



Forests for Life

Project Implementation



OroVerde - Tropical Forest Foundation is a non-profit foundation that actively initiates, accompanies and encourages projects of forest conservation. In Germany, it promotes environmental education in this area. OroVerde is responsible of the project implementation of "Lacandón – Forests for life" and in charge of the dissemination of the project results in international circles. OroVerde assists in the planning and subsequent implementation of activities in Guatemala. This involves regular visits of the project in order to coordinate the systematization of the experience.

www.ooverde.de



Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN) is a private, non-profit foundation dedicated to sustainable development and nature conservation. In the project, Defensores de la Naturaleza is responsible of the implementation of activities in cooperation with the local communities concerning forest conservation and sustainable forest management in the Sierra del Lacandón National Park. The foundation promotes the exchange of experiences and carries out lobbying and advocacy work in Guatemala. Defensores de la Naturaleza actively participates in international discussions by sharing its project experiences.

www.defensores.org.gt

Project Partners



National Council for Protected Areas (CONAP- Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas) www.conap.gob.gt



Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (University of Applied Sciences) www.hnee.de, www.centreforeconics.org

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Impressum: © 2012, OroVerde - Tropical Forest Foundation
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Project Financing 2011-2014



The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the position of the European Union and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

Forests are more than carbon

Reducing deforestation, conserving biodiversity and strengthening local development are the three goals of the project "Lacandón – Forests for life" which is jointly implemented by the German Tropical Forest Foundation OroVerde and the partner organization Defensores de la Naturaleza in the Sierra del Lacandón National Park in northern Guatemala.



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

More than 7 million tons of reduced emissions (tCO₂) by the first REDD+ project, validated and verified by international standards VCS and CCB Gold Level.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Local governance strengthened.
- Economic alternatives and sustainable livelihoods.
- Financial income increased for a better quality of life in the communities.
- Improved local administrative capacity, local leadership and environmental awareness.

BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS

- More than 100 thousand hectares of pristine forests preserved.
- Threatened wildlife preserved: jaguar, tapir, white-lipped peccary.
- Native forests restored.
- Wetlands preserved: Usumacinta river, sinkholes and lagoons.

OTHER BENEFITS

- More than 30 archaeological sites preserved.

Photos: OroVerde, Konrad Wothe, Defensores de la Naturaleza, Jaguar by Yannick Turbé | Translation: David Fenske



The Project Area

The Sierra del Lacandón National Park is located in the north of Guatemala at the border to Mexico in the department of Petén. The area was declared a national park in 1990 and is one of the core zones of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. The flora and fauna of the park is extremely diverse, providing a habitat for many threatened species and many species on the verge of extinction. There are eleven different ecosystems that form one of the most vital areas of Guatemala's natural heritage.

The cultural and historical past of the area is very rich, too. There are ruins of numerous Maya temples, some of which have hardly been touched. There are ten communities which were already established within the boundaries of the national park and lived on the natural resources of the park area before its declaration.

The communities directly influence the natural resources of the park, because they generate their incomes from livestock farming, agriculture and forestry.



The project operates at three levels: The lessons learned locally are discussed in forums, working groups or task forces and are fed into the national legislation of forest conservation and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, they are presented at international forest and climate negotiations and used to establish an exchange with other projects.



1.Reducing Deforestation

95,529 hectares of the forests of Sierra del Lacandón National Park have been well conserved and another 54,000 hectares are in the process of regeneration. In order to reduce the average annual loss of 1,240 hectares of forest,

measures of forest conservation and reforestation, amongst others, are implemented in cooperation with local communities.

The control of the national park has been intensified with patrols and checkpoints at critical sites to prevent illegal logging, fires, new settlements and the expansion of agricultural use in the areas of high biological value, far away from communities. The results of these activities are being measured by a forest cover monitoring system. Another aim is to influence legislation on forest conservation and climate change mitigation nationally in Guatemala.



The participation of the people who live in and on the forest is important for the long-term conservation.



The cooperation with the local communities is based on cooperation agreements between the local communities and the National Council for Protected Areas.

Through these agreements, the communities receive the usufructuary rights for their land in the park. In return, the local communities commit themselves to actively contribute to conservation and sustainable use of the forest.



Furthermore, an incentive system is being developed to offer a combination of payments, in cash and in kind (for example, seedlings, tools, etc.), and with expert advice. For all activities, the open and transparent communication as well as the regular exchange between the communities is very important.

3.Strengthening Local Development

2.Conserving Biodiversity



Biodiversity provides the basis for a stable and functioning ecosystem. In addition, biodiversity helps an ecosystem become more resistant to external forces such as storms and climate change. Conserving biodiversity benefits the ecosystem in various aspects and it contributes to securing livelihoods for the local communities.

The following activities are executed by the project:

- Maintaining intact forest areas, reforesting previously cleared and converted forests

with native species, allowing the forests to regenerate to a natural state.

- Collecting data on the three flagship species (jaguar, tapir, and scarlet macaw) and indicators of habitat quality to monitor the positive impact of the measures for conserving biodiversity.

