



GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

SEPTEMBER 2003



USAID's crosscutting environmental program in Honduras has assisted the country in protecting its natural resources, thus increasing the resilience of ecosystems and mitigating the potential effects of climate change. Through continued USAID assistance, Honduras will likely maintain and expand its protection of carbon stocks as well as increase its capacity to deal with natural disasters.

Background. Located in the middle of Central America, Honduras covers an area of 112,090 square kilometers, with Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean coastlines. The country features hundreds of miles of white sand beaches along its Caribbean coastline and the reef-rich Bay Islands just off shore. It has a mountainous interior that includes one of Central America's largest unspoiled tropical forests in the Mosquitia region and the archeological site at Copan, one of the region's most impressive displays of ancient Mayan culture.

While Honduras escapes the main force of the earthquakes that plague other Central American nations, the country's biggest natural threat comes during the tropical storm season in the form of hurricanes and frequent flooding along the north coast. USAID provides technical assistance, training, and logistical support to the Honduran government and private sector in forest, protected area, and water resource management, as well as in flood and drought warning system maintenance.

Sector-Specific Climate Change Activities. USAID/Honduras is helping the country expand and improve management of protected areas and forests. Important progress has been achieved in developing the capacity and commitment of public and private sector organizations and individuals to properly manage Honduras' natural resources and to prevent and prepare for future environmental disasters.

The new integrated resource management strategy of USAID in Honduras consists of four complementary and interrelated components under a "ridge-to-reef" concept:

- Watershed management
- Environmentally friendly products and services
- Harmonization of environmental laws and regulations
- Clean production technologies

To achieve these objectives, USAID has initiated a number of programs and activities and is providing support in numerous areas.

Increasing Resilience of Communities and Ecosystems to the Potential Impacts of Climate Change. USAID provides training, technical assistance, and logistical support to the Ministry of Natural Resources (SERNA) to help it establish and maintain a hydrological data system (including maintenance of 23 satellite telemetry hydrological stations) designed to provide timely

USAID's partners in climate change activities in Honduras include*:

- Honduran Forest Service (COHDEFOR)
- Honduran Municipal Association (AMHON)
- Ministry of Natural Resources (SERNA)
- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- National Forestry School (ESNACIFOR)
- National Emergency Preparedness Committee (COPECO)
- Fundación Vida
- Foundation for the Development of Municipalities (Fundemun)
- Pan-American Agricultural School – Zamorano
- John Hopkins University
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- U.S. Geological Service (USGS)

* Because partners change as new activities arise, this list of partners is not comprehensive.

flood warnings and predict drought problems. This assistance also helps SERNA design infrastructure and analyze agricultural investments.

In response to the severe damage caused by Hurricane Mitch, 200,000 pine seedlings were planted on 334 hectares and forest protection was provided to establish the regeneration of another 1,000 hectares. In addition, a sustainable watershed management program was developed for the Calan River watershed, the main surface water source for the city of Siguatepeque. This program is now being implemented with excellent municipal and community participation.

Moreover, USAID supported a forestry development project that sponsored 265 watershed management training courses reaching 5,780 participants. This training has formed a knowledgeable and committed leadership at the local level and established the basis for improving the management of the country's natural resources. Such technical assistance resulted in trained municipalities able to monitor water quality and prepare natural resource plans, maps, and annual environmental work plans.

USAID municipal development initiatives contribute to grassroots and community development while benefiting from synergies with reconstruction activities. For example, nine new communities displaced by Hurricane Mitch were provided technical assistance to form local development councils to manage community issues related to basic services and other needs. As a complement to the active pace of reconstruction experienced over the past year, USAID-supported technical assistance helped 28 local governments in Honduras formulate, with citizen participation, 10-year urban development strategies. Similarly, in order to contribute to the sustainable operation and maintenance of water and sanitation investments, 31 user fee studies were completed.

To address the vulnerability of Honduras to natural disasters and the potential impacts of climate change, USAID is providing training and technical assistance in emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation to a large number of municipal governments and communities. USAID is furthermore supporting the institutional strengthening of the National Emergency Preparedness Committee. This will significantly reduce the risk and vulnerability of thousands of people affected by flooding, landslides, and droughts.

USAID also supports training and technical assistance to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and community health workers to improve community disease prevention, case finding, rapid diagnosis, and treatment for malaria, dengue, and tuberculosis. USAID support also equips field staff with basic environmental health tools and trains 70 community environmental health technicians. Such technical assistance helps the MOH integrate infectious disease control into its decentralization initiative

Improving Capacity for Conservation of Carbon Stocks and Renewable Energy. USAID has also provided training and institutional strengthening to over two dozen local environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in biodiversity and protected area management and to more than 50 municipal governments in land use management, water quality, and general environmental issues in Honduras. These USAID activities are increasing Honduras' capacity to meet the goals of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by contributing to carbon storage in the land use and forestry sectors.

The Mission's Honduras Environmental Protection Fund Project has brought more than 258,000 hectares in 28 declared protected areas under improved management through its implementing partner umbrella NGO Fundación Vida (VIDA Foundation), created with USAID funding in 1992.

Similarly, USAID has been implementing regional (PROARCA¹) and centrally funded (Parks in Peril²) programs working toward improved management of the 800,000-hectare Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve in the Honduran Mosquitia. Selected municipalities are also being trained in forest fire prevention.

In regard to energy, Fundación Vida awarded a grant for solar energy development to a local NGO. Several USAID programs are also promoting more efficient fuel wood stoves.

For more information on USAID's climate change activities in Honduras, visit USAID/Honduras's Mission Web site at:

- <http://www.usaid.gov/hn/>

- 1 PROARCA is USAID's Regional Environmental Program for Central America, which seeks to improve the management of protected areas, promote environmentally friendly products in various markets, harmonize environmental policies, and promote the use of less-polluting technologies in the municipal and private sectors.
- 2 Parks in Peril is a \$30 million park project aimed at improving the management of Latin American and Caribbean parks that contain globally significant biodiversity. The project works strategically to strengthen environmental policy and builds partnerships and alliances for conservation. This USAID program is implemented in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy.