

SUBPROGRAMME 7: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Objective

The main objective of the subprogramme is to promote the integration and due consideration of environmental, climate and urban management concerns and opportunities in policymaking and policy implementation, with a rights-based approach and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Presentation

The subprogramme's activities address the balances and relationships among the three pillars of sustainable development from a perspective of public policy. To that end, the sustainable development impact of the main public economic, social and sectoral policies must be identified, and insofar as possible, quantified and valued in economic terms.

The subprogramme's activities will be carried out in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the outcomes of a number of major conferences that connect the global and regional agendas, namely the Paris Agreement on climate change (the first review of which will take place in 2020); the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement); 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 of the United Nations Environment Programme. Implementation of the subprogramme will be framed by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lessons learned.

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 and increasing concern about health issues. The weakness of regional growth in recent years and the profound economic recession has led many special interest groups to renew calls for environmental standards and regulations to be reduced, therefore increasing the risk of not achieving the environmental SDGs. The region's population is increasingly urban and the upward trend in urbanization rates and urban sprawl will continue together with persistent challenges related to exclusion, inequality, low quality public services and growing insecurity. A gender perspective needs to be incorporated into the analysis of these issues, as well as 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 policymaking and effective reporting and follow-up. Countries need to develop capacities and mobilize resources to generate information that will allow them to assess their progress towards attaining the targets of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, and how best to reach their objectives. In this context, the implementation of an integrated and participatory 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 an equitable 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. A growing number of countries are increasingly turning to regulatory solutions and fiscal policy, mainly in the form of carbon taxes, to address climate change. When alternative goods and services are feasible combined with a price set at the correct level, carbon pricing can be a very efficient policy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; however, it is often the subject of objections from the general public and, therefore, political economy issues must be addressed. Other 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 this 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 SDGs 11, 12, 13, 15 and 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 and a rights-based approach. 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 Escazú Agreement, 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, business community representatives and relevant sectoral bodies.

In implementing the subprogramme, the Division will continue to hold consultations and undertake joint actions with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the resident coordinator system, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), as well as the European Commission and 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 Escazú Agreement.

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 opportunities for green recovery 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 the Observatory on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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, regarding the strengthening of national capacities to assess 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 long-term, low greenhouse gas emissions development strategies and related public policies.
- (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 the political economy related to carbon pricing.

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 city and urban experts to promote policies for the sustainable development of human settlements.

2. Non-recurrent publications

- (i) A study on urban development instruments as a vehicle for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and/or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, with an inclusive gender perspective.
- (ii) A study on the experiences related to human settlements that foster sustainable and equitable economic and social development.

3. Other substantive activities

Technical materials

- (i) Development, maintenance and updating of the Latin American and Caribbean Urban and Cities Platform.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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, upon request, to support regional, national and local implementation of the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2016–2036.

5. Training courses, seminars and workshops

Cooperation with government and intergovernmental entities, universities, NGOs and regional and subregional organizations, upon request, in support of training activities and experience-sharing seminars, webinars and/or workshops, aimed at building regional capacities related to the sustainable development of human settlements.

6. Intermediate activities

Preparation of substantive inputs related to urban issues for the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

The ECLAC office in Bogotá will be responsible for the execution of the activities indicated in subparagraph 2 (ii).

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