

Mexico -Zapalinamé

Voluntary contribution for water protection in the Sierra de Zapalinamé, Coahuila

SUMMARY

NGO-led scheme collecting voluntary water protection fees through the water utility in Saltillo, to contribute to the protection of neighbouring Zapalinamé reserve.

MATURITY OF THE INITIATIVE

Ongoing since 2003 and active as of 2010.

DRIVER

Interest in increasing funds for the management of the Sierra de Zapalinamé Reserve. This mountain area is the main water source of the city of Saltillo and the environmental threats that affect the mountain reserve in general may also affect the quality and quantity of water in the future (e.g. spread of urban areas into the buffer of the reserve, land use changes, forest fires).

STAKEHOLDERS

Supply

Landowners in the Sierra de Zapalinamé Reserve, Coahuila state.

Demand

Water users in Saltillo Municipality contributing with voluntary user fees, collected through the water utility.

Intermediary

NGO ProFauna Mexico (Protección de la Fauna Mexicana A.C) administers the reserve and is in charge of managing the funds collected.

Facilitator

The Mexican Fund for Nature Conservation (FMCN) and several state government and national programmes such as the national scheme of Payments for Hydrological Services and the National Reforestation Programme (Mexican Forestry Commission -CONAFOR).

International donors such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have also provided financial support to this scheme.

MARKET DESIGN

Service

Water quantity (not clearly about increase, but at least about the maintenance of the water supplied by the hydrological system in the Sierra).

Commodity

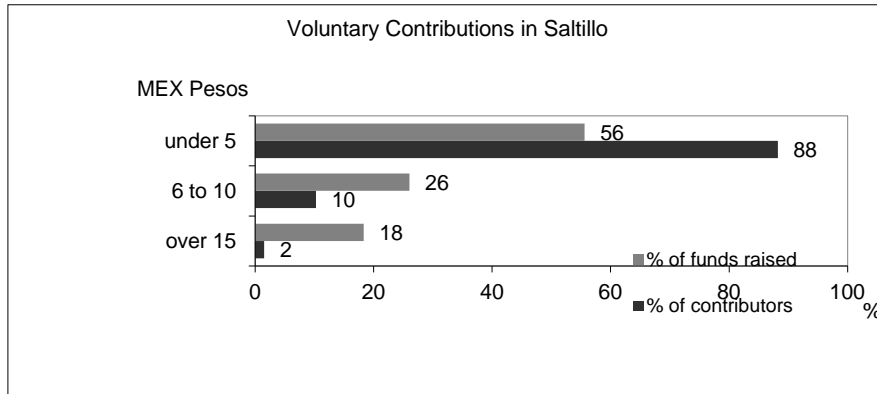
Improved Management Practices through soil conservation and forest fire control measures.

Conservation and Protection of existing ecosystems.

Payment mechanism

Voluntary user fees- Saltillo water users contribute with a voluntary fee for the conservation of the Reserve and the water protection services it offers. It is collected with the water utility's bill (Aguas de Saltillo-Agsal) and funds are then passed on to the NGO ProFauna to finance the management of the reserve and community projects.

Amount of contributions vary from 1-1000 Mexican pesos: 88 per cent of users pay less than 6 pesos per month, while only two per cent pay 15 or more (one person who is involved in water bottling business pays 1000 pesos per month).



Additional voluntary contributions come from the municipality itself and from several other government projects:

- i) Watersheds and Cities Project: this is one of the watershed conservation programmes of the FMCN, which in its second phase is being co-funded by the Foundation Gonzalo Rio Arronte, IAP. It supports the development of financial mechanisms to compensate protected areas for their hydrological services, watershed management projects and water use efficiency campaigns. This programme is also active in the watersheds serving the city of Oaxaca and Mexico City (Mexico Federal District);
- ii) Forest Fire Management and Landscape Restoration Programme (PPIRA) (also part of the FMCN);
- iii) State government and national programmes such as the national scheme of Payments for Hydrological Services (PSAH) and the National Reforestation Programme (Mexican Forestry Commission -CONAFOR); and
- iv) international donors such as WWF.

Terms of payment

Users: regular cash payments (voluntary contributions).

Providers: social development projects both for the landowners and the communities within the reserve, support to implement BMP for soil and water conservation. Payment values determined by CONAFOR are allocated to providers of the services were valued at US\$25 per hectare per year.

Funds involved

Although only about 10 per cent of water users (13,000 from a total of 160,000 users connected to the utility supply system) are already contributing, their engagement is progressing and the amounts collected have risen fast: in the first year they amounted only to about US\$3,000 (MEX\$38,249 pesos) while in 2005 they had risen to approximately US\$28,000 (MEX\$ 310100 pesos). As of 2008, the total number of municipal water users increased by nearly 12 per cent to 180,000. Water users contributing to the voluntary payments increased to 28,000 users, representing a 115

percent increase in participation. These payments produced US\$91,383 in additional funding of which US\$4,383 was allocated to land owners and US\$87,000 allocated to reserve management projects. Government expenditures pertaining to Operations and Management (O&M) in 2008 accounted for approximately US\$171,500.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS AND BENEFITS

Economic

Costs: no precise information on the amount invested in setting up the scheme, but this was a time consuming process involving extensive negotiations with the municipality, door-to-door awareness-raising campaigns with the users and engagement with the media. It is unclear how administration costs are covered.

Current funds are disbursed as follows:

- 50 per cent environmental management of the reserve (soil conservation and forest fire control)
- 20 per cent Constitution of the Water Fund
- 10 per cent Environmental Education
- 10 per cent Social development projects for landowners and communities
- 10 per cent Monitoring & Research

Unclear how administration costs are covered.

Environmental

Potential benefits are expected to arise from increased funds available for enforcing protection of soil and vegetation cover within the reserve.

Social

Social development projects carried out by the reserve to the communities.

LEGISLATION ISSUES

No information available.

MONITORING

No baseline study. Expected impacts include increased, or maintained, water quantity through enforcing protection of soil and vegetation cover within the reserve. Monitoring is done as part of the reserve's usual activities. There is some monitoring of water springs for quality, but their results are not available yet (Lechuga, 2009).

MAIN CONSTRAINTS

In order for the scheme to sustain itself, the number of users contributing must be doubled (and/or increase the average amount being donated).

This is especially important since the funds from the national PSAH scheme (see case in this review) may end after the first five-year contract period.

MAIN POLICY LESSONS

The carrot or the stick. Earlier on, the NGO tried to get the municipality to make this charge mandatory, to which the municipality did not agree. Plan B was to begin a strong campaign to inform the water users of the importance of the reserve in protecting their water supply and gain their support. This succeeded and although some contributions are very small (80 per cent of the monthly contributions are under five pesos), some are also quite large (one is 1000 pesos). The fact that the scheme was not imposed also increases people's support for the cause and their environmental awareness, which can bring other benefits in future campaigns.

OTHER INFORMATION

The FMCN and watershed management: the FMCN currently has other watershed management programmes that combine conservation and watershed management in priority watersheds and in San Pedro River. These are co-funded by other donor agencies such as TNC, CI, WWF, SEMARNAT (the Mexican Ministry of Environment) and PRONATURA (a Mexican NGO).

CONTACT

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REFERENCES

Canales, E. 2006. Cuencas y Ciudades II, un proyecto de recaudacion voluntaria. Zona Sujeta a Conservacion Ecologica, Sierra de Zapaliname, Coahuila, Mexico. Presentation made for the International Workshop for Ecosystem Services: Products and Market Development, 25-26 May 2006, San Juan del Rio, Querétaro. Mexico. Forest Trends/Katoomba group and the Sierra Gorda Ecological Group.

Lechuga, C. 2009. Zapalinamé: connecting cities and watersheds in Mexico. Ecosystems Marketplace.

LINKS

<http://www.fmcn.org/cuencas.htm>

<http://www.profauna.org.mx>