

Latin America & the Caribbean Programme

Systematic, longer-term engagement through enabling environments and capacity-building

What?

The Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries are generally receptive to innovation and novel approaches to rural development. Thanks to their technical and institutional capacities, they have already made significant progress in elaborating and implementing National Action Programmes (NAPs). A variety of policies and development models have been experimented at macro and micro levels, which the GM sees as providing solid institutional and programmatic frameworks for addressing UNCCD issues in a more coordinated and effective manner.

Why?

The economic costs of desertification-related problems in LAC are estimated at USD 1 000 million per year. This figure soars to USD 44 800 million when drought-related losses are included. The social costs of desertification are even higher since one of the direct consequences of the desertification process is the dismantling of agricultural production systems, which inevitably leads to radical changes in the countries' social fabric, aggravating rural poverty.

How?

The GM uses three main tools to engage the LAC countries and organizations more systematically in the medium and longer term:

■ **Fostering enabling environments for UNCCD investment**

The GM provides countries with its specialized services to enable them to develop strategies and approaches to integrate sustainable land management (SLM) into national and sub-regional rural development agendas. National, sub-regional and regional policy dialogue on sustainable rural development is enhanced by strong, mutually-beneficial partnerships with regional institutions, sub-regional banks, technical agencies, civil society organizations and members of the GM's Facilitation Committee. By including SLM issues in the ongoing debate, concepts and knowledge can be generated that guide development processes and foster more efficient and targeted use of financial resources. Initiatives are currently being supported in Hispaniola, Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Honduras, and sub-regional platforms in Central America and the English-speaking Caribbean.

■ **Capacity-building**

Furthering partners' understanding of current and emerging financial modalities and procedures for development is a fundamental part of the GM's work. The aim is to mainstream SLM concerns into national and sub-regional processes, while developing conducive financing strategies for UNCCD implementation in the region. Activities include analytical work and capacity-building in public financial management and new financial modalities, at country and sub-regional levels. The GM purposefully engages decision-making bodies, such as Ministries of Finance and Planning, to engender better understanding of budgeting processes and help mainstream SLM and the UNCCD into programme and budgetary cycles.

■ **South-to-south cooperation**

The GM draws the experiences and capacities of countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico and Cuba to promote south-to-south cooperation for UNCCD implementation in countries that are initiating and/or consolidating their own processes. In conjunction with its partners – the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the International Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - the GM has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Environment of Brazil, to support UNCCD implementation in Brazil and elsewhere. A programme is being developed between Brazil and Haiti on SLM practices and bio-energy. Other cooperation agreements, including one with Costa Rica, are being finalized. The governments of Brazil, Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking African countries have recently requested the GM's support in inter-regional cooperation for UNCCD implementation.

Special initiatives

Partnership Initiative on Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management in Caribbean SIDS (PISLM)

In the small island developing states (SIDS) of the Caribbean, degradation of the limited land area is the major long-term land management issue. This degradation stems from human action - such as deforestation and unsustainable agricultural practices, natural phenomena - such as severe weather conditions, and episodic events - such as fire. The aim of the GM-supported PISLM is to mainstream cross-sector land degradation issues into ongoing sub-regional activities and create a conducive environment for new activities. This will increase the impact of single partners' actions by drawing on synergies and complementarities and generating a significant multiplier effect on the resources invested.

Ecosystems services in Ecuador

Under its Strategic Programme on Compensation of Ecosystem Services (CES), the GM is initiating activities in Ecuador as part of a comprehensive approach to combating land degradation at landscape level. Initial activities are focussing on developing financing mechanisms for the conservation of forest remnants, which are key to the provision of forest services in degraded areas. In collaboration with EcoSecurities, the GM is supporting the design of carbon offset projects for reforestation initiatives that are linked to environmental services schemes for water provision.

For more information:

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