

# Central Highland Intervention Area Mountains Programme

## Mountain ecosystems, strategic for food security

In the Central Highlands of Ecuador, the Mountains Programme focuses on the provinces of Bolívar, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi and Tungurahua. These Andean landscapes are characterized by volcanic influence, colourful agricultural mosaics and natural and the cultural richness of the communities that inhabit them. The mountain ecosystems found in this region have great importance for the biodiversity and the provision of key ecosystem services, especially water regulation for rural and urban communities.

These ecosystems stand out due to the adaptations of some species -mountain forests, bushes and “páramo” grasslands- to the biophysical conditions of altitude. Additionally, it includes agroecosystems or mountain socio-ecological systems that arise from the interaction between ecosystem dynamics, land use decisions and the relationships between stakeholders at different scales.

Mountain landscapes in the Central Highlands also carry out a significant role in providing food for cities. Indigenous and peasant families generate part of their economic income with the production and commercialization of bovine milk, potatoes, “melloco” tubers, broad beans, barley, “chocho”, garlic, yellow carrots, and fruit such as blackberry, “uvilla” and strawberry. In addition, they have specialized in the production of quinoa and organic medicinal plants for export. Other families provide services to rural community tourism and to the production and spinning of alpaca wool.

The fast spread of urban areas, the growing demand of cities for agricultural products as well as climate change are some of the factors that are putting pressure on mountain landscapes, strategic ecosystems that in recent decades have suffered significant loss and degradation.

Programme Name:	Conservation and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems in Ecuador
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development - BMZ
Region of intervention:	Provinces of Bolívar, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi and Tungurahua.
Executing by:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration:	2020 - 2024
ODS ( among others )	  

Although there are various mechanisms for the protection of ecosystems in Ecuador’s Andean areas, such as the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) or the Water Funds (private), it is necessary to strengthen measures at different scales, to preserve these landscapes, their biodiversity, the provision of ecosystem services and, in parallel, offer sustainable and resilient economic alternatives for mountain communities.

## Objective

Improve the restoration and management of mountain ecosystems which are relevant to the conservation of biodiversity, the regulation of water balance and food security in Ecuador.

## Intervention model

The Mountains Programme seeks to achieve a broad understanding of the interactions that occur from the various uses of the land. Value chains will be promoted by linking productive areas with strategic natural areas for biodiversity, as well as the restoration of agroecosystems and degraded areas in order to reestablish ecological functions.



Strengthening governance systems will be a decisive pillar, for which consensus will be sought among the various users of the landscape, establishing cooperation mechanisms and innovative tools for negotiation, integrated planning and informed decision-making which will go towards an equitable use of the land.



## Expected results

The Programme is divided into four action fields that seek to achieve the proposed results:

**Promotion of four community-value chains:** Inclusion of sustainable, profitable and resilient approaches to climate change by promoting new measures of public-private collaboration (PPP).

**Ecosystem restoration:** Development of tools and plans for the restoration of 1,660 hectares located in ecologically sensitive areas, facilitating access to financing systems.

**Governance mechanisms:** The strengthening and consolidation of three coordination and agreement instances for decision-making, through regional planning and/or development planning strategies.

**Knowledge management:** Knowledge development and dissemination, and collaborative dialogue to strengthen the mountain landscape protection agenda through restoration measures and sustainable use of ecosystems.

## Key allies

The Programme considers a system of cooperation between the public and private sectors, and organized civil society with the following stakeholders: Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; provincial GADs of Bolívar, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua and Chimborazo; cantonal GAD of Salcedo ; parish GADs of San Andrés, Pilahuín, Salinas and Simiatug; CEFA; Alpaca Producers Cooperative; Tachalag Association; ASOPROGAR; COPCHUQ; FECUS; COPROBICH; Madrilact; Ecopallana; Sumak Life; ILE; Toni Corp.; Agso Ordeño; Parmalat; Nutrileche; Puruha Rasurku; Expediciones Andinas; Visión Mundial.



## Challenges

- Increased income for vulnerable families in the intervention areas.
- Achieve integrated multi-sectoral planning for mountain landscapes.
- Application of the ecosystem approach in land management.
- Strengthening of governance systems for the sustainable management of mountain landscapes.
- Development of financial mechanisms and governance systems that guarantee the sustainability of the initiatives which are being implemented.
- Technical assistance to the Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, and to local stakeholders to enable fulfillment of the Established National Contribution (NDC) - Adaptation Component in the Natural Heritage sector; Water Heritage sector and the Food, Agriculture and Livestock Sovereignty sector.
- Involvement of rural women.



## Contribution to the NDC

The Mountains Programme will provide technical advice to the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition MAATE, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock MAG, the GADs and local stakeholders, in order to fulfill the Established National Contribution (NDC) - Adaptation Component in the Natural Heritage sector, Water Heritage sector, as well as the Food, Agriculture, and Livestock Sovereignty sector.

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The programme Conservation and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in coordination with ECO Consult and the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN).



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