



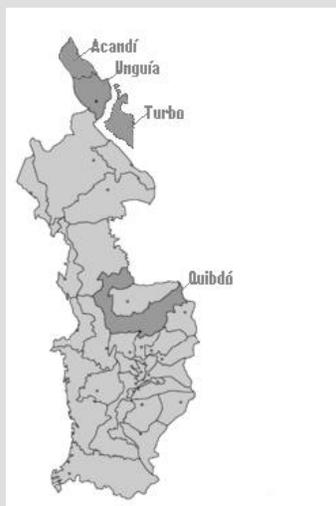
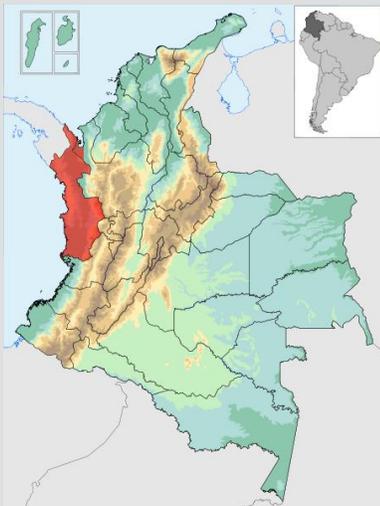
USAID CMM APS #M/OAA/DCHA/DOFDA-10-390

Project – “Resolution of Land and Natural Resources Conflicts in Colombia”

FOCUS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

01 July – 30 September 2014



Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PERFORMANCE ADVANCEMENTS	3
1. INDICATORS	4
2. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS	5
3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	9
ANNEX. SUCCESS STORIES	10

Acronyms

CCL	Local Community Council
CMM	Conflict Management & Mitigation Office, USAID
COCOMACIA	Community Council of the Integrated Farmers Association of the Atrato
COCOMASUR	Community Council of Tolo River, Southern Coastal Zone of Acandí
COCOMAUNGUJA	Community Council of the Lower Atrato of Ungia
INCODER	Colombian Institute for Rural Development
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PERFORMANCE ADVANCEMENTS

This report provides an account of the activities undertaken between July 1 and September 30, 2014 for the Resolution of Land and Natural Resources Conflicts project. The activities targeted the Major Community Councils, COCOMAUNGUIA, COCOMACIA and COCOMASUR, located in the municipalities of Unguia, Quibdó and Acandí, respectively. During this quarter, Mercy Corps implemented the science and technology component of this project, which aims to strengthen the community councils' capacity to use technical tools such as social cartography, digital cartography, GPS and geographic information systems(GIS) for the purpose of building sustainable, technical capacity of the parties making decisions on land conflict and natural resources. The project primarily involves youth and women to promote their local leadership.

Youth learning how to use the GPS

Mercy Corps has implemented the Territorial and Natural Resources Conflict resolution program in Colombia with resources from USAID / CMM since 2011. The main objective of the program is to install and promote technical, methodological and technological capacity in Government and Civil Society actors, in order to resolve conflicts over ownership and use of land and natural resources through alternative mechanisms. It also seeks to promote land access, formalization and regularization of individual property rights of vulnerable communities and groups. In the framework of the program, Mercy Corps promotes the implementation of a rights-based approach for different ethnic and community profiles and a gender-based approach; recognizing the equal participation of men, women and children.

1. Indicators

Table No 1: Achievements from July - September 2014

See Annex 1

2. Activities & Results:

General Objective. The major Community Councils of the black communities will improve the use of technological tools in resolving territorial conflicts within local councils.

Outcome 1. Three major Community Councils of the black communities apply technological tools in mediating land and natural resources conflicts within the local councils.

Activity 1.1. Train 30 people from three Major Community Councils on the use of GPS / Geo-referenced Information Systems and alternative mechanisms for resolution of territorial and natural resources conflicts.

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps delivered a workshop on alternative mechanisms for the resolution of territorial conflicts and use of GPS and GIS with the COCOMAUNGUIA. The workshop addressed the following areas: i) use of social cartography, GPS and GIS in the resolution of territorial conflicts and in the organization of the collective territory; ii) alternative mechanisms for the resolution of territorial conflicts; and iii) use of technological tools in the processes of black communities.

Youth during the workshop on the use of GPS / GIS.

Seven women and seven men participated in this workshop. The participants indicated that they acquired deep knowledge of: i) recognizing the boundaries of the collective territory and their location within the geographic space of the collective territory based on coordinates; ii) systems of measurement and units of measurement with GPS; iii) developing maps from GPS data; iv) social and digital cartography, and technical preparation of maps, iv) use of cartographic freeware Kosmo and SIG_DARIEN database; v) transformation of MAGNA-SRGAS PRO V2 coordinates, from the Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute (IGAC).

A workshop on MARC, GPS and SIG was scheduled for October with COCOMACIA and the gender commission; this workshop will be held in the municipality of San Francisco de Icho in Quibdó, Choco.

Outcome 2. COCOMACIA will implement a pilot geo-referenced information system (SIGACIA) in resolving conflicts on use and organization of land and natural resources in the collective territory.

Activity 2.1. Train three people to be responsible for the territorial conflicts mediation centers of the major community councils in the use of GPS and Geo-referenced Information System (GIS) at the Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute and apply these lessons to the GIS of the COCOMACIA, COCOMASUR and COCOMAUNGUIA major Councils.

Mercy Corps enrolled five youth from the community councils in the course: “Data capture using GPS devices for Geographic Information Systems” to be held at the Geographic Institute Agustín Codazzi in Bogota during the month of November. The

workshop will build the capacities of the youth – one woman and four men – who lead community mediation and demarcation processes to resolve territorial conflicts in the Major Community Councils.

Activity 2.2. Updating the Geographic Information System of COCOMACIA (SIGACIA) in order to systematize and rationalize the information related to the resolution of territorial conflicts, organization of the land under the collective title and use of land.

Mercy Corps signed an agreement with the consulting firm INGETEC, to upgrade COCOMACIA's geographic information system SIGACIA. The upgrade and strengthening of the GIS will allow appropriate management, analysis, and use of data for adequate decision making on the use of the territory and resolution of conflicts within the collective title.

The strengthening of COCOMACIA's GIS includes the following products: i) design of a graphic interface for the SIGACIA client; ii) including the layers of territorial analysis: a) use of land, b) climate, c) mega-projects (mining, hydrocarbons extraction, forest reserves, national parks, territorial reserves, and areas of biodiversity), d) geo-morphology; and iii) the design of the module for territorial risk analysis to link the information from items 1 and 2.

During the reporting period, INGETEC, Mercy Corps and COCOMACIA's commission on Territory and Autonomy undertook the following activities:

- Functional diagnosis of the current SIGACIA
- Meeting to discuss the diagnosis and definition of the design process – the meeting had the participation of the coordinator of the office of territory and autonomy and Mercy Corps' Lands Manager.
- Design, introduction, and familiarization of the graphic interface of the SIGACIA client

The upgrade process is expected to be completed in November. In addition, Mercy Corps defined the technical equipment to be donated to each community council in order to strengthen the processes of alternative resolution of conflicts. The donation includes a tablet for data collection in the field and digitalization of the boundaries in the field, a camera for a visual recording of boundaries and landmarks, and a GPS to be used by the community topographer engaged in the delimitation processes. COCOMAUNGUIA will receive the software ArGis 10.0 and a laptop, thus the three community councils will have their own GIS to allow for the mapping designs of the major councils as per their own interests on land use, management and governance.

Outcome 3. Thirty Afro descent women exchange best technological practices on RedTierras

Activity 3.1. Regional exchange of experiences between Colombia and Guatemala

Mercy Corps, The Guatemala Lands Fund, and INCODER agreed on the agenda for the regional exchange to be held in Guatemala in November. The exchange has been affected by the rotation of staff in INCODER, as a result of the presidential elections in Colombia and the appointment of INCODER leadership.

Activity 3.2. Exchange of experiences between COCOMACIA women and Darien Community Councils.

The exchange of experiences between the community councils of COCOMAUNGUIA and COCOMACIA on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for gender equality and territorial ethnic development was held in September, in Titumate, Unguia, Choco. The workshop was attended by 22 persons of which 16 were women, representing 72% of the total participants.

COCOMACIA women with a youth from COCOMAUNGUIA, talking

The overall purpose of the activity was to bring the available ICT tools and applications closer to the conflict resolution processes undertaken by the Afro-Colombian communities, encouraging critical thinking by both women and men, teaching territorial planning, and promoting the participation of women in decisions on access to and use of land. Although ICT was a novelty to the community councils, the following objectives were achieved:

- Clarification and understanding of the basic concepts of ICT and its distinction from ‘communication media’, ‘communication scenarios’, and old and new technologies.
- Increased debate on the advantages and disadvantages of the use and application of ICT in ethno-territorial development. The debate at times was marked by criticism, particularly by the elderly, around the current improper use of technology.
- Assessing and mapping scenarios of information and communication technology used by the communities with their key strengths and weaknesses. The Matrix of Media helped characterize the current use of ICT in the two community councils for them to reflect on the opportunities for including it in community meetings where updates on community spending are presented and the use of technology is promoted. These meetings serve to speed up land conflict resolution processes (including family leases, land use planning and natural resource management), achieve a wider diffusion of the information on land resolution advancements to all segments of the population, achieve higher effectiveness for team work, and lead to informed decision making. The Matrix developed by the group highlighted the digital gap that affects their communities, particularly regarding access to technologies such as internet and social networks, as well as the negative impact or setback it represents for the development of the rural world.
- Bringing the participants closer to the different government and private sector efforts and community initiatives to broaden the coverage and reach of the ICT in the rural context. Those efforts and their challenges were presented so that the community leaders know the state-of-the-art of ICT in Colombia and potential initiatives that may influence and benefit their communities, such as “Colombia Vive Digital” and Mercy corps’ SMS initiatives.
- Generating debate and reflection on the different issues that community leaders should be aware of in order to be able to influence and participate in the public policies on ICT in Colombia. In this section we discussed several recommendations regarding community mobilization and influence in favor of ICT in regional for a, including designing alternative mechanisms for communication such as newspapers, informative murals, or pamphlets with the messages presented in the community gatherings, in order to move on from the passive or assistance-oriented position of the communities, to empower them to defend their right to information and access to ICT.
- Establishing strategies on how ICT could be used in different social sectors – with examples for the group of artisan women, tourism business, community health centers, the school, local councils- to improve income generation, achieve broader market reach, improve the possibilities for integration with certain segments of the population, such as disabled people or the elderly.
- Developing a product that addresses the benefits, strategies and recommendations on the use of ICT to develop a campaign on prevention and awareness-raising of gender based violence at community level.

The activity was planned without previous knowledge of the attendants’ profiles on ICT matters, which then required a simplification of the contents, following an approach based on real life cases, experiences and situations of the community. From the beginning, we noted a lack of understanding of basic concepts (even though most of the participants frequently use applications, social networking, and internet) and limited knowledge of potential uses of ICT in community actions and processes. This is a symptom of the inefficiency or lack of government response by the Colombian Minister of ICT to the issue of training and dissemination of information on ICT covering ‘all’ sectors of the population and to promote their usage outside the private context with user-centered alternatives.

Some of the participants mentioned knowing certain Information Systems such as Agronet, Portal for Colombian Development – AVANZA and RedTierras; however, their participation in these systems is rather low. As such, it is important to highlight the need for capacity building on local communication, use of media and the production of web contents at a community level. This allows for communities to then generate local content relevant to their own context and undertake a real ownership of ICT. Unless such a process is undertaken, the digital gap will continue to grow despite the ever growing number of virtual platforms, applications and systems designed for the rural context – which in turn are largely inefficient as these are designed ‘by the institutions’ and with minimal inclusion or participation of the community councils. It is important to supplement those networks and systems with the production of content from and by the communities, which would provide a higher sense of ownership on ICT and consequently a higher impact in their social and cultural development.

An exchange on gender experiences and productivity in the rural sector will be held in October, in the municipalities of Southern Tolima. Also, an exchange on experiences between INCODER and the Lands Fund of Guatemala is planned to be held in November. The event will address issues of access to land and rural development for ethnic communities and public policies on rural development.

Activity 3.3. Exchange technical information and experiences of Afro-Colombian women and other women, in relation to land tenure, conflict resolution, land rights and ethno-territorial land through cross visits and RedTierras virtual network ([www. redtierras.org](http://www.redtierras.org)).

Mercy Corps signed an agreement for the design of communication pieces for the community councils on the use of technology for the promotion of gender equality and new masculinities. These communication pieces will be shared through the RedTierras network and through the regional exchange to be held in Medellin in the month of November.

3. Monitoring and evaluation

During this quarter, the Monitoring and Evaluation team focused on the analysis of the pre and post tests for indicators 10 and 11 of the gender component, as well as on the design of tools to capture and validate data for the indicators related to science and technology. The following is a brief description of the approach Mercy Corps used to address the validation of indicators 10 and 11 of the gender component and indicators 12 and 13 of the science and technology component:

To measure indicator #10 “Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming”: we conducted a total of 297 pre and post-tests, whereby questions were asked regarding the increase in the level of empowerment of women.

For indicator #11 “Proportion of target population reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities”, we applied the same 297 pre and post-tests with specific questions to determine the changes in terms of how many of them agreed with the concept that women should have equal access to opportunities.

Indicator #12 “Number of Major Councils applying technological tools in agricultural processes (Geographic Information System, Social Mapping and GPS)”, will be validated through the certifications from each of the Councils specifying how they are implementing these tools in their processes.

To measure Indicator #13 “Number of people trained in the use of technological tools” we are using the attendance sheets signed by attendees to each training session.

Annex 2. Success Story:

Creating New Young Leadership More than a Project, a dream come true in COCOMASUR

Building new, young leadership is the way COCOMASUR strengthens its organizational process and the protection and proper management of its territory both collectively and individually. PROTIERRA interviewed three mediators who have been working with the project to get their perspectives on the impact of the program on youth, how women have been involved, and what it means to them to be a mediator for their community.

What has been the impact of PROTIERRA on the youth in your community?

“PROTIERRA has guided us to achieve a dream: train our youth and then, step by step, gather the knowledge to increase their opportunities for employment, building leadership with responsibilities on the processes of the black communities,” said a 23 year-old community mediator that has participated in PROTIERRA for two years.

Has this been your experience?

“Yes; being a mediator is a huge responsibility, given the lack of understanding of the conflict resolution process by most people, as they believe that we do not have ancestral authority, that this land does not belong to Afro-Colombians and as such there should not exist a Local Council of Black Communities. The families that have gathered together and who feel part of COCOMASUR must work hard for our identity, to gain respect and recognition for the process,” said the mediator.

Mediator delivering a training for his community

What have you learned through PROTIERRA?

I learned about our collective territory, walking through it, knowing the bylaws and internal rules of the Major Council and those of the Black Communities – that was the initial step. Everything else depends on that. From there I learned the abilities and skills for leadership in different areas and how territorial conflicts may be resolved. Now I can also explain what our rights and obligations are. We learned how to coordinate our work with COCOMASUR and its local councils. COCOMASUR facilitates the training through PROTIERRA, but it is the local councils who select their own leaders and who ensure that the seed of knowledge will give fruit.

Through the Mercy Corps’ project, which has taught us about conflict resolution, natural resources management and uses of gender and technological approaches, we were enabled to strengthen the knowledge of the coordinators for each one of the local councils. Even though those leaders, selected by their communities, have been participating in the organizational process and in the training provided by PROTIERRA, they have continued to receive in-depth training on methodological tools and social abilities for leadership. Now they represent COCOMASUR in their communities, they are the informational bridges and focal points for the programs and projects implemented within the collective territory; they are responsible to ensure compliance with the guidelines established for each situation that may happen within the territory, in direct coordination with their local council.

Local Council working with their coordinator in PROTIERRA

Do women also participate in PROTIERRA?

“Yes, women work as mediators and I myself face challenges: one challenge is to train myself to be able to approach my daily tasks from a technical perspective, and the other challenge is to build trust with the community as they are relying on

me and I cannot disappoint them” says a mother of two who has worked as a mediator for PROTIERRA for the past two years.

The mediator should be able to identify potential conflict situations within the territory, due to illegal possession of land or mismanagement of natural resources for example, and initiate the protocol for mediation of cases, including initial inquiries or field visits, which aim to compile as much information as possible and share it with COCOMASUR, so that it is able to mediate the case together with the local board.

Mediator in a mediation session on a territorial conflict

What does it mean to be a mediator on territorial conflicts with PROTIERRA?

COCOMASUR is preparing strategic documents to exert oversight and control on the restoring of the territory, on environmental education and sustainable production, as well as on formalization of participation within the territory. These documents are aimed at defining the roadmap and procedures to follow, thus providing clarity and direction to the mediation process. The formation of mediators is integrated and includes elements to promote coexistence.

“Being a mediator is not limited to a specific project or activity; it entails assuming a permanent leadership attitude, it is being a representative of COCOMASUR in my community”, says another 23 year-old community mediator and community topographer. The mediator uses GPS to demarcate properties under dispute. He has participated in PROTEIRRA for 18 months.

Mediator training his community

With the support from the technical team of COCOMASUR and Mercy Corps the mediators have implemented the methodological guide and tools (such as social cartography in their communities) and have collected information with GPS and GIS while developing community dialogue on the reconstruction of our history. The mediators have demonstrated their leadership skills and their ability to understand the acquired tools and their commitment to the project and their communities.