CLIMATE ACTION IN COLOMBIA

Country context

Colombia has experienced a significant improvement in socio-economic conditions in the past decades, turning into an emerging economy attractive for investment. In 2012, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a rate of 4%, with agriculture and industry making significant contributions to the national GDP. In the same year forestry (36%), agriculture (26%) and energy (including transport and industry) emitted approximately 94% of the total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

Colombia's climate change institutional framework at the beginning of the century was fragile, simple and lacking inter-sectoral participation. Transformational action towards a more comprehensive framework started with the formulation of Colombia's National Development Plan (NDP) 2010-2014. The NDP included a climate change goal regarding **"identification and prioritization of mitigation options under the framework of a low carbon development strategy".**

In 2011 the government re-established the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS) as a way of strengthening environmental institutional arrangements.

This led to the publication of the Institutional strategy for the articulation of policies and actions on climate change in Colombia by the National Economic, Political and Social Council (CONPES). Also in 2011, the National Climate Change System (SISCLIMA) was created. It clarified the importance of the articulation between sectoral, national and territorial levels towards collective and coordinated climate change management.

In the context of SISCLIMA, CONPES began development and coordination of the **Colombian Low Carbon Development Strategy (CLCDS)**. The CLCDS invited support from the Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) project and other initiatives, so as to be developed through a multi-level participatory process. LECB aimed to respond to the needs of the CLCDS and contribute to its implementation by supporting the design and implementation of low carbon development plans, policies and measures; the design and construction of a monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system; and capacity building for government officials at all levels and the private sector.

LECB COLOMBIA at a glance

Total financing
US $1,296,000

Timeframe
5 years (2012-2017)

Sectors
Economy-wide

Counterparts
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), National Planning Department (DNP) and sectoral ministries

Thematic areas

- [x] Institutional frameworks
- [ ] GHG inventory systems
- [x] NAMAs
- [x] LEDS
- [ ] INDC support
- [x] MRV systems
- [x] Private sector involvement
- [ ] Climate finance

RESULTS

Development of Sectoral Mitigation Action Plans (SMAPs)

The SMAP process was the first sectoral engagement around mitigation action in Colombia. LECB supported the development of SMAPs for the mining, hydrocarbon, electricity, transportation, waste, housing, industry, and agriculture sectors. These plans played an important role in allocating responsibilities for the INDC and will be transformed into "Sectoral Mitigation Implementation Plans" under the NDC Support Programme (successor to the LECB project).

Development of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system

The LECB project supported the creation of a MRV system that will manage accounting for emissions, emissions reductions, and finance in an integrated way. This web-based platform (http://www.huelladecarbono.com.co/site/) enables reporting of GHG emissions from production and manufacturing processes, and is aligned with the National Registry of Emission Reductions, which in turn was included in the NDP and the tax reform process of 2016. The latter will enable tax benefits for companies under the recently regulated carbon neutrality instrument.

Development of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)

LECB has been fundamental in the development of a NAMA portfolio in Colombia. The project directly supported the development of six NAMAs: (1) **Colombian Coffee**; (2) **Reconversion of Panela**; (3) **Sustainable Bovine Livestock**; (4) **Energy Efficiency in Hotels**; (5) **Off-Grid Renewable Energy**; and (6) **Logistics Optimization in Industry**. The inputs and methodologies developed for these NAMAs were used as a basis for the development of other NAMAs, which thereby benefitted indirectly from LECB support. The NAMA formulation process involved a series of capacity building and engagement actions in the public and private sectors. This process mobilized actors, created networks and alliances, and facilitated commitments. As a result, the Colombian Institute of Technical Standards (ICONTEC) has developed a guide for NAMA formulation and evaluation.

6 NAMAs
developed for Colombia´s NAMA portfolio

+560,000
Colombian coffee growers and their families
in over 20 departments and 500 municipalities, will benefit from the Coffee NAMA

Consolidation of CLCDS and formulation of Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)

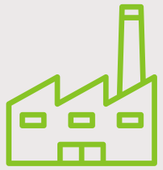
LECB was in charge of CLCDS coordination and led the process for its consolidation. The CLCDS coordinator and team had an important influence in the design of key policy documents such as the INDC, and gave technical support to the development of normative instruments like the Carbon Tax Act within the tax reform process of 2016. Climate policy for each sector was validated as part of the INDC process. The sub-national deployment of CLCDS served as a key input for the formulation of Colombia's INDC in 2015, which was carried out through capacity building workshops in four regions.

+1,780
participants
in 38 capacity building workshops held in 4 regions, including representatives of 18 regional environmental authorities and over 5 urban environmental authorities

IMPACTS

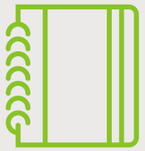
Improved public and private sector inter-institutional coordination

resulting from the highly participatory processes for consolidation and territorial deployment of the CLCDS and INDC formulation. LECB functioned as a platform that strengthened the CLCDS though inter-institutional coordination between MADS, the DNP and sectoral ministries, and also with subnational authorities. LECB also helped to foster links between state institutions and the private sector, and ensured coordination with multilateral organizations.



Strengthened engagement of the private sector in the successful implementation of the CLCDS

Throughout the INDC formulation and NAMA development processes, and the design of the Voluntary Carbon Reporting Platform, the private sector has been able to acquire new knowledge related to climate change, especially regarding corporate carbon footprints. This will allow them to make informed decisions about their GHG mitigation and investment options, and contributions.



Mainstreamed climate change mitigation in the national planning agenda to increase awareness towards low carbon development in Colombia

Under the CLCDS, LECB contributed to capacity building and successful ownership of NAMAs and SMAPs by sectoral public institutions.

General overview of the UNDP Low Emission Capacity Building Programme

Since its inception, the UNDP LECB programme has paved the way for effective and lasting climate action by building capacities of government staff to develop policies, strategies and tools that help implement their climate change goals. Focusing specifically on essential building blocks such as strengthening GHG inventory data and systems; formalization of institutional arrangement for climate actions; development and alignment of low emission development strategies (LEDS); and the creation of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), LECB provided much of the enabling environment necessary for countries to respond quickly to emerging needs, such as the submission of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) and socialization of the Paris Agreement. Given its flexible nature and strong country ownership, often the originally-envisaged and measurable LECB outputs have been exceeded, leading to some unplanned but highly welcomed additional impacts.

CASE STUDY

A COFFEE NAMA FOR COLOMBIA

The LECB project supported Colombia in the formulation of a NAMA for the coffee sector. Coffee is one of the largest agricultural activities in Colombia, one of the leading export products and one of the main sources of employment in rural areas. The sector is highly vulnerable both to the impacts of climate change and to market fluctuations derived from consumers wanting to purchase “low carbon” goods.

The Coffee NAMA aimed to develop and implement strategies for GHG mitigation in coffee production, harvest and post-harvest processes at the farm-level (fincas). To do so, the NAMA proposed four lines of action: (i) Efficient use of nitrogen fertilizers, (ii) Implementation of agroforestry systems in coffee farms, (iii) Optimization of practices for coffee post-harvest, and (iv) Improvement of basic sanitation infrastructure in coffee farms.

The process started in late 2014, when outputs from preliminary work conducted by the National Coffee Research Centre (CENICAFE) on emissions’ calculations in the coffee production system and pilot experiences were collected. **A key part of the process was the development of the emissions baseline for the coffee sector.** A survey of approximately 1,800 coffee growers from all coffee departments was undertaken with the help of the Extension Service of the National Federation of Coffee Growers (FNC). The structuring of the NAMA was led by a multi-stakeholder committee with the participation of FNC (Technical Management), CENICAFE, MADS, UNDP, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and consultancy firm Lavola.

Main process results include a NAMA designed to improve efficiency of coffee production, increase profitability and make the sector more competitive and sustainable; a “state of the art” calculation of GHG emissions from the coffee sector; and methodological learning that can be replicated for other agricultural subsectors.

Although coffee is not a high GHG emitter in Colombia, the NAMA process helped to understand and highlight the potential of the sector for GHG emissions reduction and fixation potential, and how this sector contributes to the country’s INDC.

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The UNDP Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) Programme was launched in January 2011 as part of a joint collaboration between the European Union, the Governments of Germany and Australia and UNDP. It is a global programme that helps countries build the public and private sector capacities needed to scale up country-driven mitigation actions.

LECB Colombia made possible by:

UNDP Empowered lives. Resilient nations.

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