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Achievements and successes for scaling up experiences in the "forests, biodiversity and ecosystems" sector

Author:
Emmanuel Raison

Coordination:
Equipo Expertise France

Design:
Equipo Expertise France

Layout:
Puntoaparte Editores

Keywords:
Climate change, Forests, Biodiversity, Ecosystems

Cover photo:
Brazil chestnut harvest in Pando, Bolivia (Photo ACEAA)

Summary

The projects of the Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems (BBE) sector of the EUROCLIMA[1] program have generated significant achievements in terms of pilot experiences in sustainable forest and ecosystem management, adaptation to climate change, participatory governance systems and sustainable income generation for local populations. The study "Achievements and successes for scaling up experiences in the Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystems sector" seeks to identify to what extent and under what conditions they could be replicated or scaled up.

1 BBE's thematic sector strengthens the resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems, thus contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation, contributing to the generation of green jobs, and addressing biodiversity loss in the region. Within this framework, nine projects were selected in 2019 for the implementation of actions in a total of 12 countries. Three of these projects received additional resources in 2021 to provide continuity and expand ongoing actions (see table on page X).

Implementado por

aecid Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo

AFD AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DEVELOPPEMENT

NACIONES UNIDAS CEPAL

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

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ONU programa para el medio ambiente

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Introduction

This study was motivated by the set of field experiences towards climate change adaptation that, with a remarkable integration of the forests multifunctionality, demonstrated achievements in several themes[2]. Based on a *set* of criteria, this study analyzes the conditions for replicability and scalability of the experiences, initiatives and methodologies developed in BBE projects.

1. What do we mean by scaling up potential?

The scaling up of an action or project is its extension or reproduction after its completion, and is associated with the last stage of learning processes such as systematization, capitalization of experiences or participatory evaluations. However, this study does not seek to identify "good practices" or "models" as a sufficient condition for scaling up. Rather, it considers that the possibility of scaling up actions, initiatives or projects depends on a process of learning about the context in which the actions take place, which makes it possible to understand the conditions of success and failure and, therefore, the possibilities of extending or replicating certain actions. In this sense, the existence of collective learning processes, including an analysis of the stakeholdersand their experiences, is even more important than taking into consideration the achievements and results of the actions.

The study focuses on two forms of scaling up:

- *Scaling*, which starts from the same center and extends to a larger geographic scale. A scaled-up project usually deepens the reference action while developing the same actions within a larger geographic coverage. The adoption of a pilot project as a public policy is an example of scaling up. The study contemplates three levels of scaling up: the community, the project unit (e.g., a community tourism union) and the territorial unit (e.g., the Chaco).

- *Replication*, which seeks to reproduce, with adaptations, an experience in a different place. In this case, there is no geographical or management continuity between the reference project and the replicated project.

"Resilient models of community management of non-timber forest resources were generated in the Amazon forest of Bolivia and Peru. Lessons learned are disseminated through the Observatory of Amazonian Fruits and Climate Change, and the impact of the project was scaled up to the more than 85,000 rural inhabitants who base their economy on forest management".

Luis Arteaga,
Technical Director, ACEAA (Bolivia)

2 Governance models, strengthening of value chains, sustainable forest and biodiversity management, public policy advocacy, among others.

2. Success factors and scaling-up conditions for BBE projects

Forest management models, reforestation and agroforestry systems

The *integrated forest and livestock management* model (MBGI), developed in the Chaco regions of Argentina and Bolivia *(project 06)*, allows for optimized water management, improved forage production, sustainable undergrowth management and a system of paddocks. The project shows favorable conditions for expansion, as it has the potential to be extended throughout the American Chaco (Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil) and in other dry forest regions.

Forest management through *the use of non-timber resources* is another model whose potential for expansion depends on how systematically the value chains have been strengthened. This is the case, for example, of the use of amazonian fruits: asaí, Brazil nuts, cacao and copoazú *(project 01),* which can be expanded and replicated in reserve areas or indigenous territories in the Amazon basin in Bolivia, Peru, Brazil and Colombia.

Brazil chestnut harvest in Pando, Bolivia (Photo ACEAA)

On the other hand, *the non-carbon benefits* model *(project 03, developed in Panama and Bolivia)* has potential for expansion as an alternative to carbon market mechanisms, which can be more easily appropriated by and strengthen the organizational structures of indigenous peoples. It is also worth considering *the community forestry concession model* applied in the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Petén, Guatemala (project 05), where forestry is being developed in accordance with sustainable forest management criteria. Thanks to ACOFOP's relationship-building and lobbying work with Guatemalan and international authorities, the community forest concessions have been extended for 25 years, and this model has the potential to be replicated in several countries, including Guatemala and Colombia.

"With the collaboration of multiple stakeholders and agencies from different levels of government, civil society and the private sector, we contribute to the dialogue on climate change adaptation in order to replicate and expand this experience in the Latin American region".

Alejandra Tenorio, Technical Coordinator, PRONATURA (Mexico)

Sale of handicrafts in Salta, Argentina (Photo INTA)

Finally, the process of establishing *agroforestry systems in model forest areas (project 09 in Honduras and Peru)* has generated a high demand from local communities and has generated installed capacities in both countries for possible scaling up or replication, starting with the same project areas in both countries and neighboring regions.

The diversity of forest management models present in the BBE projects is a resource that leaves learning lessons for decision making on which model is adapted to which characteristics of the context.

Strengthening value chains

The work around the **Observatory of Amazonian Fruits** in Pando, Bolivia *(project 01),* shows how a research and information system on production and marketing of Amazonian fruits enables sound decision making by producer communities. Meanwhile, economic initiatives around *sustainable tourism, handicrafts and ancestral medicine* in the Paraguayan Chaco, particularly in the municipality of Filadelfia (project 07), have potential for scaling up to a regional level, articulating with state and private sector tourism offers. One aspect that makes these initiatives replicable is the strengthening of local organizations, which makes it possible to generate improvements in the management of handicrafts and community medicine (access to technology, quality control and marketing organization).

Similarly, the promotion of the *production and sale of sustainable timber* in Guatemala and Honduras *(project 05),* from the establishment of community nurseries to the certification and export of timber, can be replicated in most of the continent's wilderness areas. In addition, the non-timber value chains supported in Guatemala and Colombia by this same project (achiote, cacao, xate leaf, ramón seeds, honey, gums) have demonstrated positive impacts on income generation, benefiting local families and communities, and can therefore be extended to other areas of these countries.

A condition for the successful scaling up of this type of initiative is to consider strengthening the entire value chain, including the final stages (market information, quality control, certification, marketing).

Income generation: a core strategy for local communities' adaptation to climate change

Among the particularly relevant initiatives to be scaled up, we can mention the *livestock and non-timber products* (meat, honey, flour) initiatives in Argentina and Paraguay *(project 06)*, as well as melipona honey and essential oils in the Bolivian Chiquitanía *(project 03)*. The Caribe Maya *sustainable tourism* initiative (Guatemala) and *mangrove restoration* with financial remuneration from the government *(project 04)* are also replicable, and the latter in particular has a high social added value because of its impact on gender equity.

Another project with potential for scaling up is the *water planting and harvesting* project in Costa Rica and Peru *(project 01)*, which has an interesting income generation model by providing US$ 1 monthly income for each cubic meter of water stored in the reservoirs built.

A condition for replicability in this case is to provide the baseline initiatives with quantitative indicators to measure their impact on income generation. Food and nutritional security indicators can be included to take into account the non-monetary benefits of certain productive initiatives.

Contribution to the construction of national public policies on climate change

In the area of public policies, mention can be made of the achievements of Project 01: a *decree on water planting and* harvesting in Costa Rica and *ordinances* declaring water planting and harvesting in Piura (Peru) to be of regional interest. These achievements, together with *the drafting of a water canon law* in Peru, open the door to replication of this project in both countries. The process of establishing a *bi-national biological corridor* between Honduras and Guatemala *(project 04)* is an initiative that has aroused great interest among the authorities of both countries. If its formalization is confirmed, it would have a high potential for scaling up in the Gulf of Honduras and replication in other biological corridors and protected areas, particularly in Guatemala through the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) and in Honduras with the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF).

The construction of national public policies requires long-term processes. It is, in a way, the most ambitious level of project scaling.

"A replicable experience, water harvesting reservoirs: easy to build, low cost and high impact on local and regional water generation, with the guarantee of a technology that has proven its efficiency for hundreds of years".

Gustavo Solano, Project Coordinator, AIDER (Peru)

Contribution to the construction of local public policies on climate change

Among the replicable initiatives of the BBE projects, the focus on *non-carbon benefits* in departmental planning for climate change in Bolivia *(project 03)* stands out, which has made it possible to include the vision of indigenous peoples in local public policies. *Project 08* also focused specifically on working with pilot municipalities in Mexico and Brazil to incorporate *ecosystem-based adaptation measures in municipal planning and land use.*

A key success factor in the integration of these measures into municipal policy is the promotion of a "livelihoods approach", which makes it possible to strategically link adaptation to climate change with production processes, particularly those of the rural population. This work has already begun to expand in several Brazilian states.

As a general rule, municipal officials have good knowledge of the field and relatively good legitimacy among the population, creating a potential for timely and effective action on climate change in most countries. However, municipalities in many parts of the continent face a severe lack of resources and sometimes lack of trust from the central state.

Water as a strategic natural asset

The south-south cooperation initiative between Peru and Costa Rica on *planting and harvesting water and payment for environmental services (PES) (project 02)* could be scaled up in Peru (in the Piura region and at the national level) and replicated in the Mono Aullador Biological Corridor (Costa Rica) and in the Mesoamerican Dry Corridor (Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua). On the other hand, the work with the Emberá and Wounaan peoples in Panama on the *protection of*

water sources and *the recovery of the cultural dimension of water (project 03)* could be scaled up in the same reserve zone in Panama, and it is possible to replicate it, for example, in the border region with Colombia, inhabited by the same indigenous peoples.

It seems strategic to give continuity to the experiences of PES related to water, such as the scaling up of *projects 02* in Peru and *03* in Panama, involving local private companies as contributors to the costs of the preservation of water sources by the communities. For this, it is essential to apply prior consultation procedures and involve local and national authorities in the negotiations between contributors and beneficiaries of these PES initiatives. Integrating the rights-based approach to water into these initiatives provides a more universal vision and makes it possible to introduce legal and ethical criteria for access to water, in addition to economic and environmental criteria.

Water, in its synergies with forests and biodiversity, is a cross-cutting issue in all climate change challenges, which directly involve people's lives.

Ownership by communities: replicable methodologies

Several projects have developed or adapted methodological proposals that would be worth replicating for their participatory and innovative nature and for the achievements obtained in terms of appropriation by the communities. This is the case, for example, of Project 09 in Honduras and Peru, which has used a systematized participatory methodology: the *Farmer Field Schools* (ECAS+) model, based on the collective construction of knowledge through self-learning in agroforestry and forest management.

Açaí harvest in Pando, Bolivia (Photo ACEAA)

Another illustrative case is the *livelihood analysis* methodologies to determine the vulnerability of the peasant sector to climate change (*projects 01 and 08*) or the participatory development of climate change adaptation indicators *(project 08 in Mexico and Brazil)*. Similarly, *project 03* has developed a proposed *methodology for free, prior and informed consultation* to be scaled up to all the peoples of Panama, based on the experience with the Emberás and Wounaan. Another local initiative of high added value within this project, in Honduras, is *community forest monitoring*, which empowered communities to monitor fires, in coordination and in a complementary manner with State entities.

Community ownership is a success factor for any project and, therefore, a priority criterion for defining its replicability.

Territorial rights of indigenous and local communities

In the BBE projects, land rights have been addressed mainly around free, prior and informed consultation (*projects 03, 05, 06*) and land tenure (projects 03, 05, 09). For the scaling ups suggested in this study, it is recommended to apply a cross-cutting territorial rights approach, in particular the right to land, water, food, a healthy environment, and participation. Regarding the latter, it is useful to refer to the content of the Escazú Agreement, as a new tool available to defend the population's rights of access to environmental issues (access to information, participation and access to justice).

Complementary to territorial rights, the study highlights as a lesson learned that the socio-cultural and spiritual dimension related to territories is essential for indigenous and farmer communities living in and from the forest. The vast majority of BBE projects have adopted specific strategies in this regard, which can be replicated and are sources of inspiration for other projects.

In general, public policies in Latin American countries could emphasize a rights-based approach towards the rural population living in the project areas. Faced with this shortcoming, territorial rights have an interesting potential to become an articulating axis to address economic, social and environmental policies, including climate policies.

Establishment of nursery in Guatemala (Photo CISP)

List of the 9+3 BBE projects

N.°	Title	Countries
01	Management of non-timber resources in the Amazon forest: a strategy of adaptation and mitigation to climate change from the Bolivian and Peruvian experience. + additional project "Implementing the Observatory of Amazonian Fruits and Climate Change"	Bolivia Peru
02	Planting and harvesting of water, water services canon and recognition of payment for environmental services, within the framework of South-South cooperation. + additional project "Governance for rainwater harvesting with gender equity and interculturality within the framework of South-South cooperation".	Costa Rica Peru
03	Institutionalize local non-carbon benefits (NRCBs) in national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.	Panama Bolivia
04	Forests, biodiversity and community development: Strengthening national protected area management in Honduras and Guatemala	Guatemala Honduras
05	Communities, Forests and Biodiversity: Promoting dialogue, exchange and forest value chains to adapt to and mitigate climate change	El Salvador Guatemala Honduras Colombia
06	Forest management and restoration in productive environments + additional project "Chaco forest management and climate change"	Argentina Paraguay Bolivia Brazil
07	Participatory environmental governance integrating the challenges of climate change in the Gran Chaco region of the Americas	Paraguay Argentina
08	Ecosystem-based adaptation as a catalyst for municipal action to achieve global goals	Mexico Brazil
09	Improving land-use governance and management to address the causes of forest loss and degradation and increase carbon stocks in Honduras and Peru	Honduras Peru

The full study will soon be available at www.euroclima.org. For more information on this study, please contact euroclimaplus@expertisefrance.fr.

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