



GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

MAY 2006



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. Its mountainous interior includes one of Central America's largest unspoiled tropical forests in the Mosquitia region and the archeological site at Copan, a major cultural and commercial center of the ancient Mayan culture.

While Honduras is largely unaffected by the earthquakes that afflict 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 and other regions of the country. 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 disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and mitigation.

Sector-Specific Climate Change Activities

Sustainable Agriculture, Natural Resources Management and Conservation of Carbon Stocks. USAID is providing technical assistance and training to nearly 1,000 small and medium-sized commercial farmers who have crops planted on more than 3,000 hectares, and to approximately 1,300 hillside subsistence farmers covering 1,500 hectares, to improve and expand sustainable agricultural systems, including higher crop yields and soil conservation and erosion control, which reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by maintaining carbon levels in soil and biomass in tropical grasslands and pasture.

In recent years, USAID/Honduras, through its Integrated Watershed Resources Management (MIRA) Project, has been supporting the improved management of Honduran protected areas and forests. The project's protected area management component is strengthening the technical, administrative and financial capacities of the personnel in charge of managing the 17 protected areas. These activities are increasing Honduras' capacity to meet the goals of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by contributing to carbon storage in the land use and forestry sector and will ultimately bring 160,000 hectares under improved management by 2007. Additionally, this project provides assistance to protected area managers to increase income and visitors to parks, and broaden awareness of conservation issues.

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

- Fintrac Inc.
- CARE
- World Vision
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
- Save the Children
- International Resources Group (IRG)
- Honduran Forest Service (COHDEFOR)
- Honduran Ministry of Natural Resources (SERNA)
- National Emergency Preparedness Committee (COPECO)

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

For more information on Honduras, visit USAID's Website at:

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

Improved Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Mitigation. USAID/Honduras continues to provide training and strengthening in emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation to a number of municipal governments and communities, thus reducing the risk and vulnerability of thousands of people who are affected by flooding, landslides and droughts. In recent years, over 1,500 members of municipal and community emergency committees have been trained in nearly 100 communities, and 48 emergency response plans have been developed. These emergency response plans form part of local micro-watershed management plans and include protection of water sources, reforestation, soil conservation, solid waste clean-up, and drainage maintenance, all contributing to mitigation of and adaptation to changes in climate. As demonstrated in the 2005 hurricane season (Hurricane Stan and Tropical Storm Beta), this project has improved.

Capacity Building, including activities in support of the UNFCCC. The policy component of the MIRA Project is one of the cornerstone activities that allows for the thematic and institutional integration of better natural resources management in the country's watersheds. This component highlights the importance of laws and regulations, while strengthening their application, thus improving both the ability to govern, and the responsibility associated with natural resources management. Capacity building for policy development has been primarily focused on improving local capacity to sustainably manage natural resources, including water resources. MIRA project policy specialists assist local government officials to develop analyses that identify local policy weaknesses and assess implications on the long term sustainability of the local natural resources base and associated livelihoods. To date, a number of policies directly related to adaptation, capacity building and vulnerability reduction have been developed, including: equitable water use, emergency preparedness, environmental sustainability, erosion reduction, and environmental services' payment structures. Recommendations on urban planning policies that reduce vulnerability to climatic changes or specific climate variation events, will be given to municipalities, communities, chambers of commerce, chambers of tourism, zoning agencies or to the central government in Honduras.

Finally, USAID/Honduras provided training and institutional strengthening to local environmental nongovernmental organizations and municipal governments in watershed and forest management, some of which are located within established protected areas, thereby increasing local capacity to meet goals of the UNFCCC by contributing to carbon storage in improved land use and forestry practices.