

# Programm PROMAC

## Environmental policy and sustainable management of natural resources in Colombia (PROMAC)

### Context

Colombia has immense biological wealth. The country has over 300 different ecosystems, ranging from the dry forests of the Caribbean region to the dense rainforests of Amazonia. These unique landscapes are home to countless species of animals and plants, some of which are only found in Colombia and are severely endangered.

The ecosystems provide the population with essential services: clean water, food and protection against the impacts of climate change. In many cases, these natural resources are not yet being used sustainably, and this is jeopardising the ability of ecosystems to function. Livelihoods, especially those of the rural population, are threatened by (1) the conversion of natural ecosystems into areas used for farming and grazing as well as infrastructure projects without effective compensation for biodiversity loss; and (2) drug cultivation and efforts to combat it. While peace talks with the country's two largest guerrilla groups create opportunities, they also pose new threats to the preservation of biological diversity.

Colombia has a differentiated normative framework and a complex National Environmental System comprising all those institutions which were set up to help promote the sustainable management of natural resources. The challenge is to achieve effective coordination between the key players in this environmental system and the implementation of Colombia's very ambitious policies in often remote rural regions.

### Objective

The key players in the environmental sector are able to efficiently implement agreed sector policies and strategies, thereby ensuring the long-term protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
German contribution	Up to EUR 11 million
Lead executing agency	Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia)
Implementing organisation	Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in collaboration with other sectoral ministries, institutions within the National Environmental System, regional and local authorities, civil society and the private sector
Planned overall term	Phase 1: October 2012 to December 2013 Phase 2: January 2014 to December 2017

### Method

The programme makes use of the fact that Colombia is seeking accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD promotes policies designed to improve people's economic and social well-being. PROMAC advises the Ministry of Environment on how best to fulfil the accession requirements in the environmental sector and embed 'green economic growth' as a key tenet in cross-sectoral policies. This will create an enabling environment for the introduction of best international practices in Colombia, such as the establishment of a limit on the amount of phosphorous that can be used in detergents.

Sustainable economic growth can only be pursued if there is reliable information on the current state of the country's national resources. The programme is helping key stakeholders in the environmental sector to consolidate the National Environmental Information System (SIAC). An Internet-based platform is being established to make the information held by various institutions on the state of Colombia's natural resources available to all interested users.



Economic instruments play a key role in delivering this sought-after 'green economic growth'. The programme advises the Ministry of Environment on the further development and efficient implementation of these instruments, for example with regard to ensuring adequate compensation for any biodiversity loss caused by interventions (e.g. infrastructure projects) or changes to water supply systems. In addition to the instruments provided for by law, voluntary economic instruments can also make an important contribution to the preservation of biodiversity. In this respect, the programme is promoting the development of a legal framework for recognising voluntary contributions to the preservation of biological diversity. In the north-east of the country, the programme supports the establishment of an alliance of public and private stakeholders that have set themselves the goal of conserving Páramo Santurbán, an ecosystem above the treeline that can only be found in the Andes.

As a prerequisite for the effective protection of natural resources in Colombia's rural regions, the programme is helping the Ministry of Environment to develop guidelines for environmentally sound land-use planning and their implementation in various parts of the country. This approach will include climate change adaptation measures. In Norte de Santander, land-use planning in the buffer zones of two protected areas will be geared towards their conservation, thus preserving biodiversity while protecting the interests of the rural population.

The programme is working with the Ministry of Environment to develop a method that implements ecosystem-based climate change adaptation measures together with rural municipalities. The method is being tested in four local authorities, and climate change adaptation is being incorporated into policies and strategies.

The consulting firm GOPA has been commissioned to help implement the programme.

## Results

In recognition of the progress made (with support from PROMAC) towards alignment with international environmental standards, the two OECD committees responsible for environmental matters agreed in February and May 2017 to admit Colombia. 'Green economic growth' was anchored as a key tenet in the National Development Plan 2014–2018.

The programme helped to redesign the internet-based platform used for the Environmental Information System and to align it with environmental indicators agreed between the key stakeholders. It now provides users with access to agreed sources of official environmental information.

An 'ecosystem services payment' law has been adopted and water charge has been modified. A process to ensure adequate compensation for biodiversity loss caused by interventions has been developed and successfully tested in two regions. The Alliance for the Conservation of the Páramo is helping to protect drinking water supplies for at least two million people.

With PROMAC support, a method has been developed to coordinate the environmental specifications for municipal land-use planning and successfully tested in one region. Land-use planning changes in four regions have helped to protect environmentally significant areas and allowed planners to gain experience of factoring climate risks into their work.

The method for the coordination of ecosystem-based adaptation measures has been implemented in four regions with rural and indigenous communities. In these regions, which are particularly affected by climate change and increased aridity, innovative measures such as the use of drought-resistant crops and more efficient water use help to protect livelihoods over the long term.

The lessons learned through PROMAC in the various thematic areas have been compiled and made available to the Ministry of Environment and to all the country's regional environmental agencies for further use.

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