



Manual on Climate Change for Women in Forests in Ecuador

The Rights, Climate Change, and Forests Program, run jointly in Ecuador by the Centre for Planning and Social Studies (CEPLAES) and Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN), has developed a publication titled: “Manual on Climate Change for Women in Forests in Ecuador”. This document was designed primarily for women, indigenous, and afro-Ecuadorian community members, as well as other forest-dependent groups in the country. The manual’s objective is to inform community members about activities that may directly affect their lives and their environment, to equip them to respond to climate-related changes, and to empower them with tools to take part in local, national and international policy debates. The publication was commissioned in response to observations that women, particularly afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous women, have had a very limited participation in consultation and decision-making processes related to climate change and forest policies.

The manual draws from local publications, seminars, and interviews with different indigenous and afro-Ecuadorian men and women that describe their relationship with forests—how they have perceived changes in the climate, the character and degree of these changes and other pressures forests face, and how communities are coping with them. Additionally, a focus group was held in Borbón, Ecuador, that brought together indigenous and afro-Ecuadorian forest-dependent women in order to engage participants in a discussion on climate change and adaptation and mitigation mechanisms, such as REDD+. This focus group and its sessions provided the basis for the final section of the manual, which further details proposals and recommendations on how to increase local participation in these debates.

The manual was deliberately written in easy to understand, non-technical Spanish language, and includes a detailed guide to help the reader navigate through some of the more technical concepts. The first section aims to increase understanding of the concept of climate change, its causes and impacts, and the linkages between climate change, forests, and gender. The second section examines the role that forests play in the lives of indigenous peoples, afro-Ecuadorians, and other forest-dependent communities, and includes a discussion of inequities and human rights in this context. The third chapter looks at the drivers of deforestation and analyzes examples of adaptation and mitigation policies and actions, and their consistency, or lack thereof,

with broader policy frameworks and development models. The section highlights international and local examples, including programs such as *Socio Bosque*, which is being implemented in Ecuador at a national scale. The fourth section introduces REDD+ and outlines how the Ecuadorian government intends to carry out REDD+, the role of UN-REDD and the different positions international and local stakeholders have taken vis-à-vis REDD+, including two prominent Ecuadorian indigenous organizations, CONAIE and CONFENAIE. The final chapter outlines next steps, including the need for access to information as a basis for participation in decision-making processes, a network that can bring women together, and the need to reassess the importance of traditional knowledge in climate change mitigation and adaptation. At the end of each of its five sections, the manual also includes relevant discussion questions.

The Rights, Climate Change, and Forests Program aims to recognize and exercise the rights and responsibilities of indigenous peoples, afro-Ecuadorians, and other forest-dependent communities. The Program works to ensure that representatives of these communities, together with other key civil society actors (youth groups, networks of environmental non-governmental organizations, and women's organizations) participate in an informed manner in decision-making processes related to climate change and forest policies and programs. The global program also supports the participation of civil society members in international negotiation processes, especially the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as REDD+ multilateral initiatives, such as the United Nations UN-REDD and The World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility programs, among others.