



# Project Brief

## Environment

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### Situation Analysis

Guatemala is one of the most ecologically diverse nations on the planet, boasting 14 different eco-regions and immense biological and cultural diversity. Four million hectares of sub-tropical forest are found in Guatemala, 70% of which is located within natural protected areas like the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) in the department of Petén and the Sierra de Las Minas Biosphere Reserve (SMBR) in the eastern region of the country. The MBR forms the heart of the largest block of broadleaf tropical forest in Mesoamerica, and its nearly 2.1 million hectares are home to iconic wildlife such as the jaguar, puma, and scarlet macaw. This significant natural endowment is complemented by the remnants of ancient Mayan cities throughout tropical forests. Despite this rich biological and cultural heritage, natural resources throughout the country are threatened by habitat loss, over-exploitation, trafficking of flora and fauna, agricultural encroachment, climate change, weak governance and narco-trafficking.

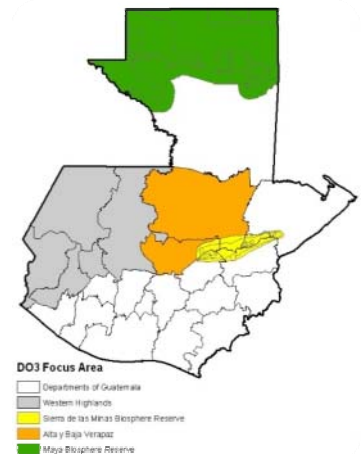


To compound these threats, Guatemala is one of the top ten countries affected by climate change and one of the most vulnerable to natural disasters. Guatemala's geographic location makes it prone to tropical storms, droughts, hurricanes and earthquakes, and the incidence of extreme weather events is predicted to worsen as a result of climate change. Geographic location is compounded by high poverty and malnutrition rates, which increase the vulnerability of many Guatemalan households, especially among inhabitants of the Western Highlands.

### USAID Response

USAID's comprehensive approach to safeguard Guatemala's natural resource base incorporates livelihood development, biological monitoring, climate resilience, and cross-sectoral climate policy initiatives. The focus areas for these interventions include the MBR and SMBR, Alta and Baja Verapaz, as well as the Western Highland Departments of San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Quiché, and Huehuetenango.

USAID has improved livelihoods, maintained forest cover, and enhanced security through ongoing support to community forest concessions in the MBR. Activities have opened high value international markets for timber and non-timber forest products, increased incomes well above the Guatemalan minimum wage, and engaged local communities in conservation initiatives. Concurrent biological monitoring in the MBR and SMBR has helped bring iconic species back from the brink of extinction. USAID supported the Public Ministry to create a specific office for Environmental and Cultural Heritage Crime in Petén and helped open the first ever Environmental Court in Petén. USAID will also launch publicity campaigns for the prevention of environmental and cultural heritage crimes. USAID supported improved investigation and prosecution of environmental and cultural heritage crimes. USAID will help develop a methodology to improve coordination between the National Civilian Police's Division of Natural Resource Protection (DIPRONA) and the MP in the investigation of relevant cases. As a Global Climate Change Initiative focus country, USAID has pioneered mitigation actions through support to four carbon sequestration pilot projects as well as design of the national level Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) strategy. These efforts will help Guatemala to engage in the global carbon market, enhance incomes, and maintain critical forest cover. In the area of adaptation, USAID has increased understanding of and support for climate change interventions, increased access to climate information, and enhanced capacity to manage and incorporate climate information into decision-making. Efforts have engaged a range of stakeholders, from small-scale farmers to municipal leaders, and include the design of climate change training modules, the installation of meteorological stations, the design of a climate early warning system, and



demonstration plots to help producers cope with climate change impacts on crops such as droughts and floods. USAID's adaptation efforts are focused in the Western Highlands, Guatemala's most vulnerable region to climate change, and are part of the Western Highlands Integrated Program (WHIP).

Guatemala is also part of the Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) program. Through this initiative, the Government of Guatemala and the United States Government established an alliance to support the design, construction and implementation of a national strategy that lowers greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A bilateral memorandum of understanding between the two countries was signed in 2013 to formalize this alliance. USAID's Guatemala LEDS program seeks to: 1) establish reliable science and analytics to improve national greenhouse gas inventories; 2) build institutional capacity to identify, design, and prioritize policies and strategies that promote social, economic, and environmental objectives through low emission development; 3) promote implementation of low emission development through demonstrations with agroindustry and small-and-large scale farmers, and; 4) support communication and education of climate change and low emission development.

### Results and Accomplishments

- **International Climate Agreement** – USAID provided technical analysis to review historical GHG emissions and identify preliminary emission trends in support of Guatemala's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution development process. This information facilitated Guatemala's participation in the new international climate change agreement.
- **Climate Change Capacity** – Technical experts have been embedded in climate change units at the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and the Ministry of Energy and Mines to build capacity from within to implement a LEDS.
- **Private Sector Support** – Six memorandums of understanding have been signed with key counterparts in the GOG and private sector, such as the Guatemala Exporters Association, National Coffee Association, Federation of Cooperatives of the Verapaces, detailing the roles and responsibilities, and priority actions to promote LED implementation in their respective areas.
- **Income and employment generation** – Efforts to increase access to credit and international markets resulted in US \$25,768,658 in total sales of timber and non-timber forest products and created 3,681 full time equivalent jobs within the departments of Petén, Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz and the Western Highlands in 2015.
- **Protected forest resources** – 486,527 hectares of timber and non-timber forest products have been maintained under Forest Stewardship Council certification in the MBR.

### Current Implementing Partners

Project Name	Implementing Partner	Duration
Low Emission Development Strategy Project in Guatemala (LEDS)	International Resources Group (Engility-IRG)	June 27, 2014 – June 26, 2019
Climate, Nature and Communities in Guatemala (CNCG)	Rainforest Alliance	February 8, 2013 – February 7, 2018
Monitoring and Evaluation Project	DevTech Systems	January 17, 2013 – February 7, 2018
Broader Access to Financial Markets and Services (Development Credit Authority – Loan Portfolio Guarantee Facility, Forestry)	BANRURAL	September 26, 2011 – September 26, 2018
Strengthening Governance in the Maya Biosphere Reserve <i>*Previously direct apportionment, soon to become inter-agency agreement</i>	U.S. Department of Interior	September 20, 2010 – Present
Participating Agency Program Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service	U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	May 14, 2007 – April 1, 2017