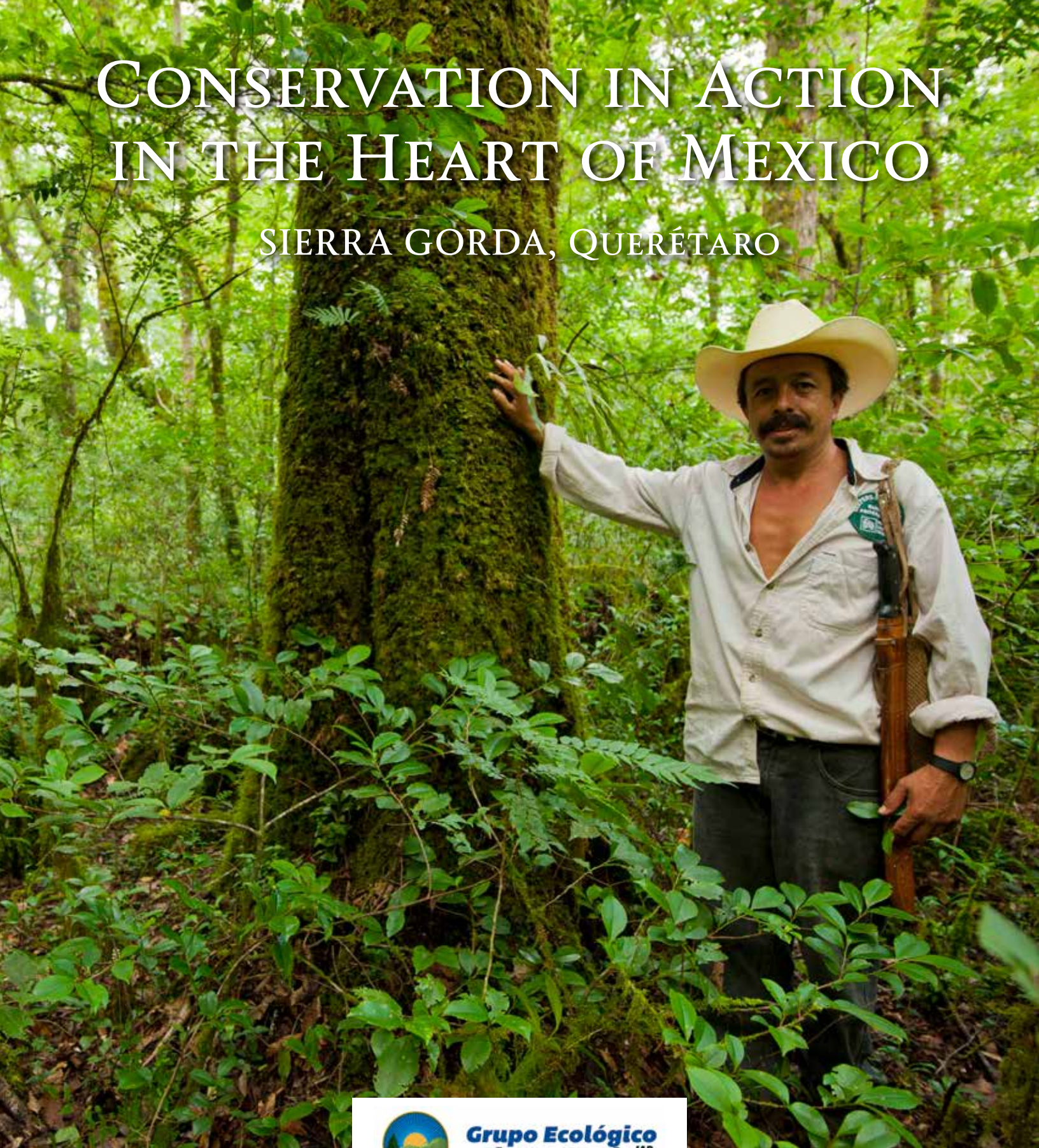


# CONSERVATION IN ACTION IN THE HEART OF MEXICO

SIERRA GORDA, QUERÉTARO



**Grupo Ecológico  
Sierra Gorda** IAP



CHAMPIONS  
OF THE EARTH



2012 Buffet Award



**CPF**  
Collaborative Partnership  
on Forests



## RE-GREENING THE PLANET, A NATURE-BASED RESPONSE

Forest loss and soil deterioration in Mexico happens for many reasons and are causing serious problems for the Mexico's natural heritage. We are headed for a chaotic and impoverished future. The rich biodiversidad treasure and sustenance of our country, is in grave danger. Loss of moisture and productivity, abuse of agrochemicals, destructive conventional techniques, agricultural producers given bad advice, flawed and obsolete public policies, dependence on external inputs and production of highly contaminated food, are all negatively impacting our soils.

Extensive cattle ranching in the forests is causing serious damage, preventing forest regeneration, aiding degradation and decline, and the grievous threat of provoked forest fires is increasing. A forest with no value for its owners is always at risk of logging.

Highly poisonous foods and soils are the bane of rural areas which are being abandoned as productivity diminishes; the water sources, lakes and springs, are drying out and the human populations are constantly growing and demanding more services.

Mexico fortunately has ranches under regenerative management that demonstrate how soil recovery can be achieved. We have several successful pioneers of regenerative soil management in Chihuahua, Coahuila, Sonora and in the Sierra Gorda, all of whom have years of experience. With determination and commitment, they are engaging technicians, producers, students and authorities at the highest levels, creating knowledge transfer through a rich educational offer that is aimed at a variety of actors.

For the past 5 years, our state of Querétaro has been operating a state carbon footprint mechanism, with new financing from a small subnational carbon fee. This tax allows us to create economic incentives for carbon capture in forest re-growth, withdrawing livestock from

extensive grazing in the forest understory, a practice that is so harmful to forest health and the wonderful process of forest regeneration, thus increasing the performance of environmental services.

We have the tools, experience, strategic alliances and support of many organizations including: the National Livestock Coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), Queretaro State Secretariat of Agricultural Development (SEDEA), Multilateral Investment Fund MIF-IADB, Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation of the Americas, and the Overbrook Foundation and World Land Trust to implement our conservation work. As pioneering experts, Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda developed a NAMA project, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, which is nationally recognized and listed in the UNFCCC Registry. "Subnational Mitigation Actions for the Regeneration of Landscapes," a provocative invitation on a sub-national level for states to implement regenerative practices for forests and soils.

Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda works to achieve our goal as a measurable response that will increase carbon capture by drawing it down to stay in biomass and the ground, and in turn capitalize the countryside by generating economic value of the natural capital and its keepers. It is time to prepare ourselves for the climate effects that already plague the territory, strengthen food production, form agricultural water and carbon sinks, as well as to dignify life in the countryside, mitigate global warming and poverty, and recover degraded soils and forests. This is how we pledge allegiance to our homeland. We want to re-green Mexico.

**Martha Isabel "Pati" Ruiz Corzo**  
Director, Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P.

## CONSERVATION ALLIANCE FOR THE SIERRA GORDA



Together with the affiliate organizations of the Sierra Gorda Alliance, Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P. (GESGIAP) leads a grassroots movement building consistent civil participation among the networks with which it works across sectors and government levels. In this way, it protects the wildlands and species of the Reserve. The Sierra Gorda Alliance includes:

- Productos y Servicios Turísticos Sierra Gorda, S.A. de C.V. Founded in 2008 as an umbrella company that aims to catalyze local micro-enterprises to higher standards within a sustainable destination criteria. Two trademarks include the local service providers: Sierra Gorda Products and Sierra Gorda Ecotours. The tourism operator helps finance conservation activities and training for partners in the region and offsets the trips to protect old forests.

- Bosque Sustentable, A.C. Founded in 2002, Bosque Sustentable, A.C. (BSAC) is an independent civil society association. The forest management experience in the Sierra Gorda communities is a result of networks built by GESGIAP since 1987. BSAC works to establish a conservation economy, restore soils by advising agricultural producers on best practices, reforest when necessary and promote natural regeneration otherwise. Training and accompaniment in holistic management, diversify micro-entrepreneurial activities, and develop ecosystem products and voluntary CO2 offsets are available.
- Joya del Hielo, A.C. Founded in 1996 as an initiative of GESGIAP's members and other conservationists, the aim of Joya del Hielo, A.C. is

to protect unique sites with high biological value by purchasing them for strict conservation. Today, it protects 8,000 hectares of temperate and tropical forests that host an important diversity of flora and fauna species and where degradation by logging, cattle ranching, and other activities has been eradicated.

- Viva Sierra Gorda. Founded in 2004 as an Earth Island Institute project, Viva Sierra Gorda is located in Berkeley, California. It is a fundraising partner organization, transferring accessible technologies and networking. It also created the platform [www.carbonneutralplanet.org](http://www.carbonneutralplanet.org) that allows companies and individuals to compensate their carbon footprint in forests and soils.

## LINES OF ACTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Sierra Gorda Earth Center - Teaching and learning best practices                      | Inter-institutional Resource Networking   | Public Relations, Fundraising and Environmental Activism                              |
|   |   |   |
| Environmental Education and Community Organizing                                      | Women and Youth Leadership  | Solid Waste Management Strategies   |
|  |  |  |
| Wildlands Conservation  | Conservation Economy – Rural Tourism Microenterprises, Carbon Offsets                 | Regenerative Agriculture and Livestock  |



|                         |                                       |   |                                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 2 ZERO HUNGER           | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION                   | 5 GENDER EQUALITY                         | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH |
| 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION |                                   |
| 13 CLIMATE ACTION       | 15 LIFE ON LAND                       | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS             |                                   |

# NAMA

Nationally  
Appropriate  
Mitigation  
Action

## Subnational Mitigation Actions for the Regeneration of Landscapes

Registered under SEMARNAT: NAMA-MX-28; UNFCCC: NS-272

Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda, I.A.P is operating a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) in Mexico called "Subnational Mitigation Actions for the Regeneration of Landscapes". This NAMA promotes regenerative actions for forest and pasture lands in 12 high-priority states of Mexico. It is rooted in the successful Carbon Compensation Mechanism of the State of Querétaro, in which the government assigns a portion of the fees for annual license plate renewal to a special fund that supports projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the state and increase carbon capture in its forests. As a part of the NAMA, GESG and the state of Querétaro are promoting the development of similar mechanisms in other states. The implementation of planned grazing and other regenerative practices was successfully begun on pilot ranches in Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Chihuahua and Sonora, and we are promoting replication in other states. The NAMA also regenerates forests by eliminating extensive livestock grazing, forest fires and logging with incentives of payments for ecosystem services to participating landowners. These actions lead to a significant reduction in CO2 emissions from forest degradation and increase carbon inventories through natural

forest regeneration.

### Contribution to Mexico's NDC

The NAMA contributes to mitigation and adaptation goals of Mexico's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. We estimate that the regeneration of pasture lands will have a net GHG impact of -2.9 MtCO2e/year in 2030, which represents 52% of the theoretical planned grazing potential estimated by the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC) and 41% of the goal of -7 MtCO2e for the entire agricultural sector in 2030. The subnational actions for forest regeneration are projected to have a GHG impact of -694,000 tCO2e/year in 2030. The impacts of the NAMA have been assessed utilizing guidance documents of the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) and methods of IPCC 2006 and have been subjected to independent external review.



### Impacts for Sustainable Development

The NAMA's subnational actions contribute to sustainable development in Mexico. They provide rural forest and pasture owners new forms of income for environmental services, increase the productivity of livestock ranches, create hydrological ecosystem services, stimulate biodiversity and aid carbon sequestration, all of which greatly benefit society. In the livestock subsector, we estimate a 53% increase of income for the participating ranches and an increase of environmental services worth \$47 million USD per year. In the forest sector, we project economic and environmental returns worth \$20 million USD per year.

### Transformational Change

The NAMA seeks fundamental and sustained change for Mexico's forest sector and livestock grazing sub-sector in order to contribute to a zero-carbon society in agreement with the Paris Accord, as well as other

national and international goals for sustainable development. Reinforcing the subnational actions, the NAMA also promotes a regenerative reorientation of the system of government programs, technical support, incentives and financial mechanisms in the affected sectors. We are also forming a critical mass of regenerative educators, technicians, officials, and legislators who are capable of significant intervention at many levels. All of the above is paired with awareness campaigns geared towards the general public in principal cities of participating states regarding climate emergency awareness and voluntary mitigation of carbon footprints.

### Join the Fight!

For more information about how your state or municipal government can join the NAMA and promote regenerative transformation of natural capital in Mexico, please contact Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda.

SIERRA GORDA EARTH CENTER  
Teaching and learning best practices



KEYLINE DESIGN - HYDROLOGICAL RECHARGE



HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT TRAINING



BIOINTENSIVE AGRICULTURE, NO CHEMICALS



COURSES AND WORKSHOPS WITH EXPERTS

## THE FLAVOR TRAIL



High mountain cuisine at the roadside restaurants along the scenic route of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, Querétaro, México.



**LAS MANZANITAS**

Seasonal fresh squeezed apple juice from the orchard, edible wild mushrooms as the rains begin, and a handmade spicy hot sauce in a molcajete, are the favorites you shouldn't miss by this native chef.



**COMEDOR CONCHITA**

Seasonal dishes, among the best handmade corn tortillas and tasty taco fillings, located on the road to the reservoir in the Magic Town of Jalpan de Serra.



**LAS ORQUÍDEAS**

Typical dishes like "cecina" which is smoked meat on coals, or the atypical egg grilled between banana leaves and beans in broth with a spicy cheese sauce, are some of the delights of this traditional kitchen run by Doña Oralia.

## ECO-LODGE NETWORK



Each local owner and operator receives you with genuine warmth and hospitality and we collaborate with them to ensure an unforgettable experience and quality customer service. Groups and families can explore nature and visit them safely, as they explore the cliffs and gorges with the very people who care for and know most about the Sierra Gorda.



**CABAÑAS CENTRO TIERRA**

The cabins are located in the Magical Town of Jalpan de Serra, and are only 1.5km from the historical center and 250m from the Jalpan Reservoir (Ramsar Site). We have private cabins with capacity for families or larger groups.



**RINCÓN DE OJO DE AGUA**

These charismatic cabins are ideal for visiting the Cave of Swallows (Sótano de las Golondrinas) at sunrise, a karst sinkhole. They are surrounded by pine and oak forests and are perfect for a family escape to nature.



**LA TRINIDAD**

Visit the small community with the separate cabin area located to the west of Xilitla, in the most well-preserved cloud forest in the region. The local experts guide you through different trails and serve meals in the private cabin kitchen for visitors. After visiting the famous Edward James attractions in Xilitla, take an hour drive up the mountain to an inimitable forest hideaway.

## TOURS FOR FAMILIES AND GROUPS

### Sierra Gorda Nature

It's your opportunity to discover the secrets of the most eco-diverse natural protected area in Mexico, aided by our expert local guides. Swim in crystalline rivers, bird watch at dawn and walk through the jungles and cloud forests of the Sierra Gorda, this tour seeks to bring you as close as possible to nature and to enjoy the regional dishes along the Flavor Trail.



*Illustration of Ecotours in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. Artist: Aslam*

### Trails and Culture of the Sierra Gorda

This is a travel experience to enjoy with the family, as you hike through the oak and sweet-gum forests that include stops at the most emblematic restaurants of the Flavor Trail. On this tour will awaken your senses with the sounds of the forest and the savor the menu that only the Flavor Trail can offer.



 [sierragordaecotours.com](http://sierragordaecotours.com)

 [Sierra Gorda Ecotours](https://www.facebook.com/SierraGordaEcotours)

 [sierragorda.ecotours](https://www.instagram.com/sierragorda.ecotours)



HOW TO HELP

Reduce your personal and work travel & calculate your CO<sub>2</sub> footprint at **carbonneutralplanet.org**

Offset your footprint to regenerate forests, soils and biodiversity in Sierra Gorda.

GLOBALGIVING.COM



SIERRAGORDA.NET



Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda IAP



Protecting Wild Cat Habitat



Support Young Environmental Leaders in Mexico



Train Local Brigades to Fight Forest Fires in MX

DONORS



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