

Guatemala - Cerro san Gil

Contributions for water protection in Cerro San Gil Protected Area

SUMMARY

Initiative to protect the water flow in the Escobas River upon which the municipality depends to supply almost all inhabitants' water needs. An extra charge has been added and is invested in the management of the Cerro San Gil Protected Area. The scheme has produced visible results, so the users have agreed to make a higher contribution to the initiative.

MATURITY OF THE INITIATIVE

Ongoing since 2001.

DRIVER

The water supply of the town of Puerto Barrios depends almost entirely on the water in the River Las Escobas, which flows out of the Cerro San Gil Protected area. Together with environmental NGOs interested in the conservation of the protected area, the water users from the town have agreed to support additional conservation measures, within and in the buffer strip around the reserve. The role played by the municipality in driving this initiative is unclear.

STAKEHOLDERS

Supply

Cerro San Gil protected area in the headwaters of the River Las Escobas.

Demand

Municipality of Puerto Barrio: estimated 80, 000 domestic users.

Intermediary

FUNDAECO (Foundation for Eco-Development and Conservation- Guatemala).

FACILITATOR

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Regional Environmental Program for Central America (PROARCA) and the German Cooperation Agency (GTZ)

MARKET DESIGN

Service

Regulation of water flows.

Commodity

Improved Management Practices projects implemented in the buffer strip around the park.

Conservation and Protection of Existing Ecosystems through land acquisition- The Conservancy and local partner FUNDAECO purchased approximately 9,000 acres to consolidate the Cerro San Gil National Protected Area (most of it in the Prístino Forest nucleus of the region). The Conservancy also helped acquire a 1,223-acre tract of forest in the vital watershed of Las Escobas, a basin that provides water to nearby towns.

Payment mechanism

Unclear. Funds collected are invested in both the management of the park and the sustainable agriculture programme in the buffer strip.

Terms of Payment

Users have agreed with an increase in the municipal water charge. The amount agreed upon and periodicity of the contribution is unclear.

Funds involved

Unclear.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS AND BENEFITS

It is unclear to what extent these impacts are expected or already underway.

Through personal communication with Morales, C. (World Wildlife Fund – Central America) we have learned that in 2005, negotiations were taking place to double the initial contribution due to the fact that the users have realised the benefits of the system and want to increase their support. This suggests that water users currently perceive improvements in water services. However, we have not been able to obtain further information from those closely involved in the project.

Economic

Increased funding for the management of the protected area.

Environmental

Lower impact agriculture along the buffer strips.

Social

No information.

LEGISLATION ISSUES

No information.

MONITORING

No information.

MAIN CONSTRAINTS

No information.

MAIN POLICY LESSONS

No information

OTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT

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<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/centralamerica/guatemala/work/art8611.html> ;

REFERENCES

Morales, C. WWF CentroAmerica, personal communication on 14/06/05



WWF/CARE/IIED (2005) Making Payments for Environmental Services work for People and Nature. A joint WWF, CARE and IIED programme linked action learning on Pro-poor Payments for Environmental Services. Unpublished project proposal

TNC (2006) Information on The Nature Conservancy website.

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/centralamerica/guatemala/work/art8611.html>

LINKS

<http://www.fundaeco.org.gt/>

Programa Ambiental Regional para Centroamérica (PROARCA), www.proarca.org