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NATURAL WEALTH

Preserving biodiversity in Colombia's tropical dry forests, grasslands and freshwater ecosystems.

OVERVIEW

Natural Wealth works with the Government of Colombia (GOC) to preserve biodiversity in the tropical dry forests on the Caribbean and in the grasslands and freshwater ecosystems in Orinoquia. This activity is being executed in the departments of Bolívar, Casanare, Cesar, La Guajira, Sucre and Vichada and it runs from March 2017 – March 2022.

Colombia is the second most biodiverse country on Earth and is home to approximately 10 percent of the world's species. Unfortunately, tropical dry forests are one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, and only eight percent of the total original area of these forests in Colombia remains. Likewise, grasslands and freshwater ecosystems in Orinoquia cover 30 percent of Colombia's territory.

Tropical dry forests, grasslands and freshwater ecosystems are being looked to as the next agricultural frontier for Colombia. Priority in these regions is being given to ecotourism and to agroindustry development, including soy, rice and palm oil crops. These ecosystems require improved protection to preserve biodiversity, and to guarantee the continuation of ecosystem services like water filtration and recreation activities.

COMPONENTS

PROTECTING PRIORITY ECOSYSTEMS AND SPECIES

Natural Wealth employs a two-pronged approach to increase the land area under legal protection. First, the activity strengthens the management of existing, and new, national and regional protected areas. Second, it enhances land protection through sound, accountable land management by indigenous groups, communities, and the Civil Society Nature Reserves.

DEVELOPING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR CONSERVATION

Natural Wealth supports Colombia's green growth strategy. It does this by promoting best agricultural management practices, and through the development of sustainable economic opportunities. The program addresses barriers to private sector involvement and prioritizes interventions with the largest return on investment in terms of biologically significant land protection.

ENCOURAGING LAND-USE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Natural Wealth works at the municipal and departmental levels to effectively operationalize national-level land use and sustainable development and conservation policies. The activity strengthens local authorities' environmental governance capacities and improves access to information about biodiversity, conservation, and habitat loss in order to establish conservation priorities.

RESULTS

- Improved natural resource management of 622,000 hectares (Ha);
- Guaranteed that 441,000 Ha were placed under legal protection;
- Provided sustainable natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation training to 7,800 people;
- Mobilized USD \$2.5 million for biodiversity conservation from public and private sources;
- Increased economic benefits for 2,400 people through activities contributing to biodiversity conservation; and
- Helped 78 laws, policies, strategies, plans, or regulations related to biodiversity be presented, adopted or implemented.