Mesoamerica Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title:	**Mesoamerica Critical Forest Biome Integrated Program**		
Country(ies):	**Regional,** El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama	**GEF Program ID:**	**11273**
Lead GEF Agency:	**IUCN**	**GEF Agency Program ID:**	
Other GEF Agenc(ies):	**FAO**	**Submission Date :**	**4/13/2023**
Type of Trust Fund:	**GET**		
Anticipated Program Executing Entity(s):	**IUCN**	**Anticipated Program Executing Partner Type(s):**	**GEF Agency**
	FAO		**GEF Agency**
	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (El Salvador)		**Government**
	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN, Guatemala)		**Government**
	Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SERNA, Honduras))		**Government**
	Forest Conservation Institute (ICF, Honduras)		**Government**

National University of Agriculture (UNAG, Honduras)		Government
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)		CSO
Agency for the Development of the Mosquitia (MOPAWI)		CSO
Forests of the World		CSO
Yucatan State, Mexico		Government
Quintana Roo State, Mexico		Government
Campeche State, Mexico		Government
Comisión Nacional De Areas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP, Mexico)		Government
Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatán		CSO
Global Green Growth Institute, Mexico		CSO
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA, Nicaragua)		Government
Ministry of Environment, Panama		Government
Fundación PA.NA.MA		CSO
Fundación NATURA, Panama		CSO
Tropical Forest Alliance		CSO
Forestry and Climate Change Fund		Others
Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)		Others
Central American Commission on Agriculture (CAC)		Others

Sector (only for Programs on CC):	AFOLU	**Program Duration (Months):**	72
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi Focal Area	**Program Commitment Deadline:**	12/29/2024
Taxonomy:	Focal Areas, Forest, Forest and Landscape Restoration, Biodiversity		
GEF Program Financing: (a)	58,147,493.00	**PPG Amount: (c)**	1,600,000.00
Agency Fee(s): (b)	5,233,267.00	**PPG Agency Fee(s) : (d)**	143,994.00
Total GEF Project Financing: (a+b+c+d)	65,124,754.00	**Total Co-financing:**	438,166,265.00
Project Tags:	CBIT: No SGP: No		
Program:	Meso-America		

Program Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the program, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the program objectives, and how will the program promote transformational change? iii) how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the program should be in section B "program description". (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The GEF-8 **Mesoamerican Forest Integrated Program** seeks to slow and reverse loss and degradation of critical remaining primary forests in the region. The program will provide support for six participating Mesoamerican countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama, to address drivers of deforestation and degradation through a targeted set of interlinked interventions employing all four Levers of Transformation identified in the GEF-8 strategy, and further guided by regional experiences to date on effective and catalytic conservation approaches.

In Mesoamerica, principle proximate threats to primary forests are deforestation and degradation from agriculture expansion largely for cattle ranching, logging (both legal and illegal), and fire, along with infrastructure development and wildlife trafficking. To address these drivers the program will apply a strategy of fostering national and regional enabling conditions for primary forest conservation through coordinated interventions supporting strengthened capacities, governance, protection, mobilization of funding, exchange and awareness raising.

The strategy is based upon the application of the following four levers for system transformation:

1. **Governance and policies.** The program will implement actions to improve inter-sectoral coordination and dialogue to enhance policy coherence on primary forest conservation in pertinent policies and instruments (at local, subnational, national, and regional levels).
2. **Multi-stakeholder dialogues.** The program will foster multilevel inter-sectoral constructive dialogue among key stakeholder by establishing or strengthening pertinent multi-sectoral local, national, and regional platforms.
3. **Innovation and learning**. The program will aim to transform the system by using innovation and learning in the areas of protected area management, management of OECMs, community-based forest restoration practices, innovative financing models and tools, use of novel incentives and business models to incentive nature-friendly activities, and new coalitions for change.
4. **Financial leverage**. The program will promote the use of financing tools to mobilize domestic and international resources to channel long-term funding to urgently needed actions like sustaining protected areas and OECMs, restoration of primary forest cover and the development of forest-friendly endeavors.

The program is organized as four interlinked components focused on: developing enabling conditions to support primary forest conservation (component 1), protecting and restoring primary forests (component 2), securing long-term sustained funding and incentivizing forest-friendly endeavors (component 3), and establishing a region-wide coordination mechanism to enhance complementarity and synergies among the range of on-going initiatives and facilitating knowledge development and exchange (component 4).

Together these actions will contribute to the following transformations of the natural system:
1. Expanded protection of Mesoamerican primary forests by means of protected areas and OECMs.
2. Increased understanding and valuing of natural capital.
3. Expanded forest-friendly production.
4. Improved policy coherence and institutional and legal frameworks that support primary forest conservation.
5. Increased contributions to global environmental conservation and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The program seeks to achieve five key targets (note, figures are rounded):

1. Improved management effectiveness of 5.3 million hectares of protected areas
2. Improved management practices in 1.4 million hectares of land through a variety of approaches including OECMs, community forest concessions, and agroforestry.
3. 63,000 hectares of high-priority land under restoration to support health of primary forest biome.
4. 84 Mt CO2eq Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated
5. 182,000 direct beneficiaries

The program will support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and also work to build on outcomes of the March 2023 One Forest Summit advancing collective ambition on conservation and sustainable management of rainforests, including supporting implementation of the "Libreville Plan" roadmap for new commitments and initiatives advancing shared goals.

Indicative Program Overview

Program Objective

To conserve Mesoamerica primary forests through strengthened governance, protection, restoration, regional cooperation, and the mobilization of stable long-term funding, ensuring a sustainable flow of ecosystem services for people and planet.

Program Components	Component Type	Program Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Program Financing($)	Co-financing($)
C1. Enabling conditions for the protection and conservation of primary forests	Technical Assistance	1.1. Strengthened local, national and regional governance mechanisms in support of primary forest conservation 1.2. Key national and regional policy and regulatory instruments prioritize primary forest conservation 1.3. Improved multi-sectoral platforms for forest conservation and management	GET	11,629,699.00	62,186,579.00
C2. Accelerated protection and restoration of primary forests	Investment	2.1. Improved protection of primary forests in protected areas 2.2. Increased area of OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand functional connectivity 2.3. Ongoing restoration of 65,000 ha of high-priority degraded forest to support health and sustainability of forest biome	GET	20,489,896.00	149,813,121.00

C3. Innovative finance, investment and scale-up nature and livelihoods	Investment	3.1. Increased financial resources for primary forest conservation 3.2. Increased number of forest-friendly endeavors	GET	11,629,499.00	122,990,024.00
C4. Coordinated and improved learning and regional collaboration	Technical Assistance	4.1. Improved national and regional coordination for primary forest protection and conservation 4.2. Lessons on primary forest protection and conservation models are available worldwide	GET	8,722,124.00	59,359,915.00
M&E					
M&E	Technical Assistance		GET	2,907,347.00	21,908,313.00
			Sub Total ($)	**55,378,565.00**	**416,257,952.00**
Program Management Cost (PMC)					
			GET	2,768,928.00	21,908,313.00
			Sub Total($)	**2,768,928.00**	**21,908,313.00**
			Total Program Cost($)	**58,147,493.00**	**438,166,265.00**

Please provide justification

PROGRAM OUTLINE

A. PROGRAM RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems that the program will address, the key elements and underlying drivers of environmental change to be targeted, and the urgency to transform associated systems in line with the GEF-8 Programming Directions document. Describe the overall objective of the program, and the justification for it.

(Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Introduction

Primary forests[1] are among the most essential and undervalued natural systems on the planet. They sustain the hydrological cycle, are major net carbon sinks, and have higher functional diversity and ecosystem integrity[2]. Intact forest landscapes (IFL) – largely undisturbed areas of primary forest of at least 500 km^2 that contain the highest levels of biodiversity, stored carbon and other critical ecosystem services – comprised some 20% of the global forest cover in 2020[3]. However, intact forests are rapidly declining: between 2000 and 2020 some 1.5 million km^2 were lost world wide representing a 12% decline in total area[4]. At the global level, the primary causes of IFL loss are logging, agriculture expansion, ranching, infrastructure expansion, fire, and mining[5].

Despite their intrinsic value and the ecosystem services they provide, primary forests are not fully recognized and valued by people. This is due in part because of how difficult it is to quantify the value of the natural services they generate and assign a monetary value, and the fact that most of the ecosystem services provided by primary forests are public goods for which users (in this case, both local and global communities) can continue to access these goods and services regardless of whether they pay for them. Therefore, in general, the importance of these forests is underestimated, and they continue to be considered unproductive lands or forest reserves that must be used. Society does not understand or recognize the real value of primary forests and does not assume the costs of their degradation and destruction.

Mesoamerican primary forests

Mesoamerica is a diverse cultural region and an economic integration area that includes the south-eastern States of Mexico and the seven Central American countries[6] [7]. Mesoamerica is a biodiversity hotspot, it contains about 5000 endemic plant species and about 8% of the world's biodiversity[8], including threatened species[9] such as the cocobolo (*Dalbergia retusa*), the Central American river turtle (*Dermatemys mawii*), the keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*), the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*), the harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) and the jaguar (*Panthera onca*).

Mesoamerica holds important areas of forest cover including intact forests located in five distinctive areas that have been called Mesoamerica's last great forests: (1) the Selva Maya (distributed along Belize, Guatemala and Mexico), (2) the Moskitia (shared by Honduras and Nicaragua), (3) Indio Maíz – Tortuguero (shared by Nicaragua and Costa Rica), (4) La Amistad (shared by Costa Rica and Panama) and (5) El Darien[10] (shared by Panama and Colombia) (Figure 1). In Mesoamerica there are other important primary forest areas like the Santa Fe National Park and the Chagres National Park in Panama, the cloud forests of the Montecristo massif that cover about 12,000 ha (the territories of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras come together in this area which is called Trifinio[11]), the the Lancadon rainforest that stretches along Chiapas (Mexico) and Guatemala, and the cloud forests of Sierra de las Minas in Guatemala.

Mesoamerica's remaining primary forests are mostly within protected areas and traditional lands and territories of indigenous peoples and local communities. Among remaining IFLs, 90% are contained within some form of WDPA classification (Mackey et al., 2015), and around half of primary forests are Indigenous lands.

Mesoamerican primary forests are in peril. Of the remaining large intact primary forests over 1,358,000 ha were lost from 2000-2020 representing a staggering

23% total reduction in area[12], with extremely high rates of IFL loss in Nicaragua (54%), Honduras (48%) and Guatemala (32%) (Figure 2; Table 1). In addition, recent data (2016-2020) show significant increases in the average annual rates of IFL loss for these three countries. These high rates of IFL loss occurred despite most IFL area (87% for the region as a whole as of 2016) under some form of WDPA protection (Table 2), indicating significant challenges with enforcement and monitoring.

Several threats contribute to intact forest degradation and loss, including logging, cattle ranching, agricultural expansion, illegal mining, and wildlife trafficking. At the root of these causes are perverse incentives that enable land use change, organized crime groups that command illicit activities such as drugs, human and wildlife trafficking, as well as extortion and money laundering[13]. legal gaps, and insufficient enforcement of existing regulations, and

Figure 1. Location of the Mesoamerican intact forest landscapes. Source: IFL Mapping Team (2020).

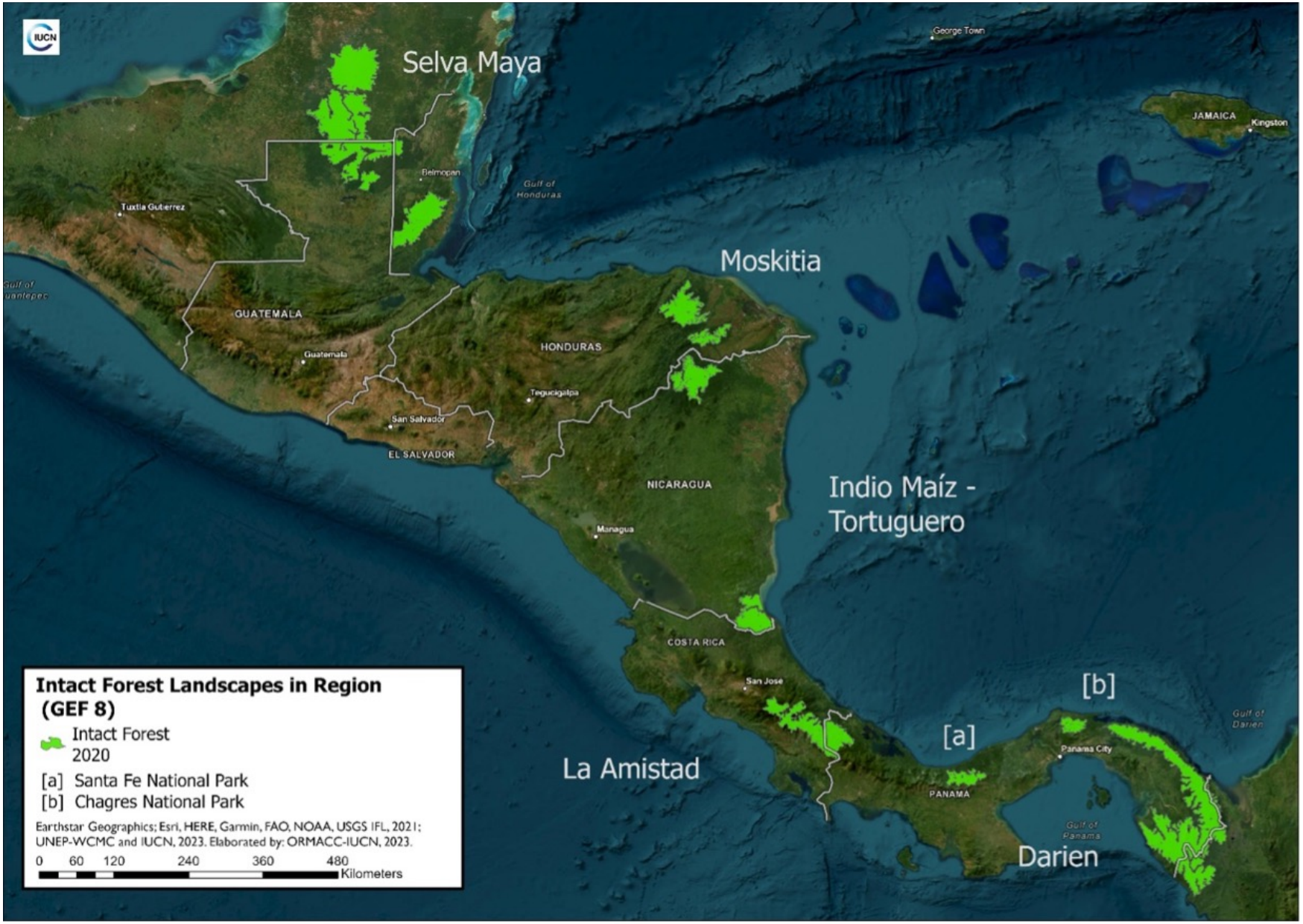


Figure 2. Mesoamerican intact forest loss between 2000 and 2020. In green intact forest cover in 2020, in red area lost between 2000 and 2020. Source: IFL Mapping Team (2020).

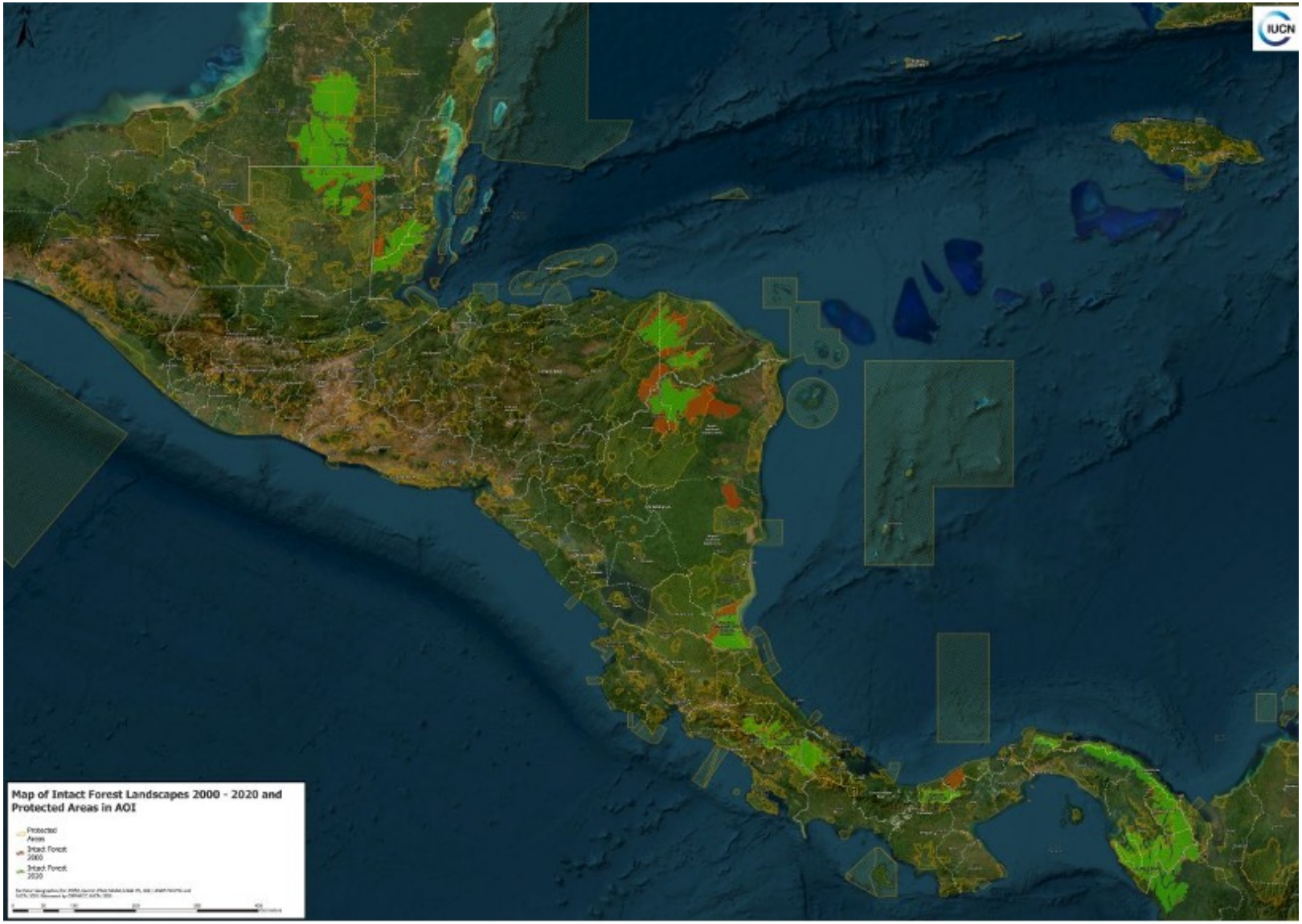


Table 1. IFL loss between 2000 and 2020; source: ILF Mapping Team (2020) data*. For the Mesoamerican region as a whole, 23% of area was lost from 2000-2020 with extremely high rates of loss in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. In addition, recent data (2016-2020) show significant increases in the average annual rates of IFL loss for these three countries.

Country	IFL extent in 2000 (ha)	IFL extent in 2013 (ha)	IFL extent in 2016 (ha)	IFL extent in 2020 (ha)	IFL area reduction 2000-2020 (%)	Average annual rate (%) of IFL loss 2000-2013	Average annual rate (%) of IFL loss 2013-2016	Average annual rate (%) of IFL loss 2016-2020
Mexico	1,499,074	1,456,957	1,430,428	1,404,675	6%	0.2%	0.6%	0.5%
Guatemala	567,951	492,289	476,603	384,695	32%	1.0%	1.1%	4.8%
El Salvador								
Honduras	676,114	481,409	461,241	352,674	48%	2.2%	1.4%	5.9%
Nicaragua	1,027,237	636,228	613,131	475,968	54%	2.9%	1.2%	5.6%
Panama	1,444,654	1,344,293	1,340,200	1,318,333	9%	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%
Subtotal IP countries	**5,220,000**	**4,411,175**	**4,321,603**	**3,936,346**	**25%**	**1.2%**	**0.7%**	**2.2%**
Costa Rica	319,092	309,576	309,359	305,509	4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%
Belize	424,914	404,684	369,043	358,432	16%	0.4%	2.9%	0.7%
TOTAL, Mesoamerica	**5,959,037**	**5,125,435**	**5,000,006**	**4,600,287**	**23%**	**1.1%**	**0.8%**	**2.0%**

* http://www.intactforests.org/data.ifl.html

Table 2. Protected area coverage of IFLs in Mesoamerica. High rates of IFL loss (see Table 1 above) have occurred despite most IFL area (87% for the region as a whole) under some form of WDPA protection[14].

Country	IFL extent in 2016 (ha)*	IFL In Protected Areas (ha) (2016)**	% of IFLs in PAs (2016)
Mexico	1,430,428	1,207,278	84%
Guatemala	476,603	474,277	100%
El Salvador		0	
Honduras	461,241	458,385	99%
Nicaragua	613,131	616,478	100%
Panama	1,340,200	999,688	75%
Subtotal IP countries	**4,321,603**	**3,756,107**	**87%**
Costa Rica	309,359	261,577	85%
Belize	369,043	341,588	93%
TOTAL, Mesoamerica	**5,000,006**	**4,359,272**	**87%**

* http://www.intactforests.org/data.ifl.html

** Mackey, B., DellaSala, D.A., Kormos, C., Lindenmayer, D., Kumpel, N., Zimmerman, B., Hugh, S., Young, V., Foley, S., Arsenis, K. and Watson, J.E.M. (2015), Policy Options for the World's Primary Forests in Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Conservation Letters, 8: 139-147. https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12120

Drivers of Mesoamerican deforestation and forest degradation

The degradation and loss of Mesoamerican intact forests contributes to: (i) accelerating climate change, (ii) loss of high value biodiversity, and (iii) undermining the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs)[15]. Intact forests are being fragmented, degraded, and converted into other land uses.

In the region, the main threats to the primary forests are deforestation for agriculture expansion, logging, and fire (Figure 3). For example, there is severe deforestation in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve from colonization by people from other areas of the country to produce meat cattle, dairy products, and short-cycle crops like maize and beans[16]. Colonization to develop agriculture production and cattle ranching also affects the Darien[17]. In general, agricultural expansion and the increase of human settlements contribute to the introduction of invasive species (e.g., cats, dogs, pastures) and increased human - wildlife interaction and conflict and eventually an increased risk of zoonosis and infections of wildlife[18]. For example, Lepe-López et al[19]., (2018) found that domestic horses in the Maya Biosphere Reserve were infected with the Equine Infectious Anemia virus therefore posing a risk of spill over to tapirs[20].

In the Selva Maya, Moskitia and Indio Maiz, illegal logging and agricultural expansion are elements of a land grabbing pattern implemented by illegal groups that

transform public or communal remote forestland into private large holdings[21]. McSweeney et al.[22], (2014) defined this process as “narco-deforestation”. In the Darien, illicit activities like illegal logging and the trafficking of human, drugs and arms are driving deforestation and changing rural livelihoods[23].

Cattle ranching is major driver of deforestation in the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala, the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve in Honduras and the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve and Indio Maíz Biological Reserve in Nicaragua[24]. Devine et al., (2020b) [25] found that in the Laguna del Tigre National Park and the Sierra del Lacandón National Park cattle ranching accounted, respectively, for 87% and 67% of deforestation. Among other impacts, cattle ranching also pollutes and degrades aquatic habitats[26] and contributes to jaguar killings due to the perceived risk of predation on cattle and livestock[27].

Dittmar & Asmann[28] (2022) estimated that in the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve, the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve, and the Maya Biosphere Reserve, respectively, at least 12,000, 65,000, 370,000, 440,000 animals are raised. Dittmar & Asmann[29] (2022) described in detail the cattle trafficking value chain. Illegal cattle can be laundered into the legal distribution chain and sold into the domestic markets or smuggled to neighboring countries. Rios & Mendoza[30] (2017) identified that illegal cattle raised within the Indio Maíz reserve is mainstreamed into the formal beef value chain. There is an unquantified amount of cattle that is trafficked to Mexico for domestic consumption and for export to the USA.

Wildfires continue to be a major issue in Mesoamerica. Between 2009 and 2019, there were about 180,000 fires that burned an area of 26.2 million hectares[31]. Wildfires are largely connected to human activities, principally fire is used to clear forestland to establish new agricultural areas. Another key action is agricultural burning during the dry season[32]. Swidden agriculture is a traditional practice that is still used in the surrounding areas of the intact forests[33], for example in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Panama. Swidden agriculture contributes to forest degradation in the Laguna del Tigre National Park in Guatemala. Wildfire can greatly affect intact forests, for example, in 2018, a forest fire destroyed about 5000 ha in Indio Maíz[34]. In 2021, fires affected both the periphery of all the intact forest areas and the inside in the Moskitia and Indio Maíz. The emissions from agricultural burning and forest fires impact the hydrological and biogeochemical cycles in the tropics and contribute to global climate change[35].

The development of infrastructure also contributes to fragmentation of the primary forests and facilitates access to core undisturbed areas. Planned public infrastructure developments like roads and dams include the extension of the Pan-American Road between Yaviza and Pinogana in the Darien[36]. Here, a key problem is the development of infrastructure projects without proper evaluation of the environmental and social impacts. Two major projects may impact the IFLs in the near future, the Maya Train in Mexico in the Selva Maya[37] and the Colombia - Panama electrical interconnection, through the Darien[38]. In addition, opening of illegal roads for colonization (e.g., Bosawas) and illegal activities (e.g., trafficking of drugs, persons, timber, and cattle) as well as the establishment of clandestine airstrips also play a role in fragmentation and degradation of Mesoamerican forests.

Illegal and unregulated hunting and the collection of non-wood forest products also contribute to degrade the intact forests. There are examples of positive and

sustainable use of forest products including the xate[39] (*Chamaedorea* spp.) and pimienta gorda (*Pimienta dioica*) in forest concessions in the Maya Biosphere Reserve[40]. However, there are also sites where there are severe impacts. For example, the populations of the Central American river turtle have been decimated by their harvesting for meat[41] in the Selva Maya in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize[42]. On the other hand, there is wildlife trafficking. Recent trends in wildlife trafficking include more organized crime groups[43], the use of clandestine border paths, an increased demand for high value tropical timber such as cocobolo, and an increased demand for rare or newly identified Mesoamerican reptiles and amphibians[44]. Also, trafficking of jaguar parts may be developing and linked to killings by ranchers and farmers, despite the advances in human-jaguar/jaguar-livestock conflict reduction measures[45]. Arias et al., (2020) [46] found that, in Guatemala and Belize, jaguar trade is a domestically focused and opportunistic activity.

Illegal mining affects core areas in the Selva Maya and Indio Maiz. For example, in Indio Maiz several sites of illegal artisanal gold mining have been identified in core areas like La Chiripa mountain[47]. Illegal mining contributes to habitat fragmentation, water pollution and wildlife harvesting.

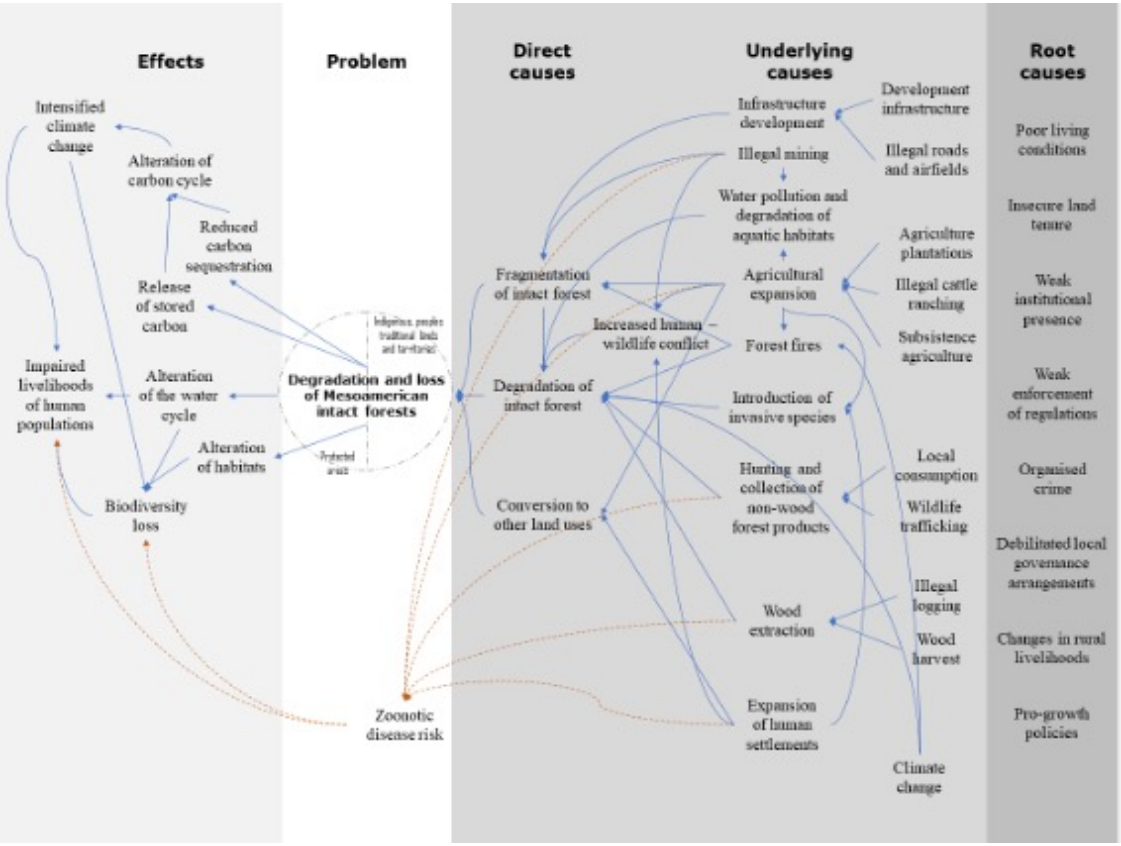
Climate change is an underlying driver of primary forest degradation and loss. Mesoamerica is very vulnerable to the impacts of climate change[48]. CAF[49] estimated that: (i) Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Belize have extreme vulnerability, (ii) Mexico has high vulnerability, (iii) Panama medium vulnerability, and (iv) Costa Rica has low vulnerability. El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) alters precipitation in Central America. In general, El Niño produces dry conditions and drought, whereas La Niña produces heavy rainfall and more active hurricane season in the Caribbean[50]. In the future these conditions may worsen – it is anticipated that climate change will generate more intense and stronger events[51]. Under the current scenario, anomalous dry and hot conditions facilitate the initiation and spread of fires[52], whereas the tropical storms and hurricanes damage the forests and impact local livelihoods[53]. Future projections indicate drier conditions in Central America and tropical forest loss due to conversion to savannah and grassland[54].

Root causes

There are several interlinked root causes (Figure 3). At the core are the poor living conditions of rural populations that have limited access to basic services like education, health care and sanitation and who must use the local natural resources to sustain their families and the growing population. In general, there are limited opportunities to subsist from the standing forests. Insecure land tenure adds to worsen the situation. Indigenous land tenure rights are not fully recognized and enforced in all five IFLs. Poor living conditions in other areas of the countries also motivates land-less peasants to colonize forest areas, like in Indio Maiz and the Darien. In general, land governance is weak. Moreover, the five IFLs are remote areas where there is generally weak institutional presence of government entities and authorities and a limited enforcement of regulations. Pro-growth policies also contribute to the current scenario. In particular the lack of inter-sectoral coherence and dialogue for policy development and decision making, and inadequate environmental mainstreaming into these processes. Finally, the previously mentioned conditions are fertile ground for the development of illicit economies that erode community cohesion and the social fabric and change rural livelihoods[55]. Organized crime also takes advantage of pro-growth policies that incentive productive activities like large-scale agriculture, cattle ranching, forest production and mining. The global increase in demand for tropical timber, meat and mineral will further increase pressures on Mesoamerican

critical forest biomes in the following decades[56].

Figure 3. Causal chain analysis of the degradation and loss of Mesoamerican intact forests.



Long-term solution

The current baseline scenario is complex, and it is impossible to fully address all the causes of the degradation and loss of Mesoamerican primary forests simultaneously. Without a major multilevel intervention to reduce pressures primary tropical forests will likely continue to deteriorate and be affected by high rates of deforestation.

To change the current situation four major transformations are needed.

1. Change societal attitudes about primary forests, to ensure that their intrinsic value and contributions to society are recognized, valued and paid for.
2. Change the regulatory and enforcement processes, ensuring: (i) that there is multi-sectoral policy coherence, (ii) that decisions are taken based on evidence of the societal benefits and costs of intervening on primary forests, and (iii) that government funding and green financing mechanisms effectively support forest conservation.
3. Change land governance in the areas where primary forests are located, ensuring that rights of indigenous and local communities to their lands and

territories are recognized and enforceable.
4. Change the living conditions of the people who live where primary forest are located, ensuring that they can have a decent standard of living from forest-positive and non-forest activities.

These are challenging transformations that cannot be fully achieved in the short term. In addition, it must be recognized that illicit activities are a driver that requires concerted multilevel government interventions and political support - much of which is beyond the scope of the present initiative. Therefore, the most strategic approach is to develop long-term regional collaboration mechanisms to articulate common ground-based action focused on conserving intact forests and building viable forest linked livelihoods. There are parallel initiatives focused on forest conservation such as “The 5 Great Forests Initiative” promoted by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and endorsed by the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the Regional Initiative AFOLU 2040 promoted by the Central American Agricultural Council and the Central American Commission for Environment and Development, the second phase of the “Selva Maya Natural Resources Protection Project” implemented by IUCN, among others. For that reason, concerted collaboration and synergies with the range of local, national and multicounty initiatives are needed to ensure concrete regional impact.

Protecting and recovering Mesoamerica´s primary forests will require a long-term effort (Figure 5). The long-term goal is that Mesoamerica´s intact forests are conserved and connected and contribute to sustain the livelihoods of local communities and society at large. The protection and conservation of primary forests and the development of buffer areas with a mosaic of interconnected forest stands with varied land uses[57] (e.g., secondary forests, agroforestry systems, farmland) will contribute to the conservation of high-value global biodiversity (e.g., tapirs, harpy eagles, jaguars) and to mitigating global climate change impacts and to promoting social stability and the enforcement of rights.

To achieve this, it is envisaged that three phases will be necessary (Figure 4).
· The first focuses on developing enabling conditions for change, concentrating on: (i) taking action to prevent further intact forest loss, (ii) strengthening local, national and regional governance as a means of rebuilding the social fabric, (iii) building capacities to mitigate the current pressures generated in the periphery, and (iv) developing mechanisms to sustain structural changes and long-term action (e.g., long-term adequate funding). All this will be done by building upon (a) existing pertinent knowledge and practice (e.g., FAO FLEGT program[58]), and (b) positive synergies among the various key stakeholders (e.g., grassroots, national, regional) and existing development and conservation initiatives (e.g., AFOLU 2040).
· The second phase requires boosting structural regulatory and institutional changes (e.g., law enforcement and justice system reforms) and implementing instruments to capitalize revenues from forest services to foster primary forest protection, forest conservation, and viable forest linked livelihoods.
· The third phase will consolidate the advances to ensure that primary forests are protected and connected through a through a variety of land use forms within a forest landscape, that their benefits are acknowledged by society, and they are adapted to the global and regional trends and changes in forest related activities and markets.

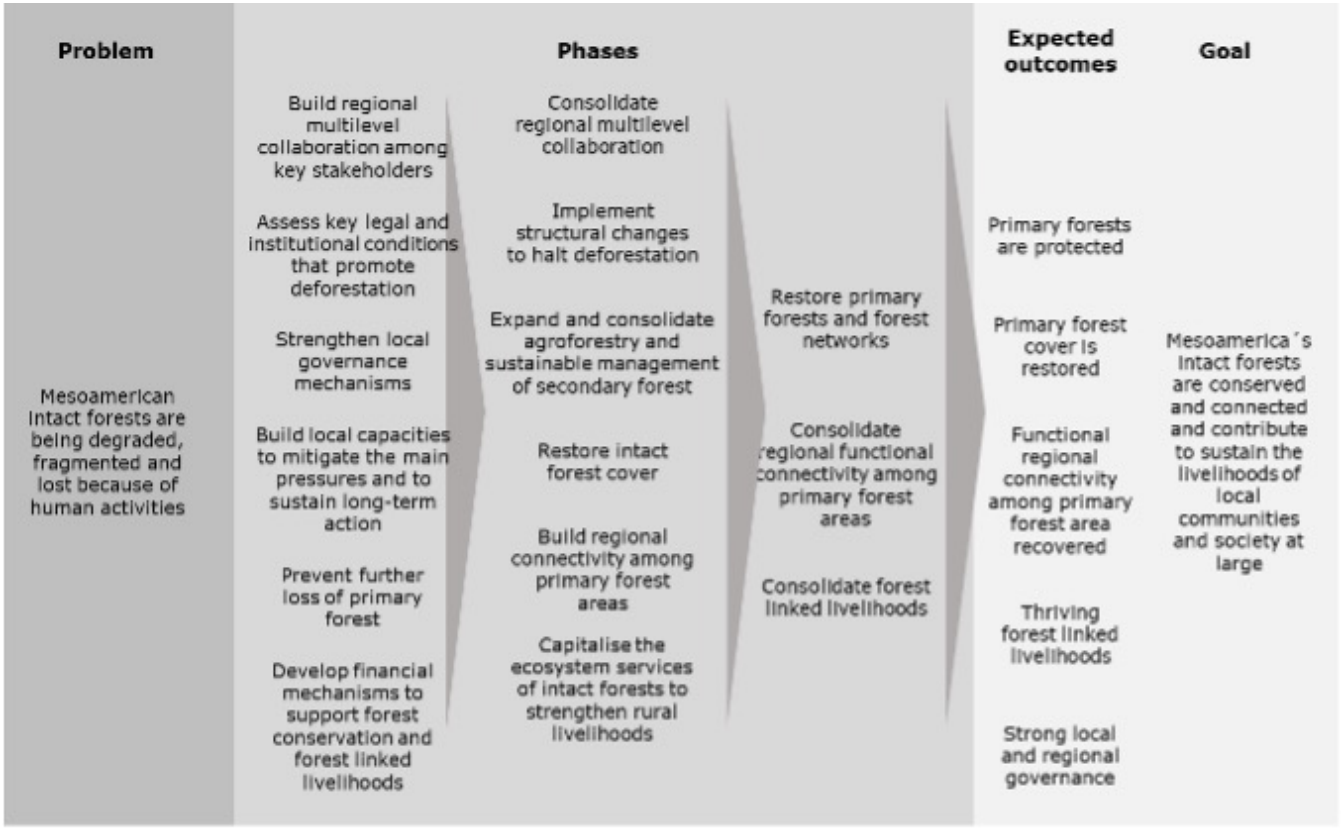
Three key elements of the proposed strategy are:
· To expand viable forest linked livelihoods in the buffer areas of the intact forests to increase economic opportunities for indigenous peoples and rural communities. During implementation, particular attention will be given to observe and adapt to the global and regional trends and changes in forest related activities and markets and the deforestation drivers[59].
· To engage rural youth into productive livelihoods linked to forest conservation and sustainable use to rebuild the social fabric, and to develop the next

generation of local leaders that value nature.

· To facilitate that society at large comprehend the full value of primary forests and their contributions to people and the planet.

The present program proposal will focus on the first phase and lay the foundations for initiating phases II and III of this long-term strategy, therefore contributing to develop enabling conditions for long-term change.

Figure 4. Foreseen consecutive phases to conserve the Mesoamerican intact forests.



Barriers

The proposed program interventions will have to confront the following barriers that limit addressing the degradation and loss of primary forests in Mesoamerica:

Barrier 1. The value of intact forests is not recognized, valued, and paid for by society.

The exceptional value of Mesoamerican intact forests and their ecosystem services are not recognized, they are seen as sources of timber and areas to be developed, not different from already degraded forests. Their environmental services are not included into the system of national accounts of the countries. There are no public policies focused on protecting the intact forests and there is a lack of positive incentives for their preservation.

Barrier 2. Weak land governance.

Collective and customary land tenure are changing to more individual land tenure regimes associated with land acquisition by large-scale producers. Land governance strength varies among the Mesoamerican countries, but key issues generally include: (i) the need to institutionalize and/or reinforce the governing mechanisms in indigenous territories; (ii) land grabbing by external actors (including fraudulent titling); (iii) insufficient recognition and enforcement of land and resources tenure rights of indigenous peoples and rural communities; (iv) to resolve occupation of indigenous land by third parties; (v) limited government capacity to resolve land tenure conflicts; and (vi) limited inter-institutional coordination and complementarity on the issue of land tenure and use among sectoral institutions including agrarian, environmental and mining entities.

Barrier 3. Limited mechanisms for transboundary forest conservation.

There has been progress in implementing mechanisms for transboundary forest conservation. For example, in the Selva Maya, pertinent authorities have established a Strategic Coordination Group (GEC for its acronym in Spanish) and an Operational Coordination Group (GOC for its acronym in Spanish) to develop cross-border collaboration, and several projects have been implemented based on these platforms[60]. However, the GEC cannot establish binding agreements and the GOC is based on the voluntary commitment of the protected area directors. Key issues with cross-border collaboration include: (i) different level of priorities; (ii) divergent organizational structure and mandates; (iii) distinct legal frameworks; (iv) dissimilar level of political support to formal transboundary collaboration; and (v) the degree of available resources and capacity to undertake collaborative actions. The existing cross-border collaboration mechanisms for the Selva Maya, Moskitia, Indio Maíz – Tortuguero, La Amistad, Darien and Trifinio need to be strengthened.

Barrier 4. Limited capacity and support for protected area management and the implementation of other effective area-based conservation measures.

The existing protected areas have been able to shield most of the intact forests. Intact forest loss and fires occur mostly on the fringe areas (Figures 2 and 4). However, the protected areas of the Moskitia and Indio Maíz cannot cope with the persistent attacks. In all cases, protected areas have limited resources and need to improve their management efficiency. Other effective area-based conservation measures[61] (OECMs) can contribute to conserving forest areas. Though, despite their value as a conservation tool, OECMs have not been fully recognised by the Mesoamerican countries. Decision 14/8 of the CBD encouraged parties to identify OECMs within their jurisdiction and to submit data to the World Database on Protected Areas. However, the recognition of OECMs by countries has important implications. Therefore, the countries must assess the legal, financial or management implications of recognising OECMS and decide on how to incorporate them into the national conservation framework. The development of regulations and procedures for the recognition of OECMs and the application of conservation strategies based on complementary areas to protected areas are uneven among the countries of the region. Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, and Panama have some progress[62], but there is a general need to develop the pertinent mechanisms for national implementation and mainstreaming into key sectors like forestry.

Barrier 5. Insufficient financial resources to sustain long-term efforts to conserve and restore intact forests and to develop sustainable local livelihoods.

The protection of intact forests and the development of community-based sustainable forest management require long-term accessible funding. There are initiatives like the Forestry and Climate Change Fund (fccf.lu) that invest in the development of sustainable value chains based on the management of secondary and degraded forests (e.g., community forestry entities). However, accessing stable long-term financing for area-based conservation and investment for sustainable community-based forest related businesses is still challenging, and the present flow of resources is largely inadequate to maintain primary forest extent and integrity in the face of multiple threats. Market-based instruments, like payment for ecosystem services and carbon emission trading, can be useful. But the Mesoamerican countries have an uneven development of these tools. A key challenge is to channel the resources directly to the rural communities to support improvements in local livelihoods[63]. Also, some groups have concerns about green grabbing and that these instruments will contribute to the displacement of local communities[64]. The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) has launched the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund to reduce intermediation and to channel funds directly to local land rights holders[65]; this initiative still needs to consolidate.

Barrier 6. Insufficient coordination among conservation and development initiatives.

At different levels (from local to regional), various initiatives that can contribute to the intact forest protection and restoration are being implemented and planned. For example, the Regional Initiative AFOLU 2040, The 5 Great Forests Initiative, the investments of the Forestry and Climate Change Fund, the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, the UK's Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, the GEF Small Grants Program, and the IKI Small Grants Program, among others. The various donors and executing entities try to collaborate as much as possible. However, there is no regional-level coordination mechanism that can facilitate strategic synergies to advance intact forest conservation. Insufficient coordination between initiatives can lead to duplication of efforts, conflicting agendas, and less impact.

Key stakeholders

There is a wide range of key stakeholders related to the current situation (Figure 3). Here is a program level summary of key stakeholders at various levels (regional, national, local). A detailed stakeholder analysis for each country will be prepared during the PPG phase.

Regional level

The Central American Integration System (SICA) is the highest-level institutional framework for political, social, and economic regional integration. Mexico is not a SICA country, but actively participate in the integration process. Since 2004, Mexico has the status of "regional observer". The agreement signed between Mexico and SICA states that “The United Mexican States, in its capacity as Regional Observer, will participate in the Council of Ministers of Foreign Relations for aspects of political cooperation, in the Council of Ministers of Economic Integration, of Social Integration, or others where there are real possibilities of sharing, strengthening and develop an agenda for cooperation and economic and social complementarity, with concrete and tangible results that reinforce dialogue and cooperation between both Parties.”

The CCAD and CAC are the key SICA entities that coordinate regional environmental, agricultural policies and strategies as well as cross-sectoral programs and initiatives. For example, the Framework Regional Environmental Strategy (ERAM), the Regional agro-environmental and health strategy (ERAS), the Regional Strategic Program for the Management of Forest Ecosystems (PERFOR) and the AFOLU 2040 initiative.
The Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) is a multilateral financial institution that invest promotes economic integration and social and economic development. Key elements of the bank strategy are environmental and social sustainability, gender equity and sustainable competitiveness. Since 1992, Mexico is a member of CABEI. The bank serves public and private sectors with a range of financing modalities and financial instruments like direct credit, guarantees, credit lines for Central Banks and trust administration. CABEI has also implemented regional projects like Bio-CLIMA and CAMBio II.

There are three regional-level organizations of indigenous peoples and local communities related to forest management:

1. The Indigenous Council of Central America (CICA) that promote, defend, and strengthen the rights of the indigenous peoples of Central America. It integrates national organizations and national councils.
2. The Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico, a regional platform that integrates organizations of indigenous women which promotes dialogue, participation and implementation of national and regional actions.
3. The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) a regional platform comprised of traditional authorities of indigenous peoples, organization of indigenous peoples and local communities and community forest concessionaries.

The Consultative Committee of the Central American Regional Integration System (CC-SICA) is a space for the participation of social actors (including private sector) which advises SICA´s General Secretariat and formulate recommendations ad proposes initiatives to the various elements of the SICA. The CC-SICA works on four areas: (i) environment and rural development, (ii) social affairs, (iii) democratic security and (iv) economic affairs.

National level

The key stakeholders are the national authorities in charge of the management of forests, agriculture and protected areas. On section "stakeholder engagement" there is a list of key stakeholders that indicate the pertinent authorities for forests, agriculture and protected areas on each participating country. These entities, through pertinent national strategies and action plans, contribute to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (e.g., combat desertification, adapt to climate change).

Other key stakeholders for the regional program are the entities responsible for issuing environmental authorizations for public and private projects, permitting the use of key natural resources (e.g., water and mining concessions), sectoral development (e.g., ministries of public works), and the ministries of finance or economy. These entities are key to ensure policy coherence with respect to the protection and conservation of the primary forests.

On each country there are various organizations that congregate forest users and farmers. For example, the Association of Forest Communities of Petén of Guatemala (ACOFOP), which congregates the community forest concessionaries of the buffer zone of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, or the Federation of Livestock Associations of Nicaragua (FAGANIC), which congregates the members of the livestock value chain. These entities have various degrees of interest and action on sustainable production and social responsibility as well as different views regarding various issues like land use.

Local level

The key stakeholders are the local authorities responsible for land use management, forests, agriculture, protected areas, and other natural resources (e.g., water and wildlife). In Mexico, the governments of the Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatan states, through their pertinent entities like the Secretary of the Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change of Campeche (SEMABICC), Secretary of Ecology and Environment of Quintana Roo (SEMA) and the Secretariat of Sustainable Development of Yucatan. In the other participating countries, the pertinent municipalities and departments / provinces. In Nicaragua and Panama, the governments of the related indigenous territories. In Nicaragua the governments of the Autonomous Regions of the North Atlantic (RAAN) and South Atlantic (RAAS) and in Panama the governments of the territories where primary forests are located (i.e., Territorio Bri Bri, Territorio Naso-Tjerdi, Kuna Yala, Kuna de Madungandí, Kuna de Wargandí, and Emberá Wounaan). These entities, through a range of instruments contribute, directly and indirectly, advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

At the local level there are a large range of formal and informal organizations that congregate the users of the natural resources (e.g., water, forests), production activities (e.g., agriculture, timber processors, cattle farming) and social organizations that promote and exercise collective rights based on common interests (e.g., women, indigenous peoples, rural communities, young people). There are also a range of civil society organizations that implement actions for biodiversity conservation as well as other pertinent topics like business development, community organisation and social development. These entities have diverse views regarding various issues like land and forest use and local development.

Baseline initiatives

Central America has a strong and advanced integration process. The Central American Integration System (SICA) is the institutional framework for political, social, and economic regional integration. It was established in 1991 and includes all Central America countries plus the Dominican Republic. Since 2004, Mexico has the status of "regional observer". SICA has several specialized entities like the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) and the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), as well several regional policies, strategies, and instruments like the Framework Regional Environmental Strategy (ERAM), the Climate-adapted sustainable agriculture strategy for the SICA region, and the Regional Gender Equality and Equity Policy (PRIEG), among others.

The Program and Project will build upon a number of key policies, commitments, institutions and investments at regional, national and sub-national levels, that are well aligned with the IP's overall objectives. These include the following:

· All Mesoamerican countries are signatories to the three *Rio Conventions* and have ratified the new Kunming-Montreal *Global Biodiversity Framework* with long-term goals and targets directly advanced by the actions of this Program (see below for additional links to GBF)

· The *Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD)* is a regional body established in 1989 comprising Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama and aims to promote regional cooperation on environmental and sustainable development matters, including forest conservation.

· The *Mesoamerican Biological Corridor* (MBC) regional initiative established in the late 1990s to protect and maintain the biological diversity of Mesoamerica. Spanning eight countries, the MBC initiative has received support from various sources including the GEF, IDB and World Bank, and the CCAD has played a key role in coordinating and implementing MBC-related programs and policies. The MBC continues to serve as an organizing and planning framework for designation and expansion of protected areas which now cover a substantial portion of the Mesoamerican region including 90% of remaining IFLs[66].

· The *Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB)* is a regional platform bringing together indigenous peoples and local communities from Mesoamerica to advocate for recognition and support for indigenous peoples' rights including community forest management, and to influence regional policies related to forests, climate change, and more.

· The *Five Great Forests Initiative* is a project supporting conservation of Mesoamerica's last remaining large forests. Funded by the EU, it is being implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society, Re:Wild, CCAD, AMPB, and Alliance Bioversity International-CIAT

· In the Five Great Forests, a recently approved initiative secured 25.5 million in additional EU funding at COP 27.

· Aligned national laws, regulations and institutions – as described more fully in the Program Framework Document and Concept notes for each national child project, all six IP partnering countries have enacted various national laws and regulations to protect forests including forestry laws, protected area legislation, environmental impact assessment regulations, and more, and have established institutions at national and sub-national levels with mandates and objectives to support conservation of high-priority forests. In addition, all six partnering organizations have recognized the role of IPLCs in forest conservation and enacted enabling and supportive policy to varying degrees.

In **El Salvador**, the main institutions involved in PA and Forest management are the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock respectively and corresponding key policies and institutional frameworks such as the Environment Act, Wildlife Law, Forestry Law and Natural Protected Areas Law. El Salvador supported the declaration of Biosphere Reserve in June 2011 by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and is considered an example of cooperation between national authorities. El Salvador is actively engaged in Trifinio Plan Advisory Committee through:

· Tri-national Management Committee and its working commissions (representatives appointed by the local management committees).

· National level: 3 Local Management Committees (one for each national area).
· Participatory master plan for the Trifinio Region (2020-2030)
· Trinational management plan of the Trifinio Biosfere Reserve

In **Guatemala** there is a broad legal and public policy framework that supports the implementation of this PI's activities, which is reflected in the Political Constitution of the Republic and in laws and policies that together seek to improve the state of the current natural forests through protection, conservation, management, restoration and sustainable agriculture and livestock measures to reduce pressure on forests. Of the 69 public policies in place as of 2022 for Guatemala, 12 address specific issues supporting objective of this IP. These include: Forestry Policy, Biodiversity Policy, Cattle Ranching Policy, Climate Change Policy, Protected Areas Policy, National Development Policy (K'atun 2032), Policy for the Conservation, Protection and Improvement of the Environment and Natural Resources, and Social Development and Population Policy.
Over the last decade (2011-2020), some 42,000 hectares of degraded lands were brought under restoration in Petén (IUCN Restoration Barometer). Guatemala reported a 31% progress level as against national target of restoring 1.2 million hectares under the Bonn Challenge. In 2021, the Government of Guatemala, through CONAP reiterated its commitment to community forest management to the ACOFOP community cooperative located within the project landscape, while providing significant and continuous support to PA management through CONAP.

Honduras has promoted multiple policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks[67] and mechanisms[68] to advance forest conservation and restoration efforts under the leadership of institutions such as the Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (SERNA), the Institute for Forest Conservation and the Secretary for Agriculture (SAG). Some results that relevant for this IP include the Government-led Green Battalion initiative to strengthen governance and management of biosphere reserves, 5 control posts with presence in the Rio Platano and Tawahka Biosphere, establishment and operation of the environmental cabinet led by SERNA, the National Reforestation and Watershed Protection Program Padre Andrés Tamayo and a Protected Areas Fund.

In **Mexico**, Political commitment of the three States of Yucatán Peninsula in this Integrated Program is strong and was formally expressed. Regional cooperation between Mexico, Belize and Guatemala is facilitated by the Operational Coordination Group and the Strategic Coordination Group established since 2015 as part the Selva Maya 2030 strategy, which bring together key ministries from the three countries and served as a platform for dialogue to develop the strategy. The three states are part of the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF task force) which promotes strategies and approaches that seek to advance balanced development between forest ecosystems and human well-being. Based on art. 34 of the General Law of Ecological Equilibrium and Environmental Protection, Mexico is committed to promote best management practices and conservation through a network of 185 Protected Natural Areas and 382 Voluntary Conservation Areas (VCA) which include conservation initiatives led by indigenous people, civil society organizations, public or private organizations. Lead government entities include CONAFOR (in charge of forest), CONANP (protected areas), environment (SEMARNAT), Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) and the Secretary for Welfare.

Nicaragua developed a coherent policy framework, which include Law 27: Environment and Natural Resources, Law 807: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use, Decree 01-2007: Regulation of Protected Areas, Law 462/947: Forestry Sector Conservation, Promotion, and Development and a National Climate Change Policy. Its institutional framework is composed of five complementary levels of government with shared responsibilities: National (Law 290), Regional (Law 28), Municipal (Law 400), and Territorial and Communal (Law 445). Commitments of Nicaragua to protect and restore forests include the Bonn Challenge: 2.8 million ha restored by 2020, ENDE-REDD+: By 2040 the deforestation rate is reduced at least 50%; reduced emissions from the land use change sector by 11 million TCO_2e in 5 years and the LDN Strategy: By 2030, forest cover increased by 21.47%, 1,166,362 ha improved.

Panama key institutions includes the Ministry of Environment (MoE), to ensures compliance with environmental laws and policies, oversees PA management, forest programs and actions to reduce GHG emissions and the Ministry of Agricultural Development, responsible for policy development in agricultural sector and incentives for producers. Panama has invested USD 386 million in environmental management, mainly for protected areas and water security, in the last 20 years[69]. The main policies are General Environmental Law: Revised in 2015, allows and regulates co-management within the PA system and the National Environmental Strategy 2021-2031, where Pillar 3 targets the conservation of habitats in the PA System (SINAP)[70] through multisectoral /multicultural participation. The National Forest Restoration Program 2021-2025[71] aims to restore 51,000 ha in five years, in watersheds and degraded areas to achieve long-term carbon neutrality and NDC[72]. The Forest Traceability and Control System (STCF) created in 2018; monitors entire chain of forest resources from origin to destination. The National REDD+ Strategy[73] (2022) support reducing carbon emissions through improved governance, financial incentives, and forest conservation and management while the MoE Regulations for Forest Exploitation in the Darien allow to generate area-and time-bound use permits[74].

In Mesoamerica there are several conservation and development initiatives related to forest conservation that are being implemented at various levels, from local to regional. However, the key ones within the current landscape of investments are indicated in the following paragraphs.

The program will take advantage of the experiences and learning from the following projects:

a. I*mprovement of Management Effectiveness in the Maya Biosphere Reserve* (GEF ID 2687) implemented from 2008 to 2017 by the IDB in Guatemala.

b. *Conservation of Biodiversity in the Indigenous Productive Landscapes of the Moskitia* (GEF ID 3592) implemented from 2009 to 2018 by UNDP in Honduras.

c. *Biodiversity Conservation in the Darien Region* (GEF ID 348) implemented from 2005 to 2011 by UNDP in Panama.

d. *Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area* (GEF ID 2686) implemented from 2006 to 2011 by the IDB in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

e. *Tropical forest protection and watershed management in the Trifinio region* in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras implemented from 2012 to 2018 by the GIZ and the Trinational Commission for the Trifinio Plan.
f. *Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya* in Belize, Guatemala, Mexico implemented from 2011 to 2019 by the GIZ.
g. *Selva Maya Natural Resources Protection* Project in Belize, Guatemala, Mexico implemented from 2017 to 2021 by the IUCN.
h. *Support for the monitoring of biodiversity and climate change in the Selva Maya* in Belize, Guatemala, Mexico mplemented from 2016 to 2021 by the GIZ and CCAD.
i. *Strengthening the regional strategic and operational cooperation for the protection of the Selva Maya* in Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico implemented from 2019 to 2023 by the GIZ and CCAD.
j. *Resilient forests and financing options for sustainable water supplies in the tropics* in Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Mexico implemented from 2018 to 2023 by OroVerde - Die Tropenwaldstiftung, sponsored by IKI.
k. *FAO-EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade* (FLEGT) program that developed global experience and interventions in Honduras and Panama, implemented from 2016 to 2022 by FAO[75].
l. *The Global Support Initiative to ICCAs* (ICCA-GSI) (phases I and II) a multi-partnership initiative, implemented from 2013 to 2023 by UNDP´s GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) and funded by Germany´s Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

The program will coordinate actions with the following ongoing initiatives:

Regional initiatives

a. *Linking Central America landscape* sponsored by KfW and implemented by IUCN on 16 protected areas and two OECMs in five landscapes: Golfo de Honduras (Belize, Guatemala and Honduras), Conservation Area El Imposible - Barra de Santiago (El Salvador), Moskitia (Honduras and Nicaragua), Caribe (Nicaragua - Costa Rica) and La Amistad (Costa Rica - Panama).
b. *Integrating climate-compatible livestock systems into national commitments of Central America and the Caribbean (INTEGRA)*, currently under development. This project is sponsored by IKI and implemented in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE).
c. *Large-scale transformation towards biodiversity-friendly, climate resilient agriculture through risk finance solutions and enabling policy and trade frameworks*, currently under development. This project will be sponsored by IKI and implemented in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico by OroVerde - Die Tropenwaldstiftung.
d. The *IKI Small Grants*. At the moment with the projects: (i) *Tree corridors as a voluntary conservation initiative in Guatemala* (implemented by Asociación de Reservas Naturales Privadas de Guatemala) and (ii) *Community networks and integrated landscape management for climate resilience in Mexico* (implemented by Foro para el Desarrollo Sustentable A.C.
e. The *GEF Small Grant Program* (SGP) implemented by UNDP in all Mesoamerica countries. With focus on projects occurring in the intervention areas of the present program.
f. The *Five Great Forests Initiative,* a recently launched program supporting conservation of Mesoamerica's last remaining large forests. Implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society, Re:Wild, CCAD, AMPB, and the Alliance Biodiversity International-CIAT. The Initiative secured about UD25.5 million in additional EU funding at COP 27.
g. *Productive Investment Initiative for Adaptation to Climate Change* (CAMBio II) (FP097), funded by GCF and implemented by the Central American Bank for

Economic Integration (CABEI) in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

h. The regional initiative "*Building Resilience in the SICA region under a synergistic approach between Mitigation and Adaptation focusing on the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use Sector (AFOLU)*" (abbreviated AFOLU 2040). This initiative is coordinated by CAC and CCAD.

i. The *Mesoamerican Territorial Fund*, a financial mechanism, developed by the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests, for the promotion of governance and territorial development in the forest areas of Mesoamerica. The fund aims to promote inclusive economic growth and improve the commercial insertion of small businesses in international markets.

j. The *Biodiversity Finance Initiative* (BIOFIN) implemented by UNDP in Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, and Panama.

k. Pertinent projects of the Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCA) Global Support Initiative, an umbrella global multi-donor platform.

l. The "*Central American Dry Corridor – Building Resilience*" initiative of SICA. A large-scale multi-donor program focused on the Central American Dry Forest ecoregion[76]. At the moment the initiative has support from FAO´s Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Transboundary initiatives

a. *Fostering Water Security in the Trifinio Region,* that prepares a TDA/SAP for the transboundary Lempa River Basin (GEF ID 10108) and is implemented by UNEP in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

b. *Protection of the Trifinio Transboundary Biosphere Reserve* sponsored by KfW and implemented by the Trinational Commission for the Trifinio Plan.

c. *Selva Maya Natural Resources Protection Project II* to be implemented between 2024 and 2029 in Belize, Guatemala, Mexico by the IUCN.

National initiatives

a. *Sustainable Integrated Management of Biodiversity in the Indio-Maíz Biological Reserve* (GEF ID 10674) under implementation by FAO in Nicaragua.

b. *Transforming Food Systems and Reducing Deforestation in the Protected Areas and Biological Corridors landscapes from the Southern Caribbean Coast and San Juan River autonomous region* (GEF ID 10599) implemented by FAO in Nicaragua.

c. *Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Belize's Maya Golden Landscape* (GEF ID 10815) under implementation in Belize by FAO. This project promotes the integration of conservation and production planning in KBAs and strengthening of IPLC production systems to deliver positive biodiversity impacts.

d. *Enhancing jaguar corridors and strongholds through improved management and threat reduction* (GEF ID 10241) implemented by UNDP in Belize.

e. *Ecosystem-based Biodiversity Friendly Cattle Production Framework for the Darien Region of Panama* (GEF ID 9589) implemented by the IADB.

f. *Conservation of wildcats and prey species through public-private partnerships and human-jaguar conflict management in Panama* (GEF ID 10285) implemented by UNEP.

g. *Resilient Rural Belize (Be-Resilient)* (FP101), funded by GCF and implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), to increase resilience of smallholder farmers to climate change.

h. *RELIVE – REsilient LIVElihoods of vulnerable smallholder farmers in the Mayan landscapes and the Dry Corridor of Guatemala* (FP145), funded by GCF and implemented by FAO.

i. *Bio-CLIMA: Integrated climate action to reduce deforestation and strengthen resilience in BOSAWÁS and Rio San Juan Biospheres* (FP146), funded by the GCF and implemented by CABEI.

j. *Upscaling climate resilience measures in the dry corridor agroecosystems of El Salvador* (RECLIMA) (FP089), funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented by FAO.

[1] FAO (2018) defines “primary forest” as a naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. The Convention on Biological Diversity defines a “primary forest” as a forest that has never been logged and has developed following natural disturbances and under natural processes, regardless of its age. Intact forests refer to large forest areas that are free from significant anthropogenic influence (Watson et al., 2018). However, there is no agreed international definition (Mackey et al., 2021), and several analogue terms are used like primary forests and intact forest landscapes, among others. Potapov et al., (2008) defined “intact forest landscapes” (IFL) as an unbroken expanse of natural ecosystems within areas of current forest extent, without signs of significant human activity, and having an area of at least 500 km^2. In the present document the terms “intact forest”, “primary forest” and “intact forest landscape” are used interchangeably.

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[6] The nine federal states of the southeast region of Mexico: Campeche, Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Yucatan. The seven countries are Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

[7] Litvak King, J. (1975). En torno al problema de la definición de Mesoamérica. Anales de Antropología 12(1), 171-195.
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[9] The cocobolo and the Central American river turtle are listed as “critically endangered” in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Vogt et al., 2006; Barstow & Linares, 2020). The keel-billed toucan and the jaguar are listed as “near threatened” (Quigley et al., 2017; BirdLife International, 2021a). The harpy eagle and the pecari are listed as “vulnerable” (Keuroghlian et al., 2013; BirdLife International, 2021b).

[10] The Darien, also called the "Tapón del Darien" and the "Selva del Darien" is an area located in south-eastern Panama and north-western Colombia. It is an area with high levels of biological diversity and endemism (Conservation International, 2005). An example is the orchid Psilochilus dressleri (Kolanowska, 2014) which is endemic to this area and is listed in Appendix II of CITES but not evaluated in the Red List of IUCN.

[11] In 1997, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras signed a treaty to execute the Plan Trifinio and established the Plan Trifinio Trinational Commission. The plan

and the commission are part of the Central American Integration System (SICA).

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[58] The FAO-EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) program develops a range of tools and practical experience on forest governance, timber traceability systems and effective production and trade by micro, small and medium sized enterprises. The program developed several initiatives in Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. More information: https://www.fao.org/in-action/eu-fao-flegt-program/en/

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[60] The GOC is formed by the regional director of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (Mexico), the regional director of the National Council of Protected Areas (Guatemala) and the deputy director of the Forestry Department (Belize). The GEC is formed by the directors and deputy directors of the protected areas in the Selva Maya. The German cooperation has funded four projects. One of the outputs is the “Selva Maya Comprehensive Strategy 2030” (FD-MSDRM, CONAP, CONANP-SERMANAT (2021). A second phase of the “Selva Maya Natural Resources Protection Project”, implemented by IUCN, is under

negotiation.

[61] The CBD Decision 14/8 of 30 November 2018 adopted the following definition: “other effective area-based conservation measure” means “a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values”.

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[68] Protected areas, community forest management, creation of biological corridors, restoration of productive landscapes, micro-watersheds, among others.

[69] Panama Environmental National Strategy 2021-2031

[70] https://www.miambiente.gob.pa/estrategias-ambientales/

[71] Executive Decree N° 137, 21 May 2021

[72] Through reforestation, assisted natural regeneration, riparian restoration, agroforestry and silvopastoral systems.

[73] https://www.miambiente.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ENREDD_.pdf

[74] In 2021, MoE granted permits for SFM in 144,727 hectares, mostly located in the *Emberá Wounaan* and *Wargandí* areas. Community and private farms that meet sustainability standards.

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[76] The Central American Dry Forest ecoregion extends from southern Chiapas in Mexico to Guancaste in Costa Rica. The SICA initiative focus on El Salvador,

Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Description

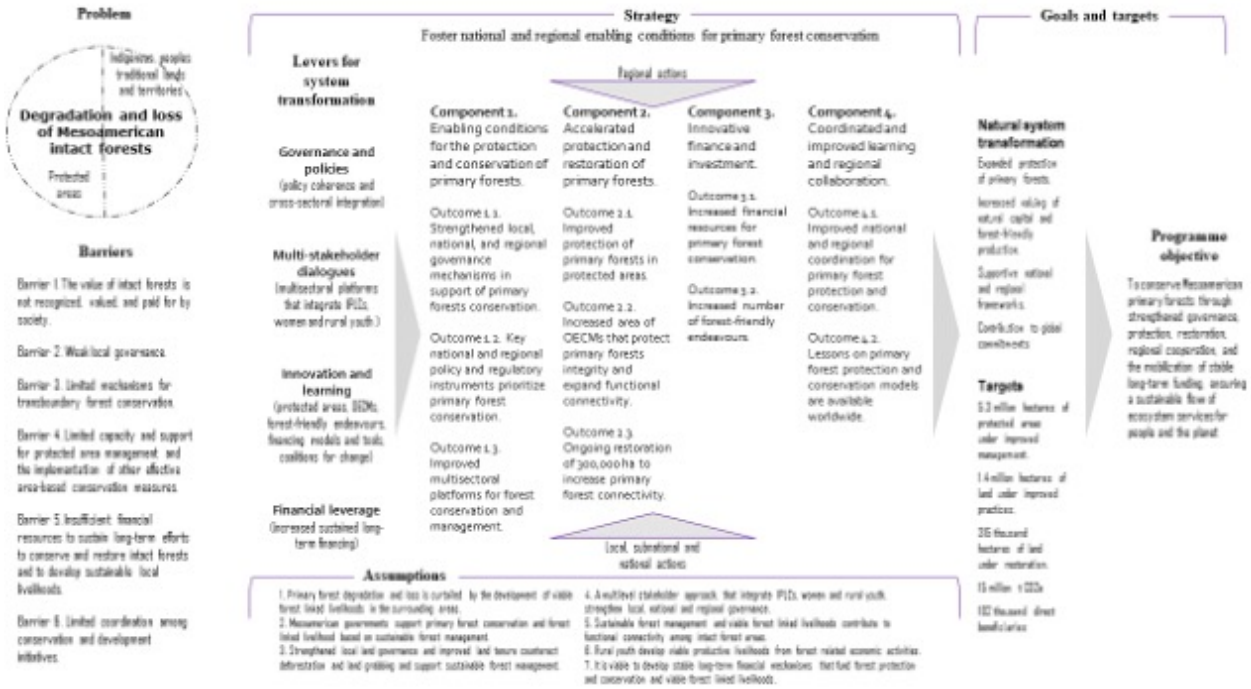
This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the program as a whole. The program description is expected to cover the key elements of "good project design" in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PFD guidance document. (Approximately 10-15 pages) see guidance here

Program theory of change

The proposed six-year **Mesoamerica Forest Integrated Program** will be a key part of long-term efforts to conserve the primary forests of Mesoamerica. As described above, the key problem is that Mesoamerican intact forests, which are located mainly within protected areas and traditional lands and territories of indigenous peoples, are being degraded, fragmented, and lost to a range of human activities. Despite their intrinsic value and the essential ecosystem services they provide, the value of Mesoamerican primary forests for society and the planet is not fully recognized and they are mostly invisible in the political and management agendas and instruments of the region.

To confront the degradation, fragmentation, and loss of intact forests, and in line with the six identified barriers, the integrated program will apply a strategy of fostering national and regional enabling conditions for primary forest conservation (Figure 5). The objective of the program is to conserve Mesoamerican primary forests through strengthened governance, protection, restoration, regional cooperation, and the mobilization of stable long-term funding, ensuring a sustainable flow of ecosystem services for people and the planet.

Figure 5. Mesoamerica program theory of change.



The following key lessons have been distilled from previous and present projects and were used for the design of the Mesoamerica Forest program:

1. Governance is key and must be strengthened in parallel at the local, national, and regional levels, with a particular focus on fostering accountability of government entities.

2. Income generating activities are very important as a lever of change, but they have to be culturally sensitive and pertinent to the local social and economic conditions of the indigenous peoples and rural communities. The cooperative modality is not appropriate in all cases.

3. Rural women are key for forest management, the conservation of natural resources and family rural economies. Interventions must strengthen opportunities for women and implement actions that correct the existing inequalities and therefore empower women.

4. Rural youth are key agents of change. Young persons are key to sustain rural communities and forest-based livelihoods. However, rural youth face significant social inequalities, limited access to land, chronically unemployed and are excluded from community decision-making processes. All this motivate rural exoduses of young persons to the cities. Interventions must integrate rural youth into governance processes and productive activities to empower young persons to enable positive changes in their communities.

5. Addressing complex problems and situations require (i) long-term efforts beyond the typical 4-year funding period and (ii) strong coordination, collaboration and synergies among stakeholders, government entities and donors.

6. Projects need a monitoring and evaluation system that can rapidly detect failures and changes in the social, economic, and environmental context. Therefore, allowing to adopt prompt measures instead of waiting for a mid-term or terminal evaluation.

The strategy is based upon the application of the four levers for system transformation defined in GEF-8 strategic positioning documentation and other programming notes[1]:

1. ***Governance and policies***. The program will implement actions to improve intersectoral coordination and dialogue to enhance policy coherence[2] on primary forest conservation in pertinent policies and instruments (at local, subnational, national, and regional levels). This will imply strengthening or developing mechanisms to resolve contradictions among sectoral views and interests (e.g., mining concessions in primary forest areas).
2. ***Multi-stakeholder dialogues***. The program will foster multilevel intersectoral constructive dialogue among key stakeholder by establishing or strengthening pertinent multisectoral local, national, and regional platforms. Affirmative actions will be implemented to effectively integrate IPLCs, women and rural youth into constructive dialogue and decision-making processes.
3. ***Innovation and learning***. The program will aim to transform the system by using innovation and learning in the following key areas:

a. Improved management of protected areas, by supporting sharing of experiences and best practices among IFLs. For example, share cross-border collaboration lessons from the Selva Maya to the Moskitia.
b. Development, implementation, and management of OECMs, in particular community-based areas administered by IPLCs, building upon international experience and local lessons.
c. Use of local knowledge and regional lessons for the implementation of community-based forest restoration practices.
d. Development and application of innovative financing models and tools (e.g., forest bonds, payment for ecosystem services) to reduce the existing funding gap and to channel resources to long-term efforts like forest restoration and the development of sustainable local livelihoods.
e. Development, testing and implementation of novel incentives and business models to incentive nature-friendly activities in the surroundings of the intact forest landscapes. For example, eco-labelled forest products from community managed secondary forests or deforestation-free beef.
f. Creation of new coalitions for change including a new regional coalition to mobilize funding and national and regional coordination platforms to improve collaboration and synergies among the various conservation and development initiatives.

4. ***Financial leverage***. The program will promote the use of financing tools to mobilize domestic and international resources to channel long-term funding to urgently needed actions like sustaining protected areas and OECMs, restoration of primary forest cover and the development of forest-friendly endeavors.

The program strategy implies the implementation of concerted and complementary actions by the six national child projects (local, subnational, and national level) and the regional coordination project (regional level). The outputs of the national child projects will contribute to achieve the regional outcomes, and the regional child project will develop outputs that support the national actions (e.g., Mesoamerican knowledge platform) and consolidate the implementation and progress at national level (e.g., regional assessment of the risk of collapse of critical forest biomes).

The program is organized as four interlinked components (Table 3). Component 1 will focus on developing enabling conditions to support primary forest conservation, therefore, addressing barriers 1, 2 and 3 (Table 3). Component 2 will concentrate on actions to protect primary forests and to restore forest areas building upon the advances of the other components, therefore addressing barrier 1, 3 and 4. Component 3 will implement actions to secure long-term funding and incentivize forest-friendly endeavors, therefore addressing barrier 5. Component 4 will support and catalyze the work of the previous components by documenting and sharing pertinent knowledge and establishing a coordination mechanism to enhance complementarity and synergies among the range of on-going initiatives, therefore contributing to address all six barriers.

Together these actions will contribute to the following transformations of the natural system:

i. Expanded protection of Mesoamerican primary forests by means of protected areas and OECMs.
ii. Increased understanding and valuing of natural capital.
iii. Expanded forest-friendly production.
iv. Improved policy coherence and institutional and legal frameworks that support primary forest conservation.
v. Increased contributions to global environmental conservation and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The program will aim to achieve five key regional targets (rounded numbers):

§ Improved management effectiveness of 5.3 million hectares of protected areas to guard the existing primary forests.

§ Improved management practices in 1.4 million hectares of land through a variety of schemes like OECMs, community forest concessions or sustainable production systems to protect the primary forests areas and to expand functional connectivity.

§ 63,000 hectares of land are under restoration processes to increase functional connectivity and health of primary forest areas.

§ Mitigation of 83 million t CO2eq emissions to the atmosphere.

§ 182 thousand persons directly benefit from the improved condition of the forests and the deliverables of the program.

The logic of the four components is explained in the following paragraphs.

Component 1 focuses on fostering multisectoral dialogue to strengthen governance processes and to increase policy coherence. The logic of this component is that the actors linked to the use of the forest areas need to understand the value of primary forests, use appropriate tools, have access to reliable information, and participate in spaces for intersectoral interaction through positive dialogue. This will facilitate improvement and strengthening of decision-making processes, the management instruments (e.g., land use plans, sectoral policies, procedures for consultations with indigenous peoples), and the various forms of governance of the territory and primary forests in Mesoamerica. A key element of the strategy is to effectively integrate indigenous peoples, local communities, and women and rural youth organizations into multisectoral platforms and the governance processes. Rural youth are crucial because they are agents of cultural transmission, will be the future leaders that will take decisions about land and natural resource use, and will develop forest-linked livelihoods. Therefore, the program will support all participating countries in operationalizing SICA´s rural youth strategy into the intervention areas.

Component 2 will strengthen protected areas, increase the area of OECMs and initiate long-term restoration efforts (Figure 6). The logic of this component is to foster that key stakeholders (e.g., farmers, land use planners) understand the current situation and the roles of area-based conservation tools and IPLCs in the management of the territories that protect primary forests. This, in turn, will increase support to forest conservation and restoration, including the mobilization of financing and the control of forest areas. The program will provide direct support to improve the management effectiveness of target protected areas, including updating management plans, strengthening participatory governance, and implementing novel technologies and tools (e.g., environmental DNA) as needed. It seems improbable that the participating countries will establish new protected areas in the near future. Therefore, OECMs will complement the protected areas by (i) shielding primary forest patches, (ii) reducing external pressures, (iii) providing space for restoration efforts, and (iv) securing tenure rights of IPLCs. To support creation and strengthening of new/existing OECMs the program strategy will be to support (i) the development of national instruments to operationalize them in the participating countries, (ii) the establishment of community based OECMs, and (iii) the creation of collaboration agreements to advance transboundary OECMs. Finally, the program will contribute to identify priority areas for forest restoration. This assessment will facilitate concentrating community-based forest restoration on key priority areas. The program will support local groups by providing tools and knowledge to undertake forest restoration efforts. Work with protected areas, OECMs and forest restoration will prepare the ground to receive and properly use the sustained long-term financial support to be mobilized in outcome 3.1.

Component 3 has two complementary parts: (1) increasing financial resources for long-term actions and, (2) incentivizing nature-friendly productive activities by implementing appropriate incentives (fiscal, non-fiscal, market-based) and supporting local entrepreneurs to develop viable forest-friendly endeavors.

The strategy to increase financial resources consists of four steps:

1. Identifying, on each participating country, the funding gap, the barriers to long-term investments into primary forest conservation and the development of forest linked livelihoods, and the possible national and international sources.
2. Developing innovative financing instruments and tools to mobilize domestic and international resources, such as forest bonds or payment for ecosystem services.
3. Implementing high-level meetings and funding campaigns to interest investors and donors.
4. Establishing a regional coalition to maintain fundraising efforts and the implementation of long-term financing instruments. The coalition will integrate IPLCs, women and rural youth organizations, private and public sector, development partners, development and private banks, civil society organizations, and philanthropic donors.

The strategy to promote the development of nature-friendly productive activities that reduce the pressure of deforestation of primary forests, consists of:
(i) Identifying potential incentives and disincentives from national, regional, and international experience. Next, developing mechanisms through pertinent multisectoral platforms. Then, test their applicability under controlled conditions, and finally scaling up the use of the more promising instruments.
(ii) Identifying experience and opportunities for forest-related endeavors that can have a net-positive forest impact. Then, develop innovative business models suitable to indigenous and rural families and communities and foster favorable and tailored conditions to access credit and financing (e.g., rate, term, guarantees). Next, support local entrepreneurs and women and youth led endeavors to prepare feasibility studies, business plans and investment plans for forest-friendly ventures. Finally, implement actions to promote the demand of pertinent products, services, and commodities.

Component 4 will support the other components by establishing national and regional coordination mechanisms to articulate efforts with other initiatives, donors, and development partners and implementing a long-term communication plan. In addition, this component will foster knowledge management and learning by supporting the development of a regional knowledge platform, documenting and disseminating lessons and facilitating knowledge exchange.

The Mesoamerica program will directly work with the private sector. In addition to the most obvious constituents (e.g., privately and government owned companies, philanthropic entities supported by the private sector), the "private sector" includes primary producers, family and community enterprises, other actors of the forest and agriculture value chains, and financial institutions. The engagement of actors of other value chains (e.g., beef, mining) will be decided during program implementation. Private sector actors will participate in various instances including: (I) involvement in multisectoral platforms, (ii) the provision of technical assistance and knowledge (e.g., project preparation facility), and (iii) contribution to the new financing mechanisms (e.g., payment for ecosystem services, green bonds).

Women are important actors in forest-based livelihoods, however because of the persistent inequalities between men and women, a focus on gender dimensions will be critical to program success. Men and women have different knowledge and visions on the use of tropical forests and play different roles in livelihoods. Women are responsible for domestic activities (e.g., housework, care and nutrition for children and elders) and arduous and time-consuming production activities (e.g., food production gardens, harvesting, small animal husbandry). This restricts their time availability for activities like technical capacities development, entrepreneurial actions, participation and representation in community decision-making bodies, among others. In addition, their involvement in decision-making processes and their bargaining power are usually inhibited by social norms and discrimination. Therefore, the Mesoamerica program will invest in mainstreaming the gender dimensions and dynamics in the target areas. The program will ensure social inclusion of women using a right-based- approach to actively engage them in the multisectoral platforms and in the forest- related activities, land governance and land use planning. Also, particular attention will be given to address the barriers that limit women and youth in their involvement in productive enterprises, access to credit and other financial support. The national child projects will undertake gender and youth analysis to better understand gender conditions regarding participation and

decision-making, issues related to access to and control over resources, and women's priorities and interests. Afterwards, gender plans will be developed to integrate the best approaches to mobilize women to contribute to the protection and conservation of primary forests, be actively involved in local governance, and develop viable enterprises.

Indigenous people are key guardians of the forests in most of the areas where the program will be implemented. They also contribute to forest protection and conservation. Considering their historical marginalization and threats related to environmental justice, the program will implement sound social and cultural safeguards and a program level indigenous peoples plan to ensure the application of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) as well as cultural criteria in the participatory definition and promotion of sustainable OECMs management, protocols and frameworks.

Table 3. Components, Outcomes and Outputs of the Mesoamerica Forest Integrated program.

Outcomes	Outputs
Component 1. Enabling conditions for the protection and conservation of primary forests.	
Outcome 1.1. Strengthened local, national, and regional governance mechanisms in support of primary forests conservation.	1.1.1. Awareness-raising and advocacy plan on primary forest protection and conservation targeted at policymakers, sectoral entities, and private sector. 1.1.2. Local and national governance structures strengthened to improve the effectiveness of primary forests protection and conservation. 1.1.3. Strengthened agreements for cross-border protected areas collaboration. 1.1.4. A regional agreement to operationalize the Rural youth strategy of the SICA region 2022 – 2030 into the primary forest landscapes.
Outcome 1.2. Key national and regional policy and regulatory instruments prioritize primary forest conservation.	1.2.1. National and subnational Intersectoral updated policies, regulations and instruments that support primary forest protection and conservation. 1.2.2. Information to support fact-based decision making on forest conservation interventions. 1.2.3. Three key regional instruments integrate strategic actions for primary forest protection and conservation (PERFOR, ERAM and ERAS).
Outcome 1.3. Improved multisectoral platforms for forest conservation and management.	1.3.1. National multisectoral platforms established or strengthened. 1.3.2. Regional multisectoral meetings of stakeholder groups and sectors to agree actions and goals for primary forest conservation. 1.3.3. Affirmative actions to integrate IPLCs, women and rural youth into decision-making processes.
Component 2. Accelerated protection and restoration of primary forests.	
Outcome 2.1. Improved protection of primary forests in protected areas.	2.1.1. Strengthened protected area management instruments and tools. 2.1.2. Regional assessment of the risk of collapse and extent of the Mesoamerican critical forest biomes. 2.1.3. Information about the contribution of protected areas and indigenous peoples to conserve primary forests and advance the global biodiversity framework to support fact-based decision making.
Outcome 2.2. Increased area of OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand functional connectivity.	2.2.1. National frameworks or protocols for the implementation of OECMs. 2.2.2. Established national networks of OECMs that support the conservation of primary forests. 2.2.3. Collaboration agreements for transboundary OECMs within the framework of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.
Outcome 2.3. Ongoing restoration of 65,000 ha to increase primary forest connectivit	2.3.1. Updated evaluation of priority areas for Mesoamerican forests landscape restoration. 2.3.2. Key priority areas under community-based restoration.

dry forest connectivity.	2.3.2. Key priority areas under community based restoration.
Component 3. Innovative finance and investment.	
Outcome 3.1. Increased financial resources for primary forest conservation.	3.1.1. National analyses of funding gaps and barriers to invest in primary forest landscapes and forest linked livelihoods. 3.1.2. Innovative financing instruments and tools to increase investments in primary forest protection, protected areas, OECMs, and forest linked livelihoods. 3.1.3. High-level dialogue meetings to mobilise financial resources through bilateral, multilateral, private and philanthropy channels to sustain long-term critical forest biomes conservation. 3.1.4. Regional coalition to mobilise funding to accelerate the conservation of primary forests and the development of viable forests linked livelihoods.
Outcome 3.2. Increased number of forest-friendly endeavours.	3.2.1. Innovative mechanisms to incentivise forest-friendly endeavours. 3.2.2. Innovative business models to develop forest-friendly goods and services. 3.2.3. Project preparation facility to enable access to private and development financing. 3.2.4. High impact events and advocacy to accelerate the demand for products from sustainably managed secondary forests and deforestation-free commodities from Mesoamerica.
Component 4. Coordinated and improved learning and regional collaboration.	
Outcome 4.1. Improved national and regional coordination for primary forest protection and conservation	4.1.1. Regional coordination platform for primary forest protection and conservation. 4.1.2. Regional long-term communication plan to mobilize support for the conservation of primary forests and critical forest biomes.
Outcome 4.2. Lessons on primary forest protection and conservation models are available worldwide	4.2.1. Mesoamerican knowledge platform on critical forest biomes (e.g., biodiversity and social information, models of forest management, regulations). 4.2.2. Program lessons, forest management and governance models, and integration of IPLCs, women and rural youth into decision-making processes documented and disseminated at regional and global levels. 4.2.3. South-south cooperation / knowledge exchange with the other critical forests biomes. 4.2.4. Annual regional knowledge exchange workshops. 4.2.5. Harmonized program annual planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

Intervention areas

The national child projects will be implemented in five primary forest areas (from North to South): Selva Maya, Moskitia, Trifinio, Indio Maiz, and Darien (Figures 6 & 7). There will be no direct interventions in Tortuguero, La Amistad, Santa Fe National Park and Chagres National Park. However, it is foreseen that all Mesoamerican primary forests will benefit from the achievements of the program.

Belize and Costa Rica did not join the present program. Nonetheless, the key stakeholders of these countries will be invited to be part of the processes (i) to strengthen cross-border protected areas collaboration in Selva Maya and Indio Maíz – Tortuguero (output 1.1.3) and (ii) to build and participate in the regional coordination platform activities for primary forest protection and conservation (output 4.1.1) (Table 2). Also, lessons learned will be shared with all Mesoamerican countries through the existing regional initiatives and bodies.

Figure 6. Program intervention areas and Intact Forest Landscapes.

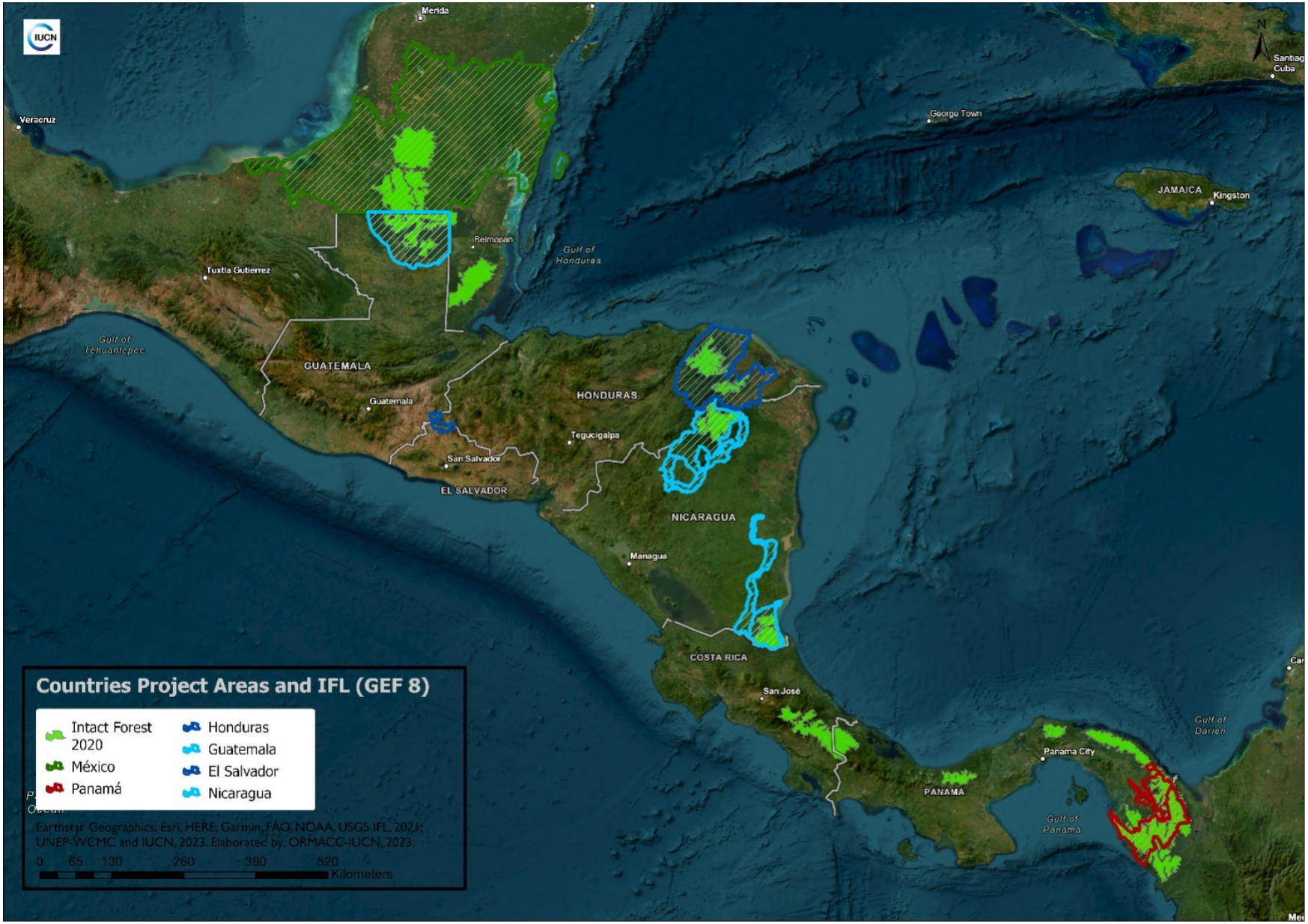
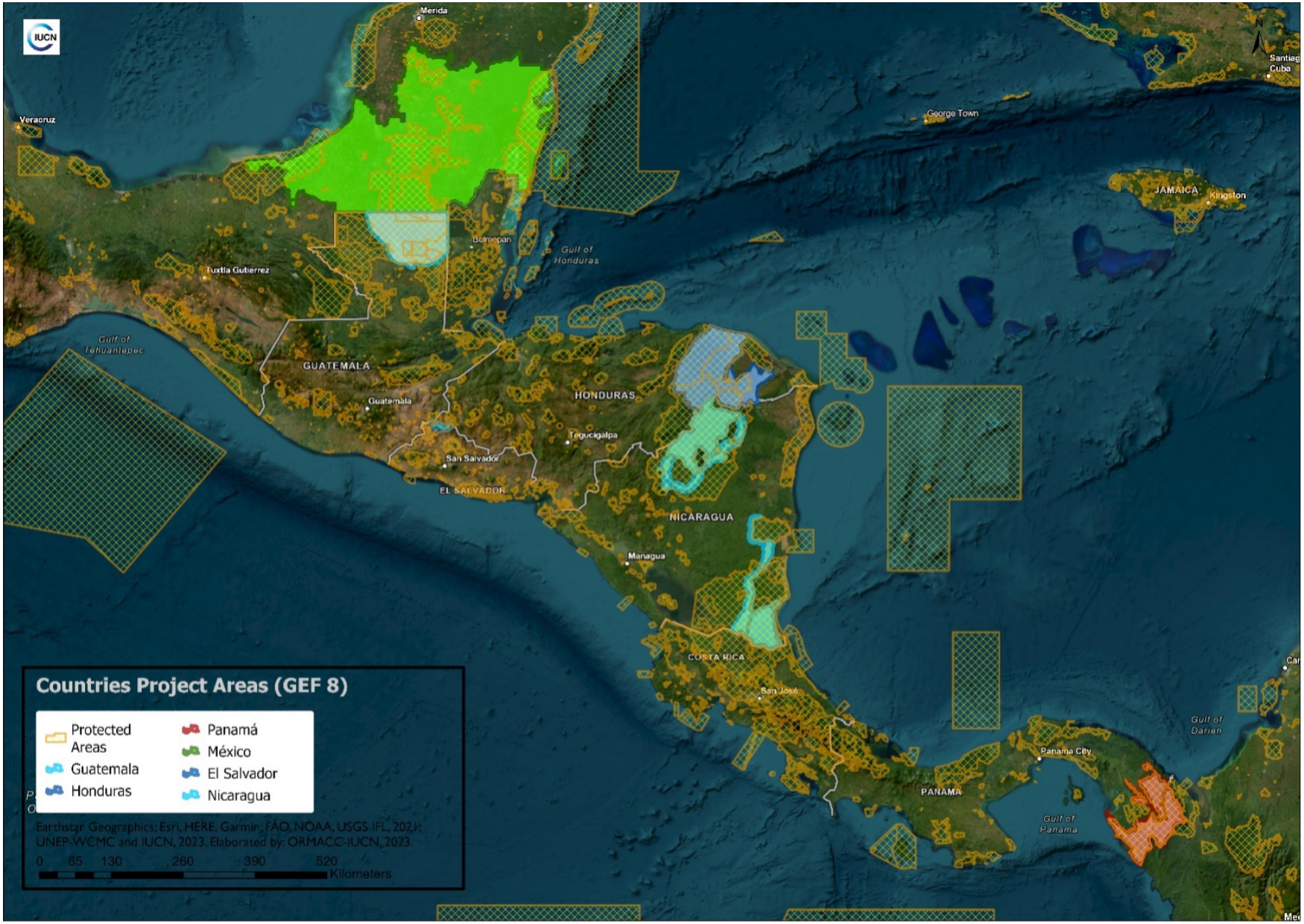


Figure 7. Program intervention area and protected areas.



Program structure

Component 1. Enabling conditions for the protection and conservation of primary forests

This component will aim to enhance capabilities and to provide motivation to advance primary forest conservation and focuses on furthering conditions to

enable the protection and conservation of primary forest at the local, national, and regional levels. Three key interventions are planned: (i) to strengthen governance mechanisms (outcome 1.1), (ii) to integrate primary forest conservation into key national and regional instruments (outcome 1.2), and (iii) to foster multi-sectoral dialogue and collaborative platforms (outcome 1.3) (Table 2, Figure 5). The results of this component will directly contribute to achieving the outcomes of component 2.

Outcome 1.1. Strengthened local, national, and regional governance mechanisms in support of primary forests conservation.
Sound governance mechanisms are key to conserving primary forests. At the regional level, the RCP will (i) facilitate knowledge exchange and provide technical assistance to key stakeholders to support strengthening local, national, and regional governance mechanisms and (ii) will prepare and implement a plan to raise awareness and advocate in support of primary forest conservation. In addition, the program will support efforts by SICA countries to agree on actions to operationalize the rural youth strategy in the primary forest landscapes and to strengthen cross-border collaboration.

Output 1.1.1. Awareness-raising and advocacy plan on primary forest protection and conservation targeted at policymakers, sectoral entities, and private sector.

Motivation and information are key to driving behavioral change[3]. Therefore, the regional child project will prepare and support the implementation of a long-term awareness-raising and advocacy plan that will be implemented together with the national child projects. It is foreseen that by the end of the Program, the plan will be updated to the new circumstances and partners will be engaged to support continued implementation.

Output 1.1.2. Local and national governance structures strengthened to improve the effectiveness of primary forests protection and conservation.
The program will provide technical assistance and will facilitate knowledge exchange (preferably peer-to-peer cross-site learning exchanges) to consolidate or develop the governance structures that manage territories, natural resources and human development in the target areas (Figures 7 and 8). At local level, the program will support structures like indigenous peoples governance entities (e.g., Miskitu Councils of Elders and Community Councils), community forest concession like those in Guatemala and Panama, forest oversight groups ("veedurias forestales") in Panama, and second level organizations like the Muskitia Asla Takanka of Honduras, the Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP), the Association of Indigenous Women of the Atlantic Coast (AMICA) of Nicaragua, and the Biosphere Reserves and protected areas councils. Special attention will be given to foster that IPLCs, women and youth organizations are integrated into the governance structures. Also, the program will foster the strengthening of the pertinent governance structures related to land tenure and land use. The regional child project will distil good practices and experiences of primary forest protection and conservation from existing initiatives and will transfer this knowledge to local, national, and regional stakeholders to support the review and strengthening of pertinent governance mechanisms (e.g., land governance and tenure).

Output 1.1.3. Strengthened agreements for cross-border protected areas collaboration.
In the Selva Maya and La Amistad forest landscapes there are instruments that support cross-border collaboration between protected areas. On the contrary, the Moskitia and Trifinio lack agreements to facilitate collaborative management of transboundary forests and cross-border collaboration between neighboring protected areas. The Plan Trifinio provides a political framework, but specific arrangements are necessary. Therefore, the RCP and the pertinent national child projects will support positive dialogue processes and ongoing initiatives to operationalize cross-border collaboration. This process will be done considering experiences on forest conservation across borderlines and transboundary protected areas[4] and the support from the network of IUCN WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group. When pertinent, cross-border collaboration will include topics like the control of illegal movement of cattle, timber and wildlife.

Output 1.1.4. A regional agreement to operationalize the rural youth strategy of the SICA region 2022 – 2030 into the primary forest landscapes.
Engaging rural youth (women and men) into community forest conservation is critical to drive structural changes. The regional child project will capitalize on the existing rural youth strategy and, with the backing of CAC and CCAD, will support countries to agree to operationalize it in the target areas (Figure 7). The national child projects will support the preparation and implementation of site targeted rural youth action plans. In Mexico, the child project, will work with the pertinent entities to prepare rural youth action plan for the Mexican Selva Maya.

Outcome 1.2. Key national and regional policy and regulatory instruments prioritize primary forest conservation.
To build conditions for primary forest conservation the program will support:

a. The generation of practical, science- and local knowledge- based evidence about the value of primary forests to support fact-based decision making (output 1.2.2). The national child projects will support the generation of evidence, like the economic value of primary forests ecosystem services, for the use of key stakeholders. The regional project will both synthesize this information and make it more widely available. This information will be integrated into the long-term awareness-raising and advocacy plan and the Mesoamerican knowledge platform.

b. The integration of primary forest conservation into key national policies and regulations (e.g., local land use plans) and three main regional instruments (outputs 1.2.1 and 1.2.3).

c. The strengthening of national institutional arrangements through the national child projects (output 1.2.1).

Output 1.2.1. National and subnational Intersectoral updated policies, regulations and instruments that support primary forest protection and conservation.
The program will provide technical assistance and support participatory processes to review, update or develop instruments that foster the protection and conservation of primary forests. These will be intersectoral processes based on constructive dialogue to encourage policy coherence. These instruments will include, among other, land use plans, forest harvesting regulations, policies and regulations for granting mining concessions, indigenous peoples life plans, procedures for consultations with indigenous peoples. The national child projects will foster that pertinent local land use plans include the protection of primary forests. The regional child project will facilitate the exchange of experience among peers of the participating countries.

Output 1.2.2. Information to support fact-based decision making on forest conservation interventions (e.g., natural capital accounting, biodiversity and social assessments).
The program will contribute to generating practical evidence about the value of primary forests to support fact-based decision making regarding their use and management. At the regional level, the RCP will compile and synthesize the evidence generated by the national child projects and address knowledge gaps where necessary to provide a comprehensive analysis of the contribution of Mesoamerica´s critical forest biomes to regional ecosystem accounting, halting human-induced extinction of threatened species, sustaining livelihoods (e.g., creation of decent employment, provision of food) and the role of indigenous territories in the conservation of biodiversity.

At the national level, the child projects will implement ecosystem accounting assessments in coordination with the corresponding national central banks to update information on the functions of ecosystems assets and the ecosystem services they provide, with a specific focus on primary forests. Other assessments that the child projects will undertake include assessments of the presence of threatened species at critical forest biome level and priority options for mitigation of threats to species survival (e.g, using IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ data and Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) [5] assessment approaches) – in particular for indigenous territories and other OECMs, as well as protected areas) to inform conservation management plans and support monitoring of threats based on global data layers (e.g., Global Forest Watch, NASA GEDI, NASA/USGS Landsat, and NASA/NOAA VIIRS, Smart-fire), citizen science data banks and field-data collection. Impact assessment (social, environmental) of national subsidies schemes may also be performed to inform decision makers on trade-offs, positive and negative impacts of specific Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) policies.

Output 1.2.3. Three key regional instruments integrate strategic actions for primary forest protection and conservation (PERFOR, ERAM and ERAS).

The program will support the processes to explicitly integrate the protection and conservation of primary forests into the Regional Strategic Program for the Management of Forest Ecosystems (PERFOR), the Framework Regional Environmental Strategy (ERAM) and the Regional agro-environmental and health strategy (ERAS). The PERFOR was adopted in 2014. It is a regional program aimed at improving the management, governance, and business climate of the territories with forest ecosystems, forest plantations and agroforestry systems of the SICA countries. It is coordinated and implemented by CAC, CCAD and the forest offices of the countries. The PERFOR briefly mentions the interaction with protected areas and the need to manage the buffer zones and to rehabilitate and restore degraded ecosystems, but there is no clear recognition of the societal value of primary forests and specific actions for their protection and conservation and integration at forest landscape level. Therefore, the program will support CAC and CCAD to update PERFOR to integrate primary forest protection, conservation, and restoration in line with more recently updated strategies (i.e., ERAM, AFOLU). ERAM and ERAS are framework strategies of the SICA. The ERAM (2021-2025) is a key instrument that articulates the regional sectoral strategies of the SICA to advance the agendas of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The implementation of the ERAM is coordinated by CCAD. The ERAS (2009 - 2024) is a cross-sectoral strategy headed by CAC, CCAD and the Central American Council of Health Ministers (COMISCA). It includes intersectoral action on (i) sustainable land management, (ii) climate variability and change, (iii) biodiversity, (iv) agri-environmental businesses, and (v) healthy spaces and lifestyles. These two strategies will be updated soon. Therefore, the program will support the planning processes to integrate primary forest protection, conservation, and restoration within ERAM and ERAS.

Outcome 1.3. Improved multisectoral platforms for forest conservation and management.

In the context of behavioral change, multisectoral dialogue is an opportunity to develop a common language, a common understanding of forest benefits and sectoral interests, and to agree on common action thus fostering policy coherence. Therefore, the program will support the processes to establish or strengthen national multisectoral platforms in the participating countries and will convene national and regional meetings to facilitate intersectoral and multilevel positive dialogues. The information generated in outcomes 1.2.2, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 will feed the platforms and dialogue processes.

Output 1.3.1. National multisectoral platforms established or strengthened.

At the regional level, the RCP will provide technical assistance to the national child projects for, depending on the country, the development or strengthening of multisectoral platforms with multiple stakeholders. The regional child project will (i) channel specific inputs like good practice, case studies, proven guidelines, and tailor-made training to the national project teams, and (ii) facilitate that they exchange their working experience and lessons. At the national level, the child projects will support convening key stakeholder (e.g., community organizations, local governments, producers) from different sectors (e.g., agriculture, forestry, mining) to agree on key priorities, practices and benefits of the conservation, restoration, and management of the primary forest areas.

Output 1.3.2. Regional multisectoral meetings of stakeholder groups and sectors to agree actions and goals for primary forest conservation.

To complement the national efforts with multisectoral platforms, the program will organize positive dialogue processes at the national and regional levels. Positive dialogue builds mutual understanding through the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and positions. It builds common understanding and tolerance and dissolves barriers. At the national and regional levels, the program will organize multi-level multi-sector facilitated dialogue processes with pertinent forest and non-forest key stakeholders to discuss and analyze the key drivers of primary forest degradation and loss and to encourage agreements to confront them.

Output 1.3.3. Affirmative actions to integrate IPLCs, women and rural youth into decision-making processes.

The program will apply and promote the implementation of affirmative actions[6]. During the PPG, program level gender and indigenous peoples action plans

will be prepared with specific affirmative actions to applied during program implementation. These will be complemented with the site targeted rural youth action plans (output 1.1.4). Examples of foreseen affirmative actions include (i) to implement women and youth led initiatives, (ii) to promote active participation of indigenous peoples, women and young persons in meetings and workshops, (iii) to arrange opportunities for tailor-made training and mentoring, (iv) to provide travel support, (v) to organize opportunities to speak and present their perspectives in various fora and to ensure the integration of their views, and (vi) to facilitate interpreters to ease intercultural communication. The effectiveness of the gender, youth and indigenous peoples action plans will be assessed annually and adjusted accordingly. In addition, the program will promote, at the national and regional levels, that key entities (e.g., forest authorities, municipalities, protected area councils, agriculture councils) adopt policies and implement actions to promote participation and representation of IPLCs, women and youth.

Component 2. Accelerated protection and restoration of primary forests.

This component supports on-the-ground action to protect and restore primary forests. This will be done through three complementary actions: (i) fortifying the management of existing protected areas that guard primary forests; (ii) expanding the use of OECMs to protect and connect primary forest areas; and (iii) initiating restoration of priority degraded/deforested areas to increase primary forest connectivity and ensure health of the forest biome. This will be done together with the national systems of protected areas and key local stakeholders, in close collaboration with other pertinent projects and initiatives.

Outcome 2.1. Improved protection of primary forests in protected areas.

The program will provide direct support to improve the management effectiveness of the protected areas that contain the target IFLs (Figure 8) (output 2.1.1) and will generate key information to support fact-based decision-making (outputs 2.1.2 and 2.1.3). This information will guide the interventions in protected areas, OECMs and forest restoration, and will be a key input for the outcomes of the components 1 and 3.

Output 2.1.1. Strengthened protected area management instruments and tools.

The national child projects will undertake specific actions to improve management of targeted protected areas. Informed by existing management effectiveness assessments and findings from the application of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) in all the protected areas located within the target landscapes (Figure 7), each national project will prepare a capacity building action plan to address key knowledge and capacities gaps with support of the regional child project. Capacity building activities will be tailored-made to fill specific identified gaps, and support will be coordinated with other projects and initiatives. A range of potential needs may be targeted including updating management plans, improved monitoring and enforcement, strengthening participatory governance, assessing and addressing threats to species, fire management, integration with OECMs, and more. It is foreseen that capacity building may include the use of novel technologies (e.g., automated monitoring procedures, environmental DNA methods for ecological monitoring, camera trapping), use of remote sensing applications for monitoring or for above-ground forest biomass estimates, use of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) for surveillance and law enforcement, and firefighting techniques. In addition, funding gaps to achieve improved protected area management will be estimated to support the development of financing models and tools to increase investments in primary forest protection (outcome 3.1). Also, national project actions will include, when pertinent, work to address intercultural and social inclusion, gender inequalities, engagement of young people, and the impacts of climate change on species and ecosystems based on climate change impact modelling and social challenges found in the national assessments (output 1.2.2). When applicable, the national child projects will mobilize support from the Expert Assessment Group for the Green List (EAGL). There are national EAGL groups in Honduras and Mexico, and a national EAGL in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize related to Selva Maya which has been harmonizing protocols and information on management effectiveness of their protected areas.

In addition, the regional child project will compile a toolbox and provide guidance to the national child projects. This toolbox will contribute to filling gaps identified during the effectiveness assessments of the protected areas. The toolbox will assemble proven instruments (e.g., FAO´s Sustainable Forest

Management Toolbox) for improving planning and management capacities and monitoring systems of protected areas, including but not limited to tools such as:

§ The Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) and the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas Standard[7].
§ Innovative methodologies for biodiversity monitoring like the eBioAtlas.
§ Techniques and guidelines for managing conflicts in protected areas.
§ Geospatial services for fire monitoring and management.
§ Emerging experiences from local protected areas management

To ensure permanence of the toolbox and associated resources, materials and webinars will be uploaded and available in the regional knowledge platform (output 4.2.1).

Output 2.1.2. Regional assessment of the risk of collapse and extent of the Mesoamerican critical forest biomes.

The work will concentrate on two actions:

1. Preparation of an up-to-date accurate map of the primary forest areas using information from remote sensors and validated national sources of the participating countries. This is necessary considering that the current IFL map[8] does not provide sufficient detail about the location and extent of the intact forest areas.
2. With guidance and support from the Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) team and WCS, and building on existing and local knowledge, assessment of the conservation status and extent of critical forest biomes will be conducted at national level to (i) update the state of knowledge on the dynamics and processes of primary forest ecosystems, (ii) identify potential risk of collapsing and the main threats – including in indigenous territories- and (iii) the possible ways to mitigate of eliminate their impact. The results of these national assessments will provide science-based and spatially explicit orientation to develop local integrated land-use planning, to inform protected areas management plans, and to support biome connectivity through a complementary network of OECMs.

This output will build upon a past RLE regional assessment and related work[9], global data layers (e.g., Global Forest Watch, NASA GEDI, NASA/USGS Landsat, and NASA/NOAA VIIRS, Smart-fire) and ensure adherence and alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) monitoring framework (target 1). Finally, the regional child project will unite the national results into a regional assessment that will be made widely available and integrated into the long-term awareness-raising and advocacy plan (output 1.1.2) and the Mesoamerican knowledge platform (output 4.2.1).

Output 2.1.3. Information on the contribution of protected areas and indigenous peoples to conserve primary forests and advance the global biodiversity framework to support fact-based decision making.

The regional child project will undertake specific studies to document the role of protected areas and indigenous peoples in Mesoamerican primary forest conservation. The analyses will include the contributions to achieve Targets 3 (area conservation) and 4 (halt human induced extinction) of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests will be a key partner to develop these assessments. The results of the analyses will be widely shared through advocacy campaigns and the long-term communication plan. The information will be used to support regional positioning in global negotiations and international development agenda.

Outcome 2.2. Increased area of OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand functional connectivity.

Improved connectivity and expansion of conserved areas to achieve the 30x30 ambition will predominantly rely on OECMs, as the priority for protected areas in the targeted landscapes will be on improving their effective management. To expand the use of OECMs the program will implement coordinated actions at the

regional and national levels.

At the national level, the child projects will support the development of frameworks and/or protocols for the recognition and implementation of OECMs (output 2.2.1) and the establishment of new OECMs (output 2.2.2). At the regional level, the RCP will support the establishment of agreements for transboundary collaboration (output 2.2.3) and will provide technical assistance and training to national key stakeholders for the development of national frameworks and the creation and management of OECMs.

Output 2.2.1. National frameworks or protocols for the implementation of OECMs.
The national child projects, when required, will provide assistance to support the establishment of a framework/protocol for the recognition of OECMs within the national conservation system to complement protected areas. This will be done in close coordination with other ongoing efforts (e.g., GEF project ID 10916) and with support from the RCP. The regional child project will facilitate the identification of key international lessons and the practical experience generated in initiatives such as the “Linking Central America Landscape” initiative (funded by KfW) and the inputs from the IUCN WCPA Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures Specialist Group.

Output 2.2.2. Established national networks of OECMs that support the conservation of primary forests.
National child projects will support local stakeholders to identify, delineate and establish OECMs. This will include supporting (i) governance arrangements to secure OECM sustainability and (ii) strategic and financial planning. Funding needs will be considered in the development of financing models and tools to increase investments for primary forest protection (outcome 3.1). Potential OECMs in target landscapes include conserved areas managed by subnational /local governments, indigenous lands, tourism, forest concessions and primary forest patches within biological corridors. The range of stakeholders involved, and approaches used in OECM management is expected to be inclusive of different sectors, thus providing a rich space for learning and knowledge sharing. Experience and lessons will be documented and made accessible at national, regional and global levels. In addition, the program will strengthen the capacities of the entities that manage OECMs (e.g., government, indigenous peoples´ organizations, community forest organizations, forest sector, micro, small and medium enterprises). The support will be tailor made to address key knowledge gaps on specific themes, including biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, organizational skills, and access to finance, among others.

Output 2.2.3. Collaboration agreements for transboundary OECMs within the framework of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.
The program will build upon the interest of countries to advance the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (CBM for its acronym in Spanish), which integrates all countries from Mexico in the North to Colombia in the South. In 2013, the countries approved the "CBM-2020 Master Plan Sustainable territorial management in the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor" as part of the Mesoamerican Environmental Sustainability Strategy (EMSA). It is foreseeable that in the near future the CBM mater plan will be updated. First, the regional child project will identify opportunities for establishing transboundary OECMs. Then, the RCP will promote multi-level multi-sector dialogue processes to develop collaborative frameworks to implement transboundary OECMs that contribute to protecting primary forests integrity and expand regional functional connectivity.

Outcome 2.3. Ongoing restoration of 63,000 ha to increase primary forest connectivity.
Forest restoration is critical to conserve primary forests and to prevent the impacts of the edge effects. The program will prepare a regional assessment of priority areas for forest landscape restoration (output 2.3.1) and will empower local groups to embark on community-based forest restoration (output 2.3.2).

Output 2.3.1. Updated evaluation of priority areas for Mesoamerican forests landscape restoration.

Over the last decade, Mesoamerica has made strong progress in planning and implementing restoration at scale. Nonetheless, the program will support countries in updating their opportunities for landscape restoration assessments to evaluate trade-offs (including, ecosystem services) and provide spatially explicit priorities to guide the restoration of degraded forest at landscape level and related investment. The program will prepare national assessments to identify priority areas for forest landscape restoration to aid primary forest connectivity and health of the forest biome. The work will build upon the results of IUCN leaded initiatives (funded by USAID and BMU-IKI) that applied the "Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology" (ROAM) tool in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Mexico´s Yucatan Peninsula which generated sound information – including financial analysis for investment decision-making. Some of these analyses will need to be updated to account for land-use changes and threats to forest ecosystems (output 2.1.2). In Guatemala and El Salvador, this analysis will be carried out with a similar methodological approach from each side of the Trifinio, with a focus on the impact of nature-based solutions and forest biomes on water recharge and availability (streamflow and groundwater) in the context of climate change, to improve common understanding on sub-regional priorities to enhance resilience to increased drought. The regional child project will consolidate and disseminate the information from the national assessments.

Output 2.3.2. Key priority areas under community-based restoration.

Based upon the results of the evaluation of priority areas for forest restoration (output 2.3.1), the program will support indigenous peoples and local community groups (e.g., strengthen capacities, planning) to embark on community-based restoration that recover forest integrity, increase ecological connectivity and improve ecosystem services provision (especially water). Restoration initiatives will include a focus on integrating and empowering rural youth and women to lead and sustain these processes on the long term. The regional child project will facilitate field visits, workshops, and webinars to promote peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchanges between restoration practitioners at regional level, especially across transboundary forest biomes.

Component 3. Innovative finance and investment.

The program aims to mobilize investments, from a range of sources, to support long-term primary forest conservation and transforming the livelihoods of the people who live in the surrounding areas. For this, the program will develop innovative financing instruments and catalyze an increased flow of funding (outcome 3.1) and incentivize nature-friendly productive activities (outcome 3.2).

Outcome 3.1. Increased financial resources for primary forest conservation.

To increase investment flows to sustain long-term primary forest conservation efforts, the program will develop a series of actions at the national and regional levels. At the national level, the child projects will identify funding gaps, key barriers and possible funding sources (output 3.1.1) and will support the development of appropriate innovative financing instruments and tools (output 3.1.2). Then, the program will support national and regional high-level dialogues and funding campaigns to attract interest from various parties (e.g., private investors, commercial and development banks, development cooperation) (output 3.1.3). Finally, the RCP will aim to construct a regional coalition of interested parties to sustain long-term financing for the conservation of primary forests in Mesoamerica (output 3.1.4).

Output 3.1.1. National analyses of funding gaps and barriers to invest in primary forest landscapes and forest linked livelihoods.

Depending on countries progress and priorities, the program will prepare national analyses of the funding gaps, barriers and possible funding sources and investment opportunities to inform the design of innovative financing models and key decision-making processes and to redirect resources from harmful subsidies to sustainable financing considering countries' specificities. A funding source to be explored in all countries is internalizing the costs into the range of plans and budgets, taking into account the value of natural capital (see output 1.2.2).

Output 3.1.2. Innovative financing instruments and tools to increase investments in primary forest protection, protected areas, OECMs, and forest linked livelihoods.

Based on the investment opportunities identified at the national level, and in partnership with public and private sectors, the program will support the design and establishment of innovative financing instruments and tools to mobilize domestic and international resources for primary forest conservation and restoration and the development of viable local forest-friendly endeavors. Examples of foreseen instruments are tax incentives/subsidies, standards, guarantees, green bonds, payment for environmental services, debt-for-nature swaps, biodiversity offsets, biodiversity credits, financial disclosure standards, among other. It is expected that investments will be in line with conservation priorities found for protected areas and OECMs consolidation at primary forest biomes level and collaboration agreement for cross-border management of the Mesoamerican biological corridor.

Output 3.1.3. High-level dialogue to mobilize financial resources through bilateral, multilateral, private and philanthropy channels to sustain long-term critical forest biomes conservation.

Drawing from the findings of a barrier analysis and the financing need and investment opportunities identified at national level, the program will regularly and systematically bring together national and multilateral development banks, ministries of finance, agriculture and environment, impact investors, and project developers to jointly agree on the steps and actions needed to leverage resource mobilization at forest landscape level including in cross-border forest areas. In addition, the program, in collaboration with key national and regional stakeholders, will organize funding campaigns to fund pertinent financing instruments. These events will include representatives from pertinent IPLC, women and rural youth organizations.

Output 3.1.4. Regional coalition to mobilize funding to accelerate the conservation of primary forests and the development of viable forests linked livelihoods.

Building upon the work with national and international parties, the program will facilitate a dialogue process to establish a regional coalition to sustain long-term financing. The institutional and operational arrangements will be developed during program implementation. It is foreseen that CCAD and IDB will play a vital role in developing and sustaining this coalition. This coalition is expected to convene key stakeholders such as buyers and producers of selected supply chains (palm oil, beef), investors (e.g., Pegasus Capital Advisers, Mirova, Arbaro Fund, FCCF), regional coordination bodies (e.g., the Central American Council for Tourism, CAC), other technical partners (TNC's NaturVest, GGGI, members of Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation) and IPLC, women and rural youth organizations to identify and continue the development and replication of innovative business models and financing instruments across Mesoamerican critical forest biomes during and after program implementation.

Outcome 3.2. Increased number of forest-friendly endeavors.

To promote the development of nature-friendly productive activities that have positive impacts on primary forest landscapes, the program will develop, test and scale-up incentives and disincentives to potentiate forest-friendly endeavors (output 3.2.1) and will develop and establish mechanisms to support local entrepreneurs (outputs 3.2.2, 3.2.3 and 3.2.4).

Output 3.2.1. Innovative mechanisms to incentivize forest-friendly endeavors.

The program will undertake a learning process to identify and apply incentives and disincentives (fiscal, non-fiscal, market-based) to discourage harmful practices and land use change and to promote nature-friendly activities in the surroundings of intact forest landscapes (e.g., deforestation-free beef, timber legality verification systems). Promising incentives will be analyzed and adjusted in participatory processes through pertinent multi-sectoral platforms (output 1.3.1). Then, the program will support that the pertinent entities field-test the instruments and adjust them according to the results. Finally, the program will assist in the scaling-up of viable instruments in collaboration with pertinent public and private entities and other partner initiatives. It will be ensured that the views and recommendations of IPLCs, women and youth organizations are considered all through the process. The experience and lessons will be documented and disseminated (output 4.2.2).

Output 3.2.2. Innovative business models to develop forest-friendly goods and services.

At the national and regional levels, the program will map ongoing initiatives, existing Mesoamerican and international experience, and barriers (e.g., access to credit) and opportunities (e.g., emerging markets) for the development of local forest-positive businesses. Then, innovative business models will be designed in collaboration with specialized groups (e.g., micro and small business development centres) and partners (e.g., FCCF). These novel models will be suited to the conditions of indigenous groups (e.g., community forest concessionaries), rural families, women (individuals and groups) and young entrepreneurs. The program will support the testing of the novel business models in the IFLs, including cases of women-led and youth-led endeavors. Finally, the program will assist in the scaling-up of viable business models in collaboration with pertinent public, private and development partners. The experience and lessons will be documented and disseminated (output 4.2.2).

Output 3.2.3. Project Preparation Facility to enable access to private and development financing.

The RCP together with the national child projects will develop a mechanism to assist local entrepreneurs to prepare bankable business proposals, feasibility analyses, investment plans and projects to access private investment or support from development financing sources (e.g., philanthropic contributions, development banks). The anticipated beneficiaries from this project preparation facility include (i) community enterprises in the forestry, agricultural and tourism sectors, (ii) indigenous peoples' groups managing OECMs, (iii) smallholders interested in forest restoration, (iv) women-led businesses and (v) initiatives led by rural young entrepreneurs. The sustainability mechanism for the Project Preparation Facility will be designed during program implementation. One option is to anchor the facility in the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

Output 3.2.4. High impact events and advocacy to accelerate the demand for products from sustainably managed secondary forests and deforestation-free commodities from Mesoamerica.

In partnership with the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA) and the World Economic Forum Centre for Nature and Finance, TFA members (Solidaridad, GGGI, WWF, TNC), CAC, and CCAD, actors from key supply chains (e.g., livestock, palm oil/ RSOP, pulp) and regulation bodies (ministries of agriculture and trade) will be gathered to agree on priorities to comply with emerging deforestation-free regulations (US FOREST act and EU deforestation-free regulation) and foster compatibility between national deforestation-free schemes for relevant products to address transboundary illegal trade (e.g., cattle). The program will consider learnings and progress done by the Costa Rican Corporation for Livestock Development, who has designed and piloted a deforestation-free verification scheme at national level and other global programs such as the Food and Agricultural Commodity Systems , similar initiatives of the impact program (Amazon, Africa) supported by the GEF as well as other experiences such as the RSPO in Mexico.

Component 4. Coordinated and improved learning and regional collaboration.

This component will aim to facilitate regional coordination (outcome 4.1) and to document and share lessons and knowledge (outcome 4.2). Key elements will be (i) the development of regional and national coordination platforms to facilitate synergies among the various projects and initiatives related to the conservation of critical forests (output 4.1.1), (ii) the implementation of a long-term communication plan to mobilize support for primary forest conservation (output 4.1.2), (iii) the development of a regional platform with national nodes (output 4.2.1), and (iv) the exchange of knowledge with actors from other forest biomes (output 4.2.3). The RCP will implement a knowledge management strategy in line with STAP guidance[75].

Outcome 4.1. Improved national and regional coordination for primary forest protection and conservation.

To potentiate national and regional collaboration and coordination, the program will (i) establish a regional coordination platform (output 4.1.1), and (ii) will

prepare and implement a long-term communication and awareness plan (output 4.1.2).

Output 4.1.1. Regional coordination platform for primary forest protection and conservation.

The RCP will support establishing a regional coordination platform under SICA regional bodies (i.e., CCAD and CAC) to support joint programming and synergies between the large spectrum of stakeholders and initiatives involved in the conservation of the Mesoamerica forest biome. The formal integration of Mexico into the platform will be done using the pertinent mechanisms and instruments based on the agreement signed in 2004. The platform will integrate regional entities, local and national governments, indigenous peoples' organizations, women organizations, rural youth organizations, private sector, civil society organizations, and donors, among others. Key points of alignment will be: (a) protection and conservation of primary forest, (b) development of viable forests linked livelihoods that reduce pressure on primary forests, and (c) contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The platform will be established under SICA regional bodies to ensure that: (i) coordination is sustained after the program ends, (ii) it has a diverse representation of stakeholders and sectors, and (iii) contributes to a biome-wide political agenda (output 1.2.1 and 1.2.3), including cooperation between governments on transboundary forest management.

The national child projects will organize coordination platforms at national or forest biome level to support collaboration among pertinent governments agencies, indigenous peoples´ organizations, women organizations, rural youth organizations, private sector organizations and initiatives, civil society organizations and donors, among others. These national platforms will allow the effective participation of representatives from each country to take part in existing global platforms and knowledge exchanges (output 4.1.2), to ensure complementarities and synergies between on-going projects and initiatives implemented in target landscapes (output 2.1.2) and to maintain continuous engagement with key players to reach agreements that mobilize financial resources to sustain long-term critical forest biomes conservation (output 3.1.4).

Output 4.1.2. Regional long-term communication plan to mobilize support for the conservation of primary forests and critical forest biomes.

To contribute to sustained behavioral change, the regional child project will prepare and initiate the implementation of a long-term communication plan. The national child projects will prepare national communication plans that will be aligned with the regional communication priorities. The plans will be evidence-driven, will channel the information generated in the program and will highlight the contributions to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It is foreseen to use a variety of communication channels to reach the wide range of target audiences. The Global Youth Biodiversity Network as well as biodiversity social media influencers will be approached to ensure the communication campaign reaches young persons.

Outcome 4.2. Lessons on primary forest protection and conservation models are available worldwide.

The program will (i) contribute to the development of a knowledge platform on the Mesoamerica Forest, including sound coordination and learning exchange with the other Forest IP biomes, in particular the Amazon IP biome, (ii) ensure that program lessons are documented and disseminated, (iii) assure a cross-project learning and (iv) organize coherent planning and reporting among the child projects.

Output 4.2.1. Mesoamerican knowledge platform on critical forest biomes (e.g., biodiversity and social information, models of forest management, regulations).

The program will support the establishment/strengthening of a regional knowledge platform on Mesoamerica critical forest biomes, building on, for instance, the Mesoamerican Centre for the Exchange of Forest Knowledge and Experiences (CMICEF) endorsed by all Mesoamerican countries to ensure sustainability and permanence. This digital platform will harness and make available learnings and knowledge acquired across the program with active participation of conservation stakeholders from all participating countries. Indicative contents include geospatial information and forest landscape restoration and

conservation models. The program will also link with the Amazon Knowledge Platform to get insights and recommendations, eventually reproduce materials, to avoid repetition and create synergies with this similar initiative from South America.

Output 4.2.2. Program lessons and forest management and governance models documented and disseminated at regional and global levels.
The RCP will systematically identify, document and disseminate lessons from the child projects as well as case studies on primary forest or protected area management, the application of incentives and disincentives and the development of local forest-positive businesses. Particular attention will be given to the lessons from the initiatives led by indigenous peoples, women and rural youth. The lessons will be disseminated through the Mesoamerican knowledge platform (output 4.2.1) and global knowledge platforms such as the Panorama Conversation Areas Community or other global channels. The program will ensure engagement of the Trifinio countries in International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW: LEARN), producing case studies, providing spatially explicit data for priority forests conservation and ecosystem restoration to optimize water recharge at transboundary watershed level. At program start a knowledge management plan will be prepared based on the guidance of the STAP.

Output 4.2.3. South-south cooperation / knowledge exchange with the other critical forests biomes.
The regional child project will organize exchange visits and meetings to foster knowledge exchange and learning with the other forest program in the Amazon, Congo, Indo-Malaya, West Africa, and Guinea. Priority will be given to peer exchange among groups and organizations of indigenous peoples, women and rural youth. A cost-sharing approach between the RCP and the national child projects will be agreed to during PPG-stage development. Indicative themes for cooperation include the REDD+ framework and carbon markets, nature-positive trade policies, and climate and biodiversity negotiations.

Output 4.2.4. Annual regional knowledge exchange workshops.
The RCP will organize annual workshops to facilitate exchanges of lessons learned, good practices and develop actions to address common issues among the program partners.

Output 4.2.5. Harmonized program annual planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
The RCP will design a comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation system responsive to child project specificities and GEF monitoring guidelines to facilitate transparent and timely reporting against the program result framework, adaptative management and learning processes for decision making. Evaluation of built capacities will apply the Kirkpatrick 4-step model. The RCP will be responsible for organizing training and providing technical support to child project staff involved in planning and monitoring and evaluation.

Maximizing GEBs through programmatic approach

Despite significant advances in the management of protected areas and forests, deforestation has continued to be a major driver of change and threatens the subsistence of primary forests. If the present situation and barriers continue it is likely that primary forest disappear in the following decades. This will compromise the range of ecosystem services that they provide to local groups and the planet. A wide range of projects have been executed and are under implementation, but they have mostly focused on national or sectoral actions. From the experience of continued multi-country support to the Selva Maya[10], it is clear that a long-term region wide collaborative programmatic approach is needed to confront the degradation and loss of primary forests in Mesoamerica.

The incremental approach of the present GEF program is:

1. To foster region-wide joint and coordinated multi-level action to conserve primary forests.

2. To mobilize inter-sectoral multi-stakeholder dialogue, negotiation, and agreements to incorporate primary forest protection on specific and coherent policies and instruments at the local, national, and regional level.

3. To advance towards solving the persistent and pervasive shortage of conservation finance.

The requested GEF funding will facilitate that the participating countries advance a strategic region-wide programmatic approach. The GEF grant will provide the necessary incremental investments to work at the transboundary level that would be more difficult to obtain through governmental or non-governmental budgetary sources. This will in turn generate important contributions to conserve high-value biodiversity and to sustain global ecosystems services. The GEF resources will leverage about USD 438 million in co-financing from a wide range of sources, from local communities to development cooperation.

The programmatic approach of the present proposal will be key to optimize the use of GEF resources and to maximize the global environmental benefits:

1. The focus on transboundary forest landscapes will allow synergic and complementary action among the child projects based on a comprehensive view of the situation in the area.

2. Testing various tools and approaches in different contexts. For example, the Project Preparation Facility will be applied in a range of social and economic conditions, this will allow to identify the advantages and limitations of the tool and to improve and adjust it for better application.

3. Facilitate the sharing of knowledge and practical experience among stakeholders. For example, sharing the practical experience on the development of updated policies or regulations, community managed OECMs. and the development of community-based endeavors will lead to generate practices to be replicated or adopted to various situations in the countries.

4. A common system to document and disseminate lessons which will contribute to identify commonalities and the application of learning in different situations.

5. A common monitoring and evaluation system which will facilitate to identify changes in the scenario and to implement adaptative measures with a region wide approach.

Mesoamerica program structure and implementation arrangements

The Mesoamerica program will be composed of seven child projects: six national projects and a regional coordination project (Figure 8). The child national projects will be implemented in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. Belize and Costa Rica will not participate in the program, but their pertinent entities will be invited to contribute to transboundary collaboration in the Selva Maya, Indio Maiz – Tortuguero and La Amistad as well as to participate in regional activities for knowledge exchange.

The six child national projects are:

a. El Salvador Mesoamerican Forest IP Project: Trifinio: a natural water fabric (El Salvador).
b. Securing benefits for the well-being of local communities and the ecosystems of the Maya Forest and Trifinio (Guatemala).

c. Conserving the Intact Forests of the Honduran Moskitia (Honduras).
d. Securing benefits for the well-being of local communities and the ecosystems of the Maya Forest (Mexico).
e. Protection and conservation of forests of global importance located in the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve (Nicaragua).
f. Collaborative Conservation of the Darién (Panama).

At the regional level, the program will have a Program Steering Committee (PSC), a Program Coordination Platform (PCP) and a Program Management Unit (PMU). At the national level, each child project will have a National Project Steering Committee (NPSC), a National Project Technical Committee (NPTC), and a National Project Management Unit (NPMU) (Figure 8).

Regional-level structure

The program will be guided by the Program Steering Committee, which wig countries and GEF implementing agencies of the child projects. The IUCN will be the PSC secretariat ll be comprised by representatives of the participating countries, the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), and the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Indigenous Council for Central America (CICA) and the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB). The CCAD and the CAC will alternatively chair the PSC. The CICA and the AMPB will be alternate members of the PSC. The representatives of the countries will be the chairs of the National Project Steering Committees (NPSC). The PSC will include the GEF Operational Focal Points (GEF OFP) of the participating countries and will participate in meetings. When necessary, the members of the PSC will decide on inviting other entities, with voice but without vote.

The PSC will be the highest-level decision-making body of the program. The key functions of the PSC will be: (i) to provide program level strategic advice and guidance, (ii) to assess the progress and performance of the program, (iii) to review and comment the workplans of the national projects to ensure sound alignment with the regional program, and (iv) to be the steering committee of the Regional Coordination Project (child project 7) (Figure 8).

The Program Coordination Platform will be chaired by IUCN to facilitate interaction, joint programming, resources leveraging and knowledge exchange with relevant public and private initiatives and entities (e.g., AFOLU 2040, BIOFIN, CABEI) and initiatives of the CBIP. CCAD and CAC related technical committees will be core members of the PCP. IUCN will promote collaborative annual planning and progress assessment.

In addition, other relevant stakeholders will be convened to provide strategic input and guidance on specific thematic areas as needed during the implementation of the IP. Thematic areas will include, amongst others, research and capacity building (WRI, CIFOR, GIZ, RA), private investments (IDB, CABEI) environmental justice (The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, CEPAL), gender and youth engagement (RELAC, the Council of Ministers of Central American Women - COMMCA), technologies and innovation (NASA, Huawei), migratory issues (OIM), outreach and communications (NatGeo, BBC, DW).

IUCN will operate a Program Management Unit that will execute the Regional Coordination Project (child project 7, Figure 8) and will report to the PSC. The key functions of the PMU will be: (i) to supervise the implementation of the six national child projects, (ii) to execute the Regional Coordination Project, (iii) to facilitate overall regional-level coordination to ensure alignment and synergy among the national projects, (iv) to provide guidance and support to the national child projects to ensure prompt, coordinated and coherent program implementation, (v) to monitor and assess the implementation of the child projects and the Mesoamerica program, and (vi) to facilitate knowledge management and communication among the child projects and project partners.

The Regional Coordination Project will be collaboratively implemented together with WCS, FCCF, CCAD, CAC and TFA. WCS will contribute to the implementation of outcomes 1.2 and 2.1. FCCF and TFA will contribute to the implementation of outcome 3.1. CCAD and CAC will contribute to the implementation of outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 4.1.

National level structure

At the national level, the IUCN and FAO are the GEF agencies that will implement the child projects (Figure 8). The anticipated Project Executing Entities of the child projects will be the following:

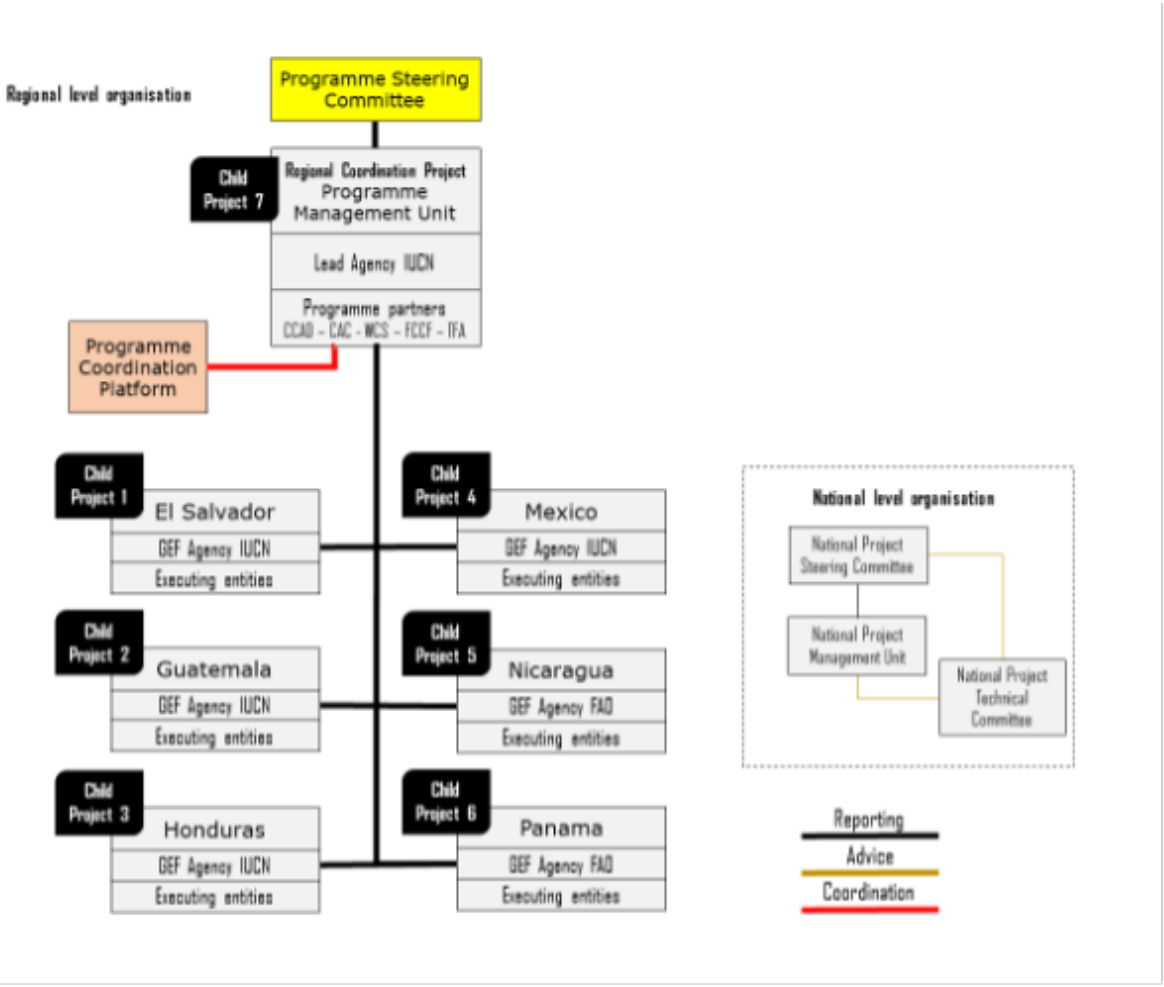
Country	Child project & Implementing Agencies	Anticipated executing entities
El Salvador	El Salvador Mesoamerican Forest IP Project: Trifinio: a natural water fabric Implementing Agency: IUCN	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and FAO.
Guatemala	Securing benefits for the well-being of local communities and the ecosystems of the Maya Forest and Trifinio. Implementing Agency: IUCN	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Honduras	Conserving the Intact Forests of the Honduran Moskitia. Implementing Agency: IUCN	Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SERNA), Forest Conservation Institute (ICF), National University of Agriculture (UNAG), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Agency for the Development of the Mosquitia (MOPAWI) and Forests of the World.
Mexico	Securing benefits for the well-being of local communities and the ecosystems of the Maya Forest. Implementing Agency: IUCN	National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP), Yucatan State Government, Quintana Roo State Government, Campeche State Government, Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatán, and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI).
Nicaragua	Protection and conservation of forests of global importance located in the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve. Implementing Agency: FAO	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA).
Panama	Collaborative Conservation of the Darién. Implementing Agency: FAO	Ministry of Environment, Fundación de Parques Nacionales y Medio Ambiente (PA.NA.MA.), and Fundación Natura.

Each project will have a National Project Steering Committee integrated by the representatives of key entities (e.g., forest authority, agriculture authority). The NPSC will: (i) provide strategic orientation, (ii) approve annual workplans, budgets and reports, and (iii) review project progress and performance.

The National Project Technical Committee will provide advice to the NPSC and the NPMU and will facilitate collaboration among project partners and other pertinent public and private entities.

The NPMU will be responsible for: (i) the execution of the national project and the achievement of the project´s outcomes, (ii) aligning project activities to contribute to the program outcomes, and (iii) periodic reporting to the Program Management Unit.

Figure 8. Implementation arrangements of the Mesoamerica program.



[1] GEFSEC. (2022). GEF-8 strategic positioning framework (prepared by the GEF Secretariat). GEF Secretariat (GEFSEC). Document GEF/R.08/28, 29 March 2022. Washington, D.C., USA, 43 pp.

[2] Defined as “the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the defined objective” by Breuer, A., Janetschek, H., & Malerba, D. (2019). Translating sustainable development goal (SDG) interdependencies into

policy advice. Sustainability, 11(7), 2092. Also see: OECD. (2001). Poverty Reduction, The DAC Guidelines. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Paris, France, 129pp.

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[4] ITTO. (2010). The transboundary transition. International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Tropical Forest Update, 20(2), 32 pp.

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McCallum, J. W., Vasilijević, M., & Cuthill, I. (2015). Assessing the benefits of Transboundary Protected Areas: A questionnaire survey in the Americas and the Caribbean. Journal of Environmental Management, 149, 245-252.

[5] Mair, L et al., (2021). A metric for spatially explicit contributions to science-based species targets. Nat. Ecol. Evol. 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-021-01432-0

[6] "Affirmative action" means positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas from which they have been historically excluded (e.g., employment, education, decision-making processes). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) define "positive actions" (also called temporary special measures) as actions aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men that may, in the short term, favour women. See the following publications: Fullinwider, R. (2018). Affirmative Action. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) Online: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/affirmative-action/ UN Women (2023). Temporary special measures. Gender Equality Glossary. UN Women Training Centre eLearning Campus. Online: https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36

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[8] IFL Mapping Team. (2020). World's Intact Forest Landscapes, 2000-2020. https://intactforests.org/world.map.html

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[10] See https://selvamaya.info/es/cooperacion/

Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe the approach to program-level Monitoring and Evaluation, including ways to ensure coherence across Child Projects and to allow for adapting to changing conditions, consistent with GEF policies. In addition, please list results indicators that will track the Program Objective, beyond Core Indicators. (Max 1-2 pages).

At program level, the Regional Coordination Child Project will be in charge of consolidating national and regional level data and preparing annual reports. Regular capacity strengthening to all staff of GEF agencies and executing agencies will be organized to apply standard methods for impact measurement, in line with GEF guidelines on the implementation of GEF Result Measurement Framework. Continuous assessment of lessons learned, supervisions missions, annual year program workshops will facilitate participatory and adaptive management based on evidence. When needed, the lead agency will provide advisory to national level evaluations.

Country project-level progress across all results framework indicators will be shared with the regional coordination project team on an annual basis, in advance of the July reporting schedule, to facilitate consolidated reporting at the Program-level by the Regional coordination team through an annual Program Report submitted to GEF.

The proposed structure of indicators for the program is described below:

§ **Program objective**: "To conserve Mesoamerica primary forests through strengthened governance, protection, restoration, regional cooperation, and the mobilization of stable long-term funding, ensuring a sustainable flow of ecosystem services for people and planet." measured through:
- Indicator 1: Surface of terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management (ha) (=GEF CI-1).
- Indicator 2: Area of landscapes under improved practices (ha) (=GEF CI-4).
- Indicator 3: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (=GEF CI-6) (tCO2e)
- Indicator 4: People benefiting from GEF-financed investment (= GEF CI-11) (female, male)
- Indicator 5: Number of cross-border alliances to protect and conserve primary forests.
- Indicator 6: Number of local, national, and regional instruments with specific measures for primary forest protection and conservation.
- Indicator 7: Conservation status for Mesoamerican Forest biomes using the Red List of Ecosystems (GBF indicator target 1)
- Indicator 8: Realized contributions of IPLCs, OECMs and PAs in addressing the loss of IFL to reduced risk of extinction of threatened species (STAR - indicator target 4 GBF)[1]

§ **Outcome 1.1:** "Strengthened local, national and regional governance mechanisms in support of primary forests conservation " measured through:
- Indicator 1.1.1: Number of strengthened local, national, and regional governance structures.
- Indicator 1.2.1: Number of local, national and regional instruments that use nature positive criteria for their design and implementation.

§ **Outcome 1.2:** "Key national and regional policy and regulatory instruments prioritize primary forest conservation" measured through:
- Indicator 1.2.1. Number of regional instruments that integrate primary forest conservation.
- Indicator 1.2.2. Number of updated policies and regulations that support primary forest protection and conservation.
- Indicator 1.2.3. Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management. (GEF CI-7)

§ **Outcome 1.3:** "Improved multi-sectoral platforms for forest conservation and management" measured through:
- Indicator 1.3.1. Number of multi-sectoral agreements that support primary forest conservation.
- Indicator 1.3.2. Number of public and private political statements, declarations, and commitments dealing with conservation of primary forests.
- Indicator 1.3.3. Number of IPLC, women and rural youth organization involved into decision making processes at regional, national and/or local level.

§ **Outcome 2.1:** Improved protection of primary forests in protected areas" measured through:
- Indicator 2.1.1. Increased management effectiveness of the protected areas that include primary forests with METT scores that improved at least by 10%.
- Indicator 2.1.2. Area (ha) of newly created protected areas that include primary forests.
- Indicator 2.1.3. Area (ha) of protected areas under agreed collaborative cross-border management.

§ **Outcome 2.2:** "Increased area of OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand functional connectivity" measured through:
o Indicator 2.2.1. Area (ha) of newly established OECMs that protect primary forests integrity and expand functional connectivity.
o Indicator 2.2.2: Area of landscapes under improved practices (=GEF CI-4) (ha) (excluding sub indicator 4.5. – terrestrial OECMs supported)

§ **Outcome 2.3:** "Ongoing restoration of 65,000 ha to increase primary forest connectivity" measured through:
o Indicator 2.3.1. Area of land restored (=GEF CI-3) (ha)

§ **Outcome 3.1:** "Increased financial resources for primary forest conservation" measured through:
o Indicator 3.1.1. Amount (USD) of new public and private financial resources that contribute to protect and conserve primary forests and to develop local livelihoods that is available.

§ **Outcome 3.2:** "Increased number of forest-friendly endeavors" measured through:
o Indicator 3.2.1. Number of new women or youth led businesses established.
o Indicator 3.2.2. Cumulative trade volume (USD) increase of existing and newly created nature positive forest-based and agricultural value chains.

§ **Outcome 4.1:** "Improved national and regional coordination for primary forest protection and conservation " measured through:
o Indicator 4.1.1. Number of south-south / lessons exchange events with other initiatives of the GEF Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program.
o Indicator 4.1.2. Increased participation of private sector, indigenous peoples' organizations, and civil society organizations in the national and regional coordination platforms.

§ **Outcome 4.2:** "Lessons on primary forest protection and conservation models are available worldwide" measured through:
o Indicator 4.2.1. Number of local, national, and regional lessons sharing events.
o Indicator 4.2.2. Number of lessons learned documents.
o Indicator 4.2.3. Level of capacities, technical cooperation and technology transfer on CFB within and between participating countries (measured by tailor-made KAP survey among stakeholders).

Linkages between the Mesoamerica IP Program indicators and KMGBF targets were identified based on MKGBF draft monitoring framework and corresponding headline and component indicators and are presented in annex 1

[1] This will be reported in coordination with global efforts to support target 4 GBF monitoring (GEF-10916, GEF-10897) and relevant GEF 8 program (Wildlife Conservation for Development, Net-zero nature positive accelerator IPs)

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Programs.

Is the GEF Agency being asked to play an execution role on this program? Yes

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

IUCN will execute a portion of the Regional Coordination, Knowledge Sharing and Support child project, ensuring complementarities and synergies with other executing partners given their respective strengths and mandates as described below:

Building on its network and experience, **the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA)** will support companies present in Mesoamerican CFB through the ongoing global transition to deforestation-free supply chains for commodities including palm oil, soy, beef, and paper/pulp. Highly active in South America and other regions relevant for this IP (i.e. East Africa, Amazon), TFA will mobilize public and private partners on knowledge sharing and good practices through jurisdictional Approaches Resources Hub and its Jurisdictional Exchange Network in particular. TFA and its members will support the establishment of sectorial roundtables and public private initiatives at regional level to facilitate the development of regulations, norms and partnerships that enable commitments from buyers toward jurisdictions and organizations engaged in a forest positive agenda, thus contributing to the creation of green jobs (10by30 Initiative for sustainable Value Chains).

WCS will support output 1.2 and 2.1 by providing trainings for the professionalization of park guards, as well as capacity building and technical support for the implementation of technologies that generate efficiencies and reduce threats to conservation, such as SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool), throughout the Program areas of intervention. For monitoring, WCS will support training and technical guidance for improved monitoring of primary forests, including indicators of forest cover, wildlife (i.e. birds, mammals), governance, livelihoods and human well-being. This would include both the measurement of conservation targets and their impact at the local, forest, and global levels.

The **Forestry and Climate Change Fund** will leverage financial ressources from public/private capital towards businesses involved in forest sustainable management and harvest, building on its existing project portfolio in the region, from pre-investment stages to timber harvesting, from initial planning to harvesting operations and advanced industrialization. FCCF is currently capitalizing a new fund of USD 50,000,000 that could be mobilized by the program, provided business plans meets FCCF's investment criteria. That is why, FCCF will also support projects portfolio development and screening.

CAC and **CCAD** of the Secretary for Central American Integration (SICA) will support further collaboration and dialogue between the agricultural and environmental sectors under a shared regional agenda (AFOLU 2040 strategy).
Other executing partners with competitive advantages and added value (e.i. financial sector, technology provider) at regional level may be identified during PPG.

Coordination and cooperation with ongoing initiatives and programs will occur at two levels:

At regional level, the Program Coordination Platform hosted by **CCAD** and **CAC** will facilitate interaction, collaboration, sinergies and knowledge exchange with partners such as Biofin for the design of financial instruments that effectively address biodiversity funding gap, UNEP-CCAD (Five great forest – GCF), the five forest alliance (CCAD,AMPB) for complementarities to prevent the loss and degradation of CFB. IUCN will ensure strong sinergies with the Selva Maya II Project (Belize, Mexico, Guatemala), funded by KfW, as it will provide financial cooperation to cover infrastructure/equipment needs at local level. Joint programming and collaboration with also actively be sought with GIZ-led initiatives in Selva Maya and at regional level (Green Development Fund for the SICA

region).

At national level, the National coordination Platforms will allow collaboration and sinergies between several projects led by CSOs (I.e. TNC, WWF, FUNDAECO, Rainforest Alliance, Heifer., among others) environmental funds (I.e. INAB, FIAES, CONAFOR), development banks (IADB, World Bank, CAF), major donors (I.e. UE, USAID and others) and other GEF projects (Nicaragua GEF7, Mexico GEF8, Trifinio GEF 7) as described in the concept notes.

The aforementioned projects and initiatives will allow to leverage resources and also allow non-participating countries (Belize, Costa Rica) to take part in knowledge sharing and exchanges, and, to the extent possible, contribute to programmatic outcomes. The Regional Coordination Platform will be in charge of ensuring participation of representatives from non-participating countries (Belize and Costa Rica) in key events organized at regional level (high-level dialogue meeting for resource mobilization output 3.2.1, high impact events on advocacy Output 3.2.2) and other activities when relevant (for instance, output 2.2.1 collaboration agreement for transboundary OECM/Mesoamerican biological corridor).

(

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
5,329,143.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

5,329,143.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
			5,329,143.00						

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
63600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Cropland	9,700.00
Rangeland and pasture	5,100.00

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
48,800.00			

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
194585.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
151,405.00			

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
26,977.00			

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

FSC

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
16,203.00			

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
		1,271,650.00			

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF) Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	81294163	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	2678551	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	81,294,163			
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	2,678,551			

Anticipated start year of accounting	2024
Duration of accounting	20

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)

Target Energy Saved (MJ)

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem	Lempa			
Count	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagonostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN throgh participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Lempa	4			

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	82,120			

Male	100,230			
Total	182350	0	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Risks to Achieving Program Outcomes Describe any risks that might emerge from preparation and implementation phases of child projects under the program, and what are the mitigation strategies the child project preparation process will undertake to address these (e.g. what alternatives may be considered during child project preparation-such as in terms of consultations, role and choice of counterparts, delivery mechanisms, locations in country, flexible design elements, etc.). Identify any of the risks listed below that would call in question the viability of the child project during its implementation. Please describe any possible mitigation measures needed.

The risk rating should reflect the overall risk to program outcomes considering the global context and ambition of the program. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low.

Risk Categories	Rating	Comments
Climate	Substantial	According to AR6, rural livelihoods and forests of Mesoamerica will be strongly hit by climate change: especially by increased flood (see recent dramatic example in La Moskitia, Honduras, in 2022), hot extremes which will affect both food security and primary productivity of forests. Under a warming of 3°C, tropical rainforests are expected to be replaced by savanna grassland. Mitigation strategies: Ensure alignment of program actions with national and regional climate change strategies and action plans.
Environment and Social	High	Please refer to the preliminary ESMS (Annex D) Mitigation strategies: Prepare and implement indigenous peoples, gender and stakeholders engagement action plans.
Political and Governance	Moderate	Mesoamerica is a diverse region with varying political and governance systems. While some countries have stable democratic institutions and processes, others have faced challenges in terms of corruption, weak rule of law, and authoritarian tendencies. Many Central American countries have experienced political turmoil and civil conflict in the past, which has shaped their current political and governance systems. In recent years, there have been efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote transparency and accountability, and combat corruption in the region. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all citizens have access to a fair and just political system that represents their interests and protects their rights. Mitigation strategies: Maintain fluid communication with pertinent authorities at the regional, national, subnational and local levels. When there are changes in the authorities, inform progress and provide information

Macro-economic	Substantial	The region has experienced mixed macroeconomic stability over the years. While some countries in the region have managed to maintain relative macroeconomic stability through sound fiscal and monetary policies, others have struggled with high inflation, fiscal deficits, and external imbalances. In recent years, many Central American countries have seen sustained economic growth and increased foreign investment, but challenges remain in terms of reducing poverty, inequality, and improving access to basic services such as education and healthcare. Additionally, the region has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to significant economic disruptions and challenges for policymakers seeking to maintain macroeconomic stability. Current geopolitical situation (conflict in Ukraine) and signals of economic recession (instability in banking/financial sector) has increased deficit in trade balance and the cost of debt of Mesoamerican countries which makes budgetary constraints a greater obstacle to ambitious policy/tax reforms Mitigation strategies: Monitor macro-economic situation and take measures as needed.
Strategies and Policies	Low	At both national and regional level (SICA+ Mexico), the political and strategic frameworks are generally supportive of the Program objectives. Policy coherence will be enhanced and maintained at regional level by working closely with CCAD-CAC and government authorities Mitigation strategies: Maintain fluid communication with key stakeholders to foster policy coherence. Present factual information to support sound analysis and decision-making.
Technical design of project or program	Low	The IP has been designed based on input received from countries during an inception workshop, which ensures coherence at programmatic level Mitigation strategies: Maintain a participatory approach during the PPG phase and implementation of the projects.
Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability	Moderate	For some countries of the region, institutional capacities to conduct policy reform and enforce regulation are insufficient Mitigation strategies: Seek alliances with partners that can support the development of pertinent capacities.
Fiduciary: Financial Management and Procurement	Low	IUCN, as well as Country Child project GEF Agency (FAO) have strong financial management and financial control systems Mitigation strategies: no additional action needed
Stakeholder Engagement	High	Transformational change will require strong stakeholder engagement and participation throughout the program implementation. See Annex D for additional considerations with regards to IPLC consultation and grievance mechanisms Mitigation strategies: Prepare sound stakeholder analyses and actions plans during the PPG phase. Ensure fluid communication and collaboration with key stakeholders during program implementation.
Other		
Financial Risks for NGI projects		

Overall Risk Rating	Substantial	

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm that any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified.

(approximately 2-3 pages)

Alignment with GEF programming strategies.
The Mesoamerica programme will contribute to four of the target Global Environmental Benefits of the GEF and the GEF-8 programming architecture: (i) to conserve biodiversity (5.3 million hectares of protected areas under improved management and 1.4 million hectares of land under improved practices), (ii) to mitigate greenhouse emissions (15 million t CO_2e emission avoided), (iii) to advance sustainable land management (315 thousand hectares of land under restoration), and (iv) enhanced water-food-energy-ecosystem security in the Trifinio forest-water system.

The present programme proposal is aligned with the GEF-8 strategy of the Amazon, Congo and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Programme.
§ First, the Mesoamerica programme is in line with the purpose of the CBIP. The programme will focus on (i) four of the seven IFLs identified in the 2020 global IFL map (IFL Mapping Team, 2020) and a (ii) small transboundary primary forest area located in the Trifinio (shared by El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras).
§ Second, the programme will develop several the expected key interventions of the CBIP, mainly:
- improving protected areas management,
- expanding the use of OECMs to protect and connect primary forests,
- fostering cross-border collaboration,
- applying a multi-level and multi-sectoral approach to strengthen governance (from local to regional),
- engaging indigenous peoples and local rural communities into primary forest conservation,
- supporting that local communities develop, in the periphery of primary forests, viable forest-related activities that improve their living condition and guard the intact forest,
- developing stable long-term funding sources to support primary forest conservation and the development of forest linked livelihoods, and
- promoting multi-level coordination and south-south learning.

A key element of the present strategy is to engage rural youth in forest conservation and viable forest linked livelihoods to become agents of change.

Alignment with multilateral agreements.
The Mesoamerica programme is in line with the main multilateral agreements:

§ **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The present intervention will directly support that the participating countries advance towards the following targets:
o Goal 5, targets 5.1 and 5.5. The programme will implement affirmative actions to facilitate the engagement of women in forest conservation actions and decision-making and into viable forest-linked productive activities.
o Goal 13, target 13.2. The programme will advocate for and mainstream the importance of forest conservation for climate change mitigation.
o Goal 15, target 15.2 and 15.5. The core of the programme is to protect primary forest, restore forest areas to rebuild functional connectivity and to implement

viable sustainable forest management that is compatible with primary forest protection.

§ **Convention on Biological Diversity**. The programme is in line with the Convention and the main decisions on forest biological diversity (i.e., Decision IX/5 and the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity). The Mesoamerica programme will directly contribute to targets 2 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework. The results of the programme will improve conditions for the survival of threatened species, therefore indirectly contributing to target 4.

§ **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**. The programme is in line with the convention and in particular with the Paris Agreement (article 5.1).

§ **United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030**. The programme will directly contribute to targets 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, and 4.2, considering that the planned actions (i) will prevent deforestation of primary forest, therefore maintaining the pertinent carbon stocks and the associated biodiversity, (ii) will increase the area of forests under conservation measures like protected areas and OECMs, (iii) will promote the development of small-scale forest-related enterprises to improve living conditions in the rural areas, and (iv) will increase sustained funding to protect primary forests and develop forest-related livelihoods.

Alignment with regional policies and instruments.

The Central American Integration System was established in 1991 and currently integrate all Central America countries and the Dominican Republic. Mexico is a Regional Observer state since 2004. SICA has range of political and technical instruments. The key instruments related to the present programme are:

· **The Framework Regional Environmental Strategy (2021-2025)**. The present programme is in line with the "Forests and Sustainable Landscapes" strategic line of the ERAM and contributes to the four expected results (4.1 to 4.4) that focus on landscape governance, increase forest restoration, increase the value of forests, and develop instruments, tools and mechanisms for sustainable forest use. The Mesoamerica programme will support the integration of primary forest protection into the new version 2026 – 2030.

· **Regional Strategy on Climate Change**. The programme is in line with the strategic objective 1.3 of reducing vulnerability of forest ecosystems and biodiversity through policies, incentives and scientific knowledge creation. Action 1.3.2 focus on the development of policies and economic incentives, this includes the implementation of payment for ecosystem services, implement REDD processes, and to include a gender perspective.

· **Regional agro-environmental and health strategy (2009 -2024)**. The programme will contribute to advance three action lines: (i) Action Line 2.5, action 2.5.2 to reduce emissions from deforestation, (ii) Action line 3.1, action 3.1.3 to improve the management of protected areas, and (iii) Action line 4.5 to incentive and strengthen conservation-linked businesses. The Mesoamerica programme will support the integration of primary forest protection into the new version of this strategy.

· **Regional Strategic Program for the Management of Forest Ecosystems**. The programme will contribute to the four components of the PERFOR: (i) component 1 focused on strengthening governance, including land rights, engaging indigenous peoples and women, (ii) component 2 that includes potentiating community forestry, (iii) component 3 that includes developing new financial instruments including payment for forest ecosystem services, and (iv) component 4 that includes establishing intersectoral policies and plans and promoting forest restoration. The Mesoamerica programme will support the integration of primary forest protection into the new version of this plan.

· **Plan Trifinio**. The programme is in line with strategy action 3 of the strategy 2010 – 2020, which focus on integrated natural resources management with emphasis on the conservation of water producing ecosystems, including the development of financial mechanisms to strengthen the protected areas and the protection of critical areas.

· **Rural youth strategy of the SICA region 2022 – 2030**. This strategy includes several actions that are pertinent to forest conservation like the development of sustainable enterprises and rural employment. Taking into account the strong contribution that rural youth can make to address deforestation,

the programme will support that this strategy is operationalised in the target intact forest landscapes.

· **Regional Policy for Gender Equality and Equity of the PRIEG/SICA Central American Integration System (2014-2025)**. In line with this policy, the programme will take affirmative actions to incentive that women participate in governance and decision-making processes and the development of forest-linked production initiatives.

Alignment with national policies and instruments.

The Mesoamerica programme will contribute to the biodiversity, climate change, and forestry strategies and plans of the six participating countries.

· **Biodiversity strategies and action plans**:

o El Salvador National Biodiversity Strategy 2013.
o Guatemala National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2012 - 2022.
o Honduras National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2022.
o Mexico National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016 - 2030.
o Nicaragua National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015 - 2020.
o Panama National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2050.

· **National climate change strategies**:

o El Salvador National Climate Change Strategy 2013.
o Guatemala National Development Strategy with Low Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
o Honduras National Climate Change Strategy.
o Mexico National Climate Change Strategy. 10-20-40 Vision.
o Nicaragua National Environmental and Climate Change Strategy
o Panama National Climate Change Strategy, 2050.

· **National REDD+ strategies:**

o El Salvador National REDD+ Strategy MbA - Restoration of Ecosystems and Landscapes of 2017.
o Mexico National REDD+ Strategy 2017-2030 of 2017.
o Nicaragua National Strategy to Reduce Deforestation and Forest Degradation (ENDE REDD+).
o Panama National REDD+ Strategy of 2022.

· **National forest policies and plans**:

o El Salvador National Forest Policy 2016-2036.
o Guatemala National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy: Mechanism for Sustainable Rural Development of Guatemala 2015 - 2045.
o Honduras National Forest Policy and Protected Areas and Wildlife 2013-2022
o Mexico National Forestry Program 2020-2024.
o Nicaragua National Forest Plan.
o Panama National Forest Strategy 2018-2050 and National Forest Restoration Program with emphasis on water producing basins 2021 - 2025.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the program have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Program Description (Section B).

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PFD development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to program outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan in the Coordination Child Project before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Program Description (Section B).

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during PFD preparation phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: No

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

This is an initial list of key stakeholders. A detailed list, including private sector, community organizations and civil society organizations will be prepared during the PPG phase.

Country	Stakeholder	Role pertinent to the project	Expected engagement
Regional	Central American Commission for Environment and Development	Specialised body of SICA, coordinates a regional regime for environmental cooperation and integration	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Central American Agricultural Council	Specialised body of SICA, coordinates a regional regime for agriculture cooperation and integration	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Central American Bank for Economic Integration	Specialised entity of SICA, promotes economic integration, acts as second level financial institution	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
Mexico	National Commission of Protected Natural Areas	Federal entity responsible for the national system of protected areas	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	National Forestry Commission	Federal entity responsible for forest management	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Federal agriculture authority	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	Secretary of Welfare	Federal entity responsible for contributing to the establishment of the welfare state, in charge of the flagship “Sowing Life” program.	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit	Federal entity responsible for financial, fiscal, spending, revenue and public debt policy,	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	Government of Campeche State	State government	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Government of Yucatan State	State government	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Government of Quintana Roo State	State government	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	National environment authority.	Direct participation in the program preparation and i

			mplementation
Guatemala	National Council of Protected Areas	Responsible for the national system o f protected areas	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	Ministry of Agriculture, Livesto ck and Food	National agriculture authority	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	National Forest Institute	National forest authority	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	Ministry of Economy	Responsible for economic policy and public finances	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
Honduras	Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources	National environment authority.	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	Secretariat of Agriculture and L ivestock	National agriculture authority	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	National Institute of Forest Co nservation	Responsible for the national system o f protected areas and forest manage ment	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	Finance Secretary	Responsible for economic policy and public finances	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
El Salvador	Ministry of Environment and N atural Resources	National environment authority, respo nsible of protected areas.	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	Ministry of Agriculture and Live stock	National agriculture and forestry auth ority	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	Ministry of Economy	Responsible for economic policy and public finances	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
Nicaragua	Ministry of Environment and N atural Resources	National environment authority, respo nsible for national system of protecte d areas	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	National Forest Institute	National forest authority	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation
	North Caribbean Coast Autono mous Regional Government	Regional government	Direct participation in the program preparation and i mplementation

			implementation
	South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regional Government	Regional government	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Ministry of Agriculture	National agriculture authority	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	Ministry of Finance and Public Credit	Responsible for economic policy and public finances	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
Panama	Ministry of Environment	National environment authority, responsible for national system of protected areas and forest management	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Government of the Comarca Emberá Wounaan	Indigenous government	Direct participation in the program preparation and implementation
	Ministry of Agricultural Development	National agriculture authority	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent
	Ministry of Economy and Finance	Responsible for economic policy and public finances	To be consulted/engaged as pertinent

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

In early March 2023, the IUCN and FAO hosted an inception workshop in Antigua, Guatemala (detailed list of participants in the table below) to receive input from stakeholders of all participating countries on the Theory of Change, barrers and opportunities to address the loss of CFBs. This supported continuous dialogue and exchange on program outcomes at regional and national level. On March 31st, a second workshop was held to share updated theory of change and obtain feedback on the results framework and governance arrangements. In addition, workshops were held in Guatemala and Honduras at national level on March 10th and 23rd-24th respectively, with representatives from Indigenous People communities of the project's areas. In Nicaragua, consultation of indigenous people government were held from Jan. 23rd to 27th 2023, and on Feb 3rd 2023(see annex 4 Nicaragua Child Project concept note). In Panama, meeting with representatives from indigenous people (Leonides Cunampia, Rodolfo Berrugate) on February 15th 2023 allowed to plan the FPIC process to be developed during PPG. In Mexico, the program outcome and roles of CSOs was socialized and discussed on February 24th 2023 with representatives from RA (Santiago Machado, Eileen Muller), TNC (Celia Pigueron), WWF (Maria Jose Villanueva), Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (Graciela Reyes), GIZ(Jorge Uribe), KfW (Citlali Cortes), UNDP-SGP (Sebastien Proust) and WRI (Javier Warman).

Organization	Name, surname	Dates of consultations
CAC	Melissa Ugalde H	7-10 March
CAC	Claudia Vallejo R	7-10 March
MARN (Panama)	Ing. Víctor Cadavid	7-10 March
MARN (Panama)	Ing. Álvaro Castillo	7-10 March
MARN (Panama)	Ing. Vaneska Bethancourt	7-10 March
SERNA (Honduras)	Sandy Carolina Pereira Pereira	7-10 March
SERNA (Honduras)	Rene Fernando Benitez Ramos	7-10 March
ICF (Honduras)	Heydee Yoselin Amaya Castro	7-10 March
Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan	Efraim Antonio Acosta Lugo	7-10 March
CCAD	Jair Urriola	7-10 March
CCAD	Mario Escobedo	7-10 March
Yucatan State	Mtro. Sergio Aguilar Escalante	7-10 March
Forestry and Climate Change F und	Ronnie de Camino	7-10 March
WCS	Óscar Núñez	7-10 March
WCS	Gabriela Ponce	7-10 March
CONAFOR (Mexico)	Laura Susana Tamayo Galvan	7-10 March
CONANP (Mexico)	Eduardo Robelo Gonzáles	7-10 March
MAGA (Peten, Guatemala)	Oscar Roberto Fión Ozaeta	7-10 March
INAB (Peten Guatemala)	Juan Gregorio Gregorio Rojas Li ma	7-10 March
MARN (Guatemala)	Flor Calderón Zapet	7-10 March
CONANP	Melisa Ojeda	7-10 March
CONANP (Bala'am Kaa'x protect ed area)	Sandra Flores Hernández	7-10 March
Campeche State	Jorge Berzunza	7-10 March
Indigenous People Misquito	Carmelo Zschocher Norales	7-10 March
Indigenous people Garifuna	Scott Wood Ronas	7-10 March
MARN (El Salvador)	Idalma Marilu Aldana Pacheco	7-10 March
Quintana Roo State	Mr. Miguel Angel Suarez Sarabi a	7-10 March
MARN (El Salvador)	Miguel Alberto Gallardo Melend ez	7-10 March
WCS	Morazan, Jose	7-10 March

MARENA (Nicaragua)	Vanessa Molina García	7-10 March
MARENA (Nicaragua)	Indiana Montoya Dompe	7-10 March
CONAFOR	Manuel Perez	20-30 March
CONAFOR	Pedro Antonio Flores	20-30 March
SEMARNAT	Erika Maria del Pilar Casamadrid Gutierrez	20-30 March
Secretary of welfare (Mexico)	Diana Gabriela Lope	20-30 March
Secretary of welfare (Mexico)	Adrian Flores Eredia	20-30 March

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PFD preparation phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the program?

Yes

And if so, has its role beem described and justified in the section B program description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Program Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	GEF Program Financing($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing($)
IUCN	GET	Mexico	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	8,949,312	805,438	9,754,750.00
IUCN	GET	Mexico	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	2,983,104	268,479	3,251,583.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	5,354,583	481,912	5,836,495.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	892,431	80,319	972,750.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	892,431	80,319	972,750.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	1,784,861	160,637	1,945,498.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	297,477	26,773	324,250.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	297,477	26,773	324,250.00

IUCN	GET	Guatemala	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	1,189,610	107,065	1,296,675.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,759,863	158,387	1,918,250.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	175,986	15,839	191,825.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	586,621	52,795	639,416.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	58,662	5,279	63,941.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	703,945	63,355	767,300.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	234,648	21,118	255,766.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,453,035	130,773	1,583,808.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	484,345	43,591	527,936.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	811,766	73,059	884,825.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	204,934	18,444	223,378.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	68,311	6,148	74,459.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	93,414	8,407	101,821.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	31,138	2,802	33,940.00

IUCN	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	808,331	72,750	881,081.00
IUCN	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	766,643	68,998	835,641.00
IUCN	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	5,719,934	514,794	6,234,728.00
IUCN	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Global Platforms	303,257	27,293	330,550.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	6,189,086	557,018	6,746,104.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	986,391	88,775	1,075,166.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	1,566,103	140,949	1,707,052.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	2,063,029	185,672	2,248,701.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	328,797	29,591	358,388.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	522,034	46,983	569,017.00
FAO	GET	Panama	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	6,290,770	566,168	6,856,938.00
FAO	GET	Panama	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	898,681	80,881	979,562.00
FAO	GET	Panama	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	2,096,923	188,723	2,285,646.00
FAO	GET	Panama	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	299,560	26,960	326,520.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**58,147,493.00**	**5,233,267.00**	**63,380,760.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
IUCN	GET	Mexico	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	225,000	20,250	**245,250.00**
IUCN	GET	Mexico	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	75,000	6,750	**81,750.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	150,005	13,500	**163,505.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	25,001	2,249	**27,250.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	25,000	2,250	**27,250.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	50,001	4,500	**54,501.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	8,334	749	**9,083.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	8,333	750	**9,083.00**
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	33,326	2,999	**36,325.00**
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	75,000	6,750	**81,750.00**
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	7,500	675	**8,175.00**
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	25,000	2,250	**27,250.00**
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	2,500	225	**2,725.00**
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	30,000	2,700	**32,700.00**

IUCN	GET	Honduras	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	10,000	900	**10,900.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	69,259	6,233	**75,492.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	23,087	2,077	**25,164.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	38,693	3,482	**42,175.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	9,768	879	**10,647.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	3,256	293	**3,549.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	4,453	401	**4,854.00**
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	1,484	134	**1,618.00**
IUCN	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD IP Global Platforms	21,276	1,915	**23,191.00**
IUCN	GET	Regional	Land Degradation	LD IP Global Platforms	20,180	1,816	**21,996.00**
IUCN	GET	Regional	Climate Change	CC IP Global Platforms	150,562	13,550	**164,112.00**
IUCN	GET	Regional	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Global Platforms	7,982	719	**8,701.00**
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	159,301	14,337	**173,638.00**
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	25,389	2,285	**27,674.00**

FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation: IPs	40,310	3,628	**43,938.00**
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	53,100	4,779	**57,879.00**
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	8,463	761	**9,224.00**
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Land Degradation	LD IP Matching Incentives	13,437	1,209	**14,646.00**
FAO	GET	Panama	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	131,250	11,812	**143,062.00**
FAO	GET	Panama	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	18,750	1,688	**20,438.00**
FAO	GET	Panama	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	43,750	3,937	**47,687.00**
FAO	GET	Panama	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	6,250	562	**6,812.00**
				Total PPG Amount	**1,600,000.00**	**143,994.00**	**1,743,994.00**

Sources of Funds for Country STAR Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Source of Funds	Total($)
IUCN	GET	Mexico	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	10,000,000.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	6,000,000.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
IUCN	GET	Guatemala	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	2,000,000.00

IUCN	GET	Honduras	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	200,000.00
IUCN	GET	Honduras	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	800,000.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	1,659,300.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	234,025.00
IUCN	GET	El Salvador	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	106,675.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	6,919,742.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,102,840.00
FAO	GET	Nicaragua	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	1,750,990.00
FAO	GET	Panama	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	7,000,000.00
FAO	GET	Panama	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,000,000.00
				Total GEF Resources($)	**40,773,572.00**

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET	11,932,416.00	92,750,000.00
CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET	10,708,870.00	122,807,000.00
CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET	3,519,725.00	28,000,000.00
CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET	3,146,943.00	22,000,000.00
CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET	7,598,165.00	63,632,000.00
CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET	11,655,440.00	88,469,045.00

CFB MesoAmerica IP	GET		9,585,934.00	20,508,220.00
		Total Project Cost ($)	**58,147,493.00**	**438,166,265.00**

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	CONANP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	CONAFOR	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Campeche	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Quintana Roo	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Yucatan	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Secretary of Welfare (Sembrando Vida Program)	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Donor Agency	IUCN-FINANP	Grant	Investment mobilized	600,000.00

Donor Agency	IUCN – KfW (Selva Maya II):	Grant	Investment mobilized	8,000,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID SURGES Project - Paladium	Grant	Investment mobilized	15,000,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID Sustainable and Prosperous Communities - TNC	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Rainforest Alliance	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Donor Agency	WCS-CCAD-CIAT-AMPB/European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	WRI-IUCN / IKI	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	GGGI	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	650,000.00
Private Sector	Forestry and Climate Change Fund	Loans	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Private Sector	Subnational Climate Finance	Equity	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Others	Financial institutions, Investment funds and/or subnational governments, through environmental bonds	Equity	Investment mobilized	20,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	CONAGUA, and Municipal Drinking Water and Sewerage Board and Commission in Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	CONAP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,600,000.00

Recipient Country Government	INAB (Probosque)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	13,200,000.00
Donor Agency	IUCN – KfW (Enlazando Paisaje)	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Donor Agency	IUCN – KfW (Selva Maya II):	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	IUCN – AECID (Gobernanza y GIRH)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,600,000.00
Donor Agency	WCS-CCAD-European Union-DESIRA (Five Great Forests)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,150,000.00
Donor Agency	European Union ACT-60635 GIZ (Green Transition)	Grant	Investment mobilized	27,600,000.00
Donor Agency	WCS-Escalamiento UE	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,500,000.00
Donor Agency	UK-DEFRA-WCS (Biodiverse Landscapes Fund)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,300,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID-TNC (Mexico and Guatemala)	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	RZA/NCS TNC (Mexico, Belize and Guatemala)	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	TNC (Durable Fresh Water)	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	FDN/PNSL (Sierra Lacandón)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	RFT-GC-ACNUR- FUNDAECO-CECON and CONAP (Protección Mirador-Río Azul/Dos Lagunas)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	750,000.00

Donor Agency	Summit Foundation-FUNDAECO-SSR (Empoderamiento Mujeres)	Grant	Investment mobilized	100,000.00
Donor Agency	Oro Verde/BMU FDN/Heifer (Sierra Lacandón)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Donor Agency	USFWS-Balam (Montañas Mayas Chiquibul)	Grant	Investment mobilized	200,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Balam-Grupo Hame (Xutilha)	Grant	Investment mobilized	750,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Rainforest Alliance	Grant	Investment mobilized	4,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	ACOFOP (ZUM-ZAM)	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	8,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	WWF (Restauración y Medios de Vida)	Grant	Investment mobilized	100,000.00
Civil Society Organization	IPLC-TNC (Mexico and Guatemala)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,500,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Heifer (Fondo Restauración Productiva)	Grant	Investment mobilized	150,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Heifer (Expansión Programa Negocios Verdes)	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	300,000.00
Civil Society Organization	NPV (Sinergias FDN-ACOFOP-IAF-TNC)	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	7,000.00
Others	World Bank and Sotzi'l (PICL-PINPEP)	Grant	Investment mobilized	4,500,000.00
Others	UN (Paz) ICCO-Conexión, Balam (Refugio de la Niñez, municipal investments for protected areas, women and youth)	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00

Others	PACUNAM	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Indigenous Peoples-World Bank-Balam	Grant	Investment mobilized	4,500,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID-FDN (Biodiversity Conservation)	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Donor Agency	USAID (Resilient Landscapes)	Grant	Investment mobilized	7,000,000.00
Donor Agency	IKI-TNC (Mexico, Guatemala and Belize)	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Others	FCCF	Loans	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Forests of the World, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Agency for the Development of the Mosquitia (MOPAWI)	Grant	Investment mobilized	7,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	ICF (EU's Proyecto Mi Biosfera)	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Honduran Armed Forces' Green Battalion, Padre Andrés Tamayo National Reforestation Program, ICF, SERNA, INA, SAG, UNAG, UNACIFOR, municipal governments (Puerto Lempira, Wampusirpi, Ahuas, Brus Laguna, Juan Francisco Bulnes, Catacamas, Dulce Nombre de Culmi, Iriona)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	13,000,000.00
Others	Support from private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities, other national and international donors	Other	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Donor Agency	FAO Mountain Partnership (Italy)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Others	FIAES	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00

Recipient Country Government	MARN – National park montecristo	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Municipality of Metapán,	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	125,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Municipality of San Ignacio	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	125,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Municipality of La Palma	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	125,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Municipality of Citalá	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	125,000.00
Others	World Bank-BID/National Coffee Council	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Donor Agency	WCS-UK Defra	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	National Environmental Incentive system – Payment for environmental services	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Adaptation Fund -Ministry of Environment	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00
Private Sector	Subnational climate finance – Green climate Fund Pegasus-R20-IUCN-Gold Standard	Equity	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Green Climate Fund	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00

Donor Agency	Protection of the Trifinio Transboundary Biosphere Reserve – KfW Tri-national Trifinio Plan Commission	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000.00
Donor Agency	“Resilient and Biodiverse Landscapes of Northern Mesoamérica (UK DEFRA - WCS)	Grant	Investment mobilized	13,952,000.00
Donor Agency	Indigenous rights and environmental justice in Latin America (IUCN - SIDA)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Forestry and Climate Change Fund	Loans	Investment mobilized	20,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Selva Maya II (IUCN - KfW)	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,680,000.00
GEF Agency	IDB - Investment portfolio in 5 Critical Forest Biomes- GU-L1165,HO-G1252, CR-L1147	Loans	Investment mobilized	5,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Green Climate Fund, CCAD, Five Great Forest Initiative	Grant	Investment mobilized	20,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,290,265.00
Recipient Country Government	National Forest Institute (INAFOR)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,481,305.00
Recipient Country Government	National Water Authority (ANA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	310,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Secretariat for the Development of the Caribbean Coast (SDCC)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	75,087.00

Recipient Country Government	North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regional Government (GRACCN)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	748,898.00
Recipient Country Government	South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regional Government (GRACCS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,875,441.00
Recipient Country Government	Rama and Kriol Territorial Government (GTR-K)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	479,502.00
Recipient Country Government	Bluefields Municipality	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	497,301.00
Others	Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)	Loans	Investment mobilized	43,200,000.00
Donor Agency	Green Climate Fund	Grant	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Green Climate Fund	Loans	Investment mobilized	10,000,000.00
Donor Agency	UICN-KFW: Biodiversity Program: Linking the Central American Landscape	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,211,246.00
Donor Agency	European Union/ Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)/ United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	Grant	Investment mobilized	13,300,000.00
Donor Agency	ITTO - Japan Government: Project to strengthen forest control and expand the coverage of the traceability system in Panama	Grant	Investment mobilized	730,088.00
Donor Agency	CAF: Technical assistance for the adaptation of the Mexican forest protocol of Climate Action Research	Grant	Investment mobilized	200,000.00

Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment: Protected Areas Directorate	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	8,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment: Climate Change and Forestry directorate	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
GEF Agency	FAO/FSC Indigenous Foundation: Technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of women's organizations and indigenous peoples	Grant	Investment mobilized	320,000.00
Donor Agency	FAO/IADB: Support for Post-COVID Economic Recovery for indigenous coffee producers	Loans	Investment mobilized	300,000.00
Donor Agency	GCF Readiness: Preparation of strategic frameworks and climate finance to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and guide the investment of the GCF in Panama	Grant	Investment mobilized	800,000.00
Donor Agency	AECID Humanitarian Office: Promote livelihoods in Darien	Grant	Investment mobilized	426,000.00
Donor Agency	European Union - Desira 2021-2025	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,436,167.00
Donor Agency	European Union - Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica : Regional initiative for climate, biodiversity, and people	Grant	Investment mobilized	7,295,965.00
			Total Co-financing($)	**438,166,265.00**

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

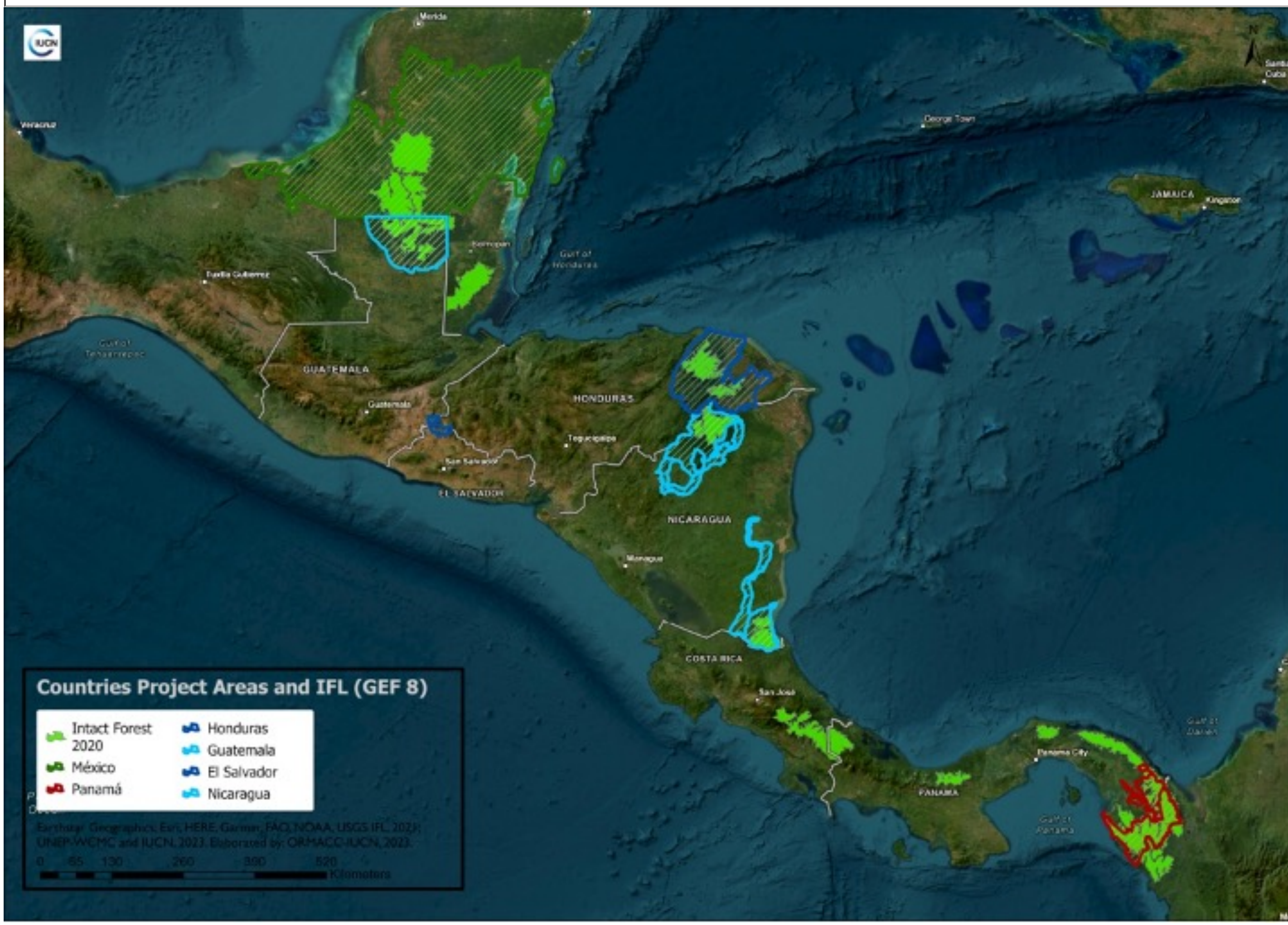
GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Joshua Schneck		Joshua Schneck	+1650-269-9903	joshua.schneck@iucn.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Raul Pinedo	GEF Operational Focal Point, Panama	Ministry of Environment	3/29/2023
Javier Gutierrez Ramirez	Vice Minister, Nicaragua	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	3/30/2023
Norman Octavio Mendoza Dominguez	Coordinator of International Cooperation Unit; GEF OFP for Guatemala	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	5/5/2023
Ms Eva Maria Colorado Panameño	Director of International Cooperation and Climate Change; GEF OFP	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	5/6/2023
Malcolm Stufkens	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	4/19/2023
Mrs. Laura Elisa Aguirre Tellez	GEF Operation Focal Point, General Director	Ministry of Finance and Public Credit	5/9/2023

ANNEX C: PROGRAM LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place


Countries Project Areas and IFL (GEF 8)
Intact Forest 2020
México
Panamá
Honduras
Guatemala
El Salvador
Nicaragua
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
COSTA RICA
PANAMA
JAMAICA

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(Program level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

Mesoamerica Forest IP Annex D_ESMS

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Desertification
Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Influencing Models			
Stakeholders			
Capacity, Knowledge and Research			
Gender Equality			
Focal Area/Theme			

ANNEX H: CHILD PROJECT INFORMATION

Title

Child Project Concept Notes_Mesoamerica Forest IP

Child Projects under the Program

Country	Project Title	GEF Agency	GEF Amount($) PROJECT FINANCING	Agency Fee($)	Total($)	
	FSPs					
Mexico	Mexico Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Securing benefits for the well-being of local communities and the ecosystems of the Maya Forest	IUCN	11,932,416.00	1,073,917.00	13,006,333.00	
Guatemala	Guatemala Mesoamerican Forest IP Project:: Securing benefits for the well-being of local communities and the ecosystems of the Maya Forest	IUCN	10,708,870.00	963,798.00	11,672,668.00	
Honduras	Honduras Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Conserving the Intact Forests of the Honduran Moskitia	IUCN	3,519,725.00	316,773.00	3,836,498.00	
El Salvador	El Salvador Mesoamerican Forest IP Project: Promoting forest conservation and integrated water management in Trifinio	IUCN	3,146,943.00	283,224.00	3,430,167.00	
Regional	Mesoamerica Critical Forest Biome IP Regional Coordination, Knowledge Sharing and Support Project	IUCN	7,598,165.00	683,835.00	8,282,000.00	
Nicaragua	Nicaragua Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Protection and conservation of forests of global importance located in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve and the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve	FAO	11,655,440.00	1,048,988.00	12,704,428.00	
Panama	Panama Mesoamerica Forest IP Project: Critical Forests Biome of Panama - Collaborative Conservation of the Darién	FAO	9,585,934.00	862,732.00	10,448,666.00	
	Subtotal ($)		58,147,493.00	5,233,267.00		
	MSPs					
	Subtotal ($)		0.00	0.00		

	Grant Total ($)	**58,147,493.00**	**5,233,267.00**	**63,380,760.00**