



Alianza
MéxicoREDD+
Con la gente por sus bosques



THE MEXICO REDD+ PROGRAM

PREPARING MEXICO TO REDUCE EMISSIONS CAUSED BY DEFORESTATION
AND FOREST DEGRADATION



Produce and preserve: combating deforestation by promoting sustainable rural development

Mexico is one of the biggest greenhouse gas emitters in the world (700,000 tons of CO₂ every year), and shows, just behind Brazil, the worst performance on the matter in Latin America. Of the country's total emissions, about 17 percent comes from the agricultural and forestry sectors and from land use change—almost as much as the amount emitted by the industrial sector.

At the Mexico REDD+ Program, a six-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), we provided crucial support to Mexico to correct this situation and improve the performance of the agricultural and forestry sectors. Today, thanks to our work and the enormous effort made by the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR by its initials in Spanish), the country is now prepared to manage and make sustainable use of its land, and to join the international initiative for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

The work was arduous and complex, since it involves a long-standing problem, which in this century alone has cost the country more than two million hectares of forests and jungles, 5 percent of its total forest area. But today we can share great achievements.

New values for a new way of territory management

The Mexico REDD+ Program contributed to changing the framework of values that dictate the actions of government and civil society in the countryside and forests of Mexico. Today, the fight against deforestation and degradation is more:

- **Transparent:** The development of public policies, the search for resources, and the allocation of budgets for REDD+ have been done under strict control mechanisms by the civil society
- **Cross-cutting:** Barriers between different sectors and between governments of different levels were lifted
- **Democratic:** All stakeholders, in collaboration with the government, contributed to the vision and strategy of Mexico REDD+
- **Scientifically and technically rigorous:** The latest scientific advances were employed

Integrated land management



Largely thanks to our work, the Mexican government now has:

- An Emission Reduction Initiative (IRE by its initials in Spanish) and the investment programs that keep it running approved by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)
- A robust National System to implement this initiative, consisting of a National REDD+ Strategy and REDD+ state strategies in several of the most deforested entities in the country
- A national safeguards information system and a strong legal framework to defend it
- A multi-level nested financing scheme that will allow receiving payments for results awarded by the international community and managing the resources with transparency and adherence to legality
- A reliable national monitoring, reporting and verification system that follows the highest international standards
- A nation-wide REDD+ gender action plan
- An Agreement for the Sustainability of the Yucatan Peninsula

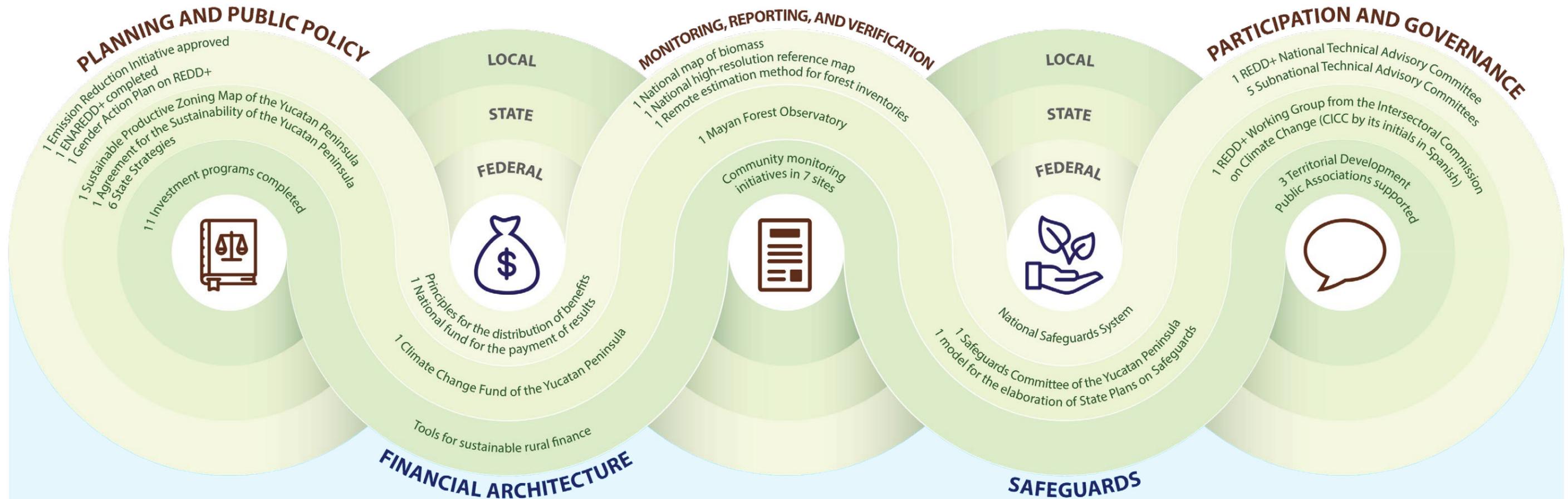
Mexico REDD+ staff visiting field projects



Women sowing cacao in the milpa. Ejido Soyoloapam, Oaxaca



REDD+ SYSTEM IN MEXICO



REDD+ ACTIONS IN THE TERRITORY

7 States involved in field projects

4 Production models with proven climatic effectiveness

86 Participating ejidos or communities

13,019 Hectares impacted by forest or soil conservation practices

1,529 Direct beneficiaries

8 Organizations incorporating gender integration in their projects

New strategies for a different kind of development

To achieve this, CONAFOR and other agencies of the federal, state, and local governments built new strategies for rural and forest development that combine growth and conservation, making the country an international leader in this matter. One of these strategies, in which the three levels of government are also involved, is the Emissions Reduction Initiative (IRE). Mexico submitted this initiative in 2016 to the FCPF and is one of the first countries with an approved investment scheme that will later result in payments for its results; the Mexico REDD+ Program played a crucial role in the process.

We financed the creation of the investment programs that integrate the IRE and set the guidelines for the proper management of the budget intended for that purpose. These are key documents that enable channeling resources to the state governments, and from there to the public agents of territory development to use them in the field and allocate them to the activities established in those investment programs.

We also provided inputs for its elaboration and oversaw the development of the initiative itself; we organized consultation forums to ensure full participation of those involved; and provided advice to the Mexican government on the presentation process and in reaching the necessary agreements to bring it forward, get it approved, and implement it.

A new institution for a new way of boosting development

In order to promote the prompt and effective implementation of the different REDD+ mechanisms, we supported the creation and capacity development of three public agents of territory development (APDT for its initials in Spanish). One of them is the Puuc Biocultural Intermunicipal Board (JIBIOPUUC).

The JIBIOPUUC works as an APDT in the region that gives it its name, where much of deforestation in Yucatan occurs. It is an association of municipalities that work together to set priorities and objectives, and is in charge of implementing the IRE investment programs.

We also worked with the federal government to develop the National Strategy for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (ENAREDD+ by its initials in Spanish), a comprehensive and multi-sectoral plan focused on making sustainable production a tool for landscape conservation, and understanding biodiversity as a key asset for economic growth. This document has seven main components:

- Public policy and legal framework
- Financing schemes
- Institutional arrangements and capacity building
- Benchmark level
- Monitoring, reporting, and verification
- Social and environmental safeguards
- Communication, social participation, and transparency



Participation is essential to achieve sustainable rural development

For its creation, the Mexican government relied on inputs, technical assistance, and tools provided by the Mexico REDD+ Program. Our support was key for the consultation process and the consensus reached regarding ENAREDD+, which involved more than 26,000 people from civil society, indigenous and rural communities, producer organizations, academic institutions, and state and municipal governments.

In short, we can say that through the Mexico REDD+ Program we have been able to provide finance and support to design the ENAREDD+ and make it operational, and to put Mexico firmly at the forefront of the world's forest countries.

The support provided to various planning exercises and the development of strategies for sustainable rural development and conservation of natural resources was repeated throughout the country. Thanks to our oversight, today Chihuahua, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Yucatan, Campeche, and Quintana Roo have state REDD+ strategies that will enable the articulation of sectoral policies to achieve common goals. These are documents and action plans that set out how subnational governments will join the national effort under this initiative. They have been enriched with studies, field project tests, and experiences that we have promoted and supported, and which have benefited almost three thousand producers.

In addition, these state strategies have made it possible to align public policies at the state level and to make a more effective and sustainable planning of land use. It is a process that state governments recognize as fundamental.



Ernesto Ruiz
Undersecretary of Environment, Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development,
Government of Oaxaca

"The relevance of the REDD+ Strategy in the state is incalculable, because it will allow us to delimitate the areas in which this or that productive activity is carried out, and that way we will continue conserving or sustainably using the natural wealth of Oaxaca."

Sunset from the forest



Cross-cutting and coordination to face complex problems

The implementation of the IRE, the ENAREDD+, and the REDD+ State Strategies is only possible, in many cases, through coordinated and joint efforts. That is why, in the Mexico REDD+ Program, we have put special emphasis on the federal and state governments adopting comprehensive policies and building alliances that go beyond the intersectoral barriers and that respond to the very complex reality of the territory.

At the federal level, for example, we were a driving force for the cooperation agreement between CONAFOR and the Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA for its initials in Spanish), which laid the foundations for a joint policy against deforestation and for the impetus of sustainable rural development. Also, with our technical support, the REDD+ Working Group of the Intersecretariat Commission on Climate Change and other coordination agencies at all levels were strengthened.

Our work was key to reach the Agreement for Sustainability of the Yucatan Peninsula (ASPY), through which Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo committed themselves to a development model that respects biodiversity and aligns its public policies accordingly.

Our work linking actors and promoting synergies brought together the main business groups operating in the Yucatan peninsula together. This double commitment of the private sector and the state and municipal governments of the region will provide the basis for transforming the way the peninsular economy grows and the perspective on biodiversity and nature in the region. Little by little, we are now making people see their local biodiversity as not only something to safeguard, but also as a fundamental asset for development in the region.



Seventy companies with presence in the peninsula of Yucatan signed the Declaration of the Private and Financial Sectors for the Sustainability of the peninsula, which forms part of a territorial pact for sustainability and complements ASPY. It is part of an effort to ensure that, through coordinated actions between the public and private sectors, the Yucatan Peninsula becomes a leading example of sustainable growth that drives local economies and articulates with national and global markets.

The Agreement for Sustainability in the Yucatan Peninsula signed in Cancun in December 2016 sets out six goals:



Carlos Joaquín González, Governor of Quintana Roo; Rolando Zapata, Governor of Yucatan; Alejandro Moreno, Governor of Campeche, in the signing of the ASPY

- Completely stop deforestation by the year 2030
- Restore two million hectares of land
- Ensure that 50 percent of the territory of the peninsula is under conservation or sustainable management schemes
- Promote Maya biocultural landscapes in more than five million hectares
- Match the resources obtained from national public sources with private or international resources aimed at sustainable development
- Restore 20 percent of the reef crests of the Peninsula

Financial mechanisms and analysis to strengthen public policies

In order to make feasible the strategies and agreements reached, we have contributed to the development of financial instruments and tools that allow federal and state governments to allocate more resources to sustainable rural development. At the same time, our contributions on this matter give these governments the possibility to better assess their investments and interventions.

We have worked to provide state and federal governments with the necessary tools, both to obtain greater resources linked to conservation and sustainable rural development, and to allocate them effectively and transparently.

We provided advice to the federal government on the options available to receive the resources obtained by the payment for REDD+ results, and when the authorities make a decision, we contribute to the appropriate institutional strengthening. This way, we prepare the operation rules that will be used by the Mexican Forestry Fund for the management of these resources, and we contribute to the construction of a general framework for the distribution of benefits, which, through its seven principles, establishes how these resources should be used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve and recover the environment, promote sustainable rural development, and improve the living conditions of the communities.

A joint fund, an unprecedented relationship

At the Mexico REDD+ Program we provided the essential elements for the design of the Climate Fund of the Yucatan Peninsula in which the three states of the region participate. The Fund will be able to receive public and private resources and allocate them in accordance with investment programs and other planning instruments. Its structure includes members from the civil society and academia, with state governments as observers and overseers.

In addition, we have sought other ways in which public resources could be used more effectively, more efficiently, and with a greater positive impact, both in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable rural development. For example:

- We mapped the economic aid options available in public programs and government funding sources to create a guide for producers, so they can familiarize with them and get access
- We presented various proposals to modify operation rules in subsidy programs to facilitate the synergy between conservation and production
- We developed a financial analysis tool that lets us know which activities are profitable socially, environmentally, and economically

The principles that will guide the mechanism of distribution of benefits

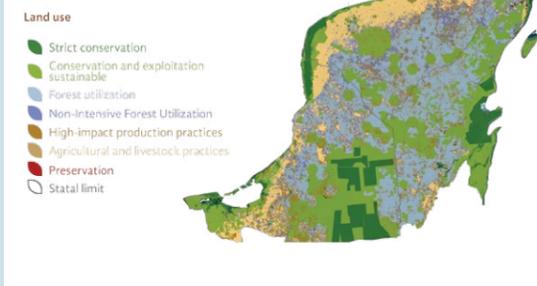
- **Legality:** Complying with the national legal framework
- **Legitimacy:** Derived from recognition by those who have rights over forest territories and participate in the REDD+ mechanism
- **Effectiveness:** Effective contribution in the fulfilment of ENAREDD+ goals
- **Efficiency:** With the lowest transaction cost possible
- **Equality:** Fair and equitable distribution
- **Additionality:** Actions that verify the reduction of emissions or an increase in its capture that would not have occurred without REDD+ mechanism
- **Transparency:** Acting in a clear and transparent manner

In addition to the creation of these tools, we have worked closely with the authorities to transform the way development credit is handled in Mexico. So, in order to get development banks to tackle deforestation and make rural development more sustainable, we are working with FIRA and Financiera Nacional de Desarrollo, two large financial institutions linked to rural areas, to promote green credits. At the same time, we have worked for the inclusion of environmental and sustainability criteria in both entities.

To complement this effort and give state governments the ability to obtain new resources and apply them on the ground in a transparent, efficient way and with the greatest possible impact, we have contributed substantially to the improvement, or even the creation, of local financial instruments. In Chiapas, for example, we provided technical support to the State Environmental Fund and the Triunfo Conservation Fund. We also fostered cooperation mechanisms between both, which would allow the creation of a public-private partnership with enormous potential.

Furthermore, we made decisive contributions to the constitution of the Climate Fund of the Yucatan Peninsula, a unique public-private partnership on the continent that brings together the three states of the region and will serve both to attract international and national funds, and for the formation of new alliances with the private sector. Governed by the three state universities, its operation is closely monitored by civil society organizations and by the most relevant actors in the region, and manages its resources according to an agenda of public policies established by the Inter-Secretariat Commission on Climate Change.

Sustainable Productive Zoning Map of the Yucatan Peninsula



The Sustainable Productive Zoning Map (MZPS by its initials in Spanish) allows establishing the sustainable productive potential of the different zones of the Yucatan peninsula. It contributes, in a very significant way, to a better planning of the development efforts and favors the alignment of public policies.

The MZPS considers the three fundamental sectors of rural development (conservation, forestry, and agriculture), acknowledging the importance of an integrated management of the territory.

“It is an instrument that shows us the type of use we can make of the land and its productive vocation. It allows us to identify which direction we can take. When someone presents a project or undertakes a productive process, this is an excellent tool that helps us evaluate if those activities are really sustainable.”

—Roberto Alcalá, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Campeche

Community meeting in Ejido San Agustín, Yucatan



Capabilities and information for a robust safeguards system

At the Mexico REDD+ Program we work closely with the Mexican government to ensure that international safeguards are respected. These safeguards guarantee the rights of producers, owners, and inhabitants of the territory. It is a system composed of a legal framework, an institutional framework, and a compliance framework that will allow REDD+ actions to serve all without detriment to biodiversity.

Specifically, we prepared the conceptual framework adopted in this matter and performed an analysis of the current legal framework to determine its compatibility with applicable safeguards, and to what extent complying with it implies complying with the guarantees established by the international community. In addition, we placed particular emphasis on promoting the transformation of the role and position of women in the political and economic life of rural regions. To this end, we prepared and agreed on a Gender Action Plan in REDD+, and presented proposals so that the rules governing the operation of government programs in the field contribute to equality between men and women.

This work would have been left incomplete and would have had much less impact if it were not articulated with the safeguards systems required by the states. This is because the policies for REDD+ would fall, largely, in their hands, and if the actions taken by the federative entities are not limited by these boundaries and principles, the protections that they establish would be diluted. For this reason, at the Mexico REDD+ Program we have supported a model for the elaboration of State Safeguard Plans that ensures its compliance.

Group of women in aloe plantation. Ejido Francisco J. Mújica, Campeche



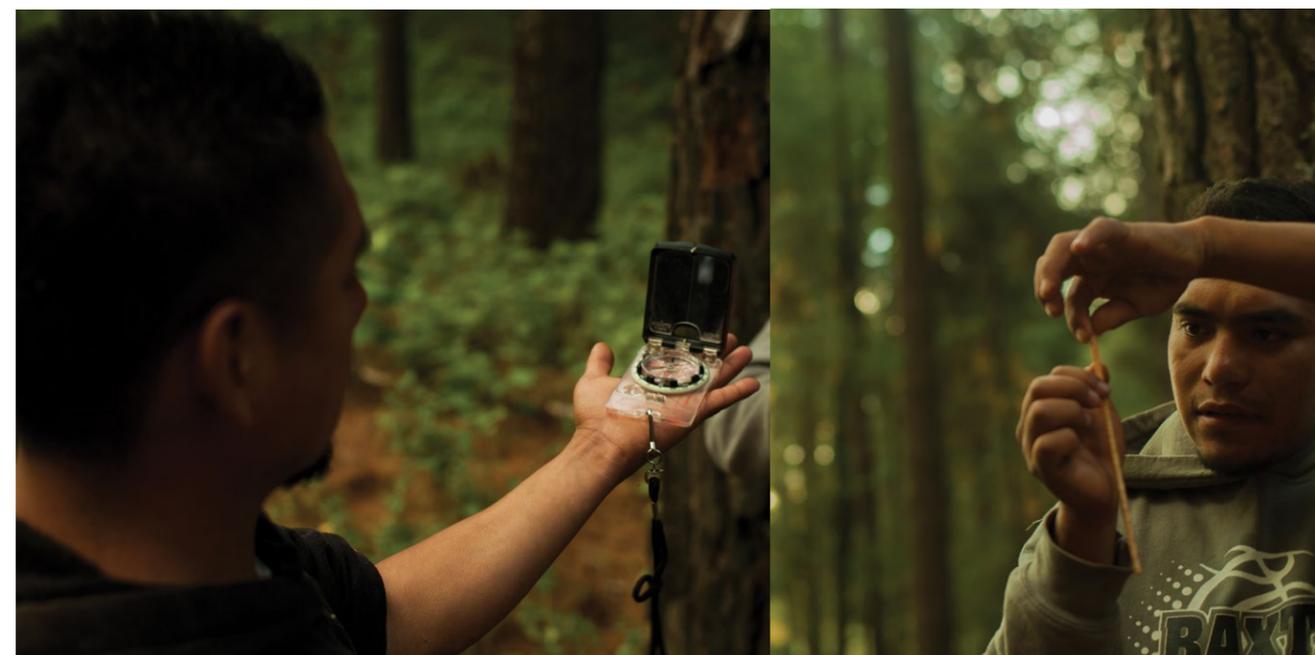
Monitor at different scales to react and report in an appropriate and timely manner

Our contributions also helped strengthening the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification National System and the development and testing of monitoring systems at different scales. At the federal level, our work has focused on giving support to the Board of the National Forest Monitoring System (GSNMF for its initials in Spanish) in the implementation process, by updating and institutionalizing the system, proposing information improvements, and strengthening technical capacities.

In line with this, we built the first woody biomass map of the country in 2013, and in 2015 we helped its update with the information of airborne and satellite LIDAR sensors, which will make it possible to propose methodological improvements for the estimation of national and subnational emission factors. We also made the high-resolution reference map with which we will improve the automated land cover classification process, increasing the accuracy of land cover maps and the changes in the coverage of the activity data monitoring system (MAD-Mex).

Through the systematization and harmonization of the databases of the National Forest and Soil Inventory and the Intensive Carbon Monitoring Sites, improvements were made for the recording and processing of information. Thanks to this and our innovative methodological proposal we will be able to strengthen the forest inventories, enabling remote estimation in sites with accessibility problems.

Forest monitoring in Cutzamala



Meanwhile, at the regional level, in the Yucatan Peninsula we were the bridge that allowed the creation of the Observatory of the Mayan Jungle, which joins the monitoring efforts of what happens in the territory and lets us know in real time if we are losing forests, and where. This information is shared with an open network of members to increase its impact as much as possible, and to spread it among the stakeholders. Therefore, the authorities, ejidos, communities, and owners of forests and jungles can respond in real time to the threats that may arise. It also offers comprehensive information that, along with the Productive Zoning Map, contributes to a more effective planning for use of the territory.

At the same time, we have worked with dozens of communities to help them build internal monitoring and control systems that enable them to detect threats to their natural resources in a timely manner, understand how they are responding to human activities, and develop best management practices.

With this work on capacity building, data collection and development of tools for monitoring, reporting, and verification of what happens at different levels, we help strengthen Mexico's efforts for sustainable rural development and against deforestation and degradation. Thanks to this work, producers, academics, civil society organizations, and the three levels of government can react accordingly and in a timely fashion to strengthen actions or correct the course of their activities in fields, forests, and jungles.

Innovation and learning for a new way of producing and preserving

We have worked at all levels, from the national to the local level. Much of this effort has focused on undertaking and documenting projects that show how can we produce more and better, while conserving and restoring the environment. During the project's implementation, we worked with almost four thousand people and managed to impact more than 133 thousand hectares of Mexican forests, fields, and jungles.

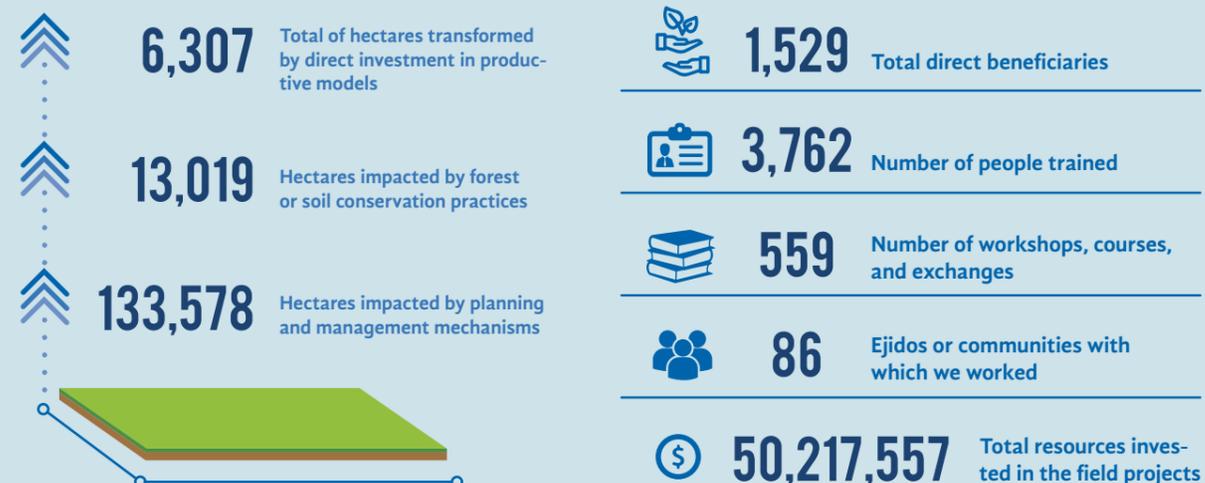
The projects carried out within this framework were developed taking into account the ecological, economic, social, and cultural particularities of each place. This allowed us to document and systematize good production practices, both within and outside the forest areas, while transforming agricultural production and triggering economic growth in regions that have long struggled to break away from stagnation.

Whether it was by trying an economically and ecologically more efficient way of exploring forest resources, or by putting into practice the most recent innovations in conservation agriculture, or by using biofertilizers to increase productivity in each hectare, without losing soil quality, the projects that we supported and promoted marked a before and after in the regions where they took place. Thanks to them, today is possible to reproduce them and make them the norm, not the exception.



Planning fences in a burned area Guachochi, Chihuahua

Impact of the REDD+ field projects



Starting processes, sustaining them, and expanding their reach is only possible by strengthening capacities

Our work included a strong and careful design and implementation of schemes for the development of capacities that included courses, workshops, and the exchange of experiences between different types of actors—producers, public servants, academics, civil society organizations—and the elaboration of educational materials that made it possible to systematize and share information and to enrich the perspectives of each one of the actors in this endeavor.

Throughout six years of work, at the Mexico REDD+ Program, with the collaboration of CONAFOR, state governments, the academy and numerous local communities, we were able to build a clear vision on how to make sustainable rural and forest development a reality. We have also clearly shown that by making biodiversity an asset, sustainable and environmentally friendly production enables economic growth, while increasing social well-being and, above all, curbing deforestation.



Planning fences in a burned area Guachochi, Chihuahua

Scope of training (data up to December 2016)

Thousands of people participated in workshops and training sessions offered, funded, or supervised by the **Mexico REDD+ Program**.

 36 tours and experience exchanges between peers	 10,408 people trained (3,318 women and 7,090 men)
 50 regional leaders	 405 workshops and courses
 1 diploma course in REDD+ actions	 4 REDD+ learning communities
 447 informational materials elaborated in the form of manuals, guides, brochures, and tools	

Acknowledgements:

The organizations that form the Mexico REDD+ Program want to thank all the people, organizations, institutions, companies, and government agencies—mainly SEMARNAT and SAGARPA—that have contributed to the positive results of this project have over the last six years.

This work was possible thanks to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

We would like to make a special mention of the National Forestry Commission who participated and provided feedback to this project to prepare and make Mexico a world leader in REDD+.

We are confident that this unprecedented effort will show its greatest benefits when producers improve their livelihoods without compromising forest resources, the main weapon for climate change mitigation, and when public agencies and public policies work together for sustainable rural development.



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