



Sustainable Agriculture
and Rural Development
MOUNTAIN POLICY PROJECT



Activities in Central America

PASOLAC (Programa para la Agricultura Sostenible en Laderas de América Central)

Overall objective: To contribute to socio-economic development at the local, national and regional level by promoting sustainable agriculture in the hills of Central America.

Promoting sustainable agriculture in the hills of Central America

PASOLAC is a network of more than 50 institutions (public and private sector) including farmer associations, NGOs, municipalities, research centres and national government institutions collaborating to promote sustainable agriculture in the hill areas of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. Its principal clients are smallholder farmers. Through a fund managed by network members, activities related to technology innovation and transfer, institutional development, capacity-building and policy dialogue are financed in a complementary way. In its fifth phase (2004-2007), the emphasis of the programme lies in the massive scaling-up of its results and the handing over of functions and responsibilities to its partners. PASOLAC is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and executed by INTERCOOPERATION since 1992 in the above mentioned countries.

Implementing strategies to promote sustainable agriculture in hills

The Programme for Sustainable Agriculture in the Hillside of Central America has implemented different strategies to promote sustainable agriculture, with emphasis on sustainable soil and water management technologies. One of the strategies concerns the implementation of pilot actions of payments for environmental services (PES) at the municipal level, where there exists a clear connection between hillside and production of water for different uses (domestic use, irrigation, risk reduction, etc.). By means of this focus, the programme tries to ensure the supply of water, both in terms of quantity and quality, to the urban and rural populations demanding hydrological services.

Strengthening SARD-M policies at the national level

PASOLAC, as a Regional Focal Point of the SARD-M Project, facilitates communication, coordination and networking with other partners, while supporting the design and implementation of project activities in Central America. Regional focal points advocate for SARD policies in mountain regions and work closely with relevant entities at the regional and national levels.



- ▲ Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of mountain policies in Central America;
- ▲ Facilitation of information sharing, communication, coordination and networking with other partners, notably with existing national focal points;
- ▲ Mobilisation of potential partners in the project;
- ▲ Fostering of public awareness with regards to the concrete application of SARD mountain policies.

Performing policy assessments in Central America

The development of policies for sustainable development is an **iterative process** that allows for the national and local levels to act in a coordinated and participatory manner to develop coherent policies that balance the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development. Given that SARD is a process that involves **multiple sectors strongly linking agriculture and rural development and stakeholders at all governance levels**, the assessments will pay attention to the opinions of the different components of society at various levels, i.e. national and decentralized levels of government and civil society, including the private sector, and also take into consideration the multi-sectoral nature of SARD.

Within this framework, PASOLAC has performed the following activities to assess the strengths and weaknesses of mountain policies, including social, economic, environmental, legal and institutional aspects, in relation to SARD principles.

- ▲ National-level surveys in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Nicaragua.
- ▲ Realization of one-day national workshops involving different stakeholders (i.e. national governments, decentralized institutions and civil society organizations) in each of the countries surveyed to complete the policy assessments performed and analyze positive and negative externalities of mountain regions.
- ▲ Organization of a one and a half day workshop in Managua, Nicaragua on 16-17 November 2005 to share the findings of the assessments. The workshop was attended by 29 people from government and civil society involved in the formulation and implementation of policies for SARD in five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua), and from other regional or national institutions with experience in the design or implementation of SARD-related policies. The workshop examined methodological aspects regarding the formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies for sustainable agriculture and rural development in the hillsides of Central America and also conducted a limited examination of the positive and negative externalities of hillside areas.
- ▲ Production of a document with the results of the surveys and contributions from stakeholders collected during the different workshops.

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