Guatemala –S. Jerónimo

SUMMARY

Project to support the creation of a compensation system to the owners of the "water-producing" upper river basin (San Isidro) for "protection of the forest and the soils, as elements that regulate the flow and quality of water" flowing down to the urban area of San Jerónimo, in Baja Verapaz.

MATURITY OF THE INITIATIVE

Ongoing since 2004

DRIVER

Embedded in GTZ-supported decentralization programme which generated information on the value of the drinking water supply infrastructure in the urban area, its cost of operation and the value of the protection function of the micro-basin that supplies water to the municipal capital.

Payment for environmental services is seen as an alternative in the absence of legal regulations and the implementation of corrective measures in the use of natural resources. Rojas et al. 2005

STAKEHOLDERS

Supply

Community of San Isidro located in the middle and upper parts of the watershed of the San Jerónimo River. The community operates under a collective land management system and covers an area of around 1,250ha. (the upper parts of the watershed are within the Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve- see case profile in this review)

Demand

Water users in the urban areas located in the lower river basin: municipalities of San Jerónimo and Salamá).
Users are organized under Urban Water Committee and the Association of Irrigation Users in San Jerónimo (AURSA); other users are landowners in the highlands and a hydroelectric plant (Tecnoguat).

Intermediary

Environmental Service Commission formed by representatives of the Municipality, the Urban Water Committee, the local development council in the upper river basin of San Isidro, AURSA and the environmental NGO Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN)

Facilitators

NGO Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN) and the German Cooperation Agency (GTZ), through its Municipal Decentralization and Development Program (DDM-GTZ).

Research by FDN provided information on the value of the use of water for irrigation, hydroelectricity, rural drinking water services and the users willingness to pay.

National Forest Institute (INAB) has also provided support to the initiative.

MARKET DESIGN

Service

water quantity and quality

Commodity

Improved Management Practices though forest management (covering about 60% of the area).

Conservation and Protection of Existing Ecosystems.

Reforestation for commercial plantations in priority reforestation areas (55ha, in 2005) under the Forest Conservation Incentives of the National Forest Institute (INAB) PINFOR programme.

Payment mechanism

Intermediary-based transactions and user fees: though this scheme, current water rates already incorporate the real costs of maintenance of the water supply system, and include the cost of the watershed management activities being implemented in San Isidro.

A management plan was elaborated for about 300ha of the area administered by the community of San Isidro. This plan divides the area into zones of different degrees of protection (see map in http://www.gfa-group.de/publications/home_beitrag_1797132.html).

We found no information on how the funds are managed and transferred to landowners.

Terms of payment

No information.

Funds involved

No information.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS AND BENEFITS

Economic

No information.

Environmental

Expected benefits include regulation of water flow, erosion control and improved water quality.

Social

Increased capacity-building: Rojas et al. (2005) consider that the process to set up this scheme required continuous consultation that permitted local actors to acquire the capacity and skills needed to conduct negotiations in an agreement process. Negotiations to set up the scheme led to the creation of a municipal development council (COMUDE) in San Jerónimo and with representation from the water users (urban water committee, AURSA and the Municipal Corporation).

LEGISLATION ISSUES

Due to the lack of national legislation and policies, PES needed to be implemented through regulations at the municipal level. Users (see above) were invited by the municipal government to participate in a broad discussion of the structure and content of the new municipal regulation on the sustainable management of water, which provides payment for environmental services and generic regulations for irrigation and industrial water users. These regulations are already in place. Rojas et al. 2005

MONITORING

No information.

MAIN CONSTRAINTS

No information.

MAIN POLICY LESSONS

Rojas et al. (2005) consider that the generation and dissemination of technical information on the use of water (volumes, quality, use of land, etc) raised awareness among the local users and served as a solid base for the decision-making process to agree on the water regulation. In addition, the authors highlight that this local experience has began influencing the national policies of national actors such as the National Forest Institute (INAB) and the National Protected Area Council (CONAP).

OTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT

No information.

REFERENCES

Rojas, O., Lux, M. and Kotov, R., (2005) Introduction of payment for environmental services in the municipal water regulation of San Jerónimo Municipality in Baja Verapaz, Guatemala GFA Consulting Group http://www.gfa-group.de/publications/home_beitrag_1797132.html

LINKS