



2015 IUCN-ORMACC
ANNUAL REPORT



PARK RANGER AT LAGUNA LACHUÁ NATIONAL PARK, GUATEMALA.
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I. Message from the Regional Director

2015: Our roadmap towards world transformation

This 2015, leaders from all over the world reached an agreement to approve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim, in the following 15 years, to end poverty, fight against inequality and injustice, and protect our planet. For us at IUCN, the main vision that can bring human beings together is that of a just world that values and conserves nature. Our roadmap is guided by welfare aspirations that promote the health of ecosystems as an essential complement to reduce poverty.

Our mission and vision at IUCN are intrinsically linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and, for such reason, in 2015 we jubilantly celebrate the decision to promote common welfare in the planet. After more than two years of public consultations, the 17 SDGs with their 169 goals embody the aspirations of a society seeking to end poverty through education, gender equality, promoting innovation, encouraging the existence of peace-

ful and inclusive societies, and facilitating access to justice, among other aspects. Other aspirations that comprehensively and indivisibly add to the ones mentioned are those of guaranteeing water availability, stopping biodiversity loss, promoting access to energy and modalities of consumption and sustainable production, fighting climate change and desertification, and ensuring conservation and sustainable use of oceans and terrestrial ecosystems.

At IUCN, we promote nature-based solutions as a measure to attain those welfare goals, pursuing balance between the economic, social, and environmental agendas. Maintaining a healthy natural infrastructure provides us with benefits such as drinking water, clean air, quality of lands used for agriculture, food safety, and clean energy, among others. Ecosystem protective measures are not only profitable, but also necessary to reach the expected wellbeing, and this is why IUCN, is first in

line to contribute to the fulfillment of such objectives.

Each government will be responsible for creating its own roadmap to implement the SDGs, since – although there is a common commitment – it is acknowledged that each country has specific challenges to attain sustainable development. This task will require congruence and will from various sectors. For IUCN, it will be essential to join efforts in such a way that the governance frameworks traced and the respective planning, evaluation, and decision-making process will guarantee the engagement of social actors, like indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders who depend on natural resources. It will also be necessary to encourage quality systems that include ecosystem health and social equity assessment.

We now know that the only way to achieve great transformations is through union,



commitment from all actors to fulfill these objectives, its goals and success indicators, so each citizen, each entrepreneur and rulers together believe and encourage this proposal. IUCN Members are key in this roadmap, due to their vast knowledge and experience in environmental matters; thus, our actions must continue contributing to strengthen the Union's work programme. Youngsters, women, and vulnerable groups must also join such effort with renewed strength and sufficient opportunities.

We have to believe and be confident that poverty can be eradicated, that we can have a better quality of life without having to destroy the planet in the attempt. Natural resources, its goods and services used sustainably are our best present and future ally. At the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, from every corner of the globe we promote the fact that if we have healthy ecosystems and natural resources,

these will be the key to prosperity and the solution to many current challenges. At IUCN, we are committed to contribute towards encouraging conservation and sustainable development actions and processes that are inclusive, respect human rights, and the diversity of culturally different populations.

We do not need more environmental agendas separated from economic and social issues roaming solitary in the sphere of triviality. The environment must be at the core of our aspirations and an integral part of a single vision of welfare, country, region and planet. SDGs provide the framework for consistent action over the next 15 years. Let us not allow this effort, this global compact, to become something intangible, let us have big aspirations of seeing future generations enjoy the goods and services nature has to offer.

Grethel Aguilar Rojas
IUCN Regional Director for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

II. Strategic guidance

In search of a conservation approach based on rights

For 28 years, IUCN's Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (ORMACC) has been implementing the Union's Programme through the completion and execution of projects jointly with Members, partners and allies in Central America's seven countries (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama), and Mexico, besides the Caribbean, which includes the island states. At the end of 2015, this regional office had 82 associates (42 women and 40 men), with 7 women holding leadership positions.

Members' participation is essential to implement the IUCN's work Programme. These organisations show great capacity, knowledge, and permanent presence in the countries where IUCN promotes its work Programme. IUCN Members are the

heart, the guiding force in favor of natural resource conservation. The region's Membership has significantly increased during the last five years. From the 85 Members the region had in 2010, 104 organisations are registered in 2015. In 2015, the region's Membership has been strengthened with the inclusion of 4 new organisations:

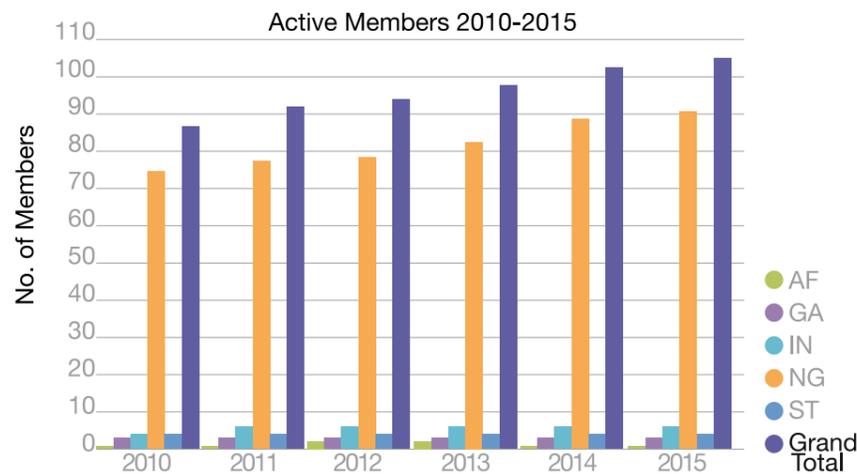
Guatemala: Fundación Laguna Lachuá (FUNDALACHUÁ)

Mexico: PRONATURA Península de Yucatán A.C.

Espacios Naturales y Desarrollo Sustentable A.C.

Fondo Pro-Cuenca Valle de Bravo A.C.

Membership Growth in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean



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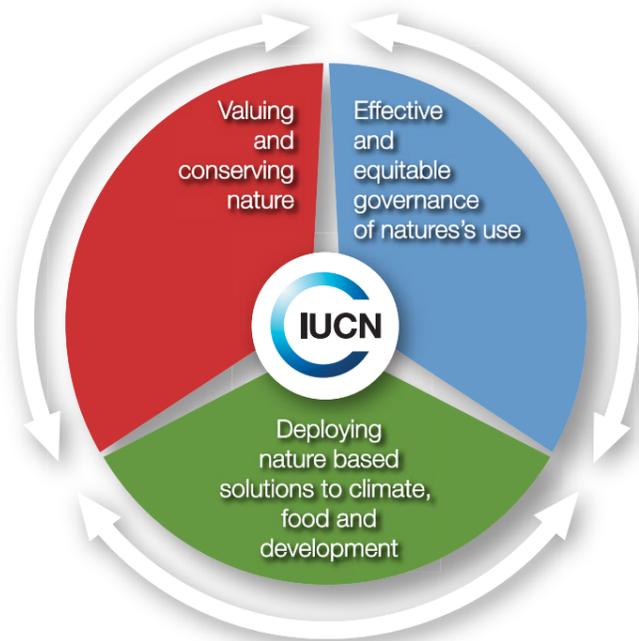
An ongoing Programme: trends and regional contributions

In 2015, we strongly promoted efforts focusing on the conservation of nature based on human rights, strengthening among other things social and gender equity and the livelihoods of the populations, as well as fostering intercultural and multisectoral work. An approach based on ecosystems and the promotion of "Nature-Based Solutions" to face the challenges posed by climate change have been cornerstones of IUCN-ORMACC's actions in the region.

Main Trends in the Region

The main global trends pervading IUCN-ORMACC's actions in the region are those related to:

- Adaptation and mitigation of climate change effects.
- Conservation and restoration of forests and agroforestry systems.
- Protected Area Management.
- Conservation and sustainable use of water resources, including watershed management.
- Effective mechanisms of environmental governance.
- Biodiversity Conservation with a focus on human rights.



III. Advances of IUCN's Programme and the main achievements of the year

One Programme: various actors, actions, and results for a common purpose

With the purpose of carrying out its mission in this region comprising Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, IUCN articulates knowledge, policies and actions through a joint programme with the support of its different constituents: Members, Commissions and Secretariat.

The adoption of the "One Programme" approach reinforces the implementation and impact of IUCN's Programme, promoting more effectively the respective roles, capabilities and specific charac-

teristics of the Union's constituents. This work approach has implied joint action and subsidiarity of the different IUCN Members to achieve maximum impact in its conservation goals, and obtain the programme's results with transparency and effective communication.

Results: Some key results achieved with our support, in contribution to IUCN Programme's three strategic themes of (Conservation - Governance - Natural Solutions), are:



1. The Central American Map of Indigenous Peoples, Protected Areas and Natural Ecosystems was created, validated, and socialized to promote the approach based on conservation rights, stress the need for indigenous peoples to participate in the governance of Protected Areas and natural resources, as well as visualize the forest cover and marine-coastal resources of Central America.

2. The "Gateway" of Protected Areas of the Caribbean was launched in 2015 under the framework of BIOPAMA and it is located in the offices of CERMES, Member of IUCN for the Caribbean. Twenty-five professionals of the Caribbean related to Protected Areas, governments, non-government organisations, academic institutions, etc., increased their skills to eventually contribute with information, as well as in the use of Gateway. We also had the support of IUCN Envi-

ronmental Law Centre and the Environmental Law Commission in training in legal and protected area matters.

3. With the endorsement of the governments of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala a diagnosis of the Trifinio Acquirer was made; this aquifer is located in the border region, which included a characterization, a geophysical study of electric resistivity, a structural-geological analysis, a juridical-institutional study and the update of the Geographical Information System, which will contribute to strengthen these countries' underground water coordinated management.

4. In Costa Rica, we worked in two of the country's most vulnerable ecosystems in face of climate change: paramos and coastal zones. At the request of the National System

of Conservation Areas (SINAC), a participatory management plan of the Cerro Las Vueltas Biological Reserve was made; it includes a diagnosis, maps, and zoning, and systematization of the experience. Further, an attention strategy was developed for the site considered important for the marine-coastal conservation of La Amistad Caribe, based on technical/scientific studies.

5. Under the lead of the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development of Belize, IUCN-ORMACC conducted a study and developed an innovative proposal for the tariffs of the country's protected areas. The proposal considered a better arrangement to empower those NGOs co-managing the Protected Areas System (PAS). This initiative served as basis for a new Wildlife Protected Areas Act.



WORKSHOP FOR THE VALIDATION OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN MAP OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, PROTECTED AREAS AND NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.



FIELD VISIT TO MONITOR AND OBTAIN FEEDBACK OF PHASE II PRO POOR REDD + PROJECT IN COCOA PLANTATIONS, LACHUÁ ECOREGION, GUATEMALA. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.

1. An inter-territorial collaborative management agreement was established among 38 communities of the Indigenous Territorial Governments of Prinzu Ahuya Un, Karata, and Tawira in the Autonomous Region of Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast aimed at regulating and agreeing on the collaborative management of the Cayos Miskitos Biological Reserve and its coastal zones (1,200,000 hectares). This agreement serves as precedent of indigenous collaborative management, based on its customary rights regulations, as well as the national right regulation applied.

2. Supported by IUCN Members in Guatemala, the Regional Secretariat and the civil and government sector, the Guatemalan Congress approved the Probosque Law, which will allocate \$400,000,000 every year to improve the livelihoods of small forest producers by creating one million new jobs and facilitating access to firewood for 145,000 families.

3. In Honduras, civil society actors, indigenous peoples, and the private sector were encouraged to participate in an infor-

med manner in the negotiation process of the FLEGT action plan. The participation of agroforestry organisations and indigenous populations in building the REDD+ national strategy and in the socio-environmental safeguard information system was supported. Likewise, Indigenous Forest Governance and Peasant Forest Governance plans were created to ensure their involvement in the FLEGT negotiation with the European Union, driven by IUCN Member organisation, Fundación Vida.

4. Along with the Member organisation AN CON, the formulation of Panama's new Forestry Law was supported; such law includes a system of forestry incentives and cost reduction for access to forest production schemes.

5. Work was done with MiAmbiente Honduras in defining a process to legalize basin, sub-basin, and microbasin committees in Honduras, which contributes to the operationalization and implementation of the General Water Law. Fundación Vida participated in this process aided by the Bridge and Nuestra Cuen-

ca Goascorán projects, providing these committees with technical support.

6. In collaboration with MOPAWI, IUCN-ORMACC Member helped reactivate the Territorial Council of KATAINASTA and its 30 community councils, which are mandated to promote an indigenous governance process of its lands and natural resources in 55,000 hectares area.

7. A roundtable for regional fishing in the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast (RACCN) of Nicaragua was consolidated to promote sustainable fishing management in the Cayos Miskitos Biological Reserve (RACCN Nicaragua) with the support of the Regional Secretariat for Natural Resources (SERENA).

8. The efforts to improve the incorporation of indigenous peoples' rights, interests and proposals in the process of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the REDD+ mechanism in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Peru were supported.

9. The agreement between MASTA (representatives of the Miskitu population in Honduras) the private corporation BG Group and MiAmbiente was formalized with the inclusion of certain social and environmental safeguards in terms of oil explorations, as well as social investment funds in the coastal communities of La Mosquitia, in Honduras. IUCN supported the Miskitu population in the development of its Bio-Cultu-

ral Protocol in 2012, regarding the right to free, prior and informed consent, which was used as a guide to develop the consultation process between BG Group and MASTA, resulting in 17 topics the indigenous peoples are proposing as a condition to give their consent.

10. As high-level political support to FLEGT matters in Guatemala, the Action Plan Against Illegal Logging was updated; such plan gathers in an inter-institutional panel 11 government institutions, civil society organisations, rural communities and the academic sector.

11. As part of the strengthening processes carried out by the Binational Commission of the Sixaola River Basin, shared between Costa Rica and Panama, an Action Plan was prepared and actions towards the basin's sustainable management were executed. The Costa Rica's Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Panama Ministry of Environment and the Talamanca-Caribbean Biological Corridor

as active Members of the Binational Sixaola Commission and, at the same time, IUCN Members participated in the training efforts and contributed to the process.

12. The formulation and implementation of six agendas and/or indigenous incidence plans with equal number of indigenous and Afro-descendant organisations of Central America was supported. Said agendas allowed the leaders of these populations to participate in decision-making spaces and influence the defense and protection of their lands, territories, natural ecosystems, livelihoods, and other indigenous rights, as well as the respect of the right to Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

13. The Regional Guidelines for Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) were created and validated in REDD+ processes with the participation of indigenous networks, regional bodies, and REDD focal points at a national level, among other key regional actors.



II WORKSHOP ON GENDER AND REDD + WITH WOMEN LEADERS OF FOREST AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS HELD IN PANAJACHEL, GUATEMALA. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.



MEETINGS BETWEEN HONDURAS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION ON FLEGT. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.

Natural Solutions



1. With support from Fundalachuá, 500 new hectares of cocoa were planted in the Ecoregion of Lachuá in Guatemala. Five hundred and sixty producers were incorporated into the production chain, 5 producer organisations and 3 farms joined to create a cocoa production cluster in Guatemala. Three marketing agreements were also signed, allowing the placement of 25 metric tons of high quality cocoa in Guatemala and the international market.

2. Small forest managers had access to the forestry incentives programme of Guatemala (PINPEP), which allowed evaluating and improving 1,200 forest management plans in low-income communities of Alta and Baja Verapaz.

3. In Guatemala, three agreements were established between the communities, the municipal council of Tacaná, and the National Forest Institute, for the co-management of community forests in the Esquichá microbasin, which is part of the Coatán

basin, San Marcos, benefitting 2,052 families within the microbasin (12,312 people) in an area of 103.76 hectares of community forests. This will allow to include forests in the PINPEP-INAB system and improve communities' incomes, as well as favor the protection and conservation of this forest mass.

4. In Petén (Guatemala) 26 forest-owning companies obtained income from the production and commercialization of 1,555 m³ of firewood and 1,430 m³ of timber; 60 jobs were created and 22 cooperation agreements were signed between 10 forest companies of Petén associated to ACOFOP for the harvest and marketing of 1,500 m³ of processed wood, which meant \$1,377,060 in sales revenue.

5. Progress was made in strengthening the Regional Climate Forum, which offers information services to Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, as well as services for the identification and connection with regional networks for: i) agriculture and food safety, and ii) biodiversity, ecosystems (coastal and marine) and carbon with the purpose of facilitating access, knowledge, and use of climate information to professionals to improve the decision-making process in terms of climate change adaptation. This is made in the framework of the Regional Climate Change-USAID Programme, which was implemented in a consortium led by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre (CATIE), as Member organisation of IUCN.

6. IUCN-ORMACC contributed to define the restoration commitments in the Bonn Challenge framework to restore 150,000,000 hectares of deteriorated and deforested hectares from here to 2020. Among the most outstanding actions is the technical support given to the Governors' Climate and Forests (GCF) Task Force of the State of Yucatán, the State of Campeche, and the State of Quintana Roo (Mexico) to define the land restoration commitments. In addition, four countries of the region assumed specific commitments with forest landscape restoration:

- Guatemala reconfirmed the official launch of the May 2015 Restoration Strategy and the commitment to restore 1.2 million hectares.
 - El Salvador announced its commitment to restore 1 million hectares.
 - Costa Rica: 1 million hectares.
 - Honduras: 1 million hectares.
 - Mexico (State of the Yucatán Peninsula) announced its commitment to restore 250,000 hectares for 2020 and 550,000 hectares by 2030.
 - Mexico (State of Quintana Roo) announced its commitment to restore 300,000 hectares by 2020 and 700,000 hectares by 2030.
 - Mexico (State of Campeche) announced its commitment to restore 400,000 hectares by 2020 and 750,000 hectares by 2030.
- With these commitments, IUCN-ORMACC has supported the region to promote actions in forest landscape restoration, in contribution to the Bonn Challenge for a total of 7.1 million hectares.

7. IUCN-ORMACC, along with its Members, supported the implementation of the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and the States of Yucatán, Quintana Roo and Campeche (Mexico). This process has supported the national REDD+ strategies and other policies as follows:



FIRST WORKSHOP ON GENDER AND REDD + WITH WOMEN LEADERS OF FOREST AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, IN ANTIGUA GUATEMALA, SACATEPÉQUEZ. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.



AWARENESS ACTIVITIES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION IN THE XAYA-PIXCAYÁ BASINS, GUATEMALA. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.



PART OF THE TRAININGS ON FREE, PRIOR, AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC) IN THE ECOREGION OF LACHUÁ, GUATEMALA. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.

a. In the Forest Landscape Restoration Peninsula, forest landscape restoration (FLR) led by the government and supported by IUCN-ORMACC is strengthening the early actions of REDD+, especially the development of restoration investment plans.

b. In the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast (RACCN), the central government has developed the Emission Reduction Project Idea (ER-PIN) for the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), using, among other contributions, the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) led by IUCN-ORMACC and its partners in the RACCN. This has enabled to integrate the subnational restoration strategy for the RACCN into the National Strategy for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation of Nicaragua (ENDE-REDD) .

c. In Guatemala, IUCN-ORMACC supported the development of the Reduced Emissions project idea presented before the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) by the Government of Guatemala in October 2014, using, among other contributions, information generated in the ROAM process. IUCN-ORMACC provided a cost-benefit analysis for the implementation of REDD+ actions, taking into consideration policy instruments such as the Forestry Incentive Programme (PINFOR), Programme of Incentives to Small Land Owners with Forestry or Agroforestry Vocation (PINPEP) and the Timber Strategy, including restoration activities' carbon monitoring costs.

d. In September 2015, the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) of Guatemala were approved by the Higher Council on Cli-

mate Change, presented in the COP 21. The document highlighted the initiatives that IUCN-ORMACC has supported along with other social actors and considered crucial to continue using the resources: Probosque Law, PINPEP, FLR Strategy and REDD+ National Strategy.

e. In El Salvador, IUCN-ORMACC is supporting the establishment of priorities and objectives of degraded landscape restoration for the National Programme for Ecosystem and Landscape Restoration (PREP) and the REDD+ national frameworks, as well as a roadmap to actively coordinate the REDD+ strategy and the ROAM development processes.

f. In Costa Rica, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy uses the restoration opportunities assessment, jointly led by IUCN-ORMACC, Government Forest Authority and the National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO), as input for project designing purposes.

8. In Nicaragua, as part of the process to promote legal timber trade through updated information, a study was performed on the origin, use and destination of timber and its byproducts coming from forest companies in the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast (RACCN). It was clear that the forestry market in the RACCN is of approximately \$17,000,000, which generates 2,000 direct jobs in the entire forestry value chain. Forty-one percent (\$7,000,000) corresponds to the value added by timber transformation and marketing, while the remaining 59% (\$10,000,000) is raw material.



FIELD ACTIVITIES: FORESTS POVERTY TOOLKIT IN LIVELIHOODS AND FORESTS; PART OF THE REDD + ACTIONS, HUECHEN BALAM, YUCATAN, MEXICO. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.



MEMBERS OF THE EMBERÁ WOUNAAN TERRITORIES, WHERE A PROGRAMME TO DIVERSIFY ITS LIVELIHOODS, IMPROVE PLANTAIN PRODUCTION AND ACHIEVE INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT OF PLANTAIN PLANTATIONS WAS DEVELOPED. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.

9. In Panama, as part of the promotion and improvement of the agroforestry systems in the region of Emberá Wounaan, a programme was developed to diversify its livelihoods, improve plantain production and achieve integrated waste management of plantain plantations. Members of indigenous communities were trained in the recycling of organic and inorganic waste resulting from plantain management activities; for example, through adequate management of plastic casings, the making of handcrafts and the development of joinery products, among others.

10. In Guatemala, the Forest Landscape Restoration Project in the sub-basins of the rivers

Xayá-Pixcayá was declared strategic by the mayors of the intervention zone, for which municipal agreements were issued. The project's objective is to restore the strategic ecosystems of the aforementioned sub-basins, from which 74% of the surface water consumed in the city of Guatemala de la Asunción is obtained. A public-private environmental alliance was formed under this project, with the participation of more than 26 government organisations, foundations, youth associations, professional associations, universities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, which join efforts and support forest restoration and the environmental health of the Xayá-Pixcayá sub-basins.

Significant events

Activities calendar

January-March

- IUCN-ORMACC organised the 3rd Dialogue of the Responsible Private Forestry Sector of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (UNIFOR). During this event UNIFOR was established legally in Guatemala as a nonprofit organisation.



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April-May

- The Blue Solutions Forum, organised jointly between GIZ, UNEP, GRID-Arendal and IUCN (GMPP and GPAP, with inputs from ORMACC and SUR), was a success with numerous non-governmental and governmental representatives from the South American, Central American and Caribbean regions.

- IUCN-ORMACC successfully organised a Regional

Workshop on Community Forestry Management: The potential impact of FLEGT and REDD+ in reducing poverty and promoting equity.

- BIOPAMA with the support of ORMACC delivered a Terrestrial Protected Areas Training for Protected Areas, which was designed and carried out with technical assistance from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI).

- CEM Steering Committee took place in Costa Rica, hosted by IUCN-Member organisation CATIE with the support of the regional office.

June-August

- IUCN-ORMACC supported the organisation and development of the Central American Climate Forum.



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- IUCN-ORMACC has successfully completed two socialization events for the Regional Strategic Programme for the Forest Ecosystem Management (PERFOR) of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), in Panama and Guatemala.

- In the high level training on water governance in Panama, El Salvador and Costa Rica under the BRIDGE project, governmental authorities recognized the importance of transboundary water governance, and El Salvador's Environment Ministry requested support from IUCN-ORMACC and ELC on the elaboration of the water bill.

September

- The "Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (Caribbean Gateway)" was officially launched at the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum in Panama City, Panama. The operational host for The Caribbean Gateway is the IUCN Member Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) of The University of the West Indies (UWI) based at the Cave Hill campus in Barbados.

- Tools for the implementation of the Rights Approach in Conservation were socialized at IUCN-ORMACC Regional Conservation Forum.

October-November

- IUCN-BIOPAMA funded two data management trainings in the Caribbean.
- Several regional workshops were held under the Regional Climate Change Programme (RCCP-USAID).

- Fostering Gender Policies: In close collaboration with the Gender Global Office, IUCN has provided technical expertise and financial resources to the Ministry of Environment of Guatemala (an IUCN Member) as well as the National Forest Institute (host for

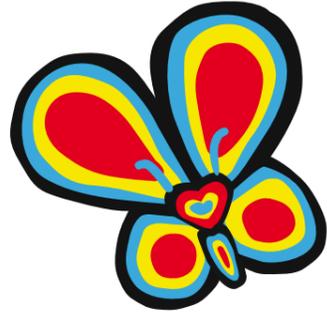
IUCN-ORMACC Guatemala Office) in building their Gender Policies.

- Conservation and management of Red List Species: In Quetzaltenango, Guatemala was held the First Regional Symposium of Restoration, Conservation and Management of the, conservation and management of the *Guatemalan Pinabete Abies Guatemalensis* endemic specie of Guatemala, category 1 of the Red List of species.

- IUCN-ORMACC was part of the official delegation of the Government of Honduras, in the Fourth Round of Negotiations on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) Honduras-European Union on the application of laws, forest governance and trade (FLEGT).



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Regional Conservation Forum:

“Giving a voice to people and nature”

Under this inspiring slogan, during three days the IUCN's Regional Conservation Forum - Panama 2015 brought together representatives of non-governmental organisations, governments and IUCN experts from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean in Panama City, September 3-5, 2015. This period of intense work and the exchange of knowledge and experiences articulated the reflections and analysis of the organisations and governments Members of IUCN in common convergence and under the One Programme framework.

The forum was organised in close collaboration and coordination with the Ministry of the Environment and the Committee of IUCN Members in Panama, and was honored with the presence of the President of the Union, Zhang Xinsheng and Director General, Inger Andersen, both during their first visit to the region, marking an institutional milestone.

Exchange of knowledge

For the first time in an edition of the Regional Forum held in this region, the first day was dedi-

cated to sharing knowledge so non-governmental organisations, governments, academia and private companies could have the opportunity to share experiences, and good conservation and sustainable development practices.

With the participation of more than 300 people, 53 expert panelists, an exhibition area, the projection of 18 audiovisual works and 6 posters, this day served as a platform for debate and regional «sounding board», reinforcing and confirming the relevance of the three theme-based areas of IUCN Programme (Conservation-Governance-Natural-Based Solutions) in harmony with the Sustainable Development Goals for 2015-2030.

Climate change was one of the most relevant issues discussed this day, as well as the implementation of nature-based solutions for adaptation. Also the experiences on biodiversity conservation and the application of various instruments for conservation purposes constituted significant work streams.

The role and contribution of indigenous peoples in the conser-



PHOTOGRAPHY: ©2015 TITO HERRA, UCN-ORMACC.

vation of natural resources and the importance of good governance and strengthening management at the local level were two topics that came up for discussion and agreement.

Contributing to the Programme

During second day of the forum, a general presentation was made of the draft of the IUCN's 2017-2020 World Programme. The global results and sub-results were reviewed and discussed in a participatory manner from the perspective of the Members of this region. Based on these observations, a first approach to the definition of regional priorities was also made for this region's 2017-2020 Work Plan.

Members participated and presented their proposals

The third and last day's agenda focused on the Union's Governance en route towards the World Conservation Congress- Hawai'i 2016 and its Conservation Forum, and on the new motion preparation process. Members had the opportunity to meet and discuss the Council's proposals

for governance reforms and other possible amendments to the IUCN bylaws.

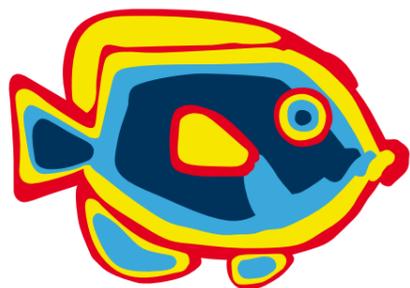
In order to enable the exercise of regional governance, work spaces were facilitated for the intermediate structures of Members of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, which included meetings of Member Committees, nominations and voting processes particularly of the Board of Directors of the Mesoamerican Committee and the nominations of Regional Councillors for the World Conservation Congress- Hawai'i 2016.

The forum, in accordance with the One Programme integrative approach, served as a platform so the Commissions - through their six representatives and the Regional for Latin America and the Caribbean- could report their progress and more relevant contributions to the development of the Union's Programme from the respective thematic specialty. Moreover, a panel of exchange of the Regional Councillors, shared the vision and perspectives of the Council in relation to the Forum's participants.

As the Forum's governance corollary, the Members chose the three candidates to Regional Councillors that will be supported by the region at the IUCN's World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i 2016: Marco Vinicio Cerezo of Guatemala, Lider Sucre of Panama and Luis Rodríguez-Rivera of the Caribbean. Also, Froilán Esquinca of Mexico was elected Chairman of the IUCN's Committee of Mesoamerican Members for the 2015-2019 period.

To Hawai'i

The Forum was a relevant regional turning point that, under the One Programme approach, helped give a voice to many organisations, representatives of various sectors and IUCN constituents, in search of solutions that ensure better life conditions for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean in the first stopover en route to the IUCN's World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i, (September 2016), which will seek to inspire, reinforce and mobilize the Union, as well as boost the Hawai'i commitments towards sustainable development goals in the Union's agenda for the next quadrennium.



IV. Strategic alliances

Our main cooperating partners that contribute to the Programme of the Union's implementation in the region are:



V. Members and Commissions

Outstanding achievements of the Membership

COSTA RICA

- Fundación MarViva, IUCN Member, received the Medal to Environmental Merit from the Autonomous Regional Corporation for the Sustainable Development of Chocó (CODECHOCÓ). This recognition was made during the launch of the new Protected Marine Area "Regional District of Integrated Management Gulf of Tribugá-Cabo Corrientes," carried out in Nuquí, Chocó on March 12, 2015. CODECHOCÓ emphasized MarViva's commitment to the environmental management of the Department of Chocó and the preservation of marine ecosystems in the Gulf of Tribugá-Cabo Corrientes. The Medal to Environmental Merit is the highest distinction given by the Corporation to institutions linked to environmental management, protection, sustainable use of natural resources, and strategic ecosystems in Chocó.

- Eighty exhibitors from different communities of Talamanca (Costa Rica) and Las Tablas (Panama) participated in the III Agrobiodiversity Fair, in Bribri (Talamanca), which was carried out under the project Governance for Ecosystem-based



NINE ENDANGERED RED MACAWS ARE RELEASED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE PETEN REGION. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY: ARCAS.

Adaptation, organised in alliance with the Talamanca-Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBTC) and other local organisations. In this activity, local communities exchange their seeds, farming experiences, and relevant aspects of their culture.

CURAÇAO

- CARMABI's New Marine Education Center (MEC) is a small but high quality museum exhibiting a lot of information on the marine life present in the sea around Curaçao and in particular on the coral reef surrounding the island.

GUATEMALA

- ARCAS released the first nine endangered scarlet macaws (*Ara macaocyanoptera*) in Sierra Lacandona National Park in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve in the region of Petén, north of Guatemala, with the purpose of reinforcing the local population of scarlet macaws there. Five of the macaws carried satellite transmitters to monitor their movements and success adapting to wildlife. The scarlet macaw is an endangered species, with only 300 to 400 birds out in the wild in Guatemala, Mexico and Belize.

HAITI

• Jean Wiener, Vice President of the Regional Committee of Caribbean Members and Executive Director of the Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM), Member organisation of IUCN, was awarded the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize for his efforts to protect the environment.

PANAMA

• In July 2015, the Metropolitan Natural Park, Member organisation of IUCN in Panama since 2008, celebrated 30 years of providing environmental services to the inhabitants of Panama City, such as 30% reduction of air pollutants in the capital city, temperature reduction, sound reduction, as well as serving as a flooding zone of the Curundú River and providing locations for hiking, research, and other activities.

• The National Association for the Conservation of Nature

(ANCON), Member of IUCN in Panama since 1988, celebrated its 30th anniversary. Established in 1985, since its beginnings it has worked very closely with national and international bodies, academic and commercial entities, and local communities with the purpose of fulfilling the mission of preserving Panama's biodiversity and natural resources in benefit of present and future generations.

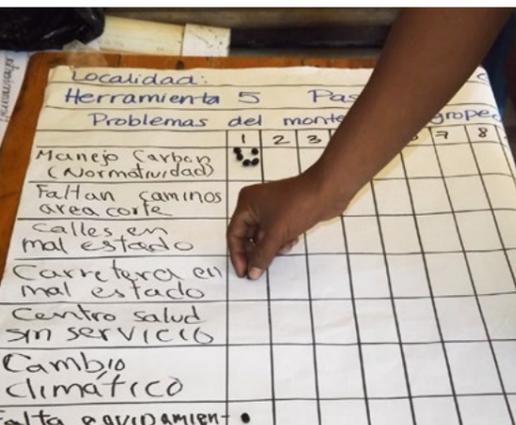
• Chagres National Park Foundation received the Odebrecht Golden Frog 2015 Award, given to non-government organisations that present projects of their own, developed in communities within national territories, whose activities are based on environmental sustainability and preservation. Such recognition to the Chagres National Park Foundation was granted by the project "Towards a Sustainable Community Model."

• The Bahía de Panama Wetland was declared a statutory protected area. This was achieved with the support from the Panamanian government and the momentum provided by the National Committee of IUCN Members in Panama and other environmental organisations. This impedes constructions in this zone until a management plan is created for this reserve. This zone, which stretches from Juan Díaz to Chimán, is important for its mangroves. The main threats for this site are illegal logging, landfills and real estate development.

• Panama declared two new Marine Protected Areas in the Pacific and the Caribbean: the Coiba Mountain Range (Pacific) and Volcán Bank (Caribbean). This turns Panama into one of the countries that fulfills the United Nations' objective of establishing at least 10% of its territorial waters as zones under special protection.

MEXICO

• National Geographic announced the finalists of the World Heritage Award; among them is Sierra Gorda Ecological Group (GESG). This Mexican civil organisation competes in the category "Preserving the Natural World," with an Australian association involved in protecting biodiversity and another Thai association dedicated to rescue elephants. The GESG has been recognized for working directly with the communities settled in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. Mexico's most ecodiverse natural area of Mexico. The association's main strengths that caught National Geographic's attention were providing new work opportunities, developing tourist microenterprises and helping to preserve biodiversity without forgetting the economic and sustainable development of the region.



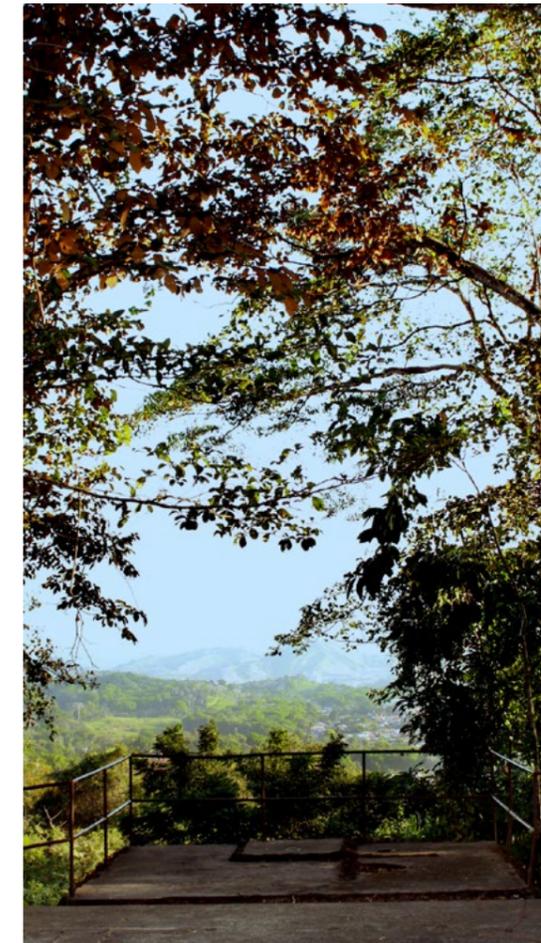
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THE NEW CARMABI MARINE EDUCATION CENTER. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY: CARMABI.



THE PRESIDENT OF PANAMA, JUAN CARLOS VARELA AND THE MINISTER OF MIAMBIENTE, MIREI ENDARA DURING THE SIGNING OF THE ACT DECLARING TWO NEW MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN PANAMA. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY: MIAMBIENTE.



BALCONY AT THE METROPOLITAN NATURAL PARK, PANAMA. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY: METROPOLITAN NATURAL PARK.

Our work with IUCN Commissions

1. Jointly with the Ecosystem Management Commission (CEM) and the Environmental, Economic and Social Policy Commission (CEESP), the first actions were coordinated to implement Human Dependency on Nature in the community of Yorkín, belonging to the Sixaola River Binational Watershed (Costa Rica-Panama), where IUCN-ORMACC implements projects on water governance and ecosystem-based climate change.

2. Progress was made in planning knowledge products related to Central American Protected Areas with the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

3. The Environmental, Economic and Social Policy Commission (CEESP) and IUCN-ORMACC supported the task force for Mesoamerica in charge of the Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF) in formulating an agenda for 2016. These efforts contributed to socialize and replenish the proposal of the guide on principles and values to evaluate the performance of natural resource governance, as well as identify the potential new Members that could strengthen the task force.

4. In cooperation with the Environmental, Economic and Social Policy Commission (CEESP) and the PROAMBIENTE project, and based on five experiences (case studies), the Guidelines on the Governance of Protected Areas with Indigenous Groups and Local Communities were created. The case studies refer to the experiences of:

- Nicaragua (Cayos Misquitos Reserve and the Macizo de Peñas Blancas Protected Area)
- Guatemala (Izabal and San Marcos).
- Honduras (Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve).

These guidelines are intended as a legal information tool and suggestions for use of the human rights approach, and guarantee the full and effective participation of local communities and indigenous groups in the conservation and management of Central American Protected Areas.

5. Jointly with the Centre for Environmental Rights and IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law, UICN-ORMACC has participated in the creation and review of the "Virtual Modules on Protected Areas law" (<http://www.protectedareas-law.org/>), which have been pilot-tested two times in our region (in Trinidad and Tobago, and more recently in the Dominican Republic) under the BIOPAMA project to build/strengthen capacities for government officials dealing with Protected Areas issues, NGOs, partner organisations of IUCN and legal staff, among others.

6. In coordination with IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), and jointly with Members of IUCN and CEC, themes and initiatives driven from the environmental education scope were strengthened, highlighting the following:

- a.** The IUCN's Member Organisation Earth Charter organised an Expert Meeting on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean with UNESCO from May 12-14 in San José (Costa Rica), seeking to strengthen knowledge and experience of sharing information regarding climate change education and disaster risk reduction.
- b.** For second year in a row, IUCN's Member Organisation Metropolitan Natural Park of Panama City organised the

"Healthy Park, Healthy People," one day event, approved by Order WWC-2012-Res-039-SP "Healthy Park, Healthy People" approved by the World Conservation Congress, held in Jeju. This annual event aims to promote and raise awareness among people to improve their quality of life and a more sustainable natural environment.

c. Further, along with the Metropolitan Park of Jalisco (Mexico), IUCN-ORMACC has ventured in a cooperation and horizontal exchange programme to strengthen the environmental education programmes of both urban natural parks.

7. To the Species Survival Commission (SSC), IUCN-ORMACC has supported the monitoring of advocacy related to the possible

loss of the region's emblematic species. After piloting IUCN Red List of Ecosystems in several countries of Latin America, including Costa Rica, this novel flagship knowledge product is picking up traction in the region, with the first training workshop for conservation practitioners from across Latin America that took place in April in Costa Rica. This work has involved close collaboration between CEM, SSC, the Secretariat and IUCN Members.

8. BIOPAMA project offers a good example of working productively and collaboratively with Commissions (WCPA), Members (Caribbean Members), key partners in the Caribbean region and across the Secretariat (HQ and IUCN-ORMACC).



PARTICIPANTS AT BIOPAMA TRAINING FOR TERRESTRIAL PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT, JULY 2015, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. PHOTOGRAPHY: BIOPAMA PHOTO LIBRARY.

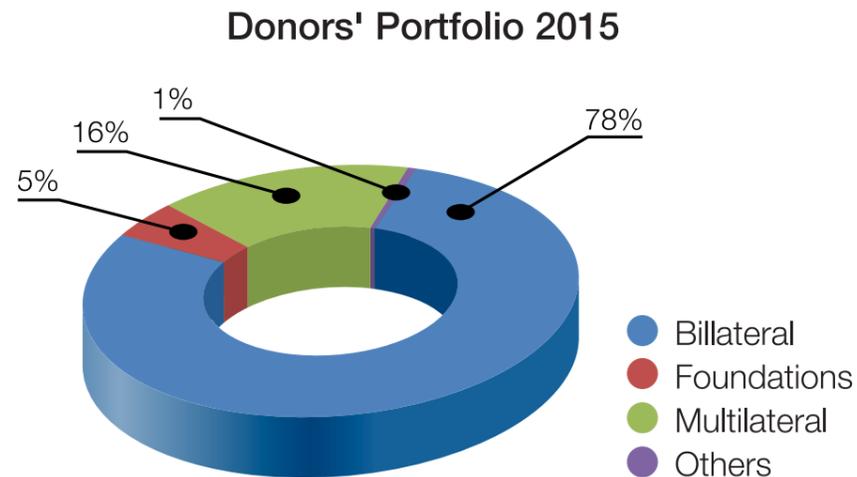


CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH THE MISKITU PEOPLE, NICARAGUA. ©2015 IUCN-ORMACC.



BILWI, NICARAGUA. PHOTOGRAPHY: ©2014 PAÚL ARAGÓN/ IUCN-ORMACC.

VI. Financial summary



Source: IUCN-ORMACC

During 2015, IUCN-ORMACC added five new projects to its portfolio, which implied a US\$13.5 million increase, resulting in a total portfolio of US\$36.4 million. Likewise, a total of 30 projects were implemented for an annual budget of US\$8.9 million.

2015 reports the highest budget attained by IUCN-ORMACC since it was established in the region. The efforts made by the organisation to increase its work in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean have yielded tangible results; new cooperating partners have believed in the IUCN's work and have joined forces with our partners to work together in implementing projects in the field and in coordination with the governments.

We thank Members, partners, and allies for their trust in our mission. It is still a challenge to maintain international cooperation's interest in the region, but certainly the good results, transparency and efficacy in terms of project management enable us to obtain impact results. Joint efforts among governments, non-governmental organisations, communities, enterprises, and experts from various sectors of society have proven to be an essential element of success in accomplishing our mission.

Our appreciation to our cooperating partners, who know that is crucial for this region rich in biodiversity and cultural diversity to preserve natural resources that will help improve our people's quality of life of and contribute to a better planet.

VII. Publications and other knowledge products

1. Book:

Legalidad Forestal en Mesoamérica (Forestry Law in Mesoamerica)

2. Video:

Proyecto AVE: (Adaptación, Vulnerabilidad y Ecosistemas). Go4Eba

3. Book:

Retos en la implementación de REDD+ en México a través de esquemas de distribución de beneficios a favor de poblaciones en condición de pobreza (Challenges for Pro-Poor Benefit Sharing Schemes in the Implementation of Redd+ in Mexico) (Spanish and English version).



4. Video:

Mapa de Pueblos Indígenas, Áreas Protegidas y Ecosistemas Naturales en América Central: una construcción participativa (Map of Indigenous Peoples, Protected Areas and Natural Ecosystems in Central America: A Participatory Construction) (Spanish and English version)

5. Book:

Lineamientos para la gestión compartida de Áreas Protegidas: Pueblos Indígenas y Tribales y comunidades locales en Centroamérica (Guidelines for the Shared Governance of Protected Areas: Indigenous Populations and Tribes and Local Communities in Central America)



6. Brochure:

Por una implementación efectiva del enfoque de derechos (For an Effective Implementation of the Rights-Based Approach) (Spanish and English version)

7. Brochure:

Construyendo una nueva forma de gobierno en KATAINASTA (Building a New Form of Government in KATAINASTA) (Miskitu).

8. Poster and leaflet:

Versión popular Bio-Protocolo de Consulta y Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado del Pueblo Mayangna Sauni Arungka (Popular Version of the Protocol of Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the Mayangna Sauni Arungka Population) (in Spanish and Mayangna).



9. Guide:

El camino de la Consulta y el Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado (CLPI) en la Eco-Región Lachuá (The Road to Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in the Ecoregion of Lachuá

10. Brochure:

Lineamientos Regionales de Consulta y Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado (CLPI) en procesos de REDD+: la ruta hacia la construcción de instrumentos que contribuyan a su implementación (Regional Guidelines for Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Redd+ Processes: The Roadmap Towards the Construction of Instruments That Contribute to Its Implementation)

11. Mapa de Pueblos Indígenas, Áreas Protegidas y Ecosistemas Naturales en América Central (Map of Indigenous Peoples, Protected Areas and Natural Ecosystems in Central America)

12. The Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (Caribbean Gateway).

13. Web Tool:

IUCN-ORMACC Special Data Infrastructure, Website: <https://ideormacc.org/geoportal/>

14. Web Tool:

Species for Restoration, Website: <http://especiesrestauracion-IUCN.org/>

About IUCN

IUCN is a Membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

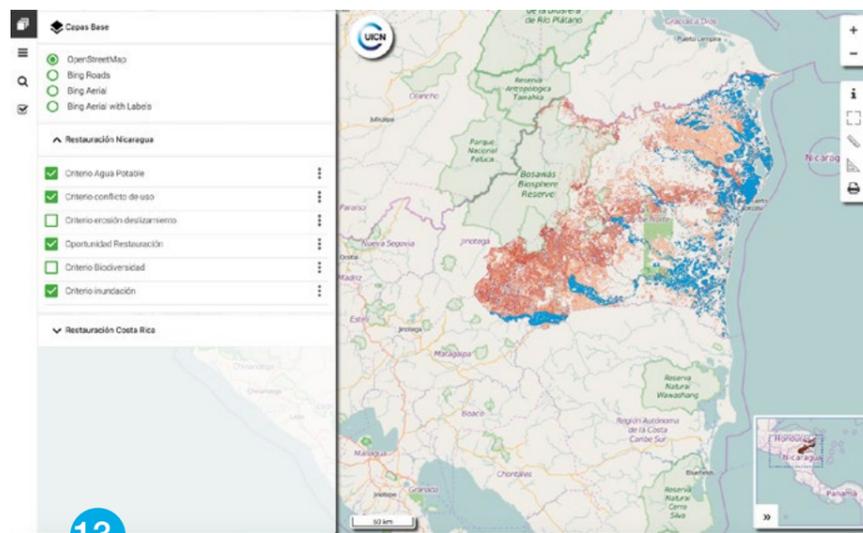
Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of 1,300 Member organisations and some 15,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad Membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

www.iucn.org
<https://twitter.com/IUCN/>

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