

ProBosques

Fighting climate change and deforestation through management sustainable land

Where and how we work

Colombia is one of the 17 so-called megadiverse countries, which are home to more than two thirds of the world's biodiversity. In Colombia, the greatest biodiversity is found in forest areas, which cover about 52% or 60 million hectares of the country. After five years of continuous decline, deforestation increased considerably with the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016, reaching 220,000 hectares in 2017. In the following years, 2018 and 2019, deforestation decreased to 197,000 ha and 159,000 ha respectively, however, in 2020 it rose again to 172,000 ha.

Most deforestation is concentrated in the Colombian Amazon, especially in the departments of Caquetá, Meta and Guaviare. During the decades of internal conflict, large parts of these regions were effectively inaccessible because they were controlled by illegal armed groups. Now that they can be accessed again, they are subject to uncontrolled deforestation. The main causes of deforestation are land speculation, coca cultivation and illegal mining. Sometimes public development projects and infrastructure measures also contribute to forest loss, as does extensive cattle ranching, and agro-industrial production.

The wood sector is only rudimentarily developed and plays a very small role in the country's economy, although an area of around 17 million hectares of natural forest has great potential for sustainable forest management. How could that be achieved? The establishment and strengthening of value chains from forest products create income, employment and consolidate local economic power.

Effective control mechanisms and the assignment of land and use rights are indispensable in this context.

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Project area	Amazonía Colombiana
Overall term	January 2020 – December 2022

Together, these form the core elements of a successful and comprehensive strategy to combat deforestation. There are various institutional responsibilities for the use of forest resources. These are divided between the environmental authorities (especially the Ministry for Environment and Sustainable Development and the regional environmental authorities) and the agricultural ministries and authorities. Unfortunately, the procedures for planning and regulating forest use are complex, slow, and costly, discouraging sustainable forest management. Also, there is a lack of technical and financial support programs to consolidate forest-based value chains. The government's goal is to reduce deforestation. This is where the ProBosques project comes into play with the goal of improving sustainable forest management in selected regions of Colombia.



Photo: Forest Governance Workshop



Photo: Amazon, Chiribiquete Project, 2017

What we are doing

ProBosques works in the Colombian Amazon in departments of Meta and Caqueta, and implements measures at local, regional, and national level.

Value chains and sustainable forest management with and for entrepreneurs.

ProBosques trains small and medium-sized companies, and producer associations, so that they can access sales markets with new products and better production methods. The sustainable management of forest and wood resources increases local income and thus interest in forest conservation and its long-term sustainable use. The project supports seven producer associations (4 in Meta and 3 in Caqueta) to improve their business models along the value chains of wood and non-wood products, investing in innovations, forming alliances, and become more profitable.

Regional governance and sustainable forest management.

Well-coordinated governance structures enable the implementation of sustainable management plans. In Colombia so-called Forestry Tables have been created as a space for dialogue, coordination, and consensus-building to address issues related to the forestry sector, facilitating the inclusion of all stakeholders that interact and contribute to its development. ProBosques works with the Forestry Tables in Meta and Caqueta to consolidate the joint development, coordination, and implementation of regional and local measures that are geared towards a sustainable use of the forest.

Legal, institutional, and financial frameworks for sustainable forest management

At national level the project advises the Ministry for Environment and Agriculture on the adaptation of legal regulations and helps to develop and test a forestry extension service. The Forestry and wood industry also needs capital, for which the project is developing financing instruments.

EXPOBosques

Together with the Ministry of Environment and in cooperation with other initiatives, including FAO, WWF, *Corazón de la Amazonia*, *Fondo Acción*, Embassy of Norway and ONF Andina, the project organized a virtual forestry and forest fair: ExpoBosques. More than 70 national and international experiences in the field of forestry were able to share their experiences on the virtual platform as well as in forums. They illustrate pioneering elements for a more sustainable forest management in Colombia, especially in Amazonia. More than 6,000 people visited the virtual forums and nearly 3,000 people interacted and used the web and mobile app. For more information go to: www.probosquesColombia.org.

ProBosques follow on in some aspects from the REDD+ project (2013-2019), which supported the Ministry of Environment, among other things, in the preparation and implementation of the national REDD+ strategy. This includes supporting the forestry tables; measures through which the local population increases its income through the careful use of the forest; and advising the Ministry of Environment to improve the political framework. In addition, ProBosques works in line with the financial cooperation module "REDD Early Movers", to strengthen approaches that contribute to deforestation and emissions reduction.



Photo: *Mundo Maderas de Colombia*. ExpoBosques



Photo: Mono ardilla, ProBosques Project

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