

Lessons learnt

Past and ongoing programmes and projects focused on local development at municipality or Associations of municipalities' level have demonstrated that objectives and expected results are only achieved if activities are screened in terms of responsiveness to needs and expectations of the local population, the legal capacity of the different actors and their local mandate and leadership. The logic behind is to achieve higher participation and better appropriation of proposed changes by local partners.

Due diligence needs to be given to the participation of Civil Society Organisations and aspects of social development related to gender inclusion and equality, indigenous people and vulnerable groups. Because of the historically weak presence of the State in Petén, CSOs are strong. In addition, the percentage of indigenous people in the population is high and their exclusion from overall development is well documented. For these reasons, particular consideration of these groups and organisation allows better understanding of the local context and increase appropriation and support to the proposed activities.

Furthermore, in order to join public partners, relevant local actors as well as private partners for making green transition of Petén a reality, institutional capacity building will be key at all levels. Ongoing programmes involving different public administration structures, both at central and local level, have demonstrated that such capacity building must be implemented in a non-isolated manner, bringing together representatives from different public bodies. While the latter has been shown to be feasible and allows effective inter-institutional work at municipal level, it requires the formation of formal working groups both at the decision-making and technical level.

Working in parallel on different components which, on their own, would have a positive but only limited impact and which, in combination, will trigger the necessary synergies, and achieve the desired outcomes and impacts of the action in the most efficient manner. Adding to this, the institutional set-up involves closely the agencies of the MS, which accumulated already valuable experience in specific components of this action and at the Petén department. Amplifying and expanding their programmes will allow quick-wins in crucial sectors and make the Team European Initiative more visible.

Finally, by successfully demonstrating, in a clearly outlined territory, that economic use of natural resources can be compatible with protection of environment and biodiversity and the mitigation and adaptation to climate change, a transformative impact will be achieved.

Many regional and thematic EU programmes, also in cooperation with Member States and other international partners, provide valuable experience for both, design and implementation of new actions. The proposed action will actively approach these initiatives and connect Petén's public entities, municipalities, CSOs and other implementing partners to the respective platforms and centres. In the specific context, the following programmes are of particular interest:

- COPENICUS, which can provide Earth Observation data combined with satellite positioning (Galileo) to provide added-value products and tailored information for the Petén region useful for all five components and for which local capacity building is envisaged. In this regard, the action will capitalise on the regional Copernicus data centre in Panama, and the EU Space Programme, which encompasses Copernicus, Galileo and EGNOS services. The aim being, not only that these instruments become main tools for the monitoring and follow-up of the planned activities, but also that they become the reference tool for the concerned stakeholders in their decision-making processes and follow-up of the execution of their policies and strategies.
- The Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica initiative is committed to strengthening the role of forests in providing ecosystem services, safeguarding biodiversity and sustaining prosperous livelihoods over time and in line with local cultural values, and includes the Mayan Biosphere in Petén. As part of the European Green Deal, the EU seeks to support its partners to safeguard their natural ecosystems, to tackle climate change and to halt biodiversity¹⁶ loss.

¹⁶ EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, COM(2020) 380 (final) of 20/05/2020