



UNDP-UNEP POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE
PNUD-PNUE Initiative Pauvreté-Environnement
PNUD-PNUMA Iniciativa Pobreza-Medio Ambiente



Dominican Republic

Basic facts

- Upon request from the Government, PEI fielded scoping missions to the country during 2009 and 2010. The Preparatory Phase was successfully implemented by the end of 2010.
- A Phase I Project Document was developed in collaboration with the Government, the UNDP Country Office and the Regional Team. It was completed in December 2010.
- One of the most prominent poverty-environment linkages identified is the vulnerability of poor populations to the random and more frequent extreme weather events in this Small Island Developing State. However, adaptation and climate risk reduction management programmes and institutions are not working closely enough with the social safety net programmes that have been so successfully implemented in the country.
- The joint project is set out to achieve the following general objectives:
 - Generate empirical evidence and increase the knowledge base of key stakeholders to influence decision-making and the design of effective prevention and ex-ante responses to reduce the vulnerability of poor rural households
 - Mainstream poverty-environment linkages into national development planning frameworks and strategies, particularly in the context of territorial and sectoral planning
 - Build and strengthen institutional capacities to support harmonization, alignment and coordination among key development actors
- Key government partners include the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPYD); Social Cabinet; SingleSystem of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN); and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.
- Phase 1 is designed to be implemented over the period 2011–2012 with a budget on the order of USD 900,000. However, these funds are not currently available.

The context of poverty-environment mainstreaming in the Dominican Republic

- Although the Dominican Republic has one of the fastest growing economies in the region, more than one-third of its total population lives in poverty and almost 12 per cent live in extreme poverty.
- According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the population of the Dominican Republic increased 1.3 per cent from 2005 to 2010.
- The Global Climate Risk Index ranks the country number 8 within a list of the 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events. These events include hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding and drought. Deforestation, land degradation and water availability are among the top environmental issues in the country.
- For instance, recent tropical storms hitting the country (Olga and Noel in 2007) affected about 6 million people or 70 per cent of the population. Infrastructure, particularly related to water resources management, transportation and energy, was heavily damaged, leading

to impacts in key sectors, such as agriculture, electricity, drinking water and sanitation. Hardest hit were small agricultural operations and subsistence farmers, as well as rural and peri-urban residents.

Main activities

- Identify and quantify poverty-environment linkages relevant to national development priorities.
- Strengthen existing mechanisms for inter-institutional coordination, such as the Roundtables on Territorial Planning. This includes harmonizing and aligning the work of the National Roundtable (known by its Spanish language acronym, MCI) with the different sectoral and regional MCIs.
- Increase awareness among key institutions and civil society on the long-term benefits to poverty reduction and to the environment from mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages into development planning.
- Incorporate the identified poverty-environment linkages into territorial development planning frameworks that are being developed by the National Territorial Planning Authority (DGODT).
- Explore the costs and benefits of broadening the scope of social programmes (such as *Solidaridad*, a conditional cash transfer programme) that act as social safety nets, in order to incorporate actions aimed at increasing the resilience of poor households to climate shocks. This may be done, for example, through a set of protocols and measures in natural resource management.
- Develop and implement capacity strengthening programmes for key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Development (MEPYD), the Single System of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN), and the National Territorial Planning Authority (DGODT).
- The project is also expected to increase the capacities of civil society partners, and support donor coordination in the relevant aspects related to poverty-environment mainstreaming.

What has been achieved to date?

- Timely completion of the Preparatory Phase.
- Design and validation of a Phase I Project Document resulting from a joint effort between the Government, the UNDP Country Office and the Regional Team.
- The Preparatory Phase produced tangible and concrete results, including:
 - a conceptual and methodological proposal for the development of a country-specific Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, which is expected to be tested and adopted during potential Phases 1 and 2
 - an institutional capacity gap analysis and mapping of key institutional actors
 - a proposal for the adaptation of the Assets-Based Approach to Poverty to incorporate the effect of climate shocks in the income-generating capacity of poor households. This is also expected to be calibrated and tested during potential Phases 1 and 2.
 - the incorporation of poverty-environment linkages in the National Development Strategy (2010–2030) across its four thematic pillars. Collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Development (MEPYD) is expected to continue through the assistance to the development of Territorial Plans during a potential Phase 1.

Lessons learned

- Engaging the UNDP Country Office is critical for the success of the project: the early establishment of a strong UNEP- UNDP Country Office partnership was key in the formulation process.
- Within the UNDP Country Office it is also critical to build a strong relationship between the Poverty and/or Governance Group and the Environment Group. It is desirable that the process be driven by the Poverty and/or Governance team, since these tend to provide key linkages with key ministries such as economy, planning, finance and social ministries.
- Flexibility in the application of the PEI programmatic approach during the Preparatory Phase proved helpful during the elaboration process of the Phase I project document.

Way forward

- At the moment, the PEI programme in the Dominican Republic has been put on hold due to the global PEI financial situation. Co-financing possibilities are being explored through other UNDP- and/or UNEP-funded programmes to carry out some of the planned activities.