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE OF THE SELVA MAYA: THE OPERATIVE COORDINATION GROUP (GOC) AS A TECHNICAL ARTICULATING AGENT

TL4

» Context and challenges

The lack of an institutionalized mechanism that favors cooperation between key actors responsible for the management of protected areas (PA) in the Selva Maya at a regional level (Belize, Guatemala and Mexico), has limited the planning, coordination and governance which are appropriate to define concrete interventions that help to mitigate threats in the region, including the traffic of flora and fauna, poaching and forest fires, as well as to align and coordinate competences, knowledge and skills of technical personnel for the best performance of their activities. For this reason, the need to promote the coordination of cross-border activities in the Selva Maya constitutes a starting point to foster an enabling environment among managers of these areas that benefit the implementation of a cooperation strategy at a

technical-operative level. In agreement with the counterparts of the three countries, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project since 2012 has provided technical advice and support to facilitate and raise the rapprochement and dialogue between the parties both at the level of forest rangers and managers through exchanges, workshops and working meetings. As a result, the Operative Coordination Group (GOC) was formed in 2016 with representatives from the institutions responsible for PA management in the three countries, whose objective is to provide technical assistance in the management and protection of natural and cultural resources for the sustainable development and environmental governance of the Selva Maya.

Beneficiaries

Directly, the directors, deputy directors, technical staff and resource managers of the three countries.
Indirectly, the local population that lives in the buffer zones of the protected areas.



Impacts

- ◆ The formalization of the GOC favored a trilateral collaborative vision and the promotion of regional governance that fosters the rapprochement of protected areas; improving communication, coordination, management, planning and implementation of joint actions in the territory, like joint patrols, exchange of experience and training.
- ◆ With the support of the Project, four exchanges of forest rangers at regional level were completed and more than 90 bi- or trilateral technical meetings were held, promoting dialogue spaces which facilitate cooperation in the exchange of information.
- ◆ Directors and deputy directors who have participated in the Management and Effective Leadership Diploma, have acquired significant personal and organizational skills, and have strengthened and improved their management capacities in the field of human and technical resources management.
- ◆ The coordination between the GOC and the Strategic Coordination Group (GEC), which has an intervention approach at a political-strategic level, has been strengthened. The GEC recognizes the GOC's action and guides their implementation.



Participatory spaces at operational level

The promotion and facilitation of exchanges and training for forest rangers and operational staff at trinational level served to 1) visualize participatory and communication spaces at regional level, 2) define local capacities to be strengthened and to level competences for the best performance of their functions; 3) contextualize challenges and threats for protected areas in border zones; and 4) outline the first joint planning efforts for specific technical cooperation measures.

Enabling factors: The results of the first exchanges of experiences of forest rangers between the three countries, which were of rotating nature by country, motivated directors and technical-operative personnel of the three countries to get involved in work dynamics and to visualize areas of opportunity, including potential collaborative synergies, to address common threats.

Formalizing technical-operative coordination and cooperation

In order to promote the cooperation and coordination of cross-border activities at operational level, the formation of the GOC was facilitated, recognized as a technical advocacy platform at a regional level, which provides technical support to the Strategic Coordination Group (GEC) of the Selva Maya. The consolidation of the GOC, per se, provides the basis to recognize the potential work and role of this group, enhancing its positioning and negotiation level vis-à-vis other instances.

Enabling factors: The interest of the directors and deputy directors in building a joint work agenda at the regional level, as well as the interest of higher hierarchical levels of promoting joint work at a cross-border level.

Mapping of key actors and implementation of a joint action plan for regional advocacy

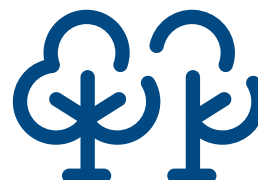
Through working meetings, both key actors with an impact on the operation of regional actions, and intervention needs were identified. The implementation of a joint work plan to promote bi or trinational actions allowed to raise the level of regional incidence, showing that even those PAs that are not located at the border to another country can share important experiences.

Enabling factors: Previous work with different actors from the three countries helped to define the universe of actors and their influence on decision making. Alliances from previous work have helped to determine the level of interest of those responsible for protected areas in working together to promote joint activities.

GOC Operational Guidelines

Meetings and workshops supported the elaboration of the GOC Working Guidelines, which facilitate their integration and operation through the development of an internal regulation and allow the level of certainty about the scope for action to be increased by establishing the collaboration and communication basis of this group.

Enabling factors: After three years of promoting joint and coordinated work for cross-border cooperation, the actors strengthened an assertive dialogue, recognizing the need to maintain the formalization of their operations.



The results of the trinational forest rangers experience exchanges (1) were key to trigger the coordination and cooperation among PA managers (2) by identifying common challenges and interests, including the improvement of effective communication, as well as the exchange of information, methodologies and action protocols to reduce regional threats. The interest and willingness of the parties during the process enabled them to develop organized work schemes (3). The increase in joint actions has shown the need for Operational Guidelines to improve intra-country and inter-country coordination (4).

» Story

"The GOC has opened doors to learn more about the problems related to the conservation of the Selva Maya and promotes an important link between what happens in the field and at the desks. The Project has promoted links between protected areas and socialized knowledge to strengthen the management of the Selva Maya as a whole."
Ramón Pacheco, Programme for Belize.



"The GOC is an important mechanism of effective communication that articulates inter-institutional efforts to consolidate strategies and actions in the Selva Maya. During the last years the Project has facilitated relevant processes and contributed significantly to the development of coordination

mechanisms to achieve conservation objectives of this important area."
Wilson Guzman, National Council of Protected Areas, Guatemala.



"The GOC enables those responsible for protected areas to think regionally and not locally and to address common regional problems through coordinated local actions. The role of the Project was crucial, as it was an interlocutor and facilitator between the three countries, promoting the support and exchange of knowledge between the actors."



José Zúñiga, Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, Mexico.



STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION: THE STRATEGIC COORDINATION GROUP (GEC), A STEERING AND INCIDENCE PLATFORM FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE SELVA MAYA

» Context and challenges

TL4

The Selva Maya refers to a region of tropical forest shared by the countries of Belize, Guatemala and Mexico, which, due to its geographical extension (more than ten million hectares of forest), is the largest continuous forest massif in Mesamerica, whose connectivity is favored through a system of protected areas covering more than four million hectares. A relevant feature is that some of these protected areas share not only border boundaries between two countries, but share threats including forest fires or timber and wildlife trafficking. This feature provokes the need to improve measures to strengthen environmental governance in the region through coordinated actions that increase the impact of operations to reduce threats that ensure the conservation

and sustainable use of natural resources in these three countries. With the objective of improving management, coordination and cooperation at a regional level more effectively, the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, provided technical advice on the development and implementation of a collaboration and environmental governance platform called Strategic Coordination Group of the Selva Maya (GEC) with the intention of facilitating the rapprochement between the parties responsible for the management of protected areas in the three countries, thus promoting a vision of a more integrated and connected Selva Maya linked to the population and promoting its well-being.

Beneficiaries

The environmental institutions responsible for the management and administration of the protected areas of the three countries.

Acuerdos

Crear Grupo ad-hoc

- Definir fecha e integrar CONANP, CONAP, AET CCADISCA resp. org.
- Este grupo coordinará elaboración de una estrategia para fortalecer Selva Maya como area protegida transnacional a
 - corto plazo
 - mediano plazo
 - largo plazo



Impacts



- ◆ Since the creation of the GEC (2015), various executive working meetings have been held on a rotating basis in the three countries, improving the consultation and decision-making for the management, scope for coordination and cooperation between the parties responsible for the management of protected areas, including the conceptualization and development of the document "Integral Strategy Selva Maya 2030".
- ◆ The intervention has led to greater recognition of this coordination platform, as it is referred to and taken into account in other initiatives for the conservation and sustainable development of the region.
- ◆ The link with the Operative Coordination Group (GOC) formed by directors and deputy directors of protected areas allows the exchange of ideas and reflections on the challenges and attention to threats in the region.



Attention for the coordination in the Selva Maya

As part of the formal launch of phase II of the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya Project, the "Tri-national Strategic Workshop" took place in Mexico City in May 2015. At the workshop, environmental authorities from the three countries, including the Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), the Guatemalan National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), the Belizean Forest Department (FD) and the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD)/ Central American Integration System (SICA)), reflected on the challenges to achieve a more effective coordination to conserve the natural and cultural wealth of this transboundary ecosystem, and recognized the need to promote a coordinated mechanism to achieve concrete collaboration agreements that favor the generation of wider spaces for dialogue under more effective trilateral coordination.

Enabling factors: Since 2012, the Project had promoted the efforts of regional technical cooperation through different actions, including the exchange of experiences at a technical and operational level, which identified the need for better management and coordination between the parties.

GEC Operating Mechanism

In 2016, with the intention of defining an articulated operation and operation mechanism, feasible and realistic, the Internal Regulation of Operation was drawn up, which remain in place and contribute to strengthen the internal structure of the Group through a co-responsibility scheme for adequate participation, driving and decision making. To balance responsibilities in all three countries, the Presidency is Pro Tempore rotating yearly.

Enabling factors: Previous interventions in the territory had already defined some operational structures of collaboration between protected areas of the Selva Maya.

Formation of the GEC and signature of Chicanná Agreements

In July of the same year, a first regional follow up workshop was held in Calakmul, Mexico, which triggered the creation of the GEC, being visualized as an entity of technical and political support and coordination for the development and implementation of an integral tri-national strategy (Belize-Guatemala-Mexico) for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Selva Maya. To formalize this commitment and define a road map for the following years, the "Declaration of Chicanná" was signed, a voluntary instrument expressing the commitment of the parties to join forces in favor of more effective cooperation at the regional level.

Enabling factors: The interest and technical - political will of the members of the GEC were important, while institutional support at a political level facilitated maintaining the frequency of working meetings.

Selva Maya Integral Strategy: adding multilevel efforts

Following up on the Chicanná Agreements, the "Integral Strategy Selva Maya 2030" for sustainable development in the Selva Maya has been promoted since 2017 in a joint effort with the "Selva Maya Protection of Natural Resources" Project implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which allowed giving greater visibility and integration to this region. The elaboration process included a series of participatory workshops of a technical and strategic nature in the three countries, which contributed to the definition of lines of work for consensual and articulated intervention for the conservation of this region. This instrument is in the final revision process (October 2019).

Enabling factors: The expansion of the participation of actors with different visions, interests and aspirations, enriched the instrument.

The Tri-national Strategic Workshop (1) allowed to generate a first reflection on challenges to improve management in the Selva Maya; the Declaration of Chicanná (2) reaffirmed the interest and will of the parties responsible for the management of protected areas, visualizing that common challenges can be addressed in a comprehensive manner. The Internal Regulation (3) shaped a functional and operational structure of participation. All this allowed the Integral Strategy "Selva Maya 2030" (4) to be developed on a solid basis of collaboration and trust within the Group.

» Story

"Due to its nature and structure, the GEC platform allows an adaptive management of the Selva Maya Project in coordination with colleagues from other countries, in an environment of trust, with a genuine interest and willingness to collaborate. This has facilitated the achievement of the proposed objectives, with visible benefits in the operation of the protected areas involved and the communities that inhabit them."



Christopher González Baca, CONANP, Mexico.

"As an advocacy platform, the GEC offers the three countries the opportunity to jointly access, technical advice through international cooperation. With the support of the Project the conditions have been created and the administrative entities of the protected areas in each country have been designed in such a way that coordination and joint cooperation are strengthened, which has given way to the generation and implementation of other projects to consolidate the conservation and sustainable use of the Selva Maya."



Marvin Martínez, CONAP, Guatemala.





E giz.selvamaya@giz.de
I www.selvamaya.info

