

GIZ approaches on Low-Emission Development Strategies. The need for support from research

First results of GIZ support on the development of Low-Emission Development Strategy (LED) in Costa Rica are promising and have motivated key ministries to integrate the climate policy into their structures. Awareness of the issue of climate change among the general public is increasing, the competencies of the National Secretariat for Climate Protection have been strengthened: its capability for strategic planning has been improved.

The most important challenges still remain, like the manifold “LEDS” documents on national level, weak connection of existing development strategies, weak integration across ministries, the limited financial capacities or the fragmented international support.

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The context

As a federal enterprise, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH) supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. GIZ main activities are focusing on sustainable development and resource management in a wide range of sectors.

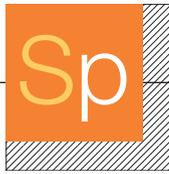
GIZ contributes to the development of Low-Emission Development Strategies (LEDS) as national, high-level, comprehensive, long-term strategies, which aim at decoupling economic growth and social development from greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions growth. In some cases these projects and activities use different denominations such as Low Carbon Development Strategy, Climate-Compatible Development Plan, or

National Climate Change Plan. GIZ provides different forms of capacity development support for mitigation strategies, according to their needs. In some cases the contributions are limited to some components, e.g. baseline GHG emissions analysis and projections, prioritization of key mitigation sectors and measures for designing NAMAs and MRV frameworks. In other cases the support is more comprehensive, including integrated help with the development of Low-Emission Development Strategies.

Example: Low Emission Development Costa Rica

One example for a comprehensive approach is the project: Low Emission Development Costa Rica – Supporting the national climate neutrality strategy in Costa Rica as a model for low carbon development. The project is commissioned to GIZ by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Society (BMUB) within the scope of the International Climate Initiative (ICI) with an

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overall term of four years from 2011 to 2015. The lead executing agency in Costa Rica is the Dirección de Cambio Climático (DCC) del Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (MINAE).

Context

Costa Rica has set itself the target of achieving a zero emissions status by 2021. As a result, it has committed to adopting policies sustainably and over the long-term that will help reduce emissions. This politically ambitious goal requires making a tremendous effort as well as using demanding, innovative approaches – particularly as emissions in key sectors are currently on the rise. Current scenarios show that greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂) are expected to increase, a fact largely due to the rise in motorized private transport and to higher consumption of fossil fuels in industry and power generation. By contrast, CO₂ emissions in waste management are increasing at a much lower rate and have even decreased a little in agriculture.

The objective of GIZ support is to strengthen Costa Rica's ability to implement strategies that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Besides the impact at the national level also a benefit for the region is expected as the country can use the experience it has gleaned from the process of becoming a low emission country to usefully inform regional and international strategy discussions on low carbon development.

Approach

The “Low Emission Development (LED)” project works at the political and institutional levels to provide advice on developing strategies and designing framework policies as well as for programs and action plans, such as the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, or NAMAs. In addition, industrial companies and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are receiving advice on how to plan and implement measures for reducing emissions and how to use environmentally- and climate-friendly technologies.

Key activities include:

- Developing and strengthening institutional competencies and capabilities:
 - strengthening the management abilities of the National Secretariat for Climate Protection of the Ministry of Environment and Energy;

- establishing a cooperative platform: Plataforma Climatica;
- supporting cooperation between different ministries.
- Integrating climate goals into the medium-term National Development Plan (2014–2018).
- Supporting the implementation of an ecological tax reform that focuses on climate financing.
- Several Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) have been developed for:
 - low carbon coffee, resource efficiency and waste management, an integrated, low emission public transport system;
 - technology transfer between industry and the green economy, environmentally friendly urban development;
 - projects in cooperation with the private sector (development partnerships with the private sector): developing climate strategies in the production chains: milk and cheese processing, soft drinks manufacturing, energy efficiency in the transport sector and energy efficient ways of travelling (eco-driving).
- Providing advice on standardization processes for climate neutrality certification.
- Developing management abilities and resources as well as guidance programs in the chambers of commerce and industry.
- Training sessions and awareness-raising measures.

The results so far

The competencies of the National Secretariat for Climate Protection have been strengthened: its capability for strategic planning has been improved, its organizational structure has been streamlined and it can use the cooperative platform Plataforma Climatica to successfully coordinate the work with the agricultural, urban development and transport sectors. The agricultural (coffee, milk and meat production) and the urban development, waste and transport sectors have all been developing NAMAs since 2012.

Awareness of the issue of climate change among the general public is increasing, as indicated for example by the rising number of special reports on climate change in the media. Costa Rica is able to proactively pass on its experiences of becoming a low emission country at the international

climate negotiations. This encourages developing and emerging countries to follow its example.

The voluntary commitments, which Costa Rica will publish at the next series of negotiations, have motivated key ministries such as the Ministry of Housing and Ministry of National Planning to integrate the climate policy into their structures.

GIZ's LEDS-Toolbox developed bottom up

Based on the project experience in Costa Rica and other countries, GIZ started to identify key success factors as well as pitfalls and started to develop a toolbox to guide practitioners through the process of developing and implementing a LEDS.

The toolbox provides a structure for the planning process divided into six steps to help users with checklists, "How to" guides, and links to detailed information. These tools form the groundwork for NAMA, MRV trainings and LEDS Workshops that GIZ is now offering to interested partners. However, this toolbox is just a first step.

The need for support from research

The most important challenges still remain:

- Many countries have several "LEDS" documents, e.g., National Action Plan on Climate Change, 5-year plan, report of Expert Group on Low Carbon Strategies for Inclusive Growth etc.
- Some of the existing development strategies (e.g. industry, job creation) are not at all connected with LED Strategies or even have conflicting goals.
- Integrating across ministries is a common challenge. Everywhere!
- Financial capacities are limited. What is affordable? How to keep costs down?
- Support from the international community is fragmented over many programs, facilities, sectors and time frames.

Hence, there is still a wide field for research. Expectations of researchers focus on the support for the practical application or implementation. A lot of research has been done and documents are available. However, practitioners need simple tools, for different working levels, that answer questions as:

- How to organize the complex process of LEDS development? Where are the incentives for the cooperation of ministries? How to assess and illustrate the cost (effort) / benefit ratio for the effort invested into the development of LEMS?
- How to implement and monitor the LED Strategy in such a way that sector-specific organizations can act efficiently and flexibly while contributing to the overall goal?
- How to calculate or weigh the effect of different activities that contribute in a consistent way to the overall goal, or that may have adverse effects (e.g. biomass and land for food or energy)?
- How to identify action gaps systematically?
- How to improve access to financial sources (e.g. GCF, International Finance Institutions)?

Possible types of instruments or methodologies that may help practitioners could be: sets of best practice examples, not so much models but success stories, country-specific facts and figures; stories with emotional content, and the possibility of South-to-South exchange at the working level; tools to define roles and responsibilities for organizing the process of strategy development and their effective implementation as well as for the monitoring of this process; tools to search and identify the potential change agents and positive alliances as well as for the moderation of conflicts and stakeholder dialogues. These tools may have the form of manuals, checklists, training curricula, cooperation platforms. However, in any case, they should be short, easy to understand and directly applicable.

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