ADAPTATION FUND

Adaptation Story

COSTA RICA

An Adaptation Fund project in Costa Rica is assisting local indigenous communities that are among the country's most economically- and climate-vulnerable groups adapt and build resilience to climate change by helping them rescue their own traditional, sustainable farming methods.

Implemented by Fundecooperación para el Desarrollo Sostenible (Fundecooperación) as part of a larger US$ 10 million community adaptation programme in the country funded by the Adaptation Fund, the project focuses on restoring diversified production systems to enhance food security in Valle de La Estrella, Talamanca – a Caribbean region that is home to the indigenous Bribri and Cabécar populations. These communities depend on agriculture, however many members in recent years have abandoned traditional practices in favor of single-crop banana plantations that quickly generate large but short-term incomes while degrading forests and land.

Unsustainable land, agricultural and livestock rearing practices combined with rising climate change impacts like drought, extreme rainfall, land degradation, soil fertility loss and changing crop patterns increase indigenous communities' vulnerabilities, making the project a crucial step toward positive change.

Through the US$ 1.1 million project, which includes $250,000 from the Adaptation Fund and also involves the National Institute of Rural Development and the Spanish Cooperation among others, a practical manual in Spanish detailing Bribri and Cabécar ancestral practices has been created by the indigenous communities themselves for their current use and among generations to come. Productive, integrated environmentally sustainable farming models featuring a relationship of respect and harmony with the land form the heart of these practices. The focus is on livestock, crop and plant diversification, crop rotation, and chemical-free fertilizers. The approach produces healthy nutrition and natural medicine year-round while protecting natural resources, forests and biodiversity, and spreading indigenous knowledge.

The project also provides eco-friendly, climate-resilient farm management plans, inputs and technical assistance for 176 indigenous families with the aim of reaching 528 families over three years through the traditional concept of "mano vuelta", where families who receive assistance return the favor by sharing knowledge with neighboring farms and working together to improve their own quality of life.

"We had banana trees, however the river grew, carried everything away and we had to move. Now on the farm with the support of the project, we can have something more to maintain our food supply. So we are also raising tilapia, pigs and chickens, and that is the idea – to sustain ourselves together with the environment and nature," said Brenda Hernández Onil, of Bribri Territory.

Photos by Luis Gamboa Hernández

PROJECT details

Direct Access Programme: Reducing Vulnerability in Critical Sectors (Agriculture, Water Resources, and Coastlines) to Lessen the Negative Impacts of Climate Change and Improve Resilience

Adaptation Fund Grant Amount: US$ 9.97 million

Additional leveraged public and private funding: equivalent US$ 5.5 million

Duration: 5 years (began October 2015)

PRIMARY objectives

- Increase adaptation capacity and strengthen farming productivity through climate-resilient agricultural and livestock practices
- Improve water resources management and supply in vulnerable coastal communities
- Restore natural coastal protections and adaptive fishing practices
- Build local capacity by sharing knowledge and best adaptation practices
- Implement weather monitoring systems and response strategies
- Work with indigenous communities to spread their knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices
- Ensure equal opportunities for women and men in project planning, implementation and decision-making
- Improve public policy and credit capacity for vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change

ADAPTATION FUND

Adaptation Story

COSTA RICA

> ***With the skills that the project gave us, I have been able to get ahead with the products that I generate on my farm. Most importantly, because the territory where I live is difficult to get to, which gets complicated with the strong rains and rivers rising.***
>
> *– María Victoria Rojas Morales, Cabécar Territory*

The project further aligns well with the overall Adaptation Fund programme in Costa Rica, which is aimed at helping vulnerable populations adapt to warming temperatures, longer dry periods and increasing rainfall intensity that have placed agricultural production, water resources, and natural coastal protections at risk. The programme addresses vulnerability in these critical sectors by working directly with local stakeholders, beneficiaries and organizations to implement tailored, effective adaptation interventions, technical assistance and training that improve climate resilience.

About 40 projects from 100 submissions were pre-selected based on criteria ranging from adaptation impact to cost effectiveness and are being implemented by Fundecooperación together with more than 80 local, national and regional organizations acting as executing entities. The programme's wide-ranging activities enable localized solutions to reach many at-risk communities.

"We are working on different levels to address climate change, including the farm, community, institutional and policy-making levels," said Marianella Feoli, Executive Director of Fundecooperación.

Key aspects of the overall programme include implementing climate smart agricultural and land management practices promoting water, soil conservation and sustainable livelihoods; improving credit capacity for communities to adapt to flood or drought; developing water efficient infrastructure and watershed management plans; improving aqueduct filtration; protecting aquifer recharge areas through reforestation, water treatment and livestock management; restoring reefs, mangroves and shorelines; and creating early warning systems and recovery strategies. Projects build local capacity while raising awareness of climate risks and adaptation measures among vulnerable communities, producers, institutions, schools and relevant stakeholders.

Feoli praised the example of Vitalina Aguilar, a cattle farmer in Guápiles whose farm was being flooded by severe rains. After receiving targeted adaptation finance from the project, Aguilar improved drainage on her farm by building canals that led to better water management, cattle protection and production. She now exchanges best practices with other community farmers. "Through the Adaptation Fund, you can see results and real changes implemented at the community and farm levels," Feoli advised.

BY THE NUMBERS

3,000 BENEFICIARIES TRAINED (50% WOMEN) ON ADAPTATION MEASURES AND CLIMATE RISK REDUCTION

1,000 FARMERS (50% WOMEN) TRAINED IN CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL AND WATER EFFICIENCY PRACTICES

5,000 WATERSHED HECTARES WITH IMPROVED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND CRITICAL ECOSYSTEMS CONSERVED

90 DISTINCT AGRICULTURAL ADAPTATION PRACTICES DEMONSTRATED ON FARMS, INCLUDING ENHANCED WATER, SOIL MANAGEMENT AND PLANTING TECHNIQUES, POST-HARVEST PROCESSING AND DIVERSIFIED LIVESTOCK PRACTICES

1,000 HECTARES IN INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES IMPLEMENTING TECHNICAL METHODS THAT ENHANCE RESILIENCE AND REDUCE VULNERABILITY TO EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

13 AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONING 3D REAL-TIME MAPS CREATED FOR SELECTED CROPS OF CENTRAL REGION

25,000 PEOPLE WITH IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY TO MANAGE CLIMATE-INDUCED IMPACTS ON WATER

1,000 POLICYMAKERS AND TECHNICAL OFFICERS WITH IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF CLIMATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING PROCESSES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

8 KM OF COASTAL PATHS AND BEACHES IN PROTECTED AREAS REDESIGNED AND REPLANTED

10 FUNCTIONING NEW METEOROLOGICAL STATIONS INSTALLED

25 HECTARES OF MANGROVE REFORESTED (INCLUDING AREAS WITHIN GANDOCA MANZANILLO NATIONAL REFUGE)

50 HECTARES OF AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS REFORESTED, AND COMMUNITY COASTAL REFORESTATION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED

50 COMMUNITY BASED WATER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND 2 MUNICIPALITIES IMPLEMENTING WATER SAFETY PLANS

500 CITIZENS IN COASTAL ZONES PREPARED AND TRAINED TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS