



Technical Update

September-December 2008

Mesoamerican Geographic Component (LLS) work plan and budget jointly implemented by the Biodiversity and Sustainable Use Unit (BSU) and the Water Management Unit of IUCN-Mesoamerica.



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Acronyms

INAB	National Forest Institute
MAGA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food
DIPRONA	Division of Nature Protection of the National Civil Police

I. Introduction

The present document defines the LLS program results obtained in the region of Mesoamerica from period September to December 2008.

The main activities in the case of the Ecoregion Lachuá were restricted to developing a program for economic growth and governance development in the region base on human strengthening and utilizing available local resources. Such is the case of payment of environmental services for avoided deforestation, honey production, reforestation and degradation processing, sustainable management of the forest and tourism activities.

In Lachuá, three of the five communities pending of the earth legalization have completed the process. The FUNDALACHUA was officially registered as a civil organization in the Ministry of Finance which brings together and represent the interests of Productive Associations and the Community Development Councils. The process of certification of the area under standards of the World Forestry Board and started and it is now at the stage of pre-certification by the Smart Wood (Rainforest Alliance). It has also developed a strategic plan for growth and expansion of honey production program in the region. Another important step is that the project has facilitated the construction and implementation of a technical medium school (Instituto Diversificado) in the Farm "Salinas 9 Ceros". This school will allow training the human resource at the level of technicians for the development of varied socio-economic activities in the Region.

Regarding to Tacaná project, the forest restoration strategy for four micro watersheds of the upper part of the rivers Suchiate and Coates was completed. This strategy links social, political, economic and environmental aspect for the development of a reforestation program that has the PINFOR and PINPEP programs as platform. It was developed as part of a business plan for the production and sale of Christmas trees of the species *Abies coatemalensis*. This plan includes: a) marketing system, b) design and production process, c) legal and environmental aspects of business; d) Cost e) financial analysis which includes cash flow, balance sheet and income statement f) sensitivity analysis and risk of the business and finally, g) a development and implementation strategy.

II. General description of the Landscapes

Tacaná

Tacaná is a water catchment in the highlands of the San Marcos department, in Guatemala, Central America, where marginalized populations are highly dependent on farming on steep hillsides and now with much reduced forest resources.

The overall challenge faced in this landscape is the restoration of the natural resources base that can simultaneously support a high population density of minifundistas (rural poor with limited ownership, or rights to land). The focus LLS on forest resources within productive landscapes complements the IUCN/DGIS WANI work on improvement of the quality of water resources in the same landscape, and builds on the knowledge base of IUCN staff, already experienced in working in this region.

Lachuá

The Lachuá Ecoregion is a rural area, located in the North-west region of Guatemala, Central America, defined by its socio-cultural, environmental, economic and political attributes. It is a region composed by a population of 11,000 Qeqchi indigenous, subsistence farmers, all of whom reside in communities located in an area of high-biodiversity, sub-tropical rainforest that encompasses the National Park named Laguna Lachuá.

In this site IUCN Mesoamerica, has been working with the National Forest Institute (INAB), Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), National Board of protected Areas (CONAP), six local indigenous community organizations. The challenge here is to extend and deepen this work, beyond this protected area, by assisting in the advancement of a more integrated participatory approach, to manage the natural resources and leading to meaningful change in the lives of rural poor.

III. Activities & Results

A. Lachuá

A1. Poverty

A strategic plan to strengthen the honey producers has been developed. The plan including: SWOT analysis, mission, vision, goals, strategies, tactics, organization for work, budget and baseline. The strategy is based primarily on: a) to provide adequate credit to access to food safety market systems, b) expand the number of hives per module of production to 50, c) install a system of traps for catching annually 5 pounds of pollen and d) develop a marketing system that allow the producers to obtain an average price of Q8.50 (US\$ 1.07) per pound of honey.

The cooperation agreement between FUNDALACHUA and AGEXPORT was concluded that will finance a Business Plan for payment of Environmental Services in the Ecoregion in cooperation with the Rainforest Alliance. It will bring to FUNDALACHUA funds for the quantification, certification and sale of environmental services in terms of avoided deforestation at a value of US\$ 180000.00 in a time period of 2 years. It is hoped that this process allow to FUNDALACHUA to obtain a profit of US\$ 430000.00 per year, for its operation and development. This will consolidate the governance of the area and facilitate the integrated management of shared Ecoregion.

The feasibility study on the development of a technical medium school in the ecoregion Lachuá was concluded. The school is being built in the farm "Salinas 9 Ceros" and it is expected that a total of 120 students from the two regions can graduate as technicians. This represents an important advance in terms of human capital development for the ecoregion.

The implementation of the Operational Plan generated the following results:

- The honey production chain has an organizational strategy for expansion and growth from 16 to 132 barrels o (700 pounds of honey per year).
- FUNDALACHUA has US\$ 180,000 from AGEXPORT and US\$ 110,000 from the Dutch Cooperation for the implementation of its program for selling environmental services. Those funds will be used to implement the Master Plan of the National Park and the strengthening of production chains of pineapple, honey and cocoa.
- A business plan for production and marketing of environmental services in terms of avoided deforestation which includes market research, technical, economic, financial, legal and environmental issues was created.
- A technical medium school for the training of human resources in the ecoregion is been builds at the moment to develop human capacities that , it has the capacity to maintain 120 students per year .

A2. Market and Incentives

A market study for the sale of environmental services was develop, which include: products, market segments, pricing, distribution mechanism and sales. On the other hand, the PIN (Project Idea Note) was developed, which is the starting point for development of the project for sale of Environmental Services. The report identifies two types of commodities: The first is the avoided

deforestation, product of management of the protected area and its hinterland, and the second, the capture of carbon through the implementation of the Forest Strategy. The PIN comprises a total of 19,000 hectares that have some form of additionally in the Ecoregion.

An agreement was signed for the certification of the forest area of the Ecoregion with FSC standards through the Smart Wood. Already a workshop by the Rainforest Alliance was given to the community with the idea of inform them about the required legal documentation. It is expected that the pre-evaluation of the area takes place the second week of November and the process is totally completed in first month of 2009

A total of 56,000 pineapple fruits, equivalent to 179,200 pounds were produced and sold by the producer organization Katbal Pom, with a utility on the sales of 21%. The loss of plant and lack of fruit weight are limiting aspects of productivity that must be carefully analyzed.

Obtained results:

- A study of marketing for the implementation of environmental services program in the Ecoregion Lachuá that included carbon sequestration and avoided deforestation was concluded.
- PIN (Project Idea Note) for the development of the environmental services program in the Ecoregion Lachuá was completed. With the main emphasis on its implications on the standard CVS.
- An amount of 56,000 pineapple and 14,000 pounds of honey were sold for two productive associations through various partnerships alliances.
- The certification process with FSC standards started for more than 19,000 hectares of forest in the Ecoregion through the Rainforest Alliance and its Smart Wood program.
- A pay for more than US\$ 500,000 in incentives from government to communities in the region, directly benefiting over 500 families.

A3. Governance (FLEG / Rights and Tenure)

The process of measuring the community Lachuá San Marcos started, and it is expected to be completed in March 2009. Monte Sinai, Semuy I and Semuy II have the necessary paperwork to complete the process of legalization of land tenure, with the only pending the granting of titles from FONTIERRA. It is estimated that the property title could be delivered during the first half of 2009

Despite having participated actively in more than 12 multi-sector group meetings and the secretariat of agricultural, there is no agreement to resolve the problems of invasion that have occurred in the northeastern part of the park by the invading group "Mansion of the North" and the south by the invading groups "Cecokpur Mojón" and "El Paso del Mono". In these processes, the lack of governability existing in the country is the main limiting factor for resolving the crisis. It is important that the public ministry take action and consider the complaints arise from the park staff regarding invasions and illegal activities within the protected area.

Obtained results:

- Three of the five communities have completed the legal documentation for the land certification in the property registry.

- In San Marcos Lachuá community has begun the process of measuring the polygon to be registered.
- Twelve meetings with the multi-sector round table and the secretary of agrarian affairs have been conducted to try to solve the problems of invasion in the National Park.

A4. Forest Landscape Restoration

FUNDALACHUA completed its formal legal process and is empowered to act in fulfilling its mission and vision. The Strategic Plan of the organization in terms of mission, vision, goals, organization and strategies was concluded. It is hoped that this organization is a platform for development of shared management of the Ecoregion and the governance of the area.

The Master for Plan National Park Laguna and Lachuá and its area of influence was completed. The Plan considers 2 main aspects. The first one is the co-management vision of the protected area by community organizations, and the second, the sale of environmental services for its own implementation and poverty alleviation in communities in the influence area.

The intermediate line of monitoring and evaluating of the project Laguna Lachuá was developed. It is now on a data tabulation and analysis process, and is it expected to be completed by the second week of February 2009. Here the analysis was expanded to estimate the impact that LLS has obtained on the areas of interest in terms of poverty, markets and incentives, governance and landscape restoration.

Obtained results:

- The Strategic Plan of FUNDALACHUA was completed.
- The Master Plan of the National Park Laguna Lachuá was concluded and submitted to CONAP for its approval and diffusion.
- The intermediate line of monitoring and evaluation of the project Laguna Lachuá was completed and is ready for its diffusion and evaluation with the purposes of determining future development strategies.
- Follow-up the sustainable management of 21,200 ha, that is equal to 38% of the region:
 - 14,500 conservation management of the national park.
 - 2500 has been reforested in 3 years period.
 - 3500 community hectares under conservation.
 - 700 ha management under agro-forestry (cocoa, cardamom and fruit trees)

Note: By the end of 2010, it is intended to have under supervised management (certificated) 50% of the region.

B. Tacaná

B1. Poverty

Two workshops were conducted with CORNASAM. During meetings, the best mechanisms to support implementation of the PINFOR and PINPEP programs were defined with INAB, MAGA, CONAP CARE, municipalities, Caritas Arquidiosesanas and Helvetas. It urged the municipalities to adopt such programs as tools for sustainability, identifying the actors who could make use of the incentive through the forest restoration strategy that was developed for 4 micro watersheds of the upper part of Rio Suchiate.

A business plan for the producing of pinabete (*Abies coatemalensis*) was formulated. it includes a marketing strategy, technological process, legal and environmental framework for the implementation of the incentive, an organization for work system, economic and financial analysis, analysis risk, business strategy and monitoring and evaluation system. The business plan includes a high rate of capital investment for its implementation, which might be considered a limiting factor to access to credit. The project will require an investment of Q 331,000 ha during the first 7 years. Between 7-9 and then 12-14 years, sales will produce annual revenues of 300,000 Q, equivalent to the 24% of the internal rate of return. In general, the pruning system of these trees could be an excellent alternative for jobs generation in the region.

A total of 53 forest management plans, equal to 67.46 hectares were elaborated and submitted to the forestry incentives program PINFOR. Five groups of women from the San Pablo, Santa María and Tacaná communities were benefited by the implementation of the program.

Obtained results:

- Two workshops were conducted with different stakeholders of the watershed to identify possible strategies that could allow the implementation of the forestry incentives programs in the higher part of the Suchiate River.
- Business plans for producing Pinabete trees, used as Christmas trees were developed to generate employment and income in the region.
- A total of 53 forest management plans, equal to 67.46 hectares were included in the forestry incentives program.

B2. Market and Incentives

The municipal forestry office of San Pablo City was opened. It has a professional that will provide to the community assistance services in terms of incentives for forestry and forest management. The office was equipped with a cooperation agreement for amount of US\$ 3,000 for the purchase of equipment. The office already has operational plans in terms of activities, products, sources of verification, responsible, budget and schedule.

There have defined a marketing strategy for the production of Christmas trees that include defined products, prices and distribution and sales systems. The strategy is part of the submitted business plan. The specific product to be marketed is the Christmas aromatic tree Pinabete with minimum and maximum height of 6 and 8 feet, respectably. The conic, symmetrical and uniform in size and shape of the tree is achieved through an annual process of pruning.

Obtained results:

- A municipal forestry office strengthened and operating in the influence area of project.
- A marketing plan for the commercialization of Christmas trees as a mechanism to general income for the communities.
- A local forestry office to strengthen the processes of sustainable forest development.

B3. Forest Law Enforcement and Governance

In order to determine a strategy for land tenure to allow farmers to develop the forestry incentive programs in the implementation of the Forest Restoration Strategy, 3 workshops were conducted in communities Esquichá, and Sibinal Coatancito. During the workshop was determined that the community organizations are the main strengths and opportunities. However, the lack of a public policy consistent with the current context and the lack of the individual legal certainty constitute its main weaknesses and threats.

The strategy to reduce illegal logging was presented to INAB. It will be implemented with funds from Tacaná project during the diffusion and socialization phase.

Obtained results:

- Three workshops with communities to develop a strategy for land tenure to allow the implementation of the forestry incentives programs in the high part of the Suchiate River.
- A strategy to reduce illegal logging was presented to the forestry authority for its implementation.

B4. Forest Landscape Restoration

The forest restoration strategy for the micro Sibinal, Ixchiguán, San José Ojetenam and Tacaná was completed. It includes the spatial analysis, legal, economic, human, environmental and financial assistance for adequate implementation and development. The developed tool will be the basis for the territorial planning and development of production systems. At present, it has not been socialized and is currently awaiting final amendments to be concluded.

The diagnosis of livelihoods of the four micro watersheds has to be addressed by the strategy of forest restoration was developed. It defines the current status of the micro watersheds in terms of human capital, environmental, socio-political, economic and infrastructure.

A student from CATIE and another from EPS of the FAUSAC were hired to develop the strategy of the three micro watersheds located in the high part of the Suchiate River (Coatancito, Chemealon and Tojgueche) under the terms of reference of the previous four watersheds.

Obtained results:

- The forest restoration strategies for the four micro watersheds of the upper part of the Suchiate River were completed.
- The diagnoses of livelihood for the four communities located in the upper part of the watersheds of Suchiate River were concluded.

IV. Next Steps

In the coming months, the project will be focus on the integration of staff and consultants to facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the Operational Plan 2009.

In the area of Lachuá:

- The indicators for monitoring the strategic plans and business developed in the production chains of pineapple and honey will be developed.
- 40 honey producer modules with 50 hives each one and 4 pineapple producer modules with a capacity of 100,000 fruit will be installed.
- A process to promote, market and distribution that allows to sale 130 tons of honey and 5000 pounds of pollen will begin.
- It will be an actively cooperating with the Laguna Lachuá project in the formulation and implementation of the Land Management Plan of the Ecoregion. At the same time, the forest certification process will be concluded and the program of forestry incentives will has continuity.
- The results of the project intermediate line and the master plan of the park will be diffused (socialize). Also, during the present year, it is expects to conclude the measurement process of San Marcos to finally legalize the four missing communities.
- There will be a substantial contribution to the development of the environmental services program and the strengthening of FUNDALACHUA as fundamental pillars of the sustainability of the protected area.

Tacaná region:

- There will be the socialization process and feedback of the forest strategy for the upper part of the basin of the Suchiate River.
- There will be a similar develop strategy for 3 micro watershed in the same area of the basin.

- For the middle part of the watershed a business plan and PIN will developed a in order to initiate the sale of environmental services for avoided deforestation in the coffee plantations.
- There will support to raise funds to allow the implementation of the landscape restoration strategy and the implementation of the business plan for Tacaná project.
- Finally, the baseline will be completed to determine the impacts that LLS project has had on the framework for poverty reduction, market development, governance and landscape restoration.

V. Knowledge Management, Learning and Communication, M&E

The program of monitoring and evaluation has identified the indicators to improve each of the productive chains, set up the instruments for its evaluation and developed the protocol for its implementation. On the other hand, there has developed a workshop for the general evaluation of the results obtained on the operative plan 2008. There is a work on the development of an improved diagram according to the methodology proposed by the central monitoring LLS. In the context of the above, there have been developed both in Tacaná Lachuá 8 workshops. Its purpose was the evaluation and development of various themes among which over come: the production strategies for pineapple, honey and cocoa; strategy of development of the environmental services program of the Ecoregion Lachuá; analysis and discussion of the Master Plan 2009 -2014, analysis and discussion of the Pinabete business plan and forest strategy.