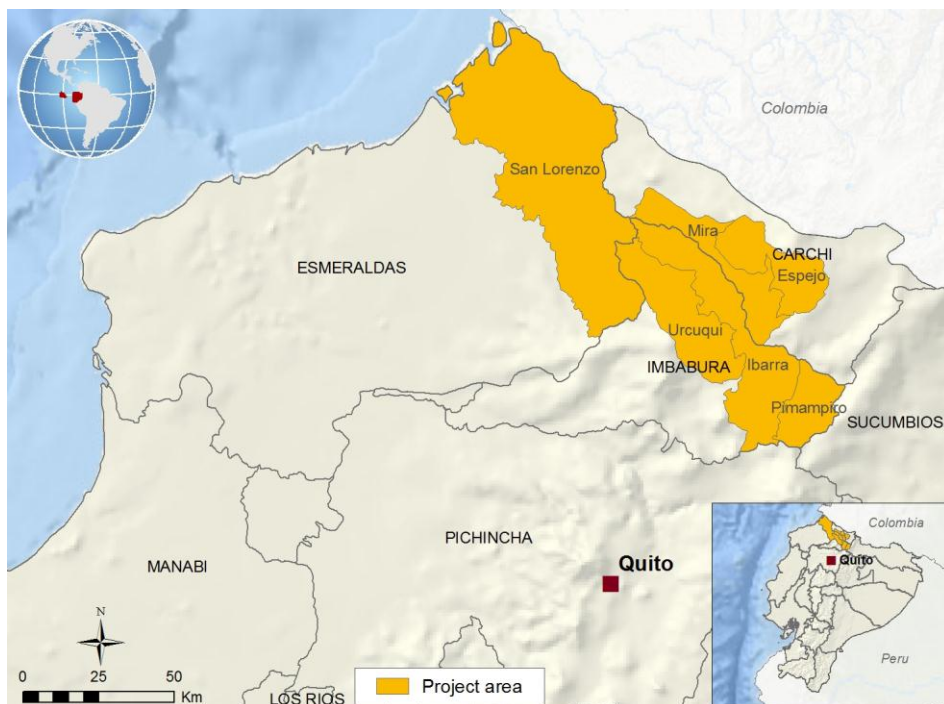


ECUADOR

Sustainable Management of Biodiversity and Water Resources in the Ibarra-San Lorenzo Corridor



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

ISSUES

Over the last decade, Ecuador's poverty levels have fallen despite a period of recent political and economic crises. Nevertheless, in rural spheres, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities continue to face barriers to economic inclusion, ranging from lack of secure access to land and water resources to limited investment opportunities. The situation varies across regions and social groups. In the Amazon for instance, indigenous groups struggle to obtain clear titles for communal lands that are under increased pressure from oil exploration and production. In the highlands, peasant communities face shortages of land and increasing degradation due to agricultural intensification and unregulated expansion into the upper reaches of water basins (páramos). In the coastal regions, communities face growing encroachment on their lands by large landholdings, in addition to degradation of mangrove forests due to unsustainable exploitation.

The project area is situated in the Ibarra-San Lorenzo corridor, which is characterized by its: i) diversity of natural resources and existence of protected areas, ii) location bordering Colombia, iii) contribution to the supply of agricultural products, iv) potential for tourism and for activities derived from coastal resources, and v) wealth generated by cross cultural contributions of Afro-Ecuadorian, indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers that inhabit it.

The expansion of the agricultural frontier for livestock, African palm plantations and logging, are the main threats to the sustainability of forestry resources of the area. There are a number of problems which threaten forestry development, such as the removal of fine hardwood species compounded by the lack of appropriate technology and an inefficient control of forestry operations.



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) brings together 183 countries, the private sector, civil society organizations and international institutions to address global environmental problems. The GEF-IFAD partnership promotes win-win solutions to deliver both global environmental benefits as well as significant gains for rural poor people.



Investing in rural people

PROJECT SUMMARY

Total cost: US\$18.7m

GEF Grant: US\$2.7m

IFAD Loan: US\$12.8m

Government of Ecuador:
US\$2.2m

Local Governments

Contributions: US\$0.19m

Beneficiaries

Contributions: US\$0.78m

Project period:

2012-2017

Executing agency:

Technical Secretariat of Plan
Ecuador

Beneficiaries: 20,689 people

Project objective: To locally demonstrate the relevance of sustainable forestry management approaches and practices to achieve the preservation of biodiversity and maintain the productivity of existing ecosystems.

ACTIONS

The GEF-IFAD project will promote the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of the land and forests in the Ibarra-San Lorenzo corridor, and the preservation and improvement of the main environmental services, benefiting the indigenous peoples and local communities, and contributing to poverty reduction, social inclusion and conflict resolution in the project area. The project has been structured into the following three components:

Local environment management capacity. The aim of this component is to integrate the sustainable use of natural resources into communal plans, and build up the capacity of local public institutions and community groups through: i) training for community organizations, local governments and sector committees, ii) training for subsidiary agencies of the Ministry of the Environment, iii) strengthening of monitoring in the national system of protected areas.

Innovative initiatives for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of natural resources. In agricultural areas, the environmental integrity of the land will be preserved through careful management of irrigation, plant cover, organic matter in the soil, etc. This involves the following activities: i) work with local players in two watersheds to implement sustainable practices such as trickle irrigation, fruit growing (avocado, cactus fruit and others), use of living windbreaks, organic fertilizer, appropriate crop rotation, etc., ii) assist communities in the preparation and implementation of plans to manage primary forests, mainly in Awá territory, supporting sustainable logging and collection of non-timber forest products, iii) support the Cayapas-Mataje Ecological Reserve management plan through intensified replanting and recovery of mangrove swamps using native species, particularly those in danger of extinction.

Incentives for the productive conservation of natural resources. This component is concerned with ensuring the activities detailed in components 1 and 2 are sustained with incentives. Notably, it will support the Government of Ecuador's Socio Bosque Programme based on payment for ecosystem

services on the national scale, which proposes to foster conservation of up to 4 million hectares of currently threatened forested land, through transfer payments to private and community land users for their collaboration in forest conservation activities. The project will help facilitate and support access to Socio Bosque by communities that own forested areas.

EXPECTED IMPACTS

Local environment management capacity

- Skills training has been provided to more than 300 local people on watershed conservation and planting of native tree species such as bamboo, guarango, alder and pumamaqui.
- To date, 196 families have adopted at least two sustainable land management practices or technologies.

Innovative initiatives for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of natural resources

- To date, the project has invested in the rehabilitation of 408 hectares in the Palabi and Tulilbi watersheds areas and six surrounding watersheds (Bartola estuary, Cachavi estuary, Pantheon estuary, Cedar Creek, Ceibo estuary and Jacho estuary) by planting native species in the area.
- The project has supported the Tululb and Centro Chachi – La Ceiba farmers' associations. Each beneficiary now manages two hectares under agroforestry practices.

Incentives for the productive conservation of natural resources

- To date, over 370 hectares of secondary forests have been incorporated into protected areas and 13 communities are currently participating in conservation activities, which qualifies them to receive payment for ecosystem services from the Socio Bosque programme.

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