

Natural resources

Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management for Climate Change Mitigation in Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia

If they do conserve the top of the watershed we will do all we can to somehow come to an agreement with them and give them compensation

Delfin Rivero, farmer, showing how local actions can mitigate climate change



EC Partners

Fundacion Natura Bolivia, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Departmental Government, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Municipal Government, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Vrije University, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Union of Municipalities of the Cruce Valleys, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Facts and Figures

- EC contribution: € 919 787 (77% of the project)
- Duration: 2008-2013



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Context

Increasing deforestation in the Ambor National Park, the newly created Cruce Valleys Biosphere Reserve and the El Chore Forest Reserve is resulting in alternating flooding and water shortages in the Río Grande watershed, which in turn contribute to and exacerbate regional and global climate change and cause severe economic damage and loss of life in eastern Bolivia.

Objective

- Ambor National Park is effectively managed through long-term financial support from water users in Santa Cruz city
- The new Cruce Valleys Biosphere Reserve is managed through a trust fund capitalised by Departmental Government on behalf of downstream farmers
- The El Chore Forest Reserve is sustainably managed using funds from the sale of carbon credits

Impact

- Water fund set up to invest in watershed protection in eastern Ambor, livelihoods improved through payments for environmental services to communities and municipalities, deforestation reduced in Ambor, its buffer zone, the Cruce Valleys and El Chore

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Asterio Ayala is worried. With each passing year, he sees fewer rain clouds above his farm in Bolivia's Los Negros valley. Asterio realises the importance of forest cover for the hydrological cycle. Indeed, he is protecting almost 30 ha of his cloud forests through the locally managed Payments for Environmental Services (PES) scheme.

The Los Negros Water Cooperative and Municipal Government are compensating Asterio with beehives and training in honey production in order for him to conserve his water producing cloud forests. But such efforts are no longer enough. Downstream, Delfin Rivero's spinach crops receive less moisture every year. With current rates of deforestation, Delfin expects that in ten years the Los Negros River and his spinach fields will be dry from June until August.

With climate change already visible in Los Negros, Delfin fears for the town's future. This EC-funded project is helping Delfin and Asterio and their colleagues to work together to protect the forests upon which their water supplies depend, thus both mitigating and adapting to the challenges of global climate change.



Delfin Rivero and other farmers cleaning vegetables in the Los Negros River