



## TOWARDS A BETTER SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE BY UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES

### Context and key findings

In order to collectively shape a better socio-environmental future in response to climate change, it is necessary to discuss transformations of socio-ecosystems over the last fifty years and identify the most important drivers. It is also necessary to determine the local and regional winners and losers from land use changes.

Through workshops with stakeholders in Mexico's Cuitzmala watershed region, we found that the most important drivers were:

- tropical colonization during the 1960s driven by the national government in response to land reform pressure by peasants
- conflicting agricultural and environmental policies
- land grabbing by large landowners
- wood concessions by the national government since the 1940s
- credits from the Interamerican Bank of Development to encourage cattle raising in tropical lands
- hunting and fishing exploited by people from other regions
- prices of agricultural products
- market behaviour provoking the expansion of commercial agriculture and the reduction of subsistence agriculture.

### ABOUT ROBIN

ROBIN has assessed the role of biodiversity in terrestrial ecosystems in South and Mesoamerica in mitigating climate change. It has evaluated socio-ecological consequences of changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services under climate change.



From these processes, the main beneficiaries were large landowners, the wood concessionaries, some cattle raisers and local authorities. On the contrary, small and medium *ejidatarios*, indigenous *comuneros*, and small private landowners, on the one hand, and socio-ecosystems on the other hand, were the most affected, becoming very vulnerable to economic and socio-environmental disasters. Local and regional authorities, and government officials, took advantage and controlled the rural population through the credit system.

The stakeholders felt they could only explain their present, and build a future together, by understanding their past. Due to mistrust, past land grabs, lack of respect for norms and sanctions, and weak social cohesion, the region's rural population is highly vulnerable, since peoples' social capital has been strongly diminished.



## Recommendations

- Construct future socio-environmental scenarios with local and regional stakeholders and discuss how each factor can affect social structures and responses.
- Coordinate environmental, social, and agricultural policies at the local and regional level to avoid tensions and contradictions leading to more deforestation and forest degradation.
- Encourage open, transparent and meaningful dialogue with and between local, regional, and national stakeholders. Create local committees to assure real participation.
- Establish new policies based on the development of concrete territories, taking into account past land use transformations and the socio-cultural and economic history.

## Evidence

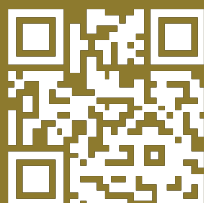
We held six participatory workshops in the Cuitzmala watershed south of Jalisco with local, regional, and national stakeholders: indigenous *comuneros*, *ejidatarios*, fishermen, small and large landowners practicing commercial or subsistence agriculture, cattle raising, and/or logging. We also invited local and regional authorities and government officials, the indigenous institutions (CDI), the tourist Ministry, tourism entrepreneurs and representatives from mining companies.

Some of the questions that guided the workshops were: How has the region changed in the last 50 years and why? Who were the actors involved? Who were the winners and losers? What have been the advantages and the disadvantages of these changes? What government programs/policies have had most impact on biodiversity loss and climate change in the region over the last 50 years? How do they perceive their socio-environmental future?

We found that social, political and environmental issues are strongly interdependent. To be effective, environmental policies such as REDD+ must be embedded in the socio-economic framework. For example, loss of biodiversity and deforestation will increase unless problems such as joblessness, lack of medical services, low incomes and low agricultural prices are addressed.

## ROBIN outputs

- Lazos, E. et al., "Entre Promesas y Esperanzas: Actores regionales de la Costa Sur de Jalisco y la construcción de su futuro socioambiental" In: Perló, M. & S. Inclán (Ed.) *La Prospectiva en México*. Ed. UNAM, México (In press)
- Gerritsen, P. et al., "Voces de la Tierra Pródiga: Testimonios Campesinos sobre las Transformaciones Socio-ambientales en la Costa de Jalisco, Occidente de México" In: Macías, A. *Voces rurales en Latinoamérica*, Ed. Plaza y Valdés, México (In press)



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This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 283093  
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