

Improving the sustainable management and use of forests, protected areas and watersheds in the context of climate change

Triangular Cooperation Costa Rica – Morocco – Germany

Context

During the last 20 years, the Government of Costa Rica has worked closely with the private sector, NGOs and civil society to develop and implement a variety of successful programmes in the context of adaptation to climate change. The country continues to look for appropriate solutions to improve its watershed management and to prevent and combat forest fires. Morocco has long-standing expertise in these two areas, and can benefit in turn from Costa Rica's world-famous experience in tapping the socio-economic potential of national parks and protected areas and from the experiences with the Payments for Environmental Services of Forests (PSA).

Project

The aim of this triangular cooperation between Costa Rica, Morocco and Germany is to improve the sustainable management and use of forests, protected areas and watersheds in the context of climate change. The project will achieve this objective by the end of 2015 by pursuing the following four basic lines of action. Based on Morocco's experience, two pilot projects will be realised in watershed areas of Costa Rica. Furthermore, existing initiatives for preventing and fighting forest fires will be adapted and consolidated. In Morocco, two pilot projects will be carried out in protected areas (probably Souss Massa and Toubkal), based on Costa Rica's experience. The project contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and will sustainably improve the socio-economic situation of the rural population through ecotourism

and the development of value chains. Parallel to this, Costa Rica's PSA experience will enrich the development of a Moroccan forest partnership and its financing system. Germany contributes methodological and organisational inputs as well as process experience gained from bilateral cooperation.

Representatives of governments, authorities, the private sector and NGOs will be involved in all four components to identify best practices and to institutionalise lessons learned and make sustainable use of them. Furthermore, a cross-border exchange of experience will be initiated with other MENA countries.

Impact

To date, the sector policy, institutional frameworks and working methods of relevant partners from both countries have been analysed. Approaches have been identified that point the way forward and will be implemented by the partners in the further course of cooperation.

- In the context of *watershed management*, Costa Rica's needs to improve planning at national and regional level are clearly visible. The regions Jesús María and Barranca have been selected for piloting the project with emphasis on tailored advisory services.
- Regarding the *financing mechanisms for forests*, Morocco will learn from the Costa Rican National Forestry Finance Fund, FONAFIFO, and its collaboration with the private sector.





Experts from the environmental, marketing and monitoring units of FONAFIO and representatives of the NGOs CODEFORSA and FUNDECOR will help design the new Moroccan forest partnership initiative.

- With regard to the *prevention of forest fires*, Costa Rica has expressed its needs especially in the areas of planning methods, early warning systems and the related institutional coordination. Further advisory services and training courses to be provided by Moroccan experts have already been agreed.
- Regarding the *valorisation of national parks and protected areas*, the exchange of expertise including tourism is under preparation.

The project receives strong political support from the governments of all three countries. The participating institutions show a high degree of ownership, and the partners are promoting the project with great commitment. Other Mediterranean countries that came together in the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests (CPMF) are also interested in this cooperation. The triangular cooperation arrangement is proposed to be presented in a special side event during the IV Mediterranean Forest Week, which will take place in Spain in March 2015.

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