

Intervention Area - Cañar Mountains Programme




Mountain ecosystems, determinants for environmental conservation and food provision

In the Cañar province of Ecuador, the Mountains Programme focuses on the Commonwealth of the Cañari People, which corresponds entirely to the political and cantonal administrative instances of Cañar, Biblián, El Tambo and Suscal. One part of this supra-municipal public institution is located in the hydrographic basins of the Cañar River, and another, in those of the Burgay River (Paute River). It is in the central, south-western part of the Ecuadorian Andes, in a mountainous region which has a variability of altitude that ranges from 80 to 4,480 meters above sea level.

The mountain ecosystems found in this area are of great importance for biodiversity and the provision of key ecosystem services, especially the water regulation for rural and urban communities. They have a diversity of ecological niches, mainly “páramos”, cloud forests, humid forests and wetlands, and a diversity of agro-ecosystems or socio-ecological mountain systems that arise from the interaction between ecosystem dynamics, land use decisions and the relationships between stakeholders at different levels.

The mountain landscape in this territory plays a role in the provision of food products for rural and urban areas. 74.75% of the population is concentrated in the rural part of the Cañari territory; of this, 22.72% is indigenous, being mostly the Cañari people. Their main livelihoods are the production and commercialization of milk, Andean grains such as quinoa and amaranth, vegetables, and honey. Lately, in connection with conservation, some families have dedicated themselves to the production and spinning of alpaca wool, merging with community tourism services.

Anthropic threats to the ecosystem, the growing demand for agricultural products and climate change are some of the factors that are putting pressure on mountain ecosystems. Thus, A joint effort is necessary which includes sustainable production mea-

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asures and incentives for the population that live in these ecosystems.

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 the province of Cañar.

Intervention model

The Mountain Programme links income generation through the strengthening of value chains together with the conservation and restoration of mountain ecosystems, from where several environmental services can be obtained. the Programme works in the the strengthening of governance systems, such as the articulation of stakeholders and the improving planning and land use planning tools, to be able to make informed decisions, and strength skills at the political, technical and community levels, generating communi-



ties of practice that will facilitate the implementation of the Programme and fulfilment of the proposed indicators.



Expected results

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

Promotion of value chains: Incorporation of sustainable, profitable, and resilient approaches to climate change through the promotion of at least two performance contracts for new public-private collaborative (PPP) actions aimed at the development of three value chains of local communities.

Ecosystem restoration: Development of tools and plans for the restoration of ecologically sensitive areas in mountain landscapes, which can facilitate access to financing systems.

Governance mechanisms: Strengthening and consolidation of two (instances/areas) for coordination and agreement for decision-making about the management of mountain ecosystems, through regional planning and/or development planning processes of the main public, private and community stakeholders. Development of an environmental monitoring system that supports integrated landscape management.

Knowledge management: There is a community of practice that enables the development and dissemination of knowledge and collaborative dialogue, in order to strengthen the mountain landscape protection agenda through restorative actions and sustainable use of ecosystems.

The target group of the programme is the Andean rural population, especially small-scale farmers from the indigenous and mestizo population, who apply land ordering practices. Rural women are expected to be strongly involved.



The programme considers within its cooperation system of public and private sectors, and organized civil society, the following stakeholders: Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; Commonwealth of the Cañari People; provincial GAD of Cañar; cantonal GADs of Suscal, El Tambo, Biblián and Cañar; parish GADs of Jerusalén, Zhud and Ingapirca; social organizations of producers of milk, vicuña (type of llama), honey, Andean grains and community tourism; Elecaastro; Nutrileche; Cordillera Tropical; Tonicorp.



Challenges

- Increased income for vulnerable families in the intervention areas.
- Application of good agricultural and livestock practices.
- Application of public policies to get conservation and restoration of mountain ecosystems with a focus about landscape.
- 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.
- Contribution to the fulfilment of the NDC (Established National Contribution), Adaptation Component in three specific sectors: Natural Heritage; Water Heritage; as well as Food, Agriculture and Livestock Sovereignty.
- 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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