



We Are Selva Maya

It is a pleasure to share with you the bulletin **We Are Selva Maya**, a new means of information dissemination from this magnificent region called the Selva Maya. In this first edition, you will find recent news, a descriptive note on the *Sello Colectivo Calakmul* initiative and links to the latest publications that we hope will be of interest to you.

The **Selva Maya** is a tropical forest region extending over Belize, northern Guatemala and south-eastern Mexico. It is considered the most extensive continuous tropical forest of Mesoamerica and stretches over more than four million hectares of protected areas. Ecological and environmental factors have favoured the distribution of more than 20 ecosystems in the Selva Maya, including the evergreen rainforests of Petén and the dry forests of the northern Yucatan peninsula. These ecosystems play a crucial role in terms of water protection and landscape connectivity, as the multiple ecological corridors maintain the mobility between organisms and species, as well as the functionality of the ecosystem as a whole, promoting the coexistence of a high biological diversity of representative elements of flora and fauna. The forest is a natural habitat to a large number of species, many of them endangered. Furthermore, it is of great importance to all three countries as a safeguard for ecosystem services.

However, the Selva Maya faces critical threats that strongly compromise its short and long-term viability and operability. These threats are related to forest fires, illegal logging and illicit trafficking of species of flora and fauna in the area. The degradation and change of land use caused by agricultural activities and the application of pesticides also have an important impact. 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 strategies to mitigate these threats.

In this context, the Selva Maya Programme implements two regional projects:

- a) Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Project *Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya*, with the objective to ensure that 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.
- b) Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the project *Support for monitoring of biodiversity and climate change in the Selva Maya*, with the overarching goal that results of regionally coordinated biodiversity and climate change monitoring in the Selva Maya region are channelled into policy-making to a greater extent.

In addition, there is a close collaboration with the *Selva Maya Natural Resources Protection* project, of the german financial cooperation KfW, financed by the BMZ and executed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

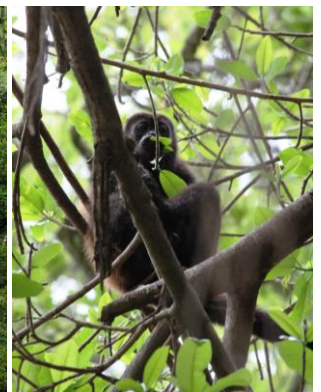
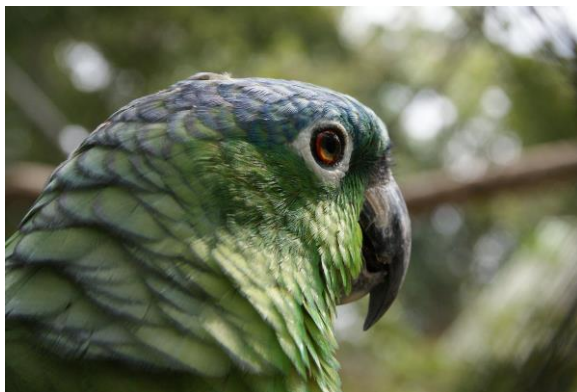
Protecting the Selva Maya and raising awareness about the importance of its perpetuity for future generations is a titanic task, this challenge cannot be overcome if we do not assume that it is a shared mission.

“The Selva Maya does not need us, but we need the Selva Maya”

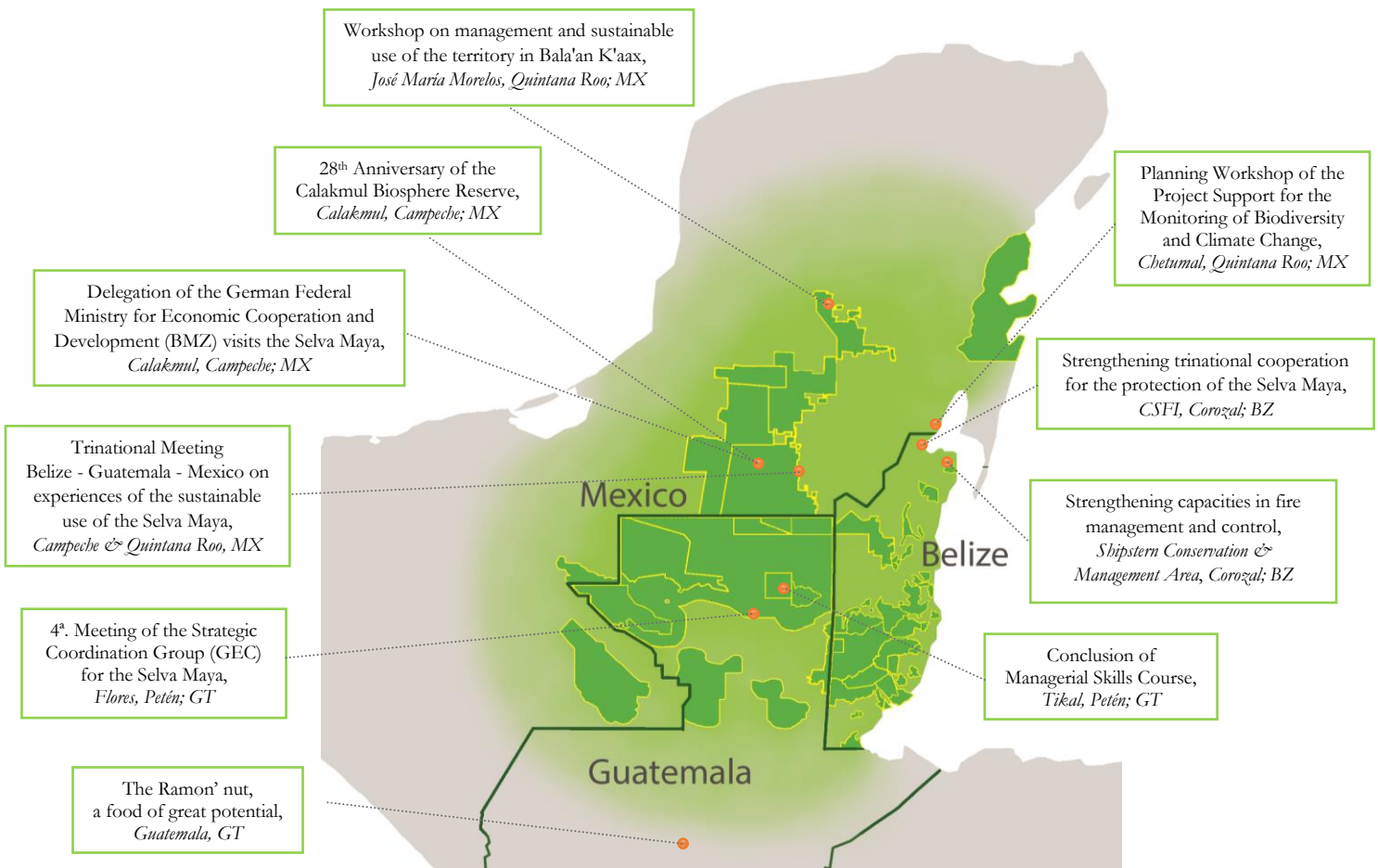
Editor's note



Jaap Schoorl
Director
Selva Maya Programme/GIZ



News

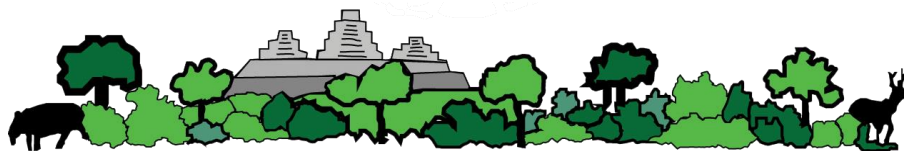


The Ramon nut, a food of great potential



In order to promote the consumption of Ramon nut, the recipe book [*La Semilla de Ramón, Nuez Maya. Recetas. Introducción a un alimento re-descubierto*](#), (Spanish version), was presented in January in the city of Guatemala. The recipes were prepared with the Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP), which leads the process of value chain strengthening for this nut in the department of Petén. The presentation was led by Mr. Thomas Cieslik, Head of Cooperation at the German Embassy in Guatemala, which together with the GIZ and the organization *Defensores de la Naturaleza* sponsored the reproduction of the recipe book. The collection and processing of Ramon nut is a sustainable economic alternative for local people and the Selva Maya.

Back row, from left to right: Julio Madrid, ACOFOP; Magdalena Peralta, President of Ramon nut Value Chain Committee; Chef Mirna Soto; & Óscar Núñez, CEO of *Defensores de la Naturaleza*. **Front row:** Juan Carlos Funes, CONAP; Dr. Thomas Cieslik, Head of Cooperation at the German Embassy in Guatemala & Jaap Schooli, Director Selva Maya Programme. **Photo:** Lucy Calderón.



Strengthening trinational cooperation for the protection of the Selva Maya

Regional cooperation is crucial for the successful protection of the Selva Maya. That is why directors, deputy directors and technical staff from bordering protected areas of Belize, Guatemala and Mexico met in Belize on the 23rd and 24th of February to assess the progress of the implemented Action Plan and prepare the Operational Plan for 2017.

They agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the following areas, 1) Biological Monitoring: among others, in the collection and analysis of data of camera traps and the development of unified monitoring protocols; 2) Strengthening of bi- and trinational cross-border patrols and surveillance programs, including training in tools such as SMART; 3) Capacity building in areas such as conflict resolution, environmental legislation and use of remote sensing equipment; 4) Environmental awareness and education in key border communities; and 5) Control and prevention of transboundary forest fires.



Representatives of the participating entities: Program for Belize (Pfb), Belize Forest Department (FD); Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (CSFI); National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP, GT) & National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP, MX).

Conclusion of Managerial Skills Course



With the objective of providing tools to improve the management within institutions as well as inter-institutional coordination and cooperation for the conservation of the natural resources of the Selva Maya at a trinational level, the course "Managerial Competencies for Effective Leadership" was offered to individuals with leadership potential in the Selva Maya region. The course was held in different locations of Belize (Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area and Jaguar Creek) and Guatemala (Tikal), with a total of 150 theoretical-practical work hours, distributed over 6 modules, from July 2016 to February 2017.

We congratulate the participants who successfully completed the course.

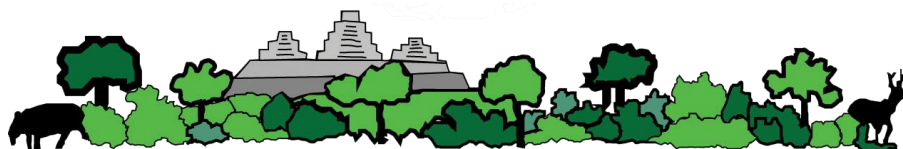
The sixth and last module of the course was held at the Hotel Tikal Inn, within the Tikal National Park, Petén, Guatemala

Planning Workshop of the Project *Support for the Monitoring of Biodiversity and Climate Change*

The Trinational Planning Workshop of the Project *Support for the Monitoring of Biodiversity and Climate Change in the Selva Maya Region* was held in Chetumal, Quintana Roo, on March 30th, 2017. The event was attended by authorities of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the General Directorate of International Cooperation and Implementation of the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) of Mexico, the Guatemalan National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) and the Forest Department of Belize; as well as other strategic partners such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the Environment Secretariats of Campeche and Quintana Roo. During the activity, the project monitoring lines were presented, key decision makers in each country were identified and the mechanisms for transmitting information on monitoring of biodiversity and climate change were analysed.



Official photo at the end of the event



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Trinational (Belize - Guatemala – Mexico) exchange of experiences in sustainable use of the Selva Maya

The spaces created to share sustainable experiences are an enriching opportunity for learning. For that reason, a trinational exchange visit was taken place in Quintana Roo and Campeche, Mexico, in which environmental government authorities, (CONANP, Mexico; CONAP, Guatemala and the Forest Department, Belize), non-governmental organizations and producer associations participated. Among the activities a group of women entrepreneurs who make products from Ramon seeds and leaves in the Tres Garantías community, Quintana Roo, was visited and the company Meliyik from the ejido Valentín Gómez Farías in the state of Campeche shared practices of packaging and commercialization of melipona (native, stingless bees) honey, while a group of beekeepers in Nuevo Becán, showed techniques of monitoring and care of hives and honey packaging.

Reforestamos México A.C. organized the event, with financial support of ACOFOP, Heifer International and GIZ.



Beekeepers of Nuevo Becán, Campeche, showing their handling techniques

Workshop on management and sustainable use of the territory around Bala'an K'aax

To present and discuss options to increase sustainable land use around the Protected Area of Bala'an K'aax (APFFBK), Quintana Roo, Mexico, a workshop was held on April 27 and 28, 2017. Apart from the leaders of adjacent municipalities, community based patrol-, monitoring- and fire prevention-groups participated as well as researchers, civil society organizations, consulting firms and representatives of the Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP).

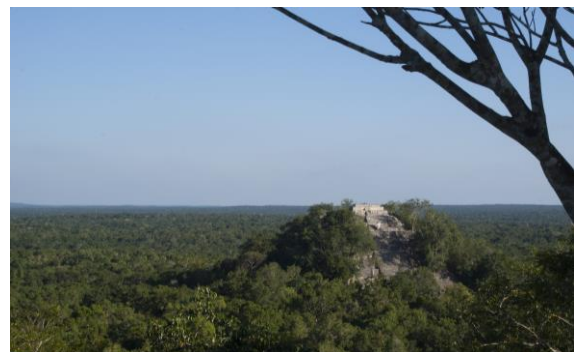
At the conclusion of the event, the following points were agreed upon: i) to promote a network among adjacent communities to the APFFBK, that strengthens protection efforts through sustainable land use planning processes; ii) to encourage the organic production of honey, fertilizers and other products; iii) to strengthen the vision of combining the conservation of natural resources with productive opportunities so that the initiatives are more sustainable.



Panoramic of the Flora and Fauna Protected Area of Bala'an K'aax

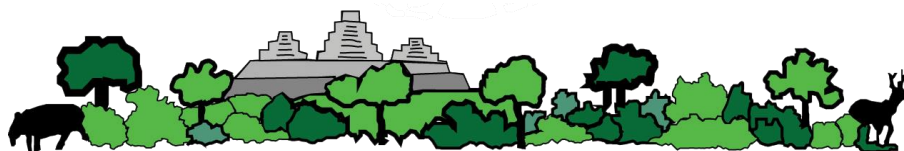
Delegation of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) visits the Selva Maya

"Articulated cooperation" was the theme assigned to the visit to Calakmul of Ms. Metzger, Head of the Regional Development Policy Division for Central America, Caribbean and Mexico, BMZ on May 20th and 21st. Key approaches to foster the conservation of the ecosystems are effective protected area and land management as well as sustainable resource use, awareness of the local population and their participation in decision making. And in the particular case of the Selva Maya: promoting and ensuring cross border cooperation and management. How to achieve this using the opportunities and addressing the challenges was the focus of this visit.



How to achieve an articulated cooperation in favour of the Selva Maya?... That is the challenge!

In order to experience an example of participation the delegation participated in the extraordinary session of the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development of Calakmul and discussed effective cooperation in the region with key actors.



28th Anniversary of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve

During the week of May, 17 to 23, activities were carried out to promote the conservation and protection of biodiversity, as part of the 28th Anniversary of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve (REBICA). Among the activities was a photographic exhibition of wildlife; viewing of cultural and environmental films; workshops on recycling, biodiversity and organic art; presentations on environmental and sustainability issues in the reserve as well as a bicycle ride in the reserve toward the archaeological site of Calakmul. REBICA's staff was in charge of the organization, supported by academic institutions, government entities as well as non-governmental and civil society organizations.

Clockwise: Eco-ñiños initiative, Closing event, Recycling workshop & 1st Conservation Ride in the Biosphere Reserve



Meetings of the Strategic Coordination Group (GEC) for the Selva Maya

On July 14, 2017 the Strategic Coordination Group (GEC) for the Selva Maya's fourth meeting was held in Flores, Petén, Guatemala. Based on the *Chicanná Declaration*, signed at the first meeting in 2015, the group's objectives are a) Establish effective channels of internal and external communication; b) Advance in the creation of a strategic framework with a trinational vision, and c) Consolidate collaboration in favour of the Selva Maya.



Work session during the fourth meeting in Flores, Petén, Guatemala.

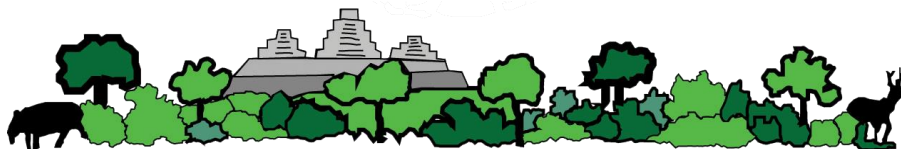
The GEC has been positioning itself as an articulating instance of initiatives and projects in the trinational Selva Maya. Among the main challenges to be addressed during 2017 are the need to build effective coordination and communication mechanisms to integrate an inclusive regional environmental agenda, to consolidate an operational structure at the trinational level, to advance in the signing of a trinational *Memorandum of Understanding* and to strengthen the GEC as an articulating and conducting entity on issues of conservation and sustainable development in the Selva Maya.

Strengthening capacities in fire management and control

The prolonged droughts of the last years are a major reason of increased incidence of forest fires in the Selva Maya region. To face this pressing situation, training in fire management and fire control is being carried out for personnel from different communities in the Selva Maya region. As such trinational training courses have taken place with technical and operational assistance from the Mexican National Forest Commission (CONAFOR), the Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the German Cooperation/GIZ. During 2017, 50 people have been trained in Calakmul, Mexico and Corozal, Belize; and 200 more are to be trained between September and November, in Petén, Guatemala.



Trained personnel at Shipstern Conservation Management Area, Corozal, Belize



Subject of interest

Sello Colectivo Calakmul

The **Sello Colectivo Calakmul** is an initiative designed and driven by the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP). The vision of the initiative is to contribute to the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as to improve the income of the families of Calakmul. To achieve this, these **objectives** have been defined:

- Encourage companies to improve their processes continuously, taking into account the criteria of Governance, Local Economy and Environmental Stewardship.
- Contribute to forming the commercial and tourist identity of Calakmul, giving added value to the products of the region.
- Promote the ethical and responsible use of biodiversity.

The Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development of Calakmul (CMDRS) is the official body that endorses the certification process of the **Sello Colectivo Calakmul**. This Council established the Certification Technical Commission (CTC), whose mandate is to administer, manage and carry out the evaluation process of the applicant companies and deliver a final resolution to the CMDRS. The Council itself, rejects, grants, withdraws or renews the Certificate of the **Sello Colectivo**.

The **Sello Colectivo Calakmul** Certificate is valid for two years. The companies that obtain it, can receive follow-up visits during this period. So far ten companies have been evaluated, four of which obtained the **Sello Colectivo** Certificate, which was officially delivered to them during the festivities of the 28th Anniversary of the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve.



Recent Publications

[La Semilla de Ramón, Nuez Maya. Recetas](#)

(Spanish)

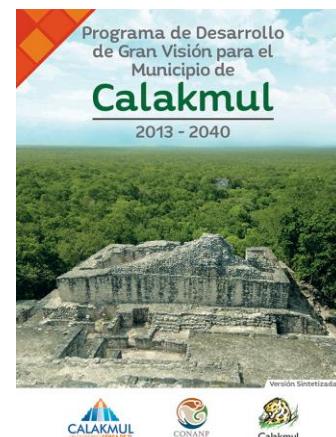
The recipe book was elaborated to encourage the consumption of dishes and drinks made from Ramon nut. Through the increased consumption of Ramon, forest communities can continue the sustainable management of the tree and thus generate a sustainable income for themselves and contribute to the protection of the forests.



[Programa de Desarrollo de Gran Visión 2013-2040 para el Municipio de Calakmul \(versión popular\)](#)

(Spanish)

The initiative of Calakmul's Regional Council seeks to transcend the short-term actions that community administrations are forced into, with a long-term plan (*Grand Vision Development Programme 2013-20140 for the Municipality of Calakmul*) to achieve development based on the balanced potential of the natural resources and capacities of the communities.



[Guía para la elaboración de OTC de Quintana Roo, MX](#)

(Spanish)

Based on lessons learnt from several communities in the state of Quintana Roo and promoted by the National Forest Commission (CONAFOR), this document is a guide to develop Community Land Use Plans (OTC). The objective of this guide is to enable the design of standardized and comparable OTCs for the State of Quintana Roo, with specific criteria and following the appropriate Terms of Reference.



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