

## **“FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION IN ECUADOR”**

### **“INCENTIVOS FINANCIEROS PARA LA RESTAURACIÓN DE PAISAJES FORESTALES EN ECUADOR”**

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**Case Study:** Ecuador’s FLR and Food Security

**Caso de estudio:** RPF de Ecuador y Seguridad Alimentaria

#### **Abstract:**

The case Study is about Ecuador’s forest landscape restoration - FLR and Food Security. Promotes “To support the achievement of the objectives regarding forest landscape restoration in Ecuador and to contribute to improving food security in the region”, permits to analyze the degradation of forest landscape as one of the identified environmental problems requiring priority attention in Ecuador, in reference to its new management model for the National Restoration Plan 2018-2030.

#### **Resumen:**

Este estudio de caso se trata sobre la restauración del paisaje forestal - RPF y la Seguridad Alimentaria de Ecuador. Promueve "apoyar el logro de los objetivos de restauración del paisaje forestal en Ecuador y contribuir a mejorar la seguridad alimentaria en la región", permite analizar la degradación del paisaje forestal

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como uno de los problemas ambientales que requieren atención prioritaria en Ecuador, en referencia con su nuevo modelo de gestión para el Plan de Restauración Nacional 2018 – 2030.

**Keywords:** financial incentives, restoration, forest landscape, Ecuador

**Palabras clave:** incentivos financieros, restauración, paisajes forestales, Ecuador

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## **1. CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM**

The degraded forest landscape areas in Ecuador is a concern in approximately 4% of land surface i.e. 1'100.000 hectares. In addition, 23% of Ecuador's land surface, i.e. 5'998.341 hectares, are the most prone to erosion<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.1 Objective of the case study**

To support the achievement of the objectives regarding forest landscape restoration worldwide and to contribute to improving food security in the region.

### **1.2 Identification of the factors of influence**

Among the main factors of degradation of forest landscapes in Ecuador are: climate, deforestation, poverty, density and uneven distribution of population, colonization, inappropriate land use and the irrational exploitation of natural resources. *(Each of these factors will be briefly analyzed in the final article).*

To adapt to climate change and to secure water resources, communities must become protagonists in the management and conservation of the moors.

### **1.3 Targeting the field of study**

The provinces/regions most affected by the deterioration of the forest landscape are: Esmeraldas, Manabí, Chimborazo and Loja.

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<sup>2</sup> Secretariat of the convention to combat desertification. "Sixth Regional Meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought. San Salvador, El Salvador, 17-19 October 2000". Final report.

## **2. POLITICS AND LAW OF FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION**

### **2.1 Legal development for forest landscape restoration in Ecuador**

The international legal framework includes the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro of 1992 - in particular Principles 7 (principle of common but differentiated responsibilities) and 11 (Participation) - as well as arts.13, 14 and 15 of Convention 169 O.I.T.

In terms of national jurisdiction, Ecuador became the first country in the world to grant inalienable rights to « Nature » in its 2008 Constitution<sup>3</sup>. Nature's rights, which are enforceable by any citizen on behalf of ecosystems, include the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles. Ecuador's national Constitution also recognizes and guarantees the "right to a decent life, to ensure food safety and sanitation" (Art. 66.2).

Moreover, the Forestry, Natural Areas and Wildlife Preservation Law<sup>4</sup> declares as "mandatory and of public interest the afforestation and reforestation of lands of forest aptitude, whether public or private", and prohibits "the use of these lands for any other purpose" (Art. 13).

Finally, at the regulatory level, the Unified Text of Secondary Environmental Legislation<sup>5</sup> enshrines "the Declaration of Forests and Protective Vegetation" (Art.17).

With its Constitution, the Republic of Ecuador assumes global leadership in the recognition of Nature's rights by directing its efforts to consolidate its maintenance and the regeneration of its vital cycles and evolutionary processes<sup>6</sup>. It is within this context that the Ecuadorian national government created the Socio-Bosque program in 2008.

### **2.2 The Socio-Bosque program (SBP)**

The SBP's objective is "the conservation of native forests and moors in all corners of the country". It provides "economic incentives for forest landscape

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<sup>3</sup> Official journal register of Ecuador No. 449. October 20, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Official journal register of Ecuador, Supplement No. 418. September 10, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Consolidated text of secondary environmental legislation of Ecuador - TULAS, Book III.

<sup>6</sup> Constitution of Ecuador, Art. 71.

recovery"<sup>7</sup> to peasant and indigenous communities that voluntarily commit to the conservation and protection of their native forests, moors or other native vegetation. The grant of this economic incentive is subject to the protection and conservation of forests i.e. it is conditioned on meeting the requirements regarding the monitoring of convention as they are set out in the agreement signed with the Ministry of Environment.

In addition to the SBP's objectives, the Ecuadorian government also promotes the institutionalization of indigenous peoples' cultural practices regarding forest landscape restoration. This policy influences both the national legal framework in Ecuador and international law<sup>8</sup>.

### 3. EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF THE SOCIO-BOSQUE PROGRAM - SBP

- Encourages afforestation, reforestation and revegetation with native species in areas affected by deforestation, degradation, fragmentation, erosion, desertification, forest fires and other human affectations.
- Encourages the conservation and protection of native vegetation cover and hybrids, primary forest ecosystems, shrub and fragile.
- Encourages the production and trade of biodiversity and non-timber forest products<sup>9</sup>.
- Encourages forest management focused on the four major links in the value chain of wood (procurement, production, processing and marketing).
- Facilitates land allocation by the State Forest Heritage and forests and protective vegetation to ensure their conservation and / or sustainable use.

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<sup>7</sup> National Program of Incentives for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage "Socio Bosque". Ministry of Environment of Ecuador. Ministerial Decision No. 131 of December 2013.

<sup>8</sup> A specific study of this subject is available in Equinoccial Technological University of Ecuador. "Análisis de los mecanismos jurídicos para la institucionalización de las prácticas culturales en la gestión sostenible de la biodiversidad, en gobiernos locales con pueblos indígenas". Online: <http://repositorio.ute.edu.ec/handle/123456789/12208> Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial - UTE. Quito, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> It is developed through effective environmental management for [FLR](#) and moor, FLR, after the identification of [Conservation mechanisms](#), respecting the [Indigenous law](#).

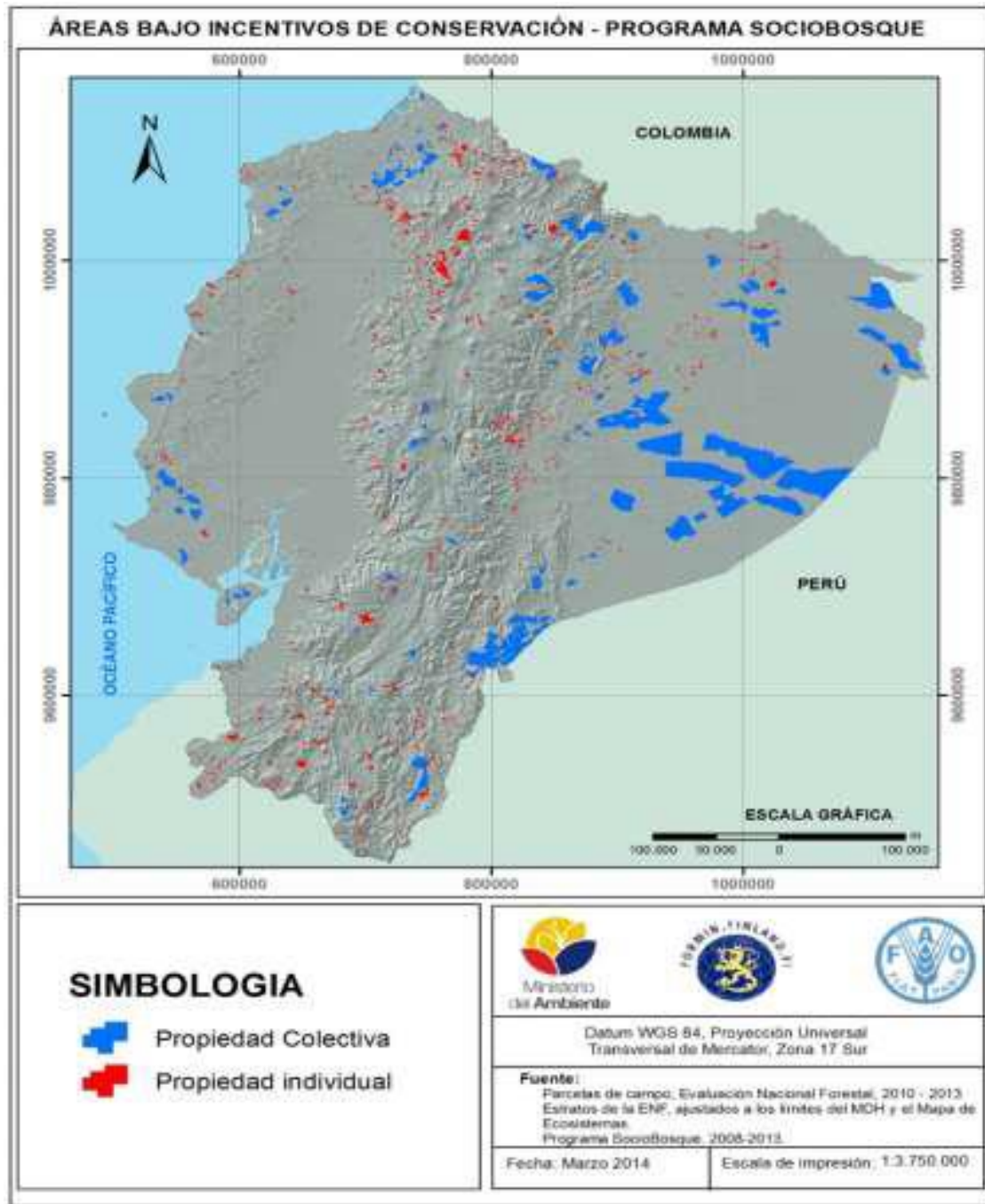
- Facilitates and promotes the recognition and valuation of ecosystem services.
- Promotes biodiversity monitoring and dialogue between researchers, technicians and decision makers in the Andean region.

These efforts to ensure forest landscape restoration in Ecuador are led concurrently with the preparation of REDD + in Ecuador, which has already presented the Forest Reference Emission Carbon Level to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change <sup>10</sup>.

It is possible to follow the forest areas under conservation incentives, Socio Bosque Program, in the next map:

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<sup>10</sup> Ecuador's Forest Reference Emission Level. Reference: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)", 2014. Available on-line: [https://redd.unfccc.int/files/2014\\_december\\_frel\\_submission\\_ecuador.pdf](https://redd.unfccc.int/files/2014_december_frel_submission_ecuador.pdf) (Revised on december 17th, 2018).



*Symb: Blue - collective property<sup>11</sup>; and Red - individual property*  
 Source: “National forest evaluation results 2014”, Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, with support of Finland Government and FAO, (p. 212).

<sup>11</sup> The “collective property” makes reference to the indigenous people’s territory or collective/communitarian territories.

#### 4. THE NEW ECUADORIAN MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR THE NATIONAL RESTORATION PLAN 2018-2030

At the end of 2018, the National Forestry Office (part of the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador) presented the new Management Model for the implementation of the Forest Restoration Plan 2018-2030. The construction of the new Model was supported by CONDESAN (Consortio para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Ecoregion Andina), with its “Bosques Andinos” Program and the EcoAndes Project. *“This model is based on the lessons worked from the experience of the Ministry of Environment in the previous phases of implementation”*<sup>12</sup>.

This Management Model seeks to: adapt to the different contexts part of the Ecuadorian reality by integrating into local territorial plans, including new interested stakeholders. This main goal is to implement restoration actions for between 10,000 and 15,000 hectares per year in the areas of highest priority in the national context, under a sustainable management model.

The objectives of this management model are: A) Implement adequate institutional processes for Forest Restoration, and B) Establish mechanisms that facilitate the integration of restoration actions in territorial planning<sup>13</sup>. For its implementation, 4 main roles are established:

##### 4.1 The first role is related to “governance and regulation”

This role is in line with international commitments and national public policy, (reviewed in point 1 of this comment).

For this it is necessary to have ministerial agreements, regulations, processes and methods that support the implementation of the Plan, with emphasis on the regulation of the new Organic Code of the Environment<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Source : Consorcio para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Ecoregion Andina – CONDESAN, Presentation of the new management model for the National Restoration Plan 2018 - 2030 by the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, October 17th, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Source : Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, on-line <http://www.ambiente.gob.ec/> (Revised on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Organic Code of the Environment, Official journal register of Ecuador, Supplement No 983. April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



#### **4.2 The second role refers to planning through "territorial tables" (the working groups)**

It is here, by these groups where the priority areas and activities for forest restoration are defined.

To achieve the objectives, coordination with all the stakeholders is necessary. So the territorial tables aim to be the central point to receive the initial proposals for restoration projects and their viability will be analyzed.

#### **4.3 The third role is execution**

This role is developing with the common activities. These activities are also implemented collaboratively with executing entities such as: Decentralized autonomous and local governments (GADs), local communities, Federations, NGOs, Universities and the Private Sector.

#### **4.4 The fourth role is the "linking role-phase"**

This is the final role, to ensure a sustainable work. The establishment of intra and interinstitutional agreements is proposed to guarantee the maintenance of the restored areas within a period of 10 years through a sustainable focus, (among different Ministries and public institutions).

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