



# RED LAFICA

Red Latinoamericana de Fiscalización  
y Cumplimiento Ambiental



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SMA Files; Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition of Ecuador; MARN; PROFEPA; MADES; OEFA; Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic ; GIZ; IDB and SERNATUR

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# REDLAFICA

## VISION

**Contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens of Latin America with a healthy environment, through the generation of a culture of environmental compliance and the exercise of efficient and effective control by the member countries of the Network.**

## MISSION

**Promote, develop and facilitate the implementation of best practices in environmental enforcement and compliance of the member countries through peer dialogue and collaborative commitment, in such a way that they allow the citizens of Latin America to live in a healthy environment, promoting a culture of respect and environmental compliance, thus contributing to the well-being and sustainable development of the region.**

# INTRODUCTION

During 2023, the Latin American Network for Environmental Control and Compliance (Redlafica- Red Latinoamericana de Fiscalización y Cumplimiento Ambiental) has gone through a process of review, adjustments and planning of the Strategic Plan of the Network committed for the period 2022-2024, and which was established in the Santo Domingo 2022 Agreement; however, without leaving aside the common objective that brings together all the entities that make up the Network and that is aimed at protecting the environment and people's health.


Along with the above, we have great news to highlight this year and it is the official entry of a new member country to Redlafica, through the incorporation of the Ministry of Environment of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, Secretary of State of the Executive Branch of this nation, responsible for the formulation, execution, supervision, evaluation and protection of the environment and sustainable development in this country. In this way, today our Network has a total of 16 Member States, and we have set ourselves the great challenge of incorporating new member countries during 2024.

With this introduction, we invite you, through this fifth edition of Redlafica's annual magazine, to learn about very

interesting projects from Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and the Dominican Republic, members of the Network who did not want to be absent in this new issue.

And one of the first articles that you will be able to review is the experience of the Superintendency of the Environment of Chile, an entity that has promoted the exchange of experiences in environmental management with international organizations, and that in the context of the Pro Tempore presidency of the Network, has deployed an agenda within the framework of the action plan promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and through the agenda that is being developed with the collaboration projects with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ Peru).

The second article is by the Ministry of the Environment, Water and Ecological Transition of Ecuador, a country that shares its experience in the supervision and control of legal mining activities in the country, where they have adopted strategies to eradicate illegal mining and strengthen inter-institutional cooperation with the objective of continuing to build a green and productive Ecuador.

A woodpecker with a vibrant red head and a black body is perched on a tree trunk. The bird is facing right, with its long, pointed beak directed upwards. The tree bark is rough and textured, with some moss or lichen visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

Then, we will be able to learn how El Salvador has modernized its Environmental Assessment System and the tools for landscape planning, for the benefit of ecosystems and communities. Modernization that has been accompanied by training and certifications of those who work in environmental impact analysis and ecological assessments of this nation.

*“Environmental Audits in Mexico”*, is the article with which the North American country invites us to learn more about what the process of implementing Environmental Audits (AA- Auditorías Ambientales) has been like, which are conducted through the National Environmental Audit Program (PNAA- Programa Nacional de Auditoría Ambiental) and whose responsibility is the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPa), which has a double function: on the one hand, sanctioning environmental offenders and, on the other hand, supporting environmental volunteers.

A fifth article is in charge of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Paraguay, an entity that leads us towards a view of sustainable

development, where this South American nation has assumed international commitments to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, placing them on the path of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. Thus, Paraguay is promoting specific actions and criteria in public policies that promote and guarantee the conservation and protection of the natural environment and social and economic equity.

For its part, the Environmental Evaluation and Supervision Organization (OEFA- Organismo de Evaluación y Fiscalización Ambiental) of Peru shares with us a sixth note, highlighting an environmental problem that they registered in the town of Lamas, where their community was exposed to the perception of bad odors coming from a property of more than 100 hectares, intended for the industrial raising of pigs and egg-laying birds, and whose auditable unit only had a license for raising pigs. This problem activated the toolbox of the Peruvian inspector, an entity that imposed 21 precautionary measures and a subsequent fine on the owner of this project. Today, the community of Lamas has once again positioned itself as one of the best tourist towns in Peru, thanks to the actions of the OEFA.

*“Guide for the Preparation of Atmospheric Emissions Inventories. “Case of Dominican Republic,”* is the seventh article that the Central American country shares with us, and whose objective of this Guide is to standardize the process of preparing an inventory of atmospheric emissions with the intention of facilitating the formulation, execution and monitoring of emissions reduction strategies. pollution and, in turn, strengthen air quality monitoring systems for the countries of the region.

And as we mentioned at the beginning of this editorial, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ Peru) did not want to be unaware of this release and invites us to review an opinion article on the triangular cooperation project called: “Strengthening environmental oversight and compliance by the OEFA and the SMA” (2022- 2024). Project that is executed with the support of German development cooperation, implemented by GIZ, with financing from the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany.

And a second Opinion article from the IDB, which through its ESG Environmental and Social Solutions Unit, shows us how they are Strengthening National

Environmental and Social Licensing and Supervision Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, through a plan of action that includes 5 thematic axes and that they are developing with Redlafica and Redlaseia.

Finally, and now closing this introduction to our annual magazine, I want to thank the work, collaboration and participation of all those who have accompanied us in this third consecutive period of the SMA as Pro Tempore 2023 presidency of Redlafica, and from now on, I invite you to continue promoting the work, activities and exchange of experiences conducted by our network, whose purpose is to create synergies between all member countries with the objective of promoting environmental compliance in the region, along with identifying improvements in our inspection processes.



*An affectionate greeting*

**MARIE CLAUDE PLUMER BODIN**

Pro Tempore President Redlafica 2023

and Superintendent of the Environment (SMA) of Chile

## Mexico

### Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection – Profepa

It is the decentralized administrative body of the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources. Its main task is to increase the levels of compliance with environmental regulations in order to contribute to sustainable development and enforce environmental laws.

## Guatemala

### Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources – MARN

Public sector entity in charge of protecting natural systems that develop and sustain life in all its manifestations and expressions, fostering a culture of respect and harmony with nature and protecting, preserving, and rationally using natural resources in order to achieve transgenerational development.

## El Salvador

### Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources – MARN

Entity in charge of recovering the Salvadoran environmental strategic environment and reducing socio-environmental risks through the promotion of a vigorous civic culture and inter-institutional coordination, to face the effects of climate change and reducing environmental degradation.

## Costa Rica

### National Environmental Technical Secretary – Setena

Decentralized body of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, whose main purpose is to harmonize the environmental impact of production processes, as well as analyze and resolve environmental impact assessments.

## Peru

### Environmental Assessment and Enforcement Agency – OEFA

Entity attached to the Ministry of the Environment, in charge of promoting compliance and environmental enforcement to ensure the proper balance between private investment in economic activities and environmental protection. In addition, it is the governing body of the Notional System of Environmental Assessment and Enforcement – Sinefa.

## Chile

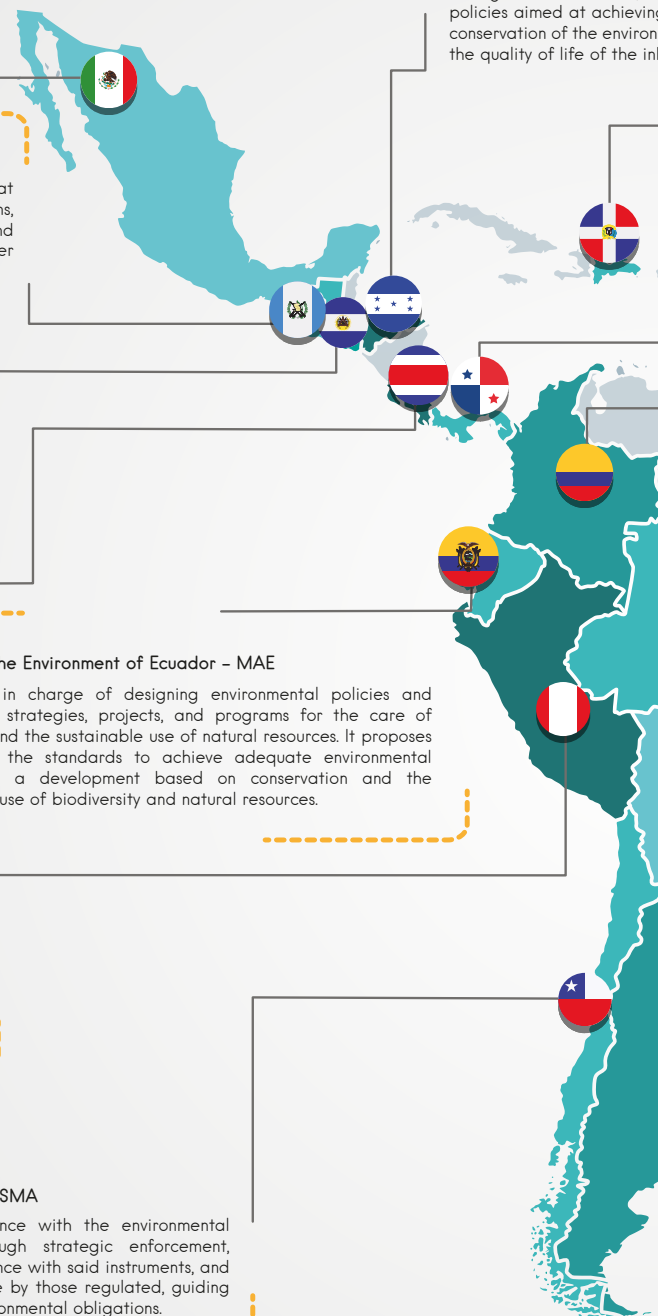
### Superintendency of the Environment – SMA

Entity in charge of ensuring compliance with the environmental regulations of its competence through strategic enforcement, applying sanctions against non-compliance with said instruments, and promoting and encouraging compliance by those regulated, guiding them in the understanding of their environmental obligations.

## Honduras

### Secretariat of Natural Resources

Government institution responsible for the formulation, coordination, and implementation of policies aimed at achieving the conservation of the environment and the quality of life of the population.





# MEMBERS

## Resources and Environment – MiAmbiente+

Responsible for promoting sustainable development, coordination, execution, and evaluation of public policies for the preservation of natural resources and the environment and that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of inhabitants.

## Dominican Republic

### Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

Entity in charge of preparing, executing, and supervising national policies on the environment and natural resources, promoting, and stimulating activities for their preservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use.

## Panama

### Ministry of Environment – MiAmbiente

Entity in charge of the formulation, application and execution of an environmental policy that promotes the valuation, protection, conservation and recovery of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources, as well as ensuring the ordering of environmental management in the public and private sectors and their integration in social and economic objectives that promote sustainable human development.

## Colombia

### National Authority of Environmental Licenses –ANLA

It is the authority in charge of ensuring that projects, works or activities subject to environmental licensing, permits or procedures comply with environmental regulations, in such a way that they contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

## Brazil

### Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources – IBAMA

Entity with jurisdiction at the federal level in charge of protecting the environment, guaranteeing environmental quality, and ensuring sustainability in the use of natural resources through the granting of environmental licenses, control of environmental quality, authorization of the use of natural resources and environmental enforcement.

## Bolivia

### Ministry of the Environment and Water – MMAyA

State entity in charge of promoting equitable, reciprocal development in harmony with the environment through the integral management of water resources, access to drinking water and sanitation, irrigation for food security and the integral management of the environment and life systems.

## Paraguay

### Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development – MADES

Entity in charge of the formulation of policies and the coordination, supervision and execution of environmental actions, plans, programs, and projects framed in the National Development Plan referring to the preservation, conservation, rearrangement, and management of natural resources.

## Uruguay

### Ministry of the Environment

The Ministry of the Environment is the Secretary of State of the Executive Branch of Uruguay responsible for the formulation, execution, supervision, evaluation and protection of the environment and sustainable development. The Ministry of the Environment of Uruguay formalizes its entry into REDLAFICA starting in 2023.

## Argentina

### Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development – MAYDS

Governing body and executor of plans and actions related to environmental policy, its sustainable development, the rational use of natural resources, the fight against climate change, as well as the enforcement, inspection, and prevention of pollution.





CHILE

# ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

SMA

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By: Daniela Peña, Head of the Strategic Management Office of the SMA of Chile and Focal Point for Redlifica , and Luis Pérez, journalist Communications Office.

Torres del Paine, Chile.

Image credits: SERNATUR

# SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF CHILE PROMOTES EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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This, in the context of the Pro Tempore presidency of the Latin American Network for Environmental Control and Compliance (REDLAFICA) that the SMA directs until 2025 and, where during this period, the Institution is deploying an international agenda, mainly, within the framework of the plan of action promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and through the agenda that is being developed with the collaboration projects with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ Peru).

One of the first activities that activated the REDLAFICA 2023 agenda was conducted on June 16th through an extraordinary work session with all the Focal Points designated by the member countries of the Entity, with the objective of reviewing the progress of the Strategic Plan committed for the period 2022-2024 and the IDB Action Plan with REDLAFICA, which is part of the Regional Dialogues on Environmental and Social Licensing and Supervision Policy (DRP- Diálogos Regionales de Política de Licenciamiento y Fiscalización Ambiental y Social).

The meeting began with the presentation of the IDB, where the progress of the activities of the six thematic axes of action established in the IDB Action Plan with REDLAFICA was addressed, aimed at improving environmental and social practices in the national licensing and inspection systems through good international practices such as IDB policies; conducting thematic workshops in selected countries; knowledge sharing between agencies; among other axes.

Then, the SMA explained the coordination that it is leading as Pro Tempore Presidency of the Network. Here, the strategic objectives defined in the Strategic Plan of the Organization committed for the period 2022-2024 were reviewed, aimed at contributing to the improvement of environment quality of the region in prioritized components; promote a culture of environmental compliance through efficient and effective oversight; and ensure the articulation and sustainability of the Network.

US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), REDLAFICA and the IDB in Denver, Colorado (United States), which took place between July 10th and 14th.



**Photo 1: Pro Tempore Presidency convened an extraordinary work session with REDLAFICA focal points**

Training that was aimed at professionals from environmental oversight entities from Mexico, El Salvador, Peru, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Chile - countries that are part of REDLAFICA - with the objective of exchanging knowledge of best sampling practices and to address environmental emergencies.

During the instance, training was conducted for sampling management, as well as in collecting air, soil and water samples, from the National Enforcement Investigation Center (NEIC).

August was a month full of visits from international authorities and enriching experiences in the exchange of knowledge on environmental sanctions and oversight. Between the 14th and 17th, managers and professionals from the Environmental Assessment and En-

forcement Agency (OEFA- Organismo de Evaluación y Fiscalización Ambiental) of Peru, led by its president, Johnny Marchán, and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GIZ), with director Lisseth Díaz, visited the SMA in the context of the Triangular Cooperation Project (PyCTr), called 'Technical, technological and knowledge management strengthening to improve Environmental Control and Compliance'. Agenda, considered different meetings and field activities led by SMA officials.

Also, in August, Superintendent Plumer received the Attorney General of the Republic of Colombia, Margarita Cabello, who serves as the supreme director of the Public Ministry of her country, to continue with the collaborative reinforcement between international entities, as well as strengthen the tools related

to environmental management.

In addition, a delegation of seven officials from the SMA traveled to Peru to participate in different work meetings and technical visits, together with the Environmental Assessment and Enforcement Agency (OEFA). This, within the framework of the second part of the Triangular Cooperation Project between the SMA-OEFA-GIZ, which seeks to promote the exchange of experiences, in relation to tools and methodologies applied to environmental inspection and compliance.

And during the month of September, the Superintendent of the Environment and President Pro Tempore REDLAFICA, Marie Claude Plumer, received the leading social specialist from the Environmental and Social Solutions Unit of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Juan Martínez, and a delegation

of the international entity, within the framework of the Strengthening of National Environmental and Social Licensing and Supervision Systems.

The work agenda that was developed between September 5th and 7th had as its starting point a bilateral meeting between both organizations where the lines of action being deployed by the IDB in conjunction with REDLAFICA were reviewed, and the coordination, tentative agenda and logistics of the next Regional Dialogue that the IDB will hold in Mexico during the month of November analyzed, an instance where the Latin American network also holds its annual meeting. The first day ended with a virtual meeting with the focal points of the network member countries who were presented with a status of progress of the plan and upcoming challenges were reviewed.



**Photo 2: SMA delegation participates in technical training organized by the US Environmental Protection Agency, REDLAFICA and IDB**

During the second day, the agenda continued with a working meeting with the Latin American Network of Environmental Impact Assessment Systems (REDLASEIA- Red Latinoamericana de Sistemas de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental) and which included the participation of the Executive Director of the Environmental Assessment Service (SEA- Servicio de Evaluación Ambiental) of Chile, Valentina Durán , together with representatives of the Ministry of the Environment (MMA- Ministerio del Medio Ambiente) of Chile and Argentina, the latter nation presides over REDLASEIA this year. Here, the credentials of each organization were presented, as well as the functioning of REDLASEIA and SEA, and the challenges and opportunities for collaboration between all the attending organizations. Wednesday's itinerary ended with a meeting at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) based in Santiago.

At the end of the agenda of activities, representatives of the SMA, REDLAFICA and the IDB delegation attended a field visit to a Santiago Solar Photovoltaic Project operated by the company Andes Mining & Energy (AME), and which is in the commune Til Til in the Metropolitan Region where they were able to learn about its facilities and operation.

*"It is very relevant to continue promoting the work, activities and exchange of experiences conducted by our network, which aim to create synergies between all member countries in order to promote environmental compliance in the region, along with identifying improvements in our inspection processes,"* explained the Pro Tempore President of REDLAFICA and Superintendent of the Environment of Chile, Marie Claude Plumer.



**Photo 3: Superintendent Plumer receives a delegation from the Inter-American Development Bank in Santiago**



Atacama Desert, Chile.



ECUADOR

# MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, WATER, AND ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF ECUADOR (MAE)

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By: Ministry of the  
Environment, Water, and  
Ecological Transition.

Quillota Lagoon, Ecuador.



# TRANSBOUNDARY IMPACTS OF ECUADOR'S MINING INDUSTRY

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Historically, in Ecuador, mining has been concentrated in the southern part of the country, where the most productive areas were Zaruma and Portovelo in the province of El Oro. The boom in this activity began in 1980 due to the rise in gold prices. Artisanal mining gained momentum with the discovery of deposits in the Ponce Enríquez area, where extraction was conducted in a rudimentary manner through gold recovery via amalgamation, lacking proper planning and technology.

As this activity grew, the legal framework also evolved to ensure that mining became a responsible industry, safeguarding water sources and adhering to environmental management based on standards and best practices.

Ecuador has specific laws for mining activities dating back to 1830, with the first law promoting mining development, which later in 1930 became the initial Mining Law. Furthermore, in 1972, the first Water Law was enacted, and in 2008, the rights of Nature were recognized in the Constitution. Currently, there are environmental regulations in place, such as the Organic Environmental Code and its Regulation, along with specific environmental regulations for the mining industry, the Environmental Regulation for Mining Activities.

The Ministry of the Environment, Water, and Ecological Transition, as the leading entity in environmental matters, regulates and oversees the environmental management of artisanal, small, medium, and large-scale mining projects and concessions, both metallic and non-metallic, across all phases (initial and advanced exploration, exploitation, beneficiation, processing, smelting, refining, and mine closure).

Through the environmental regularization process, mining titleholders obtain the corresponding Environmental Administrative Authorization, enabling them to conduct mining activities legally. This establishes a responsibility and obligation for operators to comply with current environmental regulations, aiming to reduce and mitigate environmental impacts by implementing and adhering to specific measures outlined in the approved environmental management plan and obligations of the granted Environmental Administrative Authorization.

Upon identifying non-compliance with environmental regulations, respective measures are taken, including suspending mining activities in cases of serious violations, and requiring mining titleholders to take immediate and effective corrective actions to address

identified issues. The Environmental Authority closely monitors the implementation process of these corrective measures to ensure their effectiveness.

With this aim and to ensure favorable outcomes, 559 control and monitoring inspections have been conducted on mining concessions nationwide from 2021 to present. Additionally, 200 mining concessions have been suspended due to non-compliance with environmental regulations.

On the other hand, illegal mining is a criminal offense classified in the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code, fostering other related crimes such as money laundering, weapon use, and drug trafficking. This practice hampers the development of responsible and legal mining, creating significant sources of pollution that impact Ecuador's natural heritage.

Associated with illegal mining activities are direct discharges of mine water, improper handling of tailings and waste heaps, inadequate management

of common and hazardous waste, surface subsidence due to instability of the rock mass in underground mining, lack of rehabilitation and reclamation of intervened areas, absence of closure of underground workings, unregulated mining activities by the Sectorial Ministry, improper use and handling of chemicals (cyanide), clearing of native vegetation, unlined and contaminated sedimentation ponds without treatment, and alteration of river courses. These findings directly affect water resources, soil, biodiversity, and lead to social conflicts due to community dissatisfaction.

In the following images, the destruction of native vegetation caused by illegal mining in various locations in Ecuador over the years is evident.

As a member of the "Special Commission for the Control of Illegal Mining" (CECMI) established in 2011, this governmental body is responsible for identifying findings or environmental impacts generated by the development of this illegal activity.

**Image 1: Direct impact on biodiversity in the San Lorenzo Sector, Orellana province.**



**\*Photograph 1: San Lorenzo Sector, Orellana (September 2023)**



**\*Photograph 2: Impact on water bodies**



Image 2. Illegal mining in the Yutzupino Sector causing direct impact on water and soil resources (2022)

Through inspections and reports, 745 points (x, y coordinates) of illegal mining have been identified so far, mainly concentrated in 5 areas (Napo, Orellana, Cotopaxi, Esmeraldas, and Azuay). Coordinated actions among all competent governmental institutions are required to achieve impactful results in operations.

Thus, since 2022, the MAATE has participated in 5 inter-institutional operations (Manatí I, II, and III, Palo Quemado, and sectors of San Lorenzo, San Marcos, and Punino Alto), resulting in actions taken at some points that have allowed for the implementation of environmental measures for recovery and rehabilitation in affected areas, as well as initiating administrative actions and legal proceedings through the State Prosecutor's Office.

Considering the significant environmental and social impact of illegal mining, in January 2023, the National Government, through the National Secretariat of Public Security and State, declared illegal mining as a threat to the integral security of the State and indicated its "support" for legal mining. This declara-

tion marks the beginning, allowing the State to undertake a series of measures to combat illegal mining, including increased budget allocation, intensified on-site operations, and awareness campaigns targeting the population. Furthermore, it facilitates better coordination among competent institutions, such as the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Regulatory and Control Agency, law enforcement, and our agency that collects information about environmental impact to support processes in the Prosecutor's Office.

The Ministry of the Environment, Water, and Ecological Transition is fully committed to environmental protection and conservation. We will continue to oversee and control legal mining activities in the country, implementing strategies to eradicate illegal mining and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation with the aim of furthering the development of a green and productive Ecuador.



EL SALVADOR

# MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MARN

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By: Communications and Environmental  
Education Management, Ministry of the  
Environment of El Salvador.

Generic photograph of El Salvador.

# EL SALVADOR MODERNIZES ITS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM AND TOOLS FOR LANDSCAPE PLANNING

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The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, Fernando López, has submitted important advances to continue promoting sustainable development and ensure the application of environmental oversight tools focused on landscape planning, for the benefit of ecosystems and communities.



**Photo 1:** The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, Fernando López, presented the landscape planning tools.

With the modernization of its Environmental Assessment System, our partner El Salvador takes a momentous step by including a new environmental categorization methodology, based on three indicators, which will help classify projects according to their environmental footprint, in compliance with the Environmental Law From El Salvador:

- **Nature and Size of the Activity Index:** evaluates the physical and operational dimensions of a project, considering its environmental risk.
- **Environmental Relevance Index:** measures the environmental importance of the site where the project is developed.
- **Environmental Impact Potential Index:** identifies possible environmental impacts on biotic, abiotic and socio-environmental elements of the environment.

Additionally, the update includes training and certification for those working on environmental impact analysis and ecological assessments. The assessments and documents will be available to environmental service providers and the general public. This modernization was supported by the USAID Economic Competitiveness Project, implemented by The Palladium Group.

Another example of El Salvador's commitment to continue promoting economic development, in harmony with the environment and investment, are the environmental policy instruments to ac-



Photo 2: The presentation event was attended by key actors from the different sectors of the country related to this topic.

celerate the goals and monitoring of the restoration of ecosystems and landscapes.

With support from the World Resources Institute (WRI), as part of the 20x20 Initiative and the Landscape Policy Accelerator, this update includes:

- **Ecosystem Services Regeneration Strategy:** encourages the restoration of essential services provided by ecosystems.
- **Metric and Environmental Compensation Scheme:** seeks a net gain in ecosystem services by recovering affected ecosystems.
- **Ecosystem Restoration and Productive Landscapes Program:** promotes sustainable and productive landscapes.
- **Environmental Incentives and Disincentives Program:** aligns economic interests with the conservation and restoration of the environment.

An item worth to highlight is the articulation of efforts with strategic allies, which is why spaces for discussion are generated to join efforts in the implementation of these instruments with entities such as the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the German Cooperation with GIZ, the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF-Corporación Andina de Fomento), Salvadoran Coffee Council, Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism, BANDESAL and Banco Hipotecario, among others.

Thus, El Salvador is moving towards a more sustainable and resilient development, taking care of its natural environment and planning a promising future.



Generic photograph of El Salvador.




 MEXICO

# FEDERAL ATTORNEY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## PROFEPA

By: Pedro Joaquín Gutiérrez Yurrita<sup>a</sup>;  
Enrique Castañeda Sánchez<sup>b</sup>;  
Maxime Le Bail, Isaac Quiroz Madrazo,  
Armando Montoya Figueroa and  
Luis Antonio Chang Wong<sup>c</sup>



Metropolitan Cathedral, Mexico.



# ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS IN MEXICO

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Environmental Audits (AA) emerged on the scene of environmental law in the 1960s as a measure by governments to increase compliance with environmental standards, without resorting to the traditional right of command-control, which entails so much burden on the treasury. The company voluntarily reviewed its internal processes and measured the negative environmental impacts in its surroundings with the aim of correcting them and returning to operating under environmental regulations. These internal review studies of companies to assess their conformity with standards became known as environmental reviews, quality assessment and control studies, environmental diagnostic studies, compliance audit and, finally, environmental audit<sup>1</sup>.

During the consolidation of the AA as a methodological study of a company's operations, many administrators prepared expert reports based on their experience as accountants of a company, confusing a financial audit with an environmental one, which generated uncertainty about what is important: 1- the company's quality management system; 2- how to improve your ecological performance. The result of these erratic beginnings led the authorities to accredit environmental auditors<sup>2</sup>.

In Mexico, it was not until the reform of the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection (LGEE-PA- Ley General de Equilibrio Ecológico y Protección al Ambiente) on December 13, 1996 that the terms "Self-regulation" and "Environmental Audits" were introduced into the legislation. The definition of AA was as follows : «Methodological examination of a company's processes with respect to pollution and environmental risk, compliance with applicable regulations, international parameters and good operating and engineering practices, including Self-regulation to determine its Environmental Performance based on the requirements established in the Terms of Reference, and, where appropriate, the preventive and corrective measures required to protect the environment.

Mexico focuses the AA on a **methodological examination of the processes of a facility** with the main objective of improving its environmental performance, with a purely preventive nature . The AA is useful for all types of companies in size (Figure 1) as well as in the productive sector (Figure 2), although the primary sector is poorly represented.

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<sup>1</sup> General Director of Planning and Promotion of Audits, Federal Attorney General's Office for Environmental Protection (Mexico).

<sup>2</sup> Deputy Attorney for Environmental Audit, Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (Mexico).

<sup>3</sup> Area Directors, Deputy Attorney General's Office for Environmental Audit, Federal Attorney General's Office for Environmental Protection (Mexico).

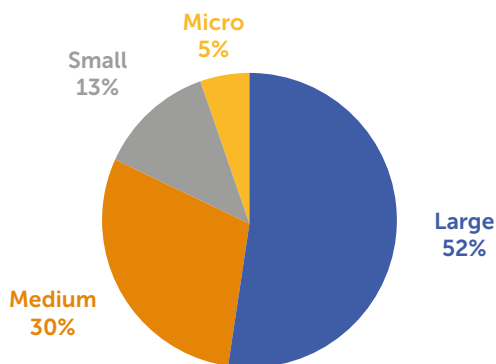


Figure 1. Facilities registered in the National Environmental Audit Program in Mexico, by staff and productive size (%) in 2022.

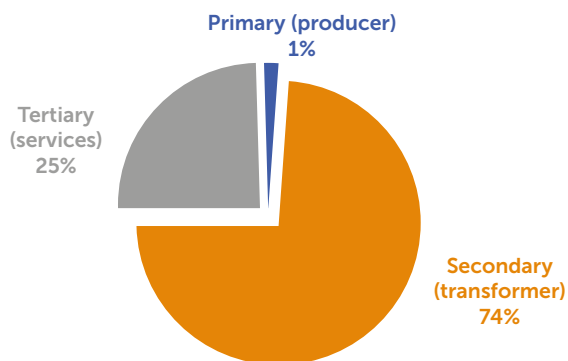


Figure 2. Facilities registered in the National Environmental Audit Program in Mexico, by productive sector (%) in 2022.

The implementation of the AA in Mexico is conducted through the National Environmental Audit Program (PNAA- Programa Nacional de Auditoría Ambiental) and is the responsibility of the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA- Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente), which has a double function: on the one hand, sanctioning offenders environmental and, on the other hand, support environmental volunteers.



Image 1. Clean Industry Certificate granted to the Federal Electricity Commission.

When PROFEPA seeks for business or service sectors to improve their environmental performance while complying with applicable regulations, it uses instruments from the national self-regulation environmental policy. These instruments have a Mexican Standard with the guidelines for accessing a certification (NMX-AA-162-SCFI-2012 , currently under review for updating).

To access any of the voluntary instruments of environmental law in Mexico,

it is assumed that the company's facility to be audited by a verification unit external to the company and unrelated to the government, complies with the mandatory regulations; therefore, the audited facility can focus on improving its environmental performance, being more demanding in its systems and processes than what the law establishes, establishing more ambitious goals.



**Image 2. The three seals awarded by PROFEPA: i) Clean industry, ii) Environmental quality, and iii) Tourism environmental quality.**

An inalienable requirement when adopting environmental self-regulation measures is the continuous measurement of environmental performance indicators, given that this monitoring will ensure, objectively and technically, that the company complies with what is accredited in its agreement to join a program created for this purpose and allows the authority to learn about the socio-environmental benefits of the program

(Table I). The certification establishes a consultation agreement between the audited parties, auditors and the competent authority that corresponds to an action plan, in such a way that there is an obligation to comply with the improvement plan.

**Table I. Environmental benefits derived from the facilities audited in the National Environmental Audit Program in 2022.**

<b>AUDITED FACTOR</b>	<b>SAVINGS</b>	<b>SOCIAL EQUIVALENCES</b>
Electric energy saving	489 million Kilowatt hour	216 thousand people with electricity/year
CO2 eq reduction	531 thousand tons	83 thousand vehicles retired, traveling 30 thousand km each/year
Water savings	7.25 million m3	77 thousand inhabitants with water/year
Reduction of urban solid waste and special management	222 thousand tons	719 thousand people who do not generate any type of garbage/year
Reduction of hazardous waste	56 thousand tons	Millions of people with a better quality of life
<b>It contributes significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals: 6, 7 and 12.</b>		

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**Temple of the Inscriptions in the ruins of Palenque, Mexico.**



PARAGUAY

MINISTRY  
OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
AND  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
**MADES**

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Authorship: Ministry of the  
Environment and Sustainable  
Development of Paraguay.

Asuncion Bay, Paraguay.

# PARAGUAY: A LOOK AT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The Republic of Paraguay, a Mediterranean country in Latin America in the process of development, is facing a great challenge between economic growth and the need to promote actions that favor the conservation of the natural environment and social protection. As is known, development processes and climate action are interconnected at multiple levels; the latter is not only essential to addressing climate change, but can also contribute significantly to promoting sustainable development, social equity and improving the quality of life of people worldwide. The challenge lies in effectively and balanced integrating climate action into development strategies and ensuring that both initiatives reinforce each other.

Paraguay has made international commitments to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, which puts it on the path of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. That is why the national government, with a firm commitment to promoting the economic and social growth and development of the country in a respectful and sustainable manner with the environment, is promoting specific actions and criteria in public policies that promote and guarantee conservation and the protection of the natural environment and social

and economic equity.

In this context, one of the main initiatives promoted is the regulation for the protection of the ownership of reduced, avoided and/or captured carbon, and the generation and issuance of carbon credits, which will represent opportunities for the country by attracting investments in sustainable projects, the adoption of cleaner and more efficient technologies and methods in the different production processes, the promotion of the generation and use of renewable energies, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

This international financial instrument promotes the mitigation of climate change through the reduction, avoidance or verified capture of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, providing economic incentives for the conservation of natural resources to the public and private sectors; furthermore, to reduce emissions and meet climate objectives in order to address climate change worldwide constitutes an important instrument of cooperation between countries.

Thus, Paraguay assumes a leading role Considering its abundant natural capital based on the richness of its biodi-

versity, it is positioned as a key actor in sustainability policies in the region to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and promote more sustainable practices, starting with the enactment of Law 7190/2023 “On Carbon Credits”, dated October 12, 2023, establishing the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES) as the application authority.

This law, in addition to representing a transcendental fact in innovation and advancement in sustainability policies, is an act of commitment to have a clear legal framework and guarantee legal security for those who adhere to the benefit; constituting one of the most important challenges assumed by this Ministry for the coming years in terms of climate action and sustainable development; must promote actions that guarantee the credibility, integrity and effectiveness of this instrument of action to obtain the expected results in the fight against climate change, conservation and the promotion of sustainable practices.

### **Environmental assessment and supervision and carbon credits**

In addition to the specific requirements of the established carbon credit implementation mechanisms, designers interested in generating carbon credits

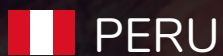
must comply with the environmental and sustainability standards necessary to comply with the environmental laws and regulations in force in the country.

That is why the use of advanced technologies in environmental impact assessment and environmental oversight, such as remote sensors, monitoring systems and early warnings, will play an important role in this process to improve efficiency, promote transparency and collect more precise and constant environmental data, allowing problems or deviations to be addressed in a timely manner, in order to contribute to guaranteeing the integrity of the processes and compliance with emissions reduction commitments.





Ñacunday National Park, Paraguay.



PERU

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

OEFA

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Author: Environmental Assessment  
and Supervision Agency

Palcoyo Mountain Range, Peru.

# EXPLORING THE TOOLBOX OF THE PERUVIAN ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTOR

The comment from the neighborhood is unanimous: “we live among bad smells and buzzards,” says a resident of the Lamas district, San Martín region, in the Peruvian jungle. Given the complaints, the intervention of the Environmental Evaluation and Supervision Agency (OEFA- Organismo de Evaluación y Fiscalización Ambiental), attached to the Ministry of the Environment, is requested, whose actions support the environmental surveillance of more than ten thousand companies from different productive sectors throughout Peru.

Engineers Alex and Agustín were commissioned by the OEFA, who have put the environmental issues in Lamas on the table, holding coordination meetings with representatives of the population, to assess the claims. All responsibility now falls on both of them.

If these supervisors have developed something, it is their sense of smell, a sense that began to work – they remember – thirty minutes before their arrival in Lamas. The environment of the property to be monitored had a nauseating and penetrating odor. In the area, both were located in front of two medium-height walls, long and divided by a large door. It is a property of more than 100 hecta-

res, where pigs and egg-laying birds are industrially raised.



Photo 1: OEFA Supervisors

## The persuasive approach

Alex and Agustín reviewed the background of the OEFA intervention. Persuasive tools had been applied: supervision reports, work meetings and signed minutes. However, the agreements were not fulfilled. It was required to analyze more rigorously the behavior of the administrator and the permits approved by the ministry that promotes these livestock activities, the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation. It was confirmed that the auditable unit only had a license to raise pigs.

Environmental regulation in Peru has a ‘preventive approach’ and includes the



Photo 2: Lagoon with untreated effluents

management of certifications, licenses and permits. Before intervening in an area, you must have an environmental and social license or certification, according to the size of the project. Agricultural activities are no exception. Raising pigs and poultry requires an operating permit from the agricultural authority.

### Supervisors in action

Once inside the managed facilities, our supervisors walk through the industrial poultry breeding area, where the presence of sheds surrounded by bushy vegetation and some palm trees is visually verified. After three hundred meters of walking, one of the supervisors saw 'part of the water mirror of a lagoon', covered by vegetation.

Bordering the identified pool and the surrounding vegetation, beyond began the pig raising area. As with laying birds, the presence of vegetation in the surroundings apparently did not generate bad signs; however, the surprise was

great when in the distance a complex of large lagoons was observed where the effluents from pig farming were stored.

In the distance, the supervisors saw areas of land with black spots and confirmed the existence of 13 lagoons practically full of pig effluent; and confirmed that two ravines delimited part of the contour of the property. One of them, the Romeroyacu stream, was three meters from the edge of the farm; and, a second ravine, the Shupishiña, a hundred meters away; facilitating unauthorized discharges of farm waste.

### Findings in the field

Buzzards, flies and that nauseating smell again. In certain places, the supervisors' boots sank in the mud generated by the poor disposal of rotten bird excreta and discarded eggs, also rotten. The more the supervisors inspected, the 'more they found'. Thus, Alex and Agustín warned of the existence of traces of 'prohibited discharges' towards the Romeroyacu stream.



Photo 3: Gallon of laying hens

The company raised pigs five times more than what was allowed in its Environmental Impact Assessment. Increasing from three thousand authorized pigs to fifteen thousand. About 43 thousand cubic meters of effluent were stored, equivalent to 18 Olympic swimming pools. Likewise, the unauthorized breeding of more than 190 thousand laying birds was confirmed, which had generated 4,600 tons of excreta, to promote the presence of flies and buzzards.

The supervisors prepared a closing report with the main events. A report was prepared, where the findings were technically detailed and this was sent to the direction in charge of the OEFA inspection; who, reviewing the environmental inspector's toolbox, identified that the application of the most severe administrative measure was appropriate.

### Imposition of drastic measures

The evidence was sufficient to act promptly, which led to the imposition of 21 precautionary measures, ordering the 'suspension and cessation of economic activity'; for the administrator

to operate again at levels authorized in its EIA, otherwise, the measures would continue. The objective: guarantee the protection of the environmental components water and soil, and the health of the population due to the risk of collapse of the treatment system.

### Reactions after the inspector's actions

Local media from the Amazon region replied: "In Lamas, the OEFA orders a company to suspend activities due to high risk of contamination;" in turn, the company communicated that it acquiesced to the inspector's measures; confirming a few days later that the raid was only verbal, because in parallel the company promoted an Amparo action for alleged violations of the fundamental right to work and for abuse of authority.

After the first week, the progress in the field is not as expected. Persuasive meetings and agreements between the company and the auditor began. A serious fact that called into question the 'agreements' was that the effluents are still there. Intense rains increase their levels, increasing the risk of contamination of streams. This fact was worrying about the upcoming arrival of rains due to the El Niño Phenomenon, El Niño Global.

The effluents are still there and are increasing daily. The effluent meter, which was not located where the OEFA ordered, continues to 'hide' the real volume of wastewater that is being produced. Despite written and verbal exhortations

(in coordination meetings), the administrator insists on sending documents to OEFA, distorting the technical suitability of the inspector.

The deadlines approach, the exhortations continue, the resources of the administrator seek to gain time and raise their demands to a judicial instance. The truth is that, after six weeks since the imposition of the precautionary measures, the administration has removed approximately more than 170 thousand chickens; however, removing the pigs does not require the same effort.

The smell of the effluents is penetrating. The administrator communicates some efforts for its withdrawal, submitting a service order (similar to a contract) for the transportation of 5% of the volume, from San Martín (Lamas) to Piura, cities separated by 600 km; this was due to the prohibition of disposal of said effluents in a nearby landfill, which was neither prepared nor authorized.

The exhortation had a limited – but hopeful – effect. Seven weeks later, the inspector continues to monitor the implementation of the measures and evaluates the behavior of the administrator. It is concluded that it is required to exert greater regulatory pressure. Once again the institution must resort to its toolbox.

To compel compliance, the OEFA has coercive fines. These, unlike those that seek to deter, are a mechanism of forced and rapid execution. More than 150 thousand US dollars are charged on the

first activation of this tool. At the eighth week and despite the administration's response being limited, improvements are felt. People who live nearby confirm this.

Nine weeks later, thanks to the intervention of the OEFA, the streams are being cleaned and the residents have seen the return of a "*Charapita*." This is the name given to the Amazonian freshwater aquatic turtle. "Now, Lamas feels like what it is: one of the best tourist towns in the world, declared by the World Tourism Organization. Now, the presence of the State, MINAM, OEFA is sensed;" the community and the mayor tell us.



Photo 4: OEFA Supervisors



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

# MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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By: Silmer Gonzalez Ruiz, Director  
of Environmental Quality, Ministry of  
Environment and Natural Resources,  
Dominican Republic.



Ozama Fortress, Dominican  
Republic.



# GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF ATMOSPHERIC EMISSIONS INVENTORIES. CASE OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

Currently, air pollution is one of the main environmental issues in urban areas worldwide. In developed countries, it is due to high volumes and diversification in industrial production and a heavy flow of automobiles. In developing countries, causes include expanding industries, unplanned urban growth, and deficiencies in basic sanitation management.

gement and achieve emission levels that safeguard health and the environment, most countries are adopting policies for preventing and controlling air pollution. Hence, there is a need to search for techniques and tools that enable diagnostics.

Air pollution problems also stem from poor fuel quality, limited use of modern technology in productive and transportation activities, high energy demand, and open-pit mining practices. To promote air quality man-

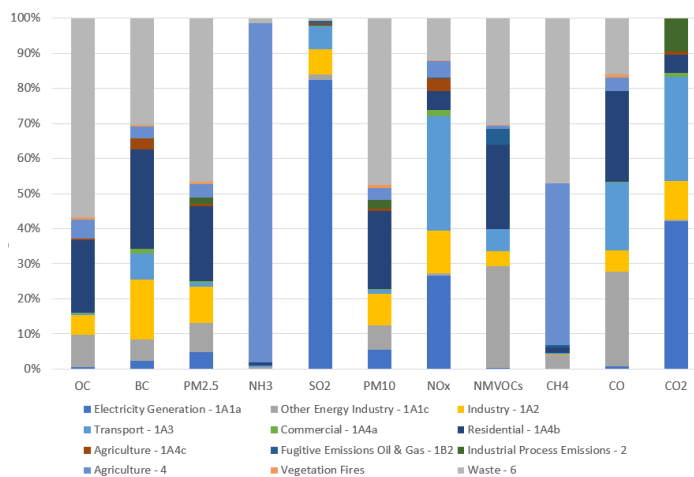
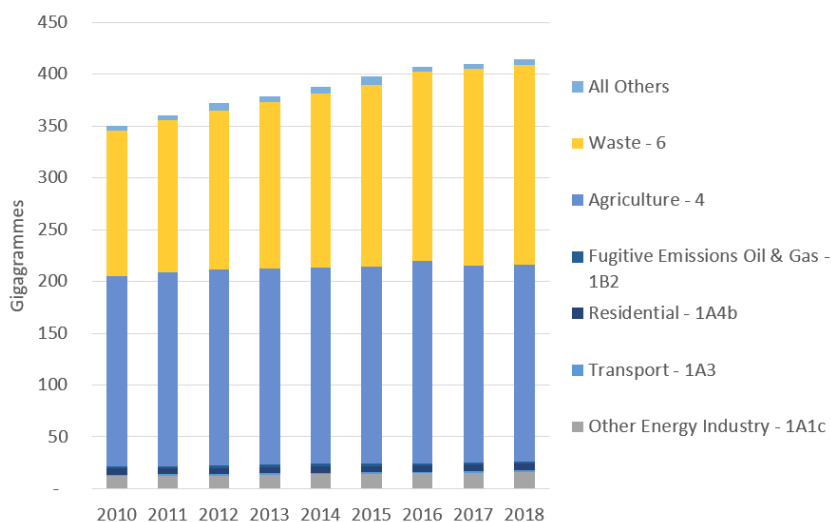


Image 1. Contribution of different sources to SLCP emissions, air pollutants and GHG in the Dominican Republic in 2018. Source: Assessment of short-lived climate pollutants in the Dom Rep., 2021



**Image 2. Methane emissions in the Dominican Republic between 2010 and 2018 (Units: Gigagrams ). Source: Assessment of short-lived climate pollutants in the Dom Rep., 2021**

Once the level of pollution in the atmosphere is known, corresponding mitigation techniques and actions can be developed to continuously improve environmental conditions based on scientific evidence. In this regard, a guide for the preparation of atmospheric emissions inventories is a reference document that compiles the main technical criteria necessary for developing an inventory of emissions. This allows environmental authorities, provinces or municipalities, territorial entities, academic institutions, emissions generators, and the general public to access information on existing procedures and methodologies for creating inventories that meet quality, coherence, integrity, comparability, representativeness, and transparency criteria.

In 1994, the first report in the series on emissions and transfers of pollutants from industrial sources in North America, known as the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) in the United States, was initiated. In Canada, it is known as the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI), and in Mexico, it is called the Registry of Emissions and Transfers of Pollutants (RETC). These reports or inventories provide an overview of industrial emissions of pollutants in North America and serve as a source of information for governments, industries, and communities to analyze the data and identify opportunities to reduce pollution. They promote greater data comparability between countries, increase awareness of health and environmental aspects associated with toxic substances and in-

dustry in North America, and foster dialogue and collaboration across borders and industrial sectors.

The Dominican Republic has a Guide for the Preparation of Atmospheric Emissions Inventories, serving as a tool to formulate, plan, execute, and evaluate inventories according to needs and requirements. The main objective of this guide is to standardize the process of preparing atmospheric emissions inventories to facilitate the formulation, execution, and monitoring of pollution reduction strategies. Simultaneously, it strengthens air quality surveillance systems for countries in the region. The Guide for the preparation of emissions inventory has been prepared to provide

a practical response to the need to take action regarding air pollution at the local and regional levels and to urgently improve inventories, management, and guidance at national and regional levels.



Image 3. Cover of the Guide for the Preparation of Atmospheric Emissions Inventories, year 2021.

The results obtained from conducting inventories will serve to generate policies and determine aspects such as the proportion of the general population and susceptible groups that need protection. Legal matters, a definition of adverse effects, a description of the at-risk population, exposure-response relationships, exposure characterization, risk assessment and acceptability, and the financial costs of air pollution control and its benefits should also be considered.

For the preparation of this document, the Inventory Development Guide of Mexico, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Guide, technical scientific publications, and the practical experience of the Dominican Republic from its first emissions inventory conducted in 2009 have been used as reference materials. The guide focuses on establishing a tool that allows the formulation, planning, execution, and evaluation of atmospheric emissions inventories according to specific needs and requirements.

To develop strategies for improving air pollution, having reliable information

about emissions, determining types of emission sources, quantities of emitted pollutants, temporal and spatial characteristics of sources, and processes and control practices used by sources or their controlling entities is indispensable. *A proper emissions inventory will help identify production sectors where efforts should be concentrated to enhance compliance with emission standards and technical regulations, especially during adverse meteorological conditions.*



Image 4. Cover of the first inventory of pollutant emissions criteria for the Dominican Republic.



Botanical or National Garden, Santo Domingo.



# OPINION **PIECE**

By: Lisseth Díaz Vargas, Director of the  
Triangular Cooperation Project

# CHILE AND PERU, COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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**“What future do we want?”** is the question that arises when we contemplate the destiny of the planet. Reality strikes us as we witness how increased consumption, mass production of goods, and the unsustainable use of natural resources fuel the global emergency caused by climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution.

The Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 concludes that, in this critical juncture, gradual and fragmented changes will be insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the remaining seven years until 2030. Additionally, the report focuses on the contribution of science to accelerate transformations toward sustainable development. Consequently, achieving the SDGs requires greater ambition from countries, active mobilization of political leaders, and societal support for the necessary transformations. Without these elements, progress will be slow and incomplete.

In this context, Peru and Chile, two nations committed to the 2030 Agenda, share experiences and learnings within the framework of implementing the

triangular cooperation project “Strengthening Environmental Oversight and Compliance by the OEFA and SMA” (2022-2024). The project is executed with the support of German development cooperation implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, financed by the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany.



**Photo 1: SMA receives the OEFA and GIZ Committee from Peru to improve the management of the Environmental Triangular Cooperation Project**



Photo 2: SMA receives the OEFA and GIZ Committee from Peru to advance the management of the Environmental Triangular Cooperation Project

Peru and Chile have an ongoing and longstanding cooperation structure on environmental issues. In 2014, within the COP 20 framework, they subscribed to an Environmental Cooperation Agreement aimed at enhancing the work of both countries concerning water resources, species protection, environmental risks, marine environment, climate change, biodiversity, mountain management, desertification, renewable energies, and green economy. Both countries promote and ensure environmental care and, consequently, the health and well-being of their populations through reasonable public policies and environmental regulations. In this regard, they conduct permanent environmental oversight and compliance tasks through their respective specialized entities for this purpose, such as Chile's Superintendence of the Environment (SMA) and Peru's Environmental Assessment and Enforcement Agency (OEFA).

In the global and national framework of both countries, it is essential to highlight that the triangular cooperation project

seeks to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically due to the project's nature and the prioritized sectors for its implementation:

**SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Develop resilient infrastructures, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.

**SDG 14 - Life Below Water:** Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

**SDG 15 - Life on Land:** Protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

**SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals:** Strengthen means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Through the implementation of this



project, the following progress has been achieved:

- Nine technical experience exchange workshops on environmental oversight and compliance between countries have been conducted on topics such as mining, fishing, aquaculture, and exotic species, methodology for determining penalties, continuous emission monitoring systems, administrative sanctioning procedures, and fine calculations.
- Manuals and technical guides related to environmental oversight actions in mining, fishing, and aquaculture have been developed.
- Internships and face-to-face technical exchanges have been facilitated between specialists from both institutions. In Chile, focusing on best practices in planning and supervising the closure of mining facilities, and in Peru, concerning compliance and environmental oversight in fishing

and aquaculture activities.

- Technological tools for information and process optimization in environmental oversight have been developed.

It's worth mentioning that science, highly valued for its role in accelerating the necessary transformations toward sustainable development, has been constantly present in the project's activities. For instance, a technological tool for remote monitoring of extensive agriculture (oil palm, sugarcane, and pig farms) has been developed for the OEFA. Sensors for an underwater drone have been acquired to monitor environmental parameters in salmon fattening centers overseen by the SMA in Chile, and a technological tool as a predictive model for visualizing changes in dissolved oxygen concentration in these salmon fattening centers is under development.



**Photo 3: Triangular Cooperation Project SMA Committee visits Peru to exchange experience and methodologies**

Finally, one of the project's pillars has been the alliance forged between the two countries, leveraging each other's complementary strengths. Mutual learning and the exchange of experiences on the development and application of technical and methodological tools in environmental oversight and compliance with environmental regulations, not only between Peru and Chile but also with other member countries of the Latin American Network for Environmental Oversight and Compliance (RedLafica), generate new action opportunities.

This constitutes one of the main aspects promoted by the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation, which, in this case, has allowed expanding the project's scope to another regional articulation space like RedLafica.



**Photo 4: Triangular Cooperation Project SMA Committee visits Peru to exchange experience and methodologies**



**Photo 5: SMA receives the OEFA and GIZ Committee from Peru to improve the management of the Triangular Cooperation Project**



Photo 6: Triangular Cooperation Project: SMA delegation visits Peru to exchange experience and methodologies

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest. A river winds through the center of the image, reflecting the sky. The trees are dense and vibrant green, with some areas appearing darker due to shadows or the density of the canopy. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# OPINION **PIECE II**

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**By: Juan Martinez, Lead Social Specialist  
at the IDB's Environmental and Social  
Solutions Unit.**

IDB'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SOLUTIONS UNIT ESG:

## STRENGTHENING NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL LICENSING AND OVERSIGHT SYSTEMS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through the Environmental and Social Solutions Unit, organizes Regional Environmental and Social Policy Dialogues (DRP) and has been implementing these policy dialogues for over ten years. The initiative aims to promote the strengthening of the region's national environmental and social licensing and oversight systems. It seeks to foster the exchange of experiences, facilitate dialogue among participating countries on priority environmental and social issues, and identify best practices for institutional strengthening. Additionally, it aims to promote operational capacity building

associated with environmental and social licensing, oversight, and compliance by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this context, the ongoing collaboration of the IDB with REDLAFICA and the Latin American Network of Environmental Impact Assessment Systems (REDLASEIA) has significantly strengthened. These two networks have become strategic partners that enhance the DRPs, constituting a platform for interrelation and strengthening of the region's national environmental and social licensing and oversight systems. Consequently, in



Photo 1: SMA and the IDB hold a workshop on Participation of interested parties in Environmental Licensing and Supervision

2023, the IDB agreed on a joint action plan comprising five thematic areas to strengthen the region’s environmental licensing and oversight processes. These thematic areas are structured as follows:

### **(1) Improvement of national practices through IDB policies**

The implementation, led by the consulting firm Social Capital Group (SCG), involved the development of three technical notes resulting from the prioritization of REDLAFICA’s topics: (i) Transboundary environmental and social impacts/contamination from extractive activities and conflicts, (ii) Analysis of gaps for indigenous peoples within the framework of environmental and social licensing and oversight, and (iii) Stakeholder participation within the framework of

environmental and social licensing and oversight.

The process of preparing each technical note involved a multidisciplinary team from SCG and IDB specialists. Additionally, it actively engaged representatives from REDLAFICA institutions, who shared their experiences, knowledge, and best practices. Over 20 meetings were held involving around 40 officials from 8 countries (Chile, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Paraguay, El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala). The leading focal points from the three countries: Chile’s SMA, Mexico’s PROFEPA, and Peru’s OEFA, played a prominent role in this process. The diversity of perspectives enriched the content, allowing for addressing challenges from multiple angles and reflecting the shared commitment of



Photo 2: OEFA Peru and the IDB hold a workshop on Indigenous Peoples and the Gaps in Participation in Environmental Licensing and Supervision

network member countries to tackle mutual technical issues.

## **(2) Thematic workshops in selected countries**

Through the participation of REDLAFICA focal points, a team was formed to lead the preparation of three technical notes on Indigenous Peoples, Stakeholder Consultation and Participation, and Transboundary Supervision. The results of these notes were presented in semi-presential thematic workshops held in the second half of November. These workshops presented the findings, conclusions, and recommendations obtained from each technical note. Additionally, these thematic workshops aim to strengthen participating countries, enabling them to commit to implementing the knowledge gained in their day-to-day activities. The networks have assumed responsibility for creating monitoring schemes to help derive results from the implementation of this knowledge.

## **(3) Knowledge exchanges between agencies**

During 2023, two experiences exchanges took place:

### **a) Exchange of experiences on interventions involving involuntary resettlements Brazil – Paraguay.**

From June 20 to 23, 2023, in Manaus, Brazil, technical and social teams from the executing units of the Rehabilitation and Housing Program of Bañado Sur

- Barrio Tacumbú (PR-L1152, UEP MOPC) of the Ministry of Public Works and Communications of Paraguay; Housing Improvement Program - Barrio Chacarita Alta (PR-L1082, UEP MUVH) of the Ministry of Urbanism Housing and Habitat of Paraguay; Social and Environmental Program of the Igarapés of Manaus, Brazil (UGPE PROSAMIM) and Resettlement Program of the Gardí Sugdud Indigenous Community (PN-T1188) from Panama met. The objective was to share and exchange experiences, lessons learned, and main socio-environmental challenges in executing involuntary resettlements of populations and economic activities. Emphasis was placed on constructing methodologies and strategies for comprehensive interaction and relationship-building with multiple involved parties, such as affected families and communities. In total, there were 32 participants (UGPE 8, UEP MOPC 8, UEP MUVH 5, and DIB 11).

### **b) Exchange of experiences US EPA – REDLAFICA and DIB, as explained previously in the Chilean SMA note on promoting the international agenda.**

Both experience exchanges were highly successful and generated results that will strengthen the participating entities in their day-to-day activities. Specifically, the results include: (i) gaining new specialized technical knowledge in resettlement and environmental monitoring, (ii) improved skills, (iii) consensus achievement in technical processes, (iv) enhanced communication networks, (v)

strengthening a community of practice in environmental and social licensing and oversight, and (vi) initiation of new actions.

#### **(4) Community of practice for environmental licensing and compliance and support for REDLAFICA**

Through the promotion and strengthening of social networks, the process of formally establishing a community of practice has continued. This community will serve as a space for REDLAFICA and REDLASEIA member countries to have systematic and updated access to a network of specialists and technical documents on environmental and social licensing and oversight topics. This will allow for scheduled dialogue spaces and knowledge exchange, sharing experiences and best practices on common and prioritized issues faced by countries in the region.

#### **(5) Promoting and strengthening the development of capacities for environmental and social licensing and oversight agencies.**

##### **a) Online course on environmental and social inspection**

Progress has been made in structuring a basic-level online course, initially prepared in English and planned for translation into Spanish in 2024. The course will enable users to identify principles, roles, and responsibilities required to conduct environmental and social inspections according to international best practices. Importantly, the course content was part of a review and adaptation process to the reality of the Latin American region involving feedback and best practices from 11 REDLAFICA countries on the topics developed.



Photo 3: PROFEPA and the IDB hold a workshop on Transboundary Environmental Impacts and Social Consequences





## **b) Framework learning curriculum on environmental and social oversight**

During July, the pro tempore presidency of REDLAFICA conducted a survey to prioritize the topics of greatest interest among member countries, resulting in the training of inspectors in the first place. Topic of interest that is a common problem that limits the training and professional development of inspectors throughout the region.

In this context, the IDB proposed designing a tool called the “Framework Learning Curriculum” for the professional development and training of inspectors. This tool will serve as a roadmap for the respective agencies according to their characteristics, regulations, and reality.

To achieve this, a survey was designed to gather information and experiences regarding the current mechanisms applied by these agencies in their professional training processes. With the survey results systematized, considering the

development level of the agencies, the structure and content of the environmental and social inspection course developed by the IDB, and the specific needs of the pilot country (El Salvador), a framework learning curriculum will be proposed. This curriculum will establish training and education parameters applicable to the diverse realities of the region’s countries.

It is noteworthy that an important milestone in the work conducted during 2023 was the strategic meetings for strengthening national environmental and social licensing and oversight systems held from September 4th to 8th in Santiago, Chile. These meetings brought together the pro tempore presidencies of REDLAFICA (SMA of Chile) and REDLASEIA (Secretariat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development, and Innovation of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina), Chile’s Environmental Assessment Service (pro tempore presidency of REDLASEIA for the 2024 period), and the Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in a dialogue space that emphasized the interaction between both networks as a key mechanism for strengthening national environmental and social licensing and oversight systems. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of the new Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF) of the IDB and its connection to the DRP as an ongoing process that continuously strengthens these systems.

Furthermore, common areas of interest for both networks were identified: (i) Incorporation of the climate change variable into environmental and social licensing and oversight processes, (ii) Citizen/stakeholder participation in environmental and social licensing and oversight processes (linked to the Escazú Agreement), (iii) Transboundary impacts and participatory monitoring, and (iv) Indigenous peoples.

Finally, the participation of REDLAFICA and REDLASEIA in the DRP 2023 was planned, taking place in Mexico City from November 27 to December, 2023. The objective was to exchange experiences, identify common ground, challenges, and areas of cooperation to strengthen the interrelation of the region's national environmental and social licensing and oversight systems.

As can be seen, various initiatives and actors are participating decisively in strengthening the national licensing and environmental and social control systems of the region; however, there is still more to do to ensure that the aforementioned systems are truly key tools to achieve the balance between economic growth and the preservation of the natural environment.



Photo 5: X Regional Dialogues organized by the Inter-American Development Bank in Mexico City 2023

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