



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

SANREM CRSP
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Trip Report: Mexico

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Gustavo A. Garcia-Lopez
Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis
Indiana University – Bloomington

Purpose of Trip: To participate along with the Mexico Collaborating Research Center in the completion of two IFRI-SANREM field sites.

Sites Visited: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City;
Coomunity of San Andres el Alto, San Antonino District, Oaxaca; and
Community of Pascala del Oro, San Luis Acatlán District, Guerrero

Description of Activities:

Gustavo worked with the UNAM team to make significant progress in data collection in two sites. He helped to coordinate the two field site visits, including identifying relevant communities from a database, and contacting community authorities and other relevant actors. He also helped complete the collection of social data related to both sites and half of the forest data for the Oaxaca site in accordance with the IFRI (International Forest Resources and Institutions) protocol. Gustavo helped with a pilot test of the SANREM household survey in both sites, and provided feedback to the SANREM team regarding the experience of using the survey in Mexico, including recommendations for possible improvements. Finally, Gustavo prepared an IFRI report for the Oaxaca site, produced in Spanish and sent as a draft to the community.

Observations:

- Community forest sector in Mexico is experiencing interesting changes which include the further integration into the wood production value chain, and the creation of new forestry associations promoted by the federal government under a new forestry law. The integration into the value chain was evidenced in both cases, through the establishment of community-owned sawmills and facilities for water purification and bottling. The water projects fit into the wood production value chain

because they represent a form of profit from environmental services from the forest, while at the same time they promote the conservation of a particular area of the forest (water catchment area).

- Both communities show differing levels of success in the water projects and the development of their own timber production enterprise (Community Forest Enterprise, CFE – see Antinori, 2004). In the first case the water purification and bottling business serves the capital (Oaxaca city), makes some (small) profits, and provides employment (the most important benefit for the community). In the second case, the business was started but conflicts over the management of the forest enterprise have hindered progress; the water bottles are sold only within the community and even such sales are minimal since community members prefer to use the water from their tap.
- Both communities have begun experimenting with adding value to its wood products by adapting the value chain – first to the labor of timber extraction and later the sawing. In San Andres, the community has created a new forest enterprise but has not yet acquired its own sawmill. In Pascala, the community has also created its own enterprise and acquired a sawmill and other equipment, but management conflicts, including allegations of corruption and the firing of all the previous enterprise staff and community council, have been a severe setback.
- The changes in inter-community forestry associations in Mexico were also reflected in both cases. In the first community (San Andres) the association has become less and less relevant over the years as the community’s conditions and needs have changed and the association has not kept up. In Pascala, the community has recently joined one of the new government-sponsored forest associations (‘silviculture associations’), in which the community council’s president serves as the representative. It is unclear (even to community members) what type of activities this association performs and what future benefits participation will bring.
- Budget and time constraints limited the team’s ability to complete the sites as intended. One week per research project is definitely not enough to do complete both the IFRI and SANREM components of the project, and especially not with only 4-5 people in the team. The Mexican team will go back to the field to complete the research.

List of Contacts Made

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