

STRENGTHENING EFFORTS FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Piloting LandScale in the Sierra de Tapalpa Landscape



Mexico plays a vital role in global agricultural production and is the world's top producer of avocados. In recent years, the state of Jalisco has dramatically expanded its cultivation of avocados, agave, and other crops. Unfortunately, this has contributed to the loss of more than 41,000 hectares of forest between 1970 and 2019, as well as habitat fragmentation, soil erosion, landslides, and strained water resources.

Region: South Jalisco, Mexico

Lead partner: Rainforest Alliance, SEMADET, SADER, JIRA, and JIDELAA

Challenges: Deforestation and overexploitation of water as a result of expanding agribusiness and urbanization

LandScale uses: Catalyzing cross-sectoral action, monitoring sustainability goals, and credibly communicating impact

The Sierra de Tapalpa landscape, located in south Jalisco, borders two protected natural areas on the East — the Sierra de Quila and Nevado de Colima. These areas form a biological corridor of immense biodiversity that is highly vulnerable to deforestation from avocado and agave plantations, agroindustrial greenhouses, expanding hillside agriculture, cattle raising, and real estate development. A better balance between nature, local communities, and agricultural production is needed to prevent further forest loss and overexploitation of natural resources.



Typical view of the Tapalpa rural landscape

Driving Sustainability

To improve natural resources management and overall governance, Jalisco's Ministry of Environment and Territorial Development (SEMADET) has supported the creation of statewide decentralized governance boards with representatives from the public sector. The LandScale pilot landscape includes two of these inter-municipal boards, the Junta Intermunicipal de Medio Ambiente del Ayuquila Alto (JIDELAA) and Junta Intermunicipal de Medio Ambiente para la Gestión Integral de la Cuenca Baja del Río Ayuquila (JIRA). These boards are working to align cross-sectoral efforts involving a vast array of stakeholders, from small producers to agribusiness companies, to comply with the Ecological Land Management Regional Program — promoted by SEMADET to halt deforestation and depletion of natural resources.

Using LandScale

SEMADET and Jalisco's Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry (SADER) are using LandScale as an organizational framework to identify areas that need collaborative effort and develop a coordinated action plan that enables board members to align their activities with each other and other stakeholders in the landscape.

The boards will use LandScale's independent and holistic framework to assess the impact of all activities in the landscape to see if the action plan has helped reduce deforestation and improve natural resources management. Assessments will provide critical landscape-level insights that can support the inter-municipal boards in making informed decisions about the management of natural resources and help members credibly demonstrate the broader impact of their efforts in order to attract additional investment to achieve their landscape goals.

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