

EVALUATING FARM AND LANDSCAPE LEVEL BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS FOR PROJECT CAMBIO (CENTRAL AMERICAN MARKETS FOR BIODIVERSITY)



Background

CAMBIO (Mercados Centroamericanos para la Biodiversidad) was a 6-year, \$30 million project executed between 2008 and 2014 to mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use in production landscapes in five Central American countries. The CAMBIO project was supported by the Global Environment Facility of the Central American Bank of Economic Integration and the United Nations Development Programme. It sought to develop financial mechanisms, delivered through national financial institutions, to encourage the adoption of biodiversity-friendly practices by farmers, livestock producers, tourism operators and other small and medium-sized enterprises.

The project's specific objective was to remove barriers in banking, business and the enabling environment to catalyze biodiversity-friendly investments in micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); in practice most of the funds accessed were used for working capital. 11,650 enterprises received loans or other incentives, directly affecting 140,000 hectares.

What: A comprehensive assessment of farm and landscape level impacts

As an international thought leader in monitoring and evaluation for agricultural landscapes, EcoAgriculture Partners was selected to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact on biodiversity conservation at farm and landscape levels, which will also serve as a baseline and generate recommendations for similar future projects. The analytic framework will be based on the theory of change of the CAMBIO project that assumes that innovative financial mechanisms can be used to incentivize the adoption of biodiversity friendly practices and expand the area under such practices in production landscapes, leading to improved biodiversity conservation at farm and landscape scales.

With whom and when?

From June to December 2015, EcoAgriculture Partners will work closely with program stakeholders on the assessment, including the UNDP, BCIE and GEF in and other local partners (financial institutions, farmers and their cooperatives, NGOs, land managers) in the participating countries.



A coffee farm on the slopes of Lake Atitlan, Guatemala.

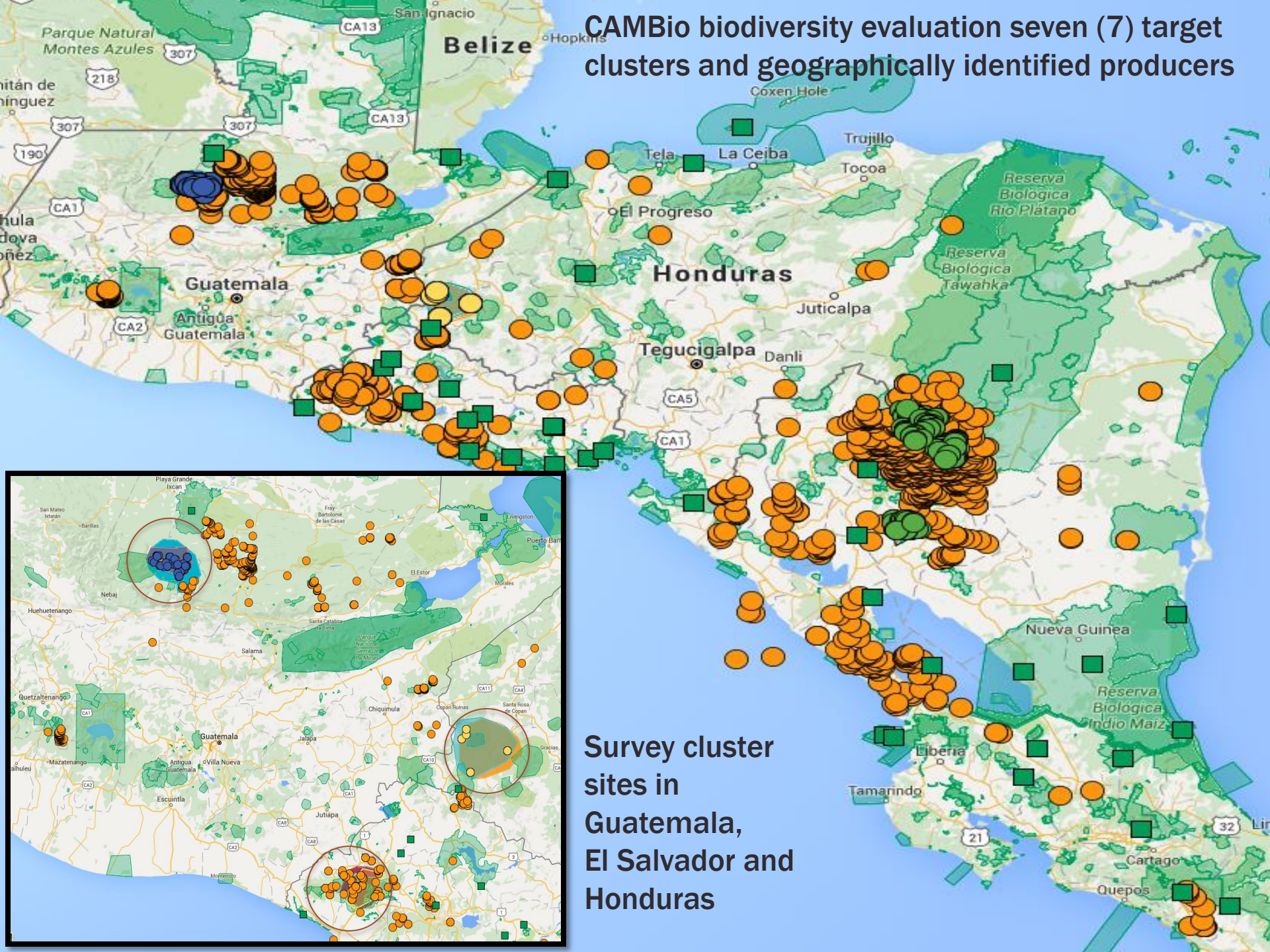
A high-quality evaluation of the change in production practices and subsequent impact on biodiversity will be achieved through interviews, key informant consultations and literature review in combination with spatial analysis. The evaluation will be supported by the availability of extensive land use maps and other GIS data in the region and farming practices information gathered through the project. Consultations with key individuals and focus groups in selected cluster sites will be organized in each of the participating countries to facilitate a discussion, on the enabling investments for biodiversity conservation and improved rural livelihoods.

More information

The assessment will be made public in early 2016. For more information on this project and others from EcoAgriculture Partners please visit www.ecoagriculture.org or contact Project Manager Lee Gross at lgross@ecoagriculture.org.



CAMBio biodiversity evaluation seven (7) target clusters and geographically identified producers



Survey cluster sites in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras

Overview and Preliminary Results

Target countries – Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica
Number of CAMBio beneficiaries interviewed = 69 with more still forthcoming
Number of financial institutions and local CAMBio partners interviewed: 11
Production systems included: pasture and coffee, cocoa and cardamom agroforestry
Methods: farmer questionnaire, farm rapid biodiversity assessment, GIS spatial analysis
Three forms of investment evaluated: loans, bio-premiums and technical assistance

How were the financial loans used?

- In Honduras and El Salvador, the loan went mostly to pay for annual investment in production costs. This included buying inputs (fertilizers) and paying for crop and shade canopy maintenance labor.
- In the case of Nicaraguan coffee farmers, the loan permitted carrying out investments to expand coffee areas into areas previously cultivated with corn and beans. Nicaragua cattle farmers used the money to invest in fencing and establishment of improved pastures. Cercas vivas were used as fencing features.
- In Guatemala micro-loans (average \$500) were used to invest in production costs. This included improving agroforestry systems by planting fruit and shade trees.

Proportion of interviewees receiving the “Biopremio”: 86.9%. What did farmers do with the biopremio?

- In the case of participating coffee cooperatives in Honduras and El Salvador, the “Biopremio” was given as a reimbursement to cover costs incurred that year related to payments of audits and inscription in coffee certification programs.
- In Nicaragua and Guatemala, farmers received the “Biopremio” award in cash. In the case of Nicaraguan coffee and cattle, many reinvested this award in the coffee plantation, mostly by augmenting the newly planted area, increasing the number of shade trees and investing in machinery.

Presence of forest features in their farms:

Honduras: Coffee farmers: 72%

El Salvador: Coffee: 80%

Nicaragua: Coffee: 54% / Cattle: 60%

Guatemala: 90%

Dynamics of forest features in farms during the last 5 years:

Honduras: Decreased 0% Stayed the same: 90%
Increased: 10%

El Salvador: Decreased: 14% Stayed the same: 86%
Increased: 0%

Nicaragua: Cattle - Decreased: 17% Stayed the same: 83%
Increased 0% / Cattle -Decreased: Stayed the same: 20%

Guatemala: Decreased: 0% Stayed the same: 90.5%
Increased: 9.5%

CAMBio and forest conservation:

In most countries except in Guatemala Cardamom farmers, CAMBio had little influence in forest initiatives specifically trying to augment and/or preserve existing forest areas. In Guatemala however, CAMBio beneficiaries saw the “biopremio” as an award for conserving forests.

