

PARTNERS

USAID's partners in climate change activities in Guatemala include:

- Abt Associates
- Counterpart International
- National Geographic Society
- Technoserve
- The Rainforest Alliance
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Because partners change as new activities arise, this list of partners is not comprehensive.

In addition to the direct environmental benefits, significant economic gains have already been realized. In fiscal year 2007, 2.6 million board feet of certified and forest products in "process of certification" were sold for \$5.1 million. USAID supported the consolidation of business links between certified timber producers and buyers and helped develop incentives for certified forest management and chain of custody tracking. Additionally, USAID helped open important markets for "xate", a non timber forest foliage product. A total of 14,463 xate bunches were sold for \$147,948.

Considering that forests have an economic value and provide key environmental services, it is critical to maintain the forest cover, especially in the MBR, a protected area which contributes to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing the livelihoods of surrounding communities.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sustainable tourism supports the maintenance of stable populations, conservation of biodiversity, and sustenance of critical wildlife species. USAID supported the Geotourism Initiative that consists of a Geotourism Charter signed by the National Geographic Society (NGS), the Government of Guatemala, and the private sector, to sustain and enhance the environment and the diversity of the cultural, historic and scenic assets of Guatemala. USAID promoted the certification of 30 new Small and Medium Enterprises and community based operations (CBOs) under the Green Deal certification seal and supported the marketing of certified venues. USAID also helped to improve various web portals and the design of fact sheets for 13 tourism destinations. Also in 2007, 1,118 people (including 602 women) received increased economic benefits from sustainable tourism. USAID granted four scholarships to women to participate in a formal community tourism education program. The handicrafts component of this program helped women's groups to legalize their organizations and also provided technical assistance on new market trends.

This project builds upon past accomplishments; in previous years, USAID has funded projects to install tourist infrastructure, train park staff in municipal parks administration, and help leverage financial resources to build trails, a visitor center, and a geology museum in Atitlan. In San Marcos and San Juan municipalities, park boundaries were mapped and delimited, and best management practices for sustainable land use were developed. All these elements served as inputs to develop natural resource management plans.

FOREST FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Reducing forest fires and forest fire threats is a key focus of USAID/ Guatemala's assistance in the Maya Biosphere Reserve where in 2005, 375,000 hectares (nearly 1/5 of the reserve) burned during the fire season. USAID support has equipped and trained municipal fire brigades in all seven municipalities of the region, and Defensores de La Naturaleza (the organization co-managing the area) is actively engaged in fire prevention establishing fire breaks, conducting prescribed burns, and establishing voluntary brigades to conduct patrols and monitoring activities. In addition, USAID is funding direct fire suppression activities through the provision of training, equipment and transportation, as well as a strong prevention component through public outreach and community patrolling in high risk areas. Approximately 10,000 hectares of high value tropical forest have been protected from destruction, and carbon emissions avoided, due to increased capacity to prevent and suppress human caused wildfire.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.usaid.gov/gt>