



STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMERCIAL REFORESTATION PROJECT OF DEGRADED PASTURELANDS IN THE MAGDALENA BAJO REGION

Ref.
36

Expert(s)	Country	Volume (md)	Amount* (€)	Beneficiary	Funding	Start date	End date	Partner(s)	Reference
Jérôme Maurice	Colombia	120	NC. <i>*For the referred expert, within ONFI</i>	ONF Andina	ONF International, Cormagdalena	Jun. 2010	Sept. 2010	n/a	jean-guenole.cornet@onfandina.com +57 17 041 531

Detailed description of the project	Services provided
<p>This commercial reforestation project (PRC) takes place in northern Colombia, in the villages of Santa Bárbara de Pinto, Plato, Tenerife, Zapayán, Pedraza and El Piñon (department of Magdalena). These villages are all located within the watershed of the Magdalena River, managed by CORMAGDALENA (La Corporación Autónoma Regional del Río Grande de la Magdalena). The Magdalena River is Colombia's most important river. It is over 1,540 km long, has its source in the Andes and flows into the Caribbean sea at Barranquilla. 80% of river transport (around 2 million tons of goods and 600,000 passengers per year) is accounted for by the Magdalena and Cauca Rivers (the latter flows into the former), and they produce 70% of the hydraulic energy of the country. The Magdalena's watershed represents 24% of the continental national territory and 66% of the Colombian population lives there. It represents 75% of the country's agricultural production and 90% of the thermoelectric energy produced countrywide. In the project area, the main economic activities are agriculture and extensive cattle farming. There is no shortage of land, and <i>fincas</i> (farms) are numerous. <i>Fincas</i> are classified as private property. Their size varies between 1 and 1000 ha (50 ha on average). The principal cause of soil degradation in the region is erosion. The project implemented by ONF Andina since 2003 is a commercial reforestation of 4500 ha of degraded pastures mixing agroforestry and silvopastoralism. The species used are Melina (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), Teak (<i>Tectona grandis</i>) and Ceiba (<i>Bombacopsis quinata</i>). ONF International wanted to analyze the project's strengths and weaknesses by carrying out an environmental and socio-economic impact study, based on the methodology called "Environmental Management Strategic Analysis".</p> <p>The study consisted of (i) establishing the project's analytical framework (methodology), (ii) a description of the natural environmental conditions and traditional practices, (iii) an analysis of intentional and effective management (project activities) from an environmental and socio-economic effectiveness point of view, enabling to (iv) conclude on the project's strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>The study was carried out in two stages: (i) one month in the field in order to collect the data between Bogota, Barranquilla and the project area and (ii) a subsequent three-month phase for the preparation and analysis of results.</p> <p>The strengths of the project lie within 6 areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental: the project aims at decreasing the impacts of cattle grazing, which is mainly responsible for soil erosion in the project area; • Land tenure: support for the valorisation of the land, without loss of property rights; • Economic: job creation, complementary and regular incomes; • Synergies with cattle breeding: fodder production, implementation of silvopastoral techniques to exploit the potential of the plantations; • Contracting: cost and revenue sharing between landowners and investors, allowing for the removal of financial barriers; • Social: isolated producers are less vulnerable thanks to the growers' network; • Sustainable development: development of sustainable reforestation activities through the building of local expertise; <p>However, weaknesses have been identified in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impacts: low recognition of the negative impacts of cattle grazing on wetlands; • Sequence of activities: delays in the implementation of a cattle breeding technification programme; • "Carbon plantations" (10% of the total area) create few jobs; • Administrative constraints slow down the project's execution.