

SUBPROGRAMME 7: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Objective

The main objective of the subprogramme is to ensure the integration and due consideration of environmental, climate and urban management concerns and opportunities in policymaking and policy implementation.

Presentation

The interrelationship between economic growth, environmental protection, climate change, urban development and social and gender equality is increasingly important for governments and the main social stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The outcomes of a number of major conferences have had an impact on the activities under this subprogramme by connecting the global and regional agendas. In recent years, the whole set of commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), and the priorities established by the United Nations Environment Assembly, have set the framework for the subprogramme's activities in the short and medium term.

The effects of climate change, the growing demand for natural resources and the need to foster economic growth through investment will place further economic pressures on the natural endowment of Latin America and the Caribbean, and in many cases, lead to socio-environmental conflicts. The population of the region is increasingly urban and the upward trend in urbanization rates and urban sprawl will continue together with persistent challenges related to exclusion, inequality and growing insecurity. A gender perspective needs to be taken into account in the analysis of these issues, as well as in the resulting public policy proposals. At the country and city levels, there is a serious lack of urban and territorial statistics and data. The scarcity of spatially- or territorially-relevant data to track and address the SDGs presents challenges for evidence-based policy making and effective reporting and follow-up. Countries need the capacities and resources to generate information that will allow them to assess their progress towards attaining the SDG and New Urban Agenda targets and how best to reach their goals. In this context, the implementation of an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements will be a priority under the subprogramme. Improvements in the use of economic tools to evaluate environmental policies will lead to more relevant policy analysis, thus supporting a transition towards lower-carbon economies.

The international climate agenda set forth in the Paris Agreement focuses on following up on the commitments made by the countries regarding mitigation and adaptation, and on the financing and technology transfer mechanisms required to achieve these goals. ECLAC will continue to promote and support the big push for sustainability to improve the capacity of national and local governments to adopt participatory and evidence-based approaches to environmentally friendly policymaking, in line with the SDGs, the Rio Principles and the Paris Agreement. Emerging issues, such as using new technologies to improve the provision of urban services (smart cities), and linking economic growth and job creation to investments that strengthen countries' sustainable development (big push for sustainability), will also be covered by the activities under this subprogramme.

Strategy

The Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division will be responsible for the implementation of the subprogramme and will work in close coordination with other ECLAC divisions

and offices in order to mainstream environmental concerns with respect to climate change and the SDGs in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work under subprogramme will be structured around three main subject areas: 1. Policies for sustainable development and environmental performance; 2. The economics of climate change; and 3. Sustainable human settlements and inclusive cities. Therefore, the main contributions to the 2030 Agenda under the subprogramme will be related to SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15 and SDG 16.

Knowledge of the region's economic, social and environmental profiles is crucial for well-designed policies that take into account the three pillars of sustainable development. Likewise, the ability to convene and involve governments, academia, civil society and other stakeholders is also necessary to fostering participatory decision-making. In this context, implementation of the subprogramme will focus on two main types of activities: (i) assessing the advances made by countries in integrating sustainability criteria into public policies, including monitoring implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration as stated in the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, and providing support to the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development; and (ii) strengthening national capacities to design and implement public policies for the sustainability of human settlements and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the intended nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.

The principal beneficiaries under the subprogramme will be the decision-making authorities responsible for sustainable development and for human settlements. Economic and sectoral authorities are an important target group for mainstreaming sustainable development and climate change issues into areas that extend beyond environmental institutions. Other beneficiaries include regional and subregional organizations, universities and academic research centres, business sectors and NGOs. The strategy will also include creating networks with a wide range of stakeholders in the environmental sphere and the economic and social sectors related to climate change, including government institutions, civil society organizations, private sector representatives and relevant sectoral bodies.

In implementing the subprogramme, the Division will continue to hold consultations and undertake joint actions with the specialized agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system, including the resident coordinator system, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), as well as with regional and subregional development banks.

Activities

Subject area 7.1: Policies for sustainable development and environmental performance

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Intergovernmental meetings

A meeting of the countries signatory to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ad hoc expert group meetings

A meeting of experts to examine the trends, emerging issues and lessons learned in implementing policies and instruments related to sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and their implications for the mainstreaming of sustainable criteria into public policies and institutions.

2. Recurrent publications

A study on the environmental progress made towards sustainable development and/or relevant SDGs.

3. Non-recurrent publications

- (i) A study on the environmental impacts of public policies with the goal of mainstreaming environmental concerns into economic decisions.
- (ii) A study compiling best practices regarding access to information and participation in environmental matters in the light of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

4. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

- (i) Development, maintenance and updating of quantitative applications for sustainable development assessment.
- (ii) Development, maintenance and updating of a database on information on environmental matters in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

5. Advisory services

- (i) Provision of technical cooperation services to countries of the region, upon request, to assess the progress and performance towards achieving sustainable development.
- (ii) Provision of technical cooperation and secretariat services to countries of the region, upon request, regarding access to information and participation in environmental matters in the light of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
- (iii) Provision of technical cooperation services to the Government of Brazil and its institutions, upon request, in relation to assessing their performance and progress towards achieving sustainable development.

6. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and regional bodies for the development in support of training activities on sustainable development and/or environmental economics.

The ECLAC office in Brasilia will be responsible for the execution of the activities indicated in subparagraph 5 (iii).

The implementation of operational activities including advisory services, training activities and technical cooperation projects, will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Subject area 7.2: Economics of climate change

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Ad hoc expert group meetings

- (i) A meeting of experts to analyse the region's priorities regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- (ii) A side event at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to discuss the results of the climate change studies and to explore cooperation opportunities.

2. Recurrent publications

One issue of the regional overview of the implications of climate change for Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. Non-recurrent publications

- (i) A study on public policies for mitigation and/or adaptation and related co-benefits.
- (ii) A study on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of economic public policies related to climate change in order to comply with intended nationally determined contributions and other related national targets.
- (iii) A study on experiences related to the transition towards a low-carbon economy and its synergies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

- (i) Preparation, upon request, of substantive inputs related to climate change for the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.
- (ii) Development, maintenance and updating of a repository of publications, technical materials and public policies related to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. Advisory services

Provision of technical cooperation services to the countries of the region, upon their request, in areas related to public policies and climate change.

6. Training courses, seminars and workshops

- (i) Cooperation with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations and regional bodies to develop training activities on climate change issues.
- (ii) Regional course on strategies for the implementation of the intended nationally determined contributions.

7. Technical cooperation projects

During the year, it is expected that projects will be undertaken in the areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The implementation of operational activities including advisory services, training activities and the implementation of technical cooperation projects will be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

Subject area 7.3: Sustainable human settlements and inclusive cities

1. Substantive servicing of meetings

Intergovernmental meetings

A session of the General Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ad-hoc expert group meetings

A meeting of experts to promote policies for the sustainable development of human settlements resilient to climate change.

2. Non-recurrent publications

A study on the implementation of the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, including an inclusive gender perspective.

3. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

(i) Preparation, upon request, of substantive inputs related to urban issues for the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

(ii) Preparation, upon request, of substantive inputs for the General Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Advisory services

Provision of technical cooperation services to countries of the region, at their request, in areas of public policy relevant to sustainable development and urban sustainability.

5. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government and intergovernmental entities, universities, NGOs and regional and subregional organizations, at their request, in support of training activities on human settlement issues.

The implementation of operational activities, including advisory services, training activities and technical cooperation projects, will be subject to the availability of extra budgetary resources.