



conservation agreements private partnership platform

# GUATEMALA - Helping a village manage their forest concession

ACTIVE

until Aug. 2018

Nestled inside of Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve is Uaxactún, a village of 800 people with more than 100 years of history depending on natural resources, namely palm trees. Harvesting and selling of "xate," or the leaves from three species of palm tree, accounts for over 60 percent of income for Uaxactún families.

In 2000, the government issued a 25-year, 83,558-hectare forest concession to Uaxactún's community organization, the Organization, Management and Conservation Civil Society (OMYC). Despite proper management, a low rate of extraction and Forest Stewardship Council certification, OMYC had accrued a US\$ 287,500 debt by 2009, and deforestation, fires and overexploitation of xate palm threatened the concession's status. In 2010, a "conservation agreement" was signed to help strengthen the capacity of OMYC and support the village to meet its commitments under the forest concession contract and, at the same time, improve livelihoods.

## What is a "conservation agreement"?

It is a deal between a community and a group or person funding a conservation project. In exchange for making specific conservation commitments, communities receive benefits from the funder.

### THE COMMUNITY AGREES TO:

- Territorial planning in agriculture polygon inside forest concession
- Assist farmers to prevent forest fires
- Conduct at least 4 patrols per month in key places inside the forest concession
- Increase the wild population of xate palm (3 species) by 20,000-25,000 per year
- Harvest xate palm based on quality, not quantity
- Monitor that xate palm is only harvested at a quality rate of at least 80%
- Hire an administrative manager to support OMYC

### IN RETURN FOR:

- Salaries for 4 patrollers a year
- Salaries for fire prevention committee, for a period of 4 months each year
- Partial salaries for teachers
- Wages to plant xate to enrich the wild population
- Incentive for each palm harvested with quality criteria, to the harvester man (xatero) and the person in selection
- Partial salary for an administrative manager to support OMYC

### INVESTMENT

CAPPP: \$171,135

Conservation International: \$18,672

Government: \$18,000

Community organization: \$181,899

WCS: \$217,264

Other: \$80,038

### IMPLEMENTER

**Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Guatemala** formed the relationship with the Uaxactún community 20 years ago and supported them during the forest concession approval process and their request for a new school.

### PARTNERS

**Organization, Management and Conservation Civil Society**

- Community organization that manages the forest concession

**National Protected Areas Council**

- Government entity in charge of protected areas and biodiversity, as well as monitoring and approving all processes of the conservation agreements

**Community Development Council and Mayor**

- Local authorities of Uaxactún



## RESULTS TO DATE

**266** patrols conducted

**248,400** palm trees planted

**82,000** hectares remain forested

- All xate harvested in the community is now directly sold by OMYC, not through middlemen
- OMYC paid its debt in full in December 2013 and now has solvency
- Territorial planning for agriculture polygon inside forest concession was complete

## MONITORING

On an annual or biennial basis, the Center of Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Protected Areas Council (CEMEC) uses satellite images to evaluate impact deforestation and fires and generate reports. On an annual basis, a four-person Control and Surveillance Committee patrols the forest and uses SMART software to generate reports that are submitted to CEMEC.

Xate palm harvested and stored in the OMYC warehouse is measured monthly for quality and must meet the minimum of 80 percent required by law.

During each burning season, a group of people is hired to assist farmers in agriculture activities. When the season is finished, a report documents how many farmers were active, where and when they burned, and how many followed fire prevention procedures.

## PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The improvement of xate palm harvesting with quality practices benefits directly the value chain and strengthened OMYC as an enterprise. With exports to the United States and other countries, xate palm generates 60 percent of income for families in Uaxactún.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

WCS Guatemala will continue to support OMYC and Uaxactún as they look to submit their own proposals for more funding to maintain the conservation agreements. The results of the conservation agreement are powerful evidence for Uaxactún to request a forest concession contract renewal in 2025 for another 25 years.



## Contact

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