

# Programme Business and Biodiversity in Central America and the Dominican Republic

## CHALLENGES

Although Central America constitutes only one per cent of the Earth's surface, it is home to approximately eight per cent of the world's biological diversity. However, this diversity of species, also known as biodiversity, is under severe threat. The transformation of natural ecosystems, deforestation of tropical rainforests, and the irresponsible exploitation of natural resources as well as climate change are causing an ever-accelerating loss of biodiversity in the region.

A consequence of this loss is a decline of the protective mechanisms provided by biodiversity against natural disasters. At increasingly short intervals, extreme weather events such as hurricanes, floods and droughts cause devastating damage to infrastructure and private sector activities in the region, especially affecting the agricultural and tourism sector.

The Central American states have reacted to the threats to biodiversity by developing sectorial and regional policies as well as strategies for their implementation. Furthermore, at the national and regional level they have established important institutional structures for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which emphasizes that the desired change towards the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity cannot be achieved through public programmes alone. It is imperative for the private sector to be actively involved if international conventions are to be implemented successfully.

## APPROACH

Through the programme's activities, the private sector in Central America and the Dominican Republic recognizes the economic importance of biodiversity and, in cooperation with key stakeholders from government, academia and civil society, contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of biological

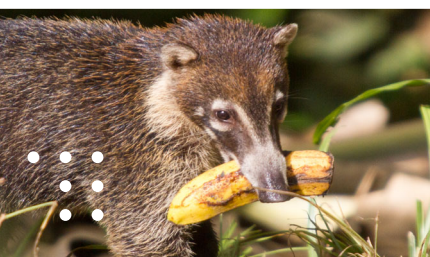
<b>Programme</b>	Business and Biodiversity in Central America and the Dominican Republic (daBio II)
<b>On behalf of</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ. European Union (UE)
<b>Partners</b>	Central American Integration System (SICA), Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD)
<b>Region</b>	Central America and the Dominican Republic
<b>Duration</b>	6 years (April 2014 - December 2019) 4.5 years (January 2020 - March 2025)

diversity in terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The project is based in San José, Costa Rica and builds on the results and experiences of its first phase (April 2014 - December 2019). This project successfully demonstrated that the private sector can benefit in a variety of ways from integrating the sustainable use of biodiversity into business activities, for instance through cost reductions or access to new markets.

The political partner of the project is the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA) which has delegated the implementation to the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), SICA's specialized entity for environmental and development issues.

One component of the programme will strengthen the CCAD's capacity to establish itself as an advisory and exchange platform for the integration of biological diversity into private sector activities. Regional and national policy makers will be supported in the formulation of framework conditions and voluntary norms for the conservation of biodiversity.

To initiate change at the company level, services and financing mechanisms for the conservation and



sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as for access and benefit-sharing (ABS) will be offered through regional and national business networks. Support is also provided to these networks to include public-private partnerships in their service offer.

In another component of the project, existing development partnerships will be extended to include partners from new sectors. Furthermore, new multi-stakeholder partnerships for the conservation of biological diversity in the region will be created. This will allow to generate innovative project ideas and new learning experiences. The thematic areas of multi-stakeholder partnerships will also be expanded to include the topics of ABS and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA).

In addition, the programme will cooperate with businesses and producer groups, thus providing the private sector with practical tools for the integration of biodiversity into economic activities. Among these tools is the Biodiversity Check which was developed by the programme and can be implemented in a variety of sectors such as agriculture, services, tourism and industry. In the tourism and agriculture sector where the Biodiversity Check is in high demand, the tool will be modified to include new product lines.

strategies and policies in the region. Multi-stakeholder alliances and public-private development partnerships will address these issues more systematically and create important synergistic effects. With improved cooperation between key actors, a deeper level of knowledge will be developed which will lead to more efficient and sustainable solutions for climate change adaptation.

Through the services provided by regional and national business networks, multiplier effects will be created and leveraged to increase the scope of biodiversity-friendly approaches. Additionally, the expansion of proven instruments such as the Biodiversity Check will increase the number of companies, producer groups and economic sectors that are actively involved in the conservation of biological diversity.

Overall, the activities and measures of the regional programme Business and Biodiversity in Central America and the Dominican Republic ensure that the German development cooperation will contribute towards the continued implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the region.

## RESULTS

In the first phase of the programme a total of 29 public-private partnerships have been established in five countries of the region. Through these alliances the private sector alone has invested around 5 million euros in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Furthermore, with the Biodiversity Check, the programme has developed a flexible tool for improving biodiversity management in private companies which has already been used in more than 100 businesses in the tourism and agricultural sector.

The cooperation with the private sector initiated by the project will ensure that the issues of biodiversity, ABS and EbA are incorporated into environmental



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