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ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Sustainable Mountain Development

Enhancing the resilience of mountain people and their environments

The issue

Mountains are key ecosystems, providing goods and services, such as water, food and energy, to the entire planet. In particular, mountains provide and regulate up to 80 percent of global freshwater resources. However, mountain people are among the world's poorest: one in three faces hunger and food insecurity. Climate change has a strong impact on mountain areas, increasing the occurrence of disasters and exacerbating desertification, land degradation and soil erosion. Mountain communities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural hazards due to their high dependency on agriculture (crops, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry) as their primary source of livelihood. Life in mountain areas is becoming increasingly difficult and the vulnerability of mountain people to food insecurity is worsening, often forcing them to migrate. Identifying new, sustainable livelihood opportunities and adopting practices that build the resilience of mountain people and their environments is a pressing challenge.

The action

The Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) programme enhances the resilience of mountain communities and ecosystems by promoting pro-mountain policies and governance mechanisms, attracting targeted investment, expanding sustainable production and the diversification of food systems, and strengthening skills and value chains.

Emphasis is placed on the adoption of strategies, plans and policies for restoration, protection, disaster risk management and climate-change adaptation that combine ecosystem conservation and livelihood improvement in mountain landscapes and watersheds:

- Support inclusion of mountains in national development plans and encourage the establishment of inclusive governance systems, national committees and transboundary mechanisms for sustainable mountain development;
- Promote sustainable management and landscape restoration programmes and protect and conserve mountain biodiversity through crop diversification, and soil conservation;
- Improve value chains of mountain products, promote voluntary and participatory certification schemes and enhance access to training, credit, enterprise building and extension services;
- Increase national institutions and local communities' capacity to design and implement disaster risk-reduction plans and climate-change adaptation in mountain watershed and landscapes.

The issue in numbers



22%

of the world's land surface area is mountainous



Almost **1 billion**
people live in mountain areas



1 in 3

mountain people in developing countries faces hunger and food insecurity

Programme targets



1 500

farmers' cooperatives marketing more than 40 mountain products



3

countries adopt and implement mountain landscape management plans



100%

increase in the number of women in mountain agricultural value chains

The budget



USD 15 million



5 years



15 countries

Expected results

- More inclusive governance systems and policies that create enabling environments to empower mountain people and include them in development processes;
- Sustainably managed mountain landscapes that ensure the provision of critical ecosystem services for both upland and lowland communities;
- Increased sustainability of mountain economies, food security and nutrition through improved access to markets and finance for mountain people, particularly women and indigenous groups;
- Greater national and institutional capacities to design, integrate into policy and implement strategies and plans for disaster risk reduction and climate-change adaptation in mountain watersheds and landscapes.

Geographic focus

Africa: Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda

Asia Pacific: Bhutan, India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines

Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia

Latin America and the Caribbean: Bolivia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Peru

In partnership with

The programme works with the Mountain Partnership, which has more than 350 members: 60 governments, 15 inter-governmental organizations and 274 civil-society organizations. Other partners include the Global Island Partnership, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – Organics International, Slow Food, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the European Forestry Commission Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds.



SDG contribution



Labelling boosts mountain producers' income

The Mountain Partnership Products Initiative by the Mountain Partnership and Slow Food is a voluntary and participatory certification and labelling scheme for small mountain producers from developing countries. It currently spans 16 products in seven countries, ranging from coffee produced in the Panamanian Central Cordillera to herbal tea and rice grown in the Indian Himalayas. To date, 24 producer organizations have benefited from the initiative and the label has, in some cases, led to a rise in selling prices of 25 percent. The narrative label details the origin of the product, who made it and the traditional techniques used. It reassures consumers that they are making a responsible purchase and supporting mountain communities by enabling producers to sell at a premium price.



Why invest?

Funding will support the development of mountain-specific policies and programmes and help build vital capacities and resilience. Integrated watershed management is commonly used in upland areas in response to competing demands from multiple resources users, but disaster risk reduction and risk mitigation policies and practices are rarely included. The programme supports the integration of risk and vulnerability reduction in mountain areas as a cost-effective means of building the resilience of mountain communities. Working with and building on the Mountain Partnership platform, the programme will expand its reach, also through South–South Cooperation. Investing in mountain people and their environments is critical to the planet's health and ensuring inclusive and sustainable development for all.

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