

Proposal 14: Building Capacity to Use Agro-ecological Techniques and Recuperate Soils in the Lower Plateau of the Andean Mountains

Submitting MGs / CSOs	NGO: Institute of Production and Research on Tropical Sustainable Agriculture (IPIAT)
Country of Implementation	Venezuela
Agro-ecological context	Various Tropical and Mountain Areas
Duration and Total Budget	3 years, \$ 105,000

Major groups (MGs) concerned:

- NGOs
- Farmers
- Local Authorities
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Women

Success indicators:

- 355 self-sustaining families
- 95 agro-ecological professionals trained
- Soil and watershed recovery

Partners to be engaged:

Farmer cooperative groups, grassroots organizations, local government, local universities, local and international NGOs, Media (In Motion Magazine), S&T (IFSA) and NGO (IPSA) Focal Points.

Expected Outcomes and Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Increased skills of rural family groups (355 families) to help set the research and development agenda on soil and watershed recovery and natural resource management; improved capacity of professionals (95) to do participatory research in agro-ecological analysis; and increased collaboration between professionals and rural families looking to strengthen local capacity building efforts. Impact on MDGs 1, 3, 7, and 8.

Proposed Objectives and Approaches

- Improve the quality of rural families' livelihoods by learning and using agro-ecological techniques.
 - Overcome the natural limitations of productive systems by identifying the most appropriate techniques and good practices that support farmer-led, community-based initiatives for sustainable tropical agriculture.
 - Organize networks to advocate for soil recovery and the establishment of agro-ecological seed banks.
 - Document good practices and success stories for scaling up.
- The approach used stresses participation at all levels by families and professionals to reflect and build upon established rural knowledge and lessons learned from community engagement in SARD.

Building upon Experience

The program builds on the successful agro-ecological experiences of IPIAT. Since 1987, IPIAT has helped to organize regional and international-level workshops and to network peasant farmers' organizations, actions, research, and community-building capacity in six western Venezuelan states. Currently, IPIAT is actively involved in helping the Venezuelan government incorporate agro-ecological techniques in major agricultural programs, such as Misión Vuelvan Caras, All Hands to the Seeds, and Endogenous Nucleus Development.

Major Group Inputs

IPIAT provides quality technical staff to help articulate the efforts of farmers, cooperatives, and governmental institutions. It will collaborate with the major groups of SARD, to share experiences and support local scaling-up, in cooperation with documentation by media (6), linking local learning and policy recommendations with NGO and S&T SARD leadership (2).