

ID: 338

Type: Voluntary contribution

48. ES in healthy Rural landscapes: examples and calls (OPEN)

Ecosystem-based adaptation for smallholder farmers in agricultural landscapes in Central America: opportunities and constraints

Presenting author: Celia A. Harvey

Other authors: Francisco Alpizar, Jacques Avelino, Pavel Bautista, Camilla Donatti, Lee Hannah, Pablo Imbach, M. Ruth Rodríguez-Martínez, Bruno Rapidel, Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, and Rafaelle Vignola

Institution: Conservation International

Contact: charvey@conservation.org

It is increasingly recognized that climate change will have a disproportionate impact on smallholder farmers, due to their dependence on agriculture for both livelihoods and food security, their often high levels of poverty, location in remote areas and marginal lands, and lack of access to technical support and credit. Consequently, across the world, governments are developing strong adaptation policies and plans to help smallholder farmers adapt to the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and other aspects of climate change. One approach that holds great promise for smallholder farmers is the use of ecosystem-based adaptation– the use of ecosystem services and biodiversity as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. However, to date, there is little information available on what EbA options are available and feasible for farmers, how effective these are in reducing farmer vulnerability to extreme weather events and climate change, and what the opportunities and constraints are for scaling up these approaches. Using information from a detailed literature review, expert interviews, and a policy review, we will present an overview of the different types of ecosystem-based adaptation measures that are appropriate for smallholder coffee and maize/bean farmers in Central America, examine how effective these approaches are for reducing farmer vulnerability to extreme weather events, and discuss key technical, policy and financial constraints to broad scale adoption. Our study highlights the importance of systematically including Ecosystem-based adaptation in ongoing climate change policies, national adaptation plans and associated resource allocations, and the need for greater understanding of the specific mechanisms by which EbA practices deliver the ecosystem services on which people depend.