



**Capacity Building for Community Conservation
and Forest Management in the Sierra Norte
Oaxaca, México.**

**Midyear report
September 30, 2003 – February 30, 2004**

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Summary

This information corresponds to the project: ***Strengthening Community Forest Management: Experiences and Planning in the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca***, carried out in the period of September 2003 to February 2004. This project as agreed with USAID/Mexico has been carried out by WWF Mexico Program through bilateral collaboration with the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation (JICA), the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry (SEMARNAT) and the National Forest Commission (CONAFOR).

This project is being carried out in four indigenous communities of the Sierra Norte de Oaxaca (San Juan Teponaxtla, San Martín Buenavista, Santa María Las Nieves and Santa María Totomoxtla) all located in the region known as Chinantla Alta, which covers an approximate area of 125,000 ha of Mountain Dry Tropical Forests.

Introduction

This report explains the progress achieved during the first semester (September 2003 – February 2004) of the third year, of a total of 3 years' work of the project: "Strengthening Community Forest Management: Experiences and Planning in the Sierra Norte de Oaxaca".

The project focuses in the following communities: San Martín Buenavista, Santa María Las Nieves, Santa María Totomoxtla and San Juan Teponaxtla communities, located in the region known as Chinantla Alta, in the state of Oaxaca. This region offers very interesting opportunities to implement good management models of their Pine-Oak forests, Tropical Dry Forests, Tropical Humid Forests and Dry Forests. These forests are distributed from the lower parts of the Río Grande River, a Papaloapan affluent, up to the flowing higher part, on a declivity (gradient) which goes from 800 msnm to 3,200 msnm, with a distance not larger than 25 km.

The agreed collaboration among AID, JICA and WWF, in order to continue the previous commitments agreed in a bilateral way between SEMARNAT and JICA made it possible to prepare "The Master Plan for the Sustainable Management of the Chinantla Alta Community Forests" between 1996 and 1998. WWF collaboration is being added in the second stage of the project, in order to reinforce, together with JICA, SEMARNAT and CONAFOR, the conservation and sustainable component of biologically important sites.

Objectives and Activities

The project's objectives planned for three years are:

Objective 1: Enhance/build community capacity to manage their forest resources.

Activity 1. Overall appraisal of the communities to identify planning and implementation needs

Activity 2: Apply community planning tools to develop forest management plans.

Activity 3: Build capacity in mapping and resource monitoring in target communities (GIS, Biological sampling, identification of priority areas for conservation).

Activity 5: Appraisal of community training needs to implement the plans.

Objective 2: Establish the integration of conservation and sustainable forest management on a regional planning scale

Activity 7: Work meetings for the integration of the Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management Plan of the Chinantla Alta region (SEMARNAT, PROCYMAF, CONAFOR, Region Communities, and WWF)

Activity 8: Identification of common tools and instruments for the integration of GIS and the regional planning (SEMARNAT, PROCYMAF, CONAFOR, Region Communities, and WWF)

Activity 9: Use the interchange of experiences between community members, local technicians and authorities to extend local planning practices, to watershed and eventually to the regional level (Activity 11 has been combined with Activity 9)

Activity 10: Establish a regional-level processes to include forest and water resources into land use planning, in four communities (Chinantla Alta)

Activity 12: Identify key technical needs that cannot be fulfilled locally, and develop a strategy to address them.

Activity 13: Identify mechanisms and criteria to strengthen the Community Protected Areas (CPA) concept, within regional land use planning. Promote the appropriate legal framework for the CPAs.

Activity 14: Promote the recognition of good forest management practices with support from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Objective 3: Define a methodological framework and lessons learned, concerning capacity building in community forest management.

Activity 15: Select a method for tracking the pilot models to help define best practices. (Including defining a baseline for economic and social information).

Activity 16: Use the experiences generated at each level to help inform regional level approaches. Prepare preliminary summaries of what has and has not worked.

During this first semester of the third working year, activities undertaken, complement those developed in the previous years, showing an important progress.

The progress made on capacity building activities in community members' training will let us secure follow up made by local people, through integrating local groups in the various activities. At the same time, the continuation of the first-year planning activities is allowing us to establish commitments with local communities and governments, to design fire prevention and control plans for the communities in a place where fires have had terrible effects in the past.

In the case of forest fires, as from the regional analysis, the acquisition of equipment and its improvement for prevention and control, as well as community members training, have been demanded from governments, starting from the municipality level to the federal government level.

During the first semester, we practically started the activities corresponding to the end of the third year of the project, where community land use planning has been presented and endorsed by each one of the four communities. This activity takes us immediately to the identification of each one of the community protected areas. With this, we will begin to design a regional proposal of community protected areas in the Cloud Forests region.

During this period and, for the first time, we have a Forest Engineer, responsible for the execution of the four forest sustainable management programs (2003-2004), certified by the federal government (SEMARNAT).

During the second semester of this third year, we will document project experiences and lessons learned.

For more detail, we include the activity bi-monthly.

Workplan Table Activities	Actions to support may include:	Comments,verifiers and products	Comments: When done, changes or explanations
Objetivo 1: Enhance/build community capacity to manage their forest resources.			
Activity 1. Overall appraisal of the four communities to identify planning and implementation needs.	The four Chinantla Alta communities have a Forest Engineer rendering forest technical services	A Forest Engineer applying four sustainable forest management plans (2003-2004)	The four communities decide to have their own forest technician and execute their forest management plans. This will let them form a working team among communities, in a parallel way
Activity 2: Apply community planning tools to develop forest management plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine economic alternatives from timber and non timber resources, with a focus on how to include women in the planning process. • Identify economic 	Forest managemet plans for the four communities in Chinantla Alta are being applied at present.	Three communities have made buying-selling contracts of log and sawed wood (San Juan Teponaxtla), based on the annual 2003-2004 forest management plans. One of the communities applies a plan for the restoration of areas burned in 1998, as a way of cultivating the forest.	The San Juan Teponaxtla community started operations with their portable sawmill in the period 2003-2004. They initiate activities for the improvement of fruitgrowing in San Martín Buenavista

alternatives to support community livelihoods.			
	Presentation of the community regulations proposal for each community, at the Community Assembly.	Community norma to internally regulate use and management of resources was reviewed by the four community assemblies.	The community agreement process to apply the regulations at local level on the four communities starts.
Activity 3: Build capacity in mapping and resource monitoring in target communities (GIS, Biological sampling, identification of priority areas for conservation).	Final integration of the GIS to start the design of community protected areas. (CPA)	Community forest management and land use planning plans are integrated into the GIS.	The GIS coverage area is widened, to get more extensive designs.
	The flora and fauna, social and economic databases are integrated into the regional GIS.	GIS, with regional coverage for the design of conservation and sustainable forest management proposal	Neighborhood communities around the cloud forests and owners of the forest are integrated to the proposal of community protected areas.
	The four communities defined and participated in the writing of the forest management plans for the period 2004-2013, with GIS support.	Forest management plans with GIS for each community, with easier application and assessment of the various activities	The forest management plans lean on the GIS for completing the period 2004-2013.

Activity 5: Appraisal of community training needs to implement the plans.	The various training needs are being looked after at community level, as follow up to their implemented local plans	JICA, CAPLAC and CONAFOR sign an agreement for the next three years, to follow up the various training needs the negotiation, follow up and planning levels	CAPLAC starts training activities in the 2004 second semester
	Coordination activities with SEMARNAT are reduced to applying the rules in forest management; CONAFOR investments are reduced to some complementary activities	The region forest management programs are approved, and two communities out of four are supported in activities related to forest management improvement	There was a reduction in SEMARNAT and CONAFOR presence, due to JICA withdrawal on field activities
Objective 2: Establish the integration of conservation and sustainable forest management on a regional planning scale			
Activity 7: Work meetings for the integration of the Conservation & Sustainable Forest Management Plan of	Meetings of progress presentation with each partner and stakeholder within the region, to know	Regional information interchange. Shared projects and analyses for regional	At the third year closing, willingness to share information on partners, NGOs and communities on

<p>the Chinantla Alta region. (SEMARNAT, CONAFOR, Comunidades)</p>	<p>about common areas and issues</p>	<p>planning. Sustainable forest management and land use plans shared with neighborhood communities.</p>	<p>land use planning, management plans, and local protection areas will enable us to integrate the information beyond our communities, and propose the CPA system for the cloud forest, as part of this project.</p>
<p>Activity 8 : Identification of common tools and instruments for the integration of GIS & the regional planning. (SEMARNAT, PROCYMAF, CONAFOR, Comunidades, WWF)</p>	<p>Acquisition of information from each one of the interested partners, to integrate it in a GIS common tool</p>	<p>Agreement with SEMARNAT, CONAFOR, ONGs, and each one of the region communities with cloud forest, to participate in the design of cloud forest CPAs.</p>	<p>The design of the CPAs for the cloud forest people includes another eight communities within the cloud forest distribution.</p>
<p>Activity 9. Use the interchange of experiences between community members, local technicians and authorities to extend local planning practices, to watershed and eventually, the regional level and support local technical capacities. (Activity 11 has been</p>	<p>Interchange between the San Juan and La Trinidad communities.</p>	<p>Training for the administration and management of extraction and transformation forest activities in San Juan Teponaxtla.</p>	<p>Beginning of the ownership process of forest use and wood industrial transformation in San Juan Teponaxtla.</p>

combined with Activity 9)			
Activity 10: Establish a regional-level process to include forest and water resources into land use planning, in 4 communities (Chinantla Alta)	Support the Santa Cruz Tepetotutla community to improve the forest management plan and the technical application	Revision of the management plan for its application in 2003-2004.	Santa Cruz Tepetotutla community with important cloud forests, and neighbor of the project working area, asked for support to integrate their cloud forests in the proposal.
	Regional support to the four sustainable forest management plans 2004-2013.	Progress presentation in the writing of the four sustainable forest management plans.	As from 2005, the four communities apply their long-term sustainable forest management plans (10 years).
Activity 12: Identify key technical needs that cannot be fulfilled locally and develop strategies to address them.	Two activities need support with external capacities: The use of the GIS for the PCA design, and the followup to the planning and negotiation process.	A consultant is contracted for looking after the CPAs design. CAPLAC and JICA-CONAFOR sign a collaboration agreement for three years, to follow up	Addressing these two activities, we comply with two of the commitments established when the project was closed, after three years.
Activity 13: Identify mechanisms and criteria to strengthen the Community Protected Areas (CPA) concept within regional land use planning. Promote	Recognition of the conservation plan, in the proposals of the Ecology State Law and the Protected Areas State System.	Ecology Law draft proposal for Oaxaca. Proposal document for the Oaxaca State Natural Protected Areas System	The CPAs plan widens protection and conservation types in high biodiversity sites, and is in a consulting process at present.

the appropriate legal framework for the CPAs.			
<p>Activity 14: Promote recognition of good forest management practices with support from FSC.</p> <p>(Parallel to other activities in Chinantla Alta)</p>	<p>Collaboration with CONAFOR, CERTIFOR and WWF, to promote good community forest management under the FSC standards.</p>	<p>Promotion materials on the importance of forest certification in collaboration with CONAFOR and WWF (poster, CD6 and wide format picture)</p>	<p>Continues promotion support for public information, and understanding of the market and certified product consumption.</p>
	<p>To support communities at the assessment and pre-assessment levels on certification with Smart Wood and CONAFOR.</p>	<p>Pre-assessed community weaknesses and strengths have been identified.</p>	<p>Recent changes in the relationship between Smart Wood and CCMSS complicate the future situation of communities and “ejidos” which have been certified up to now.</p>
	<p>To accompany capacity building of the (integrator) of certified forest communities</p>	<p>Documents of meeting and agreements with signals of focusing on the production of goods at the community level.</p>	<p>There is the challenge to identify actions which motivate the certified wood owners’ participation. Flexibility to identify common interests.</p>

<p>Objective 3: Determine a framework of methodologies and lessons learned, concerning capacity building in community forest management.</p>			
<p>Activity 15: Select a method for tracking the pilot models to help establish best practices. Including baseline for economic and social information.</p>	<p>To support a regional partner meeting in the second semester, to assess their various working methodologies during three years.</p>	<p>Summary of the various methodologies used in three years and their results.</p>	<p>Opportunity to count on partners' information at the end of the third year, and follow up the various methodologies with CAPLAC support.</p>
<p>Activity 16: Use the experiences generated at each level to help inform regional level approaches. Prepare preliminary summaries of what has and has not worked.</p>	<p>To assess in the second semester of the third year, with an external facilitator, the various lessons learned during three years.</p>	<p>To obtain a document which integrates the various lessons learned throughout the project.</p>	<p>Opportunity to register lessons learned around forest management activities and local conservation areas in high biologically diverse sites.</p>

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Indicator table on training and technical exchange programs

INDICATOR TABLE: Number of individuals participating in training and technical exchange programs.							
Reporting Period: March - August 2003							
Training events conducted by Partners							
Name of Activity	Partner	Dates	No. of hours/days	Objective supported	No. of Men partic.	No. of Women partic.	Total number partic.
Attend the Forum of indigenous villages on forests in Québec, Canada	Commissariate of Common Goods San Juan Teponaxtla WWF-Oaxaca	Sept. 2003	4 days	To present results of community land use planning	2	0	2
Attend the XII World Forestry Congress in Québec, Canada	Commissariate of Common Goods San Juan Teponaxtla WWF-Oaxaca	Sept. 21 - 28, 2003	8 days	Attend magisterial conferences, parallel meetings to the Congress and forest exhibition	2	0	2
Community census of Plots damaged by a water spout	CAPLAC Teponaxtla Communities	January 2004	6	Assess agriculture damages to compensate community members	45	12	57

Community census of plots damaged by a water spot	CAPLAC San Martín Buenavista Community	Oct. 2003	6 days	Assess agriculture damages to compensate community members	38	17	55
Party for the Earth, San Juan Teponaxtla	CAPLAC Community and Municipality Authorities	Oct. 2004	2 days	Communication and reflection space on community environmental issues	175	120	295
Visit to the property Cuasimulco, Santa Maria Totomoxtla, Chinantla Alta.	CAPLAC Totomoxtla Community	January 2004	4 days	Geographical points registration to identify agrarian limits and CPAs	25	2	27
Support to the Sierra Norte Natural Resources Committee meeting	CAPLAC- CONAFOR SEMARNAT	January 2004	3 days	Preparations for the evaluation of the operating structure of the Sierra Norte Committee.	32	1	33
Annual meeting for fire prevention and control, Totomoxtla, Chinantla Alta	CAPLAC	Feb. 2004	1 day	To define a strategy of fire prevention and control – 2004.	28	8	36
Annual meeting for fire prevention and control, Santa María Las Nieves.	CAPLAC	Feb. 2004	1 day	To define a fire prevention and control strategy – 2004	32	12	44

Field activities for sampling sites, with the purpose of a forest management plan for 10 years, San Juan Teponaxtla, Cuicatlán	Ing. Elfego Chávez. Ing. Carlos Ramón López. CAPLAC.	Sept. 03- Feb. 04	72 days	Prepare a sustainable forest management program for 10 years.	12	2	14
Field activities for sampling sites, with the purpose of a forest management plan for 10 years, San Martín Buenavista, Chinantla Alta	CAPLAC. Ing. Elfego Chávez. Ing. Carlos Ramón López.	Sept. 2003- Feb. 2004	72 days	Prepare a sustainable forest management program for 10 years.	12	0	12
Field activities for sampling sites, with the purpose of a forest management plan for 10 years, Santa María Totomoxtla, Chinantla Alta	CAPLAC Ing. Elfego Chávez. Ing. Carlos Ramón López.	Sept. 2003- Feb. 2004	72 days	Prepare a sustainable forest management program for 10 years.	12	2	14
Field activities for sampling sites, with the purpose of a forest management plan for 10 years, Santa María Las Nieves, Chinantla Alta	CAPLAC Ing. Elfego Chávez. Ing. Carlos Ramón López.	Sept. 2003- Feb. 2004	72 days	Prepare a sustainable forest management program for 10 years.	12	0	12

Beginning of activities to apply forest treatment methods, 2003-2004, San Juan Teponaxtla, Chinantla Alta	Ing. Carlos Ramón López	Sept. 2003-Feb. 2004	15 days	Apply intensity of cutting and regeneration treatments	6	0	6
Beginning of activities to apply forest treatment methods, 2003-2004, San Martín Buenavista, Chinantla Alta.	Ing. Carlos Ramón López	Sept. 2003-Feb. 2004	15 days	Apply regeneration treatments	32	0	32
Beginning of activities to apply forest treatment methods, 2003-2004, Santa María Las Nieves, Chinantla Alta	Ing. Carlos Ramón López	Sept. 2003-Feb. 2004	15 days	Apply intensity of cutting and regeneration treatments	6	0	6
Beginning of activities to apply forest treatment methods, 2003-2004, Santa María Totomoxtla, Chinantla Alta	Ing. Carlos Ramón López	Sept. 2003-Feb. 2004	15 days	Apply intensity of cutting and regeneration treatments	6	0	6
Administrative and technical management to obtain sustainable forest management plans, 2003-2004 - Teponaxtla, San Martín Buenavista, Las Nieves and Totomoxtla	Ing. Carlos Ramón López. Community Authorities	Oct.-Nov. 2003	20 days	Cover principles and criteria to start the annual forest management	20	0	20

Total:					477	176	653
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Annex 2. Acronyms

WWF	World Wildlife Fund
SEMARNAT	Secretaria del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
CONAFOR	Comisión Nacional Forestal
MEXU	Herbario Nacional de México
CAPLAC, A. C.	Capacitación y Planeación Comunitaria
CIESAS	Centro de investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social
AID	Agency for International Development
GIS	Geographical Information System
FY	Fiscal Year
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
JICA	Agencia de Cooperación Internacional del Japón
STF	Servicios Técnicos Forestales
WWF-UK	World Wildlife Fund- United Kingdom
UZACHI	Unión de Comunidades Zapotecas y Chinantecas.
ACP	Áreas Comunitarias Protegidas
ANPC	Áreas Naturales Protegidas Comunitarias.
ERP	Evaluación Rural Participativa.
PRA	Participative Rural Assesment
CIIDIR	Centro de Investigación Interdisciplinaria para el Desarrollo Integral Rural
CCMSS	Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sustentable