



Context

Guatemala is the largest economy in Central America with a middle-income status. However, two thirds of the population live on less than US\$2 per day. Guatemala has one of the largest indigenous populations in Latin America, comprising 23 groups¹. Among the indigenous population, poverty averages 79 percent, with 40 percent living in extreme poverty. Stunting in children aged 6-59 months is among the highest in the world and the highest in the region (WFP, 2021).

Guatemala has long been vulnerable to climate and geophysical hazards which includes earthquakes, volcanic activity, floods, hurricanes, storms, and landslides. According to post-disaster needs assessments, between 1975 and 2015, severe events caused damage and losses of US\$ 9,148 million, of which 58 percent correspond to hydrometeorological events (World Bank *et al*, 2017). This high exposure, along with unplanned urban growth and high levels of poverty, placed Guatemala as the ninth most vulnerable country according to the 2016 Global Climate Risk Index, for the last 20 years (World Bank *et al*. 2017). According to the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 83.3 percent of the country's GDP is located within areas of risk (GFDRR, 2009). Guatemala's location between the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean makes it a target for hurricanes on both coasts.

From an administrative perspective, Guatemala has 22 Departments², or provinces, which are further divided into 340 municipalities (*municipios*). Recently, within a two-week period in early November 2020, Hurricane Eta, an erratic Category 4 hurricane, and Hurricane Iota ravaged 16 of those departments, home to approx. 5 million people³. Eta and Iota mainly affected rural areas with high levels of extreme poverty. The most affected department was Alta Verapaz, home to mostly indigenous Maya Q'eqché communities. The affected populations in the departments of Izabal, Quiché, Huehuetenango, Petén, Zacapa, and

¹ <https://www.wfp.org/stories/indigenous-women-guatemala-are-insured-against-drought-and-heavy-rains>

² 1 Alta Verapaz, 2 Baja Verapaz, 3 Chimaltenango, 4 Chiquimula, 5 Petén, 6 El Progreso, 7 El Quiché, 8 Escuintla, 9 Guatemala, 10 Huehuetenango, 11 Izabal, 12 Jalapa, 13 Jutiapa, 14 Quetzaltenango, 15 Retalhuleu, 16 Sacatepéquez, 17 San Marcos, 18 Santa Rosa, 19 Sololá, 20 Suchitepéquez, 21 Totonicapán, 22 Zacapa.

³ Mostly Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Quiché, Huehuetenango, Petén, Zacapa and Chiquimula.

Chiquimula share several structural characteristics with those in Alta Verapaz. They areas are primarily rural, mostly self-identify as indigenous peoples, and are poorer than the national average (IFRC, 2021)⁴. Over 1.9 million people were affected, including more than 1.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance (IFRC, 2021).

There is overwhelming scientific consensus that climate extremes are having a devastating impact on agriculture in Central America, affecting the livelihoods of millions of farmers and serving as a driver of migration from the region⁵. The 2015/2016 El Niño phenomenon led to one of the worst droughts in 35 years in Central America. Guatemala's southeast region (known as the Dry Corridor⁶, a term penned during the El Niño event in 2009) was especially affected, leading to widespread crop failure and food insecurity (USAID, 2017). Maize and bean harvests were reduced by more than 50 percent in the western highlands and eastern dry corridor affecting one in five households (USAID, 2017). The Government of Guatemala (GoG) declared a State of Emergency in effect for 30 days in 10 departments⁷. 2019 was the driest year in a decade with only 65 days of rain, according to Guatemala's National Institute of Seismology, Volcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology (INSIVUMEH).

Guatemala is part of the Central American Dry Corridor (CADC), an area which extends from southern Mexico to Panama. The United Nations has designated the Dry Corridor as one of the most susceptible regions in the world to the effects of climate change. The area regularly experiences long periods of decreased precipitation—up to forty percent below average—coupled with heatwaves. During other periods, such as El Niño, tropical storms devastate the region with flooding. This has devastating impacts on the rural population who are dependent on crops for their livelihood and have extremely limited coping capacities. In Guatemala, some 10.5 million people, about 60 percent of whom are in poverty, live in the Dry Corridor⁸. The *canícula* (heat wave) is a natural climate event that causes the reduction of rainfall during the rainy season, in July and August, and coincides with a critical phase in agricultural production. In recent years, this reduction in precipitation has begun earlier, has lasted longer, and/or has been more intense, particularly in the departments of Chiquimula and Zacapa.⁹ Climate change is not the only challenge within the Dry Corridor - it is also characterised by extreme poverty, inequality, food and nutritional insecurity, extensive deforestation, soil degradation and water scarcity.

Regional institutions

The Central American States have long-standing mechanisms for regional cooperation and coordination in managing disaster risk. At the regional level the fora for anticipatory action (AA) discussion would be the Central American Integration System (*Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana - SICA*) that “*strengthens the region's institutional capacities for comprehensive disaster risk reduction management, promotes regional policies and support for each country and coordinates efforts for planning public and private actions*” (CEPRENAC, 2017: p.7). However, SICA tends to be reactive (FAO KII).

The Central American Policy on Comprehensive Risk Management (PCGIR), approved by the heads of State of SICA in December 2017, is aligned with the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/central-america-hurricanes-eta-iota-6-months-operation-update-mdr43007>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/feb/07/guatemala-hunger-famine-flee-north>;
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/08/emigration-and-food-insecurity-in-central-american-dry-corridor-focus-of-new-un-backed-study/>

⁶ Provinces of Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Quiché, El Progreso, Chiquimula, Jalapa, Zacapa and Jutiapa and Totonicapán

⁷ Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Petén, Quiché, Jutiapa, El Progreso and Santa Rosa, Huehuetenango.

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/422132/icode/>

⁹ <https://ccafs.cgiar.org/news/scaling-adaptation-experiences-dry-corridor-guatemala>

Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. It guides Disaster Risk Management (DRM) at the regional and national levels, especially for the Member States that are already part of SICA specialised agency, the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC)¹⁰. However, it doesn't refer to AA. Under PCGIR, the Central American Regional Disaster Reduction Plan 2019–2023 seeks to contribute to the integration of disaster reduction into sustainable development of SICA member States, complementing such integration at the global level among the Sendai Framework and SDGs.

SICA also has regional organisations working on environment and climate change, and water and climate. The three intergovernmental bodies that form the environmental subsystem of SICA have established a functioning mechanism with the purpose of avoiding competition and pursuing joint advocacy. In 2012, the Central Fund for the Development of Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (FOCEGIR) was established by CEPREDENAC, as a financial instrument for national and regional projects on prevention and preparedness that strengthen the capacities of countries to deal with and manage the threats of climate change and reduce vulnerability (UNDRR, 2019).

National Legislation and Policy Environment

Disaster risk management (DRM) has been on the GoG's national agenda for a long time (GFDRR, 2010)¹¹. However, the legal framework that governs DRM is the 1996 CONRED Law, which does not address key processes of Disaster Risk Management, such as risk identification and risk reduction. The creation of the National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (*Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres - CONRED*) introduced disaster prevention in the disaster management system in Guatemala for the first time. CONRED was established in 1996, by Legislative Decree 109-96 of Congress and is referred to as the 'CONRED Law'.

The GoG has identified natural hazards and climate risks as a contingent liability that undermines the country's development trajectory by affecting the country's fiscal sustainability. Therefore, The GoG has initiated a series of policy reforms intended to strengthen the legal framework for DRM and CCA. This includes a bill of law, submitted to Congress in January 2019¹², to strengthen the legal disaster risk management framework, and the adoption of a roadmap to strengthen institutional capacities for volcanic risk reduction and resilience. This follows the lessons learned from the eruption of Volcano Fuego in 2018. It is currently awaiting parliamentary approval (World Bank, 2019). The new legal DRM framework will establish responsibilities at both national and local levels through a localised DRM approach at the municipal level. The DRM Law is in line with the national CCA framework, therefore constitutes a strong mechanism to foster resilience and promote sustainability. The proposed law also builds on the National Planning System which mandates Municipal Development Plans (created by SEGEPLAN in 2007)¹³. It is unclear if AA could be linked to these plans.

The policy reforms appear to be facilitated by a World Bank Development Policy Loan (DPL) which requires targeted policy reforms and provides finance directly to a borrowing country's general budget. This budget support therefore come with strings attached, as each loan contains policy conditions that borrowing

¹⁰ This is a coordination mechanism among the national DRM agencies of SICA Member States. It is financed by annual contributions from member States, as well as significant resources via international cooperation.

¹¹ This is evident with the inclusion of DRM in the National Development Plan 2008–2012 (Plan de la Esperanza)

¹² Legislative Initiative 5543, dated January 18, 2019

¹³ The Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Presidency (SEGEPLAN) reports that a total of 209 municipalities have approved its Municipal Development Plan with the incorporation of disaster risk reduction activities. SEGEPLAN is currently supporting 46 municipalities in the formulation of its Municipal Development Plans and by 2021 it is scheduled to support 29 more municipalities. The percentage of municipalities contributing to the indicator is 61% (209 out of 340 in the country).

countries must meet (World Bank, 2019)¹⁴. Expected results from disaster risk management policy reforms relevant to AA include - the establishment of a National System for disaster risk management, with procedures and instruments to enhance risk knowledge and reduction, disaster preparedness and response, and resilient recovery; 100 municipalities with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities included in their development plans; and a restructured, strengthened National Institute of Seismology, Volcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology (INSIVUMEH) providing enhanced hazard information (World Bank, 2019).

CONRED works as a coordinating mechanism to provide a platform and legal framework for inter-ministerial coordination in the case of emergency, while also handling disaster prevention. It is supported by an Executive Secretariat (SE-CONRED) which is organised around seven work areas¹⁵ and has representation at the Department, Municipal and local levels, and some municipalities have functioning Municipal Risk Reduction Offices (USAID Communication). Although the Regulation of the Law was updated in 2012 and moves towards a comprehensive management of disaster risk, it still requires further expansion. For example, it does not consider a financing approach and it is not embedded within other policies, norms and principles of public management, such as the decentralization policy, the macro-fiscal policy, the policy of adaptation to climate change; or norms such as the Law of Public Order, the Law of the Integrated System of Financial Administration. The law also presents gaps and overlaps in the functions of different public entities and levels of government and doesn't establish roles and responsibilities (GFDRR, 2014).

Article 15 of the CONRED law creates and regulates the **Permanent National Fund for Disaster Reduction** (*Fondo Nacional Permanente de Reducción de Desastres*) and establishes other mechanisms for financing CONRED and for having extraordinary resources in the case of State of Public Calamity or National Emergency. For 2017, the budget law has assigned a budgetary line of Q8 million to be executed by SE-CONRED, independent of the regular SE-CONRED budget (Q60 million) (World Bank *et al*, 2017). Although it has been reported that sub-national levels of government do not have access to sufficient resources for DRR. In the new DRM Law, it is proposed that the Permanent National DRM Fund is to be funded annually and operational in line with the DRFS (World Bank, 2020).

The highest body of CONRED is the National Council for Risk Reduction which is coordinated by the Ministry of National Defence. The SE-CONRED is the decision-making body of the National Council. In case of imminent risks and disasters, an Executive Board for Disaster Reduction is able to make decisions needed to be implemented immediately.

The National Development Plan (K'atun) recognises important synergies between DRM and CCA (World Bank, 2019). The 2011 National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction (PNRRD) (updated in 2016) and the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018-2023 (CONRED, 2018; World Bank, 2019) form the policy framework. Both documents are related to the comprehensive disaster risk management approach promoted at the international level through the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework and emphasise the need to develop financial and budgetary mechanisms that guarantee the availability and timely execution of resources in the processes of prevention, response, early recovery and reconstruction. There is a better integration of DRR and CCA in the new national strategy over its predecessor (CONRED, 2018).

The Climate **Change National Policy** was enacted in 2009 and outlines the legal and political basis and sets up the guidelines for development of national adaptation and mitigation. In 2013, a **Framework law**

¹⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/05/27/guatemalas-capacities-to-manage-risk>

¹⁵ Coordination, financial management, DRM, response, preparedness, mitigation, and logistics.

(Climate Change Law)¹⁶ was passed by Congress with the primary objective to provide an immediate and co-ordinated response to climate change. The law established the National Climate Change Fund (FONCC) to finance projects that address, risk management, adaptation and/or mitigation (with 80 per cent of the fund dedicated to risk and vulnerability management and adaptation) and the National Climate Change Council (CNCC) to lead national policies on climate change and oversee the FONCC. The CNCC is a collegial advisory body with public and private participation, chaired by the President (USAID, 2017). In addition to this, in 2016 the government adopted the **National Action Plan for Climate Change (PANCC)**¹⁷ (USAID, 2017; LSE n.d.¹⁸).

Other relevant institutions include the National Institute for Seismology, Volcanology, Meteorology and Hydrology (*Instituto Nacional de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología e Hidrología* - INSIVUMEH); Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (*Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación* - MAGA)¹⁹ and the Climate Change Unit within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (*Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* - MARN)²⁰ was established in 2001. MARN is part of MAGA (WFP KII).

An interesting initiative is the regional collaborative network launched by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and its international and Guatemalan partners. These networks provide thousands of Guatemalan farmers access to state-of-the-art forecasts and other climate information to help them increase crop yields and increase their income. These collaborations are called *mesas técnicas agroclimáticas (MTA)*, or agroclimatic roundtables and comprise of experts and decision makers ranging from small farmers to representatives from a wide variety of institutions²¹. The representatives meet on a regular basis to discuss recent climate conditions and the latest forecasts and agree on a set of good agricultural practices for the region and strategies to communicate those recommendations (Columbia University, 2019)²².

Disaster Risk Financing

In 2018, the Ministry of Public Finance (MINFIN) approved a Disaster Risk Financial Strategy (DRFS), as part of the World Bank Development Policy Loan (DPL), which promotes the diversification of disaster-related financial instruments (World Bank, 2019). Previous to this, Guatemala used risk retention financial instruments for post disaster expenditure. The main financing sources were the Permanent National Fund for Disaster Reduction (mentioned earlier); the Emerging Fund (*Fondo Emergente*)²³ under the General Budget; a US\$85 million DPL with CAT DDO from the World Bank²⁴ and post-disaster budget reallocations (World Bank, *et al.* 2017; World Bank 2019). A 2017 World Bank report stated that there is a need to strengthen and specify the existing legal framework of the Emerging Fund and the Permanent National Fund for Disaster Reduction, in order to optimise the purpose for which they were created. For e.g., although the use of the Emerging Fund is activated by the declaration of a State of Emergency in the territory, it has

¹⁶ Decree of the Congress 7-2013

¹⁷ <https://www.climate-laws.org/geographies/guatemala/policies/national-action-plan-for-climate-change>

¹⁸ <https://www.climate-laws.org/geographies/guatemala/laws/framework-law-to-regulate-reduction-of-vulnerability-mandatory-adaptation-to-the-effects-of-climate-change-and-the-mitigation-of-greenhouse-gas-effects-decree-of-the-congress-7-2013>

¹⁹ <https://www.maga.gob.gt/>

²⁰ <https://www.marn.gob.gt/>

²¹ These include local municipalities, national government, humanitarian agencies, farmers associations and international organisations

²² <https://iri.columbia.edu/news/actoday-launches-climate-roundtables-in-guatemala/>

²³ Governmental Accord 105-2012. Its purpose is to mitigate the damages that may be caused by natural phenomena that affect the country. It is a cumulative fund financed with voluntary contributions from mining companies. Its use requires a Declaration of a state of Calamity, which is regulated by the Law of Public Order

²⁴ Which Guatemala withdrew in 2010 in response to the Pacaya volcano eruption and tropical storm Agatha

been reported that the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Energy and Mines also receive transfers from this fund for uses that don't appear to be connected with DRM. The Permanent National Fund for Disaster Reduction relies on a confusing legal framework that hinders efficient expenditure execution (World Bank *et al.*, 2017).

Although the 2017 Budget Law²⁵ already allows MINFIN to acquire risk transfer instruments, such as parametric insurance, the 2019 Budget Law approved by Congress mandates the acquisition of risk transfer instruments to build more fiscal resilience against disasters (World Bank, 2019; World Bank *et al.*, 2017).

The second DRM Development Policy Loan with **CAT DDO II P159710** amounting to US\$200 million, with the World Bank²⁶ became effective on April 16, 2020. It aims to modernise and strengthen Guatemala's legal, institutional and financial framework to manage the impact of adverse natural events and climate risk and increase the Government's capacity to quickly mobilise resources in the aftermath of natural disasters. It builds on lessons learned from the first DPL with CAT-DDO disbursed in 2010 which was linked to the GoG's commitment to implement national agendas for DRR/M (GFDRR, 2013). The CAT DDO would trigger and disburse funds after an official declaration of a state of public calamity, in accordance with the national legislation²⁷.

The **Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF SPC)** was established in 2007 and provides parametric insurance coverage for tropical cyclones, earthquakes and excess rainfall to limit the financial impact of these catastrophes by quickly providing financial liquidity when a policy is triggered. It currently has 22 member governments of which three are from Central America – Nicaragua, Panama, and Guatemala. The GoG joined the Facility as the third Central American member in 2019 and purchased parametric insurance cover for excess rainfall for the 2019/20 policy year²⁸. In June 2020, Guatemala received a payout of approx. US\$3.6 million following Excess Rainfall Event Associated with Tropical Cyclones Amanda and Cristobal, under the CCRIF excess rainfall (XSR) parametric insurance policy²⁹.

Another funding mechanism comes from the Development Councils Law (Decree 52-87), which defines a constitutional percentage (8 percent) to be distributed by the National Council to the municipalities for any initiative related to DRR (Palero, 2019).

Social protection

The current social protection programmes, overseen by the Ministry of Social Development (*Ministerio de Desarrollo Social* - MIDES) are spread out, low in coverage and lack continuity throughout the different administrations. However, efforts are being made to improve the targeting system. The three main programmes managed by MIDES include *Bono Seguro* ('secure grant' – Bono), *Transferencias Monetarias Condicionadas para-Alimentos* ('Conditional Cash Transfers for Food' – TMC for Food) and *Comedores Seguros* ('safe canteens'). The last two programmes don't cover the Dry Corridor region. *Bono Seguro* includes all the departments in the Dry Corridor, reaching a substantial number of households (the department with the biggest coverage reaches 40 per cent of the population). Although these departments

²⁵ The Budget Law also created a budgetary line of Q192 million with the name "Public Emergencies and Calamity Fund" to transfer resources from the Emerging Fund to the attention of emergencies. All public entities can access these resources to meet the different needs derived from the state of Emergency and / or Calamity (World Bank *et al.*, 2017).

²⁶ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P159710?lang=en>

²⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/05/27/guatemalas-capacities-to-manage-risk>

²⁸ https://www.ccrif.org/node/12106?language_content_entity=en

²⁹ https://www.ccrif.org/en/news/guatemala-receives-payout-ccrif-following-excess-rainfall-event-associated-tropical?language_content_entity=en

have not been covered continuously, given this coverage, *Bono Seguro* could be scaled up in an emergency (OPM, 2017).

Anticipatory Action Pilots

World Food Programme (WFP) - A pilot was launched for dry spells in the Department of Chiquimula, selected because of its climate and socio-economic vulnerability (although dry spells affect the entire country and not just the dry corridor). It is still under design, with a target launch in the 2nd quarter of 2022. The pilot builds on a micro-insurance product launched in June 2021, that will cover over 1,300 smallholders in the Dry Corridor of Guatemala (in the Departments of Alta Verapaz, Zacapa, El Progreso and Chiquimula), of which 69 percent are women (WFP, 2021)³⁰.

FAO is supporting early action for drought in Guatemala. A project was initiated in 2019 and Government partners (National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, National Meteorological Service) were engaged in all stages of the initiative, including disaster risk prioritization, establishment of anticipatory action trigger mechanism and related SOPs, implementation and monitoring of anticipatory actions. The pilot is implemented by *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA)*; and *Centro Regional de Recursos Hidráulicos (CRRH)*. A combination of soft and scientific triggers was used. The criteria for targeting beneficiaries were: Households that rely on livestock and agriculture as their primary livelihood; Households that own or use small size of agricultural land; Households that own limited number of animals; Low-income households who are living under the minimum wage; Single-parent households, particularly with large families; Households receiving limited or no social security benefits; Households with limited access to markets; and Households with children under five years old.

In April 2019, there was an activation in the Department of Jalapa. It included setting up of water harvesting systems, connections with a drip irrigation system, and the introduction of Tilapia fish in ponds. 1,450 households received technical assistance, including on identification, evaluation, and management of water source recharge areas, contour barrier information (live and dead barriers, ditches and dikes) and placement of stakes or stones near the water harvesting area. 1,005 households safeguarded their livelihoods from drought through prophylaxis carried out on 4,452 animals, and distribution of black bean seeds (REAP Mapping).

More recently there was an activation using the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Global Seasonal Climate Update (target Season: May-June-July 2021) rather than Government of SICA triggers. The first forecast was around March/May and AA started in May which was considered a bit late. The pilot is in the implementing phase and AA includes improving the capacity to harvest water and the distribution of drought-resilient seeds and strengthening the local climatic tables at the municipal level. Although there was no drought this year, FAO is working with a no regrets policy. A Practical guide to implement National Plans for AA has also been launched during 2020 (FAO KII).

Guatemalan Red Cross - Since 2019 the Guatemalan Red Cross Society has been developing protocols for volcanic ash, tropical storms, and droughts. The project seeks to provide extensive support to the National Society in further developing the Preparedness and Response system (Anticipation Hub, not dated).³¹

³⁰ <https://www.wfp.org/stories/indigenous-women-guatemala-are-insured-against-drought-and-heavy-rains>

³¹ Accessed 18 September 2021

Collaboration

There are current discussions going on between the WFP, FAO Regional Offices to develop a joint AA framework in the dry corridor. A KI mentioned that there needs to be collaboration with the Guatemala Red Cross and German Red cross to scale up. The WFP Regional Office is trying to build a relationship with the Inter-American Development Bank (WFP KII).

Other relevant development and resilience initiatives

USAID/ Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)-supported program to strengthen CONRED. The goal of the three-year Central Level CONRED Capacity Strengthening Program (SCSP) implemented by Global Communities (GC) is to strengthen the capacity of the Executive Secretariat (SE) of CONRED to reduce disaster risk, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. The programme's SCSP demonstration areas include Region 1 (as classified by SE CONRED), which includes Guatemala, Santa Rosa, Jalapa, Jutiapa; and Region 3, which includes Quetzaltenango, Sololá, Quiché, Huehuetenango, Totonicapán, and San Marcos. These two regions encompass a total of 1,743,449 individuals or 337,175 families that may indirectly benefit from strengthened capacity of CONRED as a result of this project. To accomplish its objectives, GC will collaborate with SE CONRED, core ministries, governmental institutions, *mancomunidades* (association of local authorities), municipalities, private sector associations, and university partners. The work of the project will focus on the CONRED system at the national level, as well as in several focus regions that will serve as "learning laboratories" or demonstration areas where more in depth work will be carried out to generate capacity-building strategies that can be adapted and scaled by GC's local counterparts. Importantly, while the thrust of many past capacity building efforts has been on training and equipping SE CONRED for emergency response, the proposed project will emphasise engaging the broader CONRED system in collaborative efforts to develop evidence-based, highly prioritised, and context-specific disaster preparation, risk reduction and response plans. This will decrease the humanitarian caseload and create a stronger evidence base and shared understanding of specific risks which will create a foundation for emergency response planning and capacity, as well as support a broader range of institutions, particularly at the municipal level, to take more steps to continually reduce risks to disasters and respond to them effectively (USAID Communication).

Restorative Agriculture in Communities for Economic Sustainability (RAICES) Project - Through the RAICES program funded by USAID/BHA, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and their local partners is supporting more than 72,000 people between August 2020 and December 2022 through community-led DRR activities in 53 communities in the departments of Baja Verapaz and Chiquimula in the Dry Corridor. CRS is helping the CONRED system by promoting municipalities to open their Risk Management Offices for DRR activities at the local level. The project also strengthens the resilience of 5,900 households affected by drought from those communities, developing their capacity to reduce and manage risks related to drought and erratic rains. CRS works with rural farmers to develop climate-adapted agricultural systems and community mechanisms for survival that improve their resilience and provide the necessary support when disasters cannot be fully mitigated (USAID Communication).

Other notable resilience projects related to the dry corridor include the Green Climate Fund's RELIVE (REsilient LIVElihoods) of vulnerable smallholder farmers in the Mayan landscapes and the Dry Corridor of Guatemala³² and an Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) pilot to assist with adaptation efforts in four towns in the district of Chiquimula³³.

³² <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp145>

³³ <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/01/22/developing-sustainable-livelihoods-guatemalas-dry-corridor/>

Analysis

Guatemala has a myriad of policies of relevance to early action, but implementation has remained a challenge due to lack of clear roles of stakeholders, and/or inadequate financial resources. Although recent efforts have been made to change the country's institutional DRM focus from a reactive to a more holistic and proactive approach for managing risk ahead of disasters, these still need to be implemented (World Bank, 2019). The national DRM Policy is not binding, which means DRM is still governed by the 1996 Law, which does not address key processes such as risk identification and risk reduction (World Bank, 2019). Although successive governments and Parliaments have legislated on risk management, vulnerability, etc., these laws and policies cannot be developed in their entirety since a considerable amount of effort needs to be undertaken to take them to completion (Palero, 2019). There appears to be political interest in AA and the institutions are there to support it (FAO KII), but it is unclear where the entry points are. There is potential to engage at the regional level with SICA to discuss a structure for managing and scaling up AA in the region, once sufficient evidence has been collected or the utility of AA/FbF approaches has been demonstrated in one or two locations. Other mechanisms being explored by WFP and FAO include PROGRESAN (the food security working group) or even CEPREDENAC (the disaster management group) (WFP KII).

Political issues remain a threat. One KI mentioned that during government changes all the momentum for change gets lost. The World Bank also highlighted that at the program level, the political and governance risk is high, which could have potential impacts on the achievement of the operations. In 2015 there were corruption allegations against government officials³⁴, which impacted the GoG's ability to implement reforms (World Bank, 2019). More recently there were protests to demand the resignation of President Giammattei and Attorney General Consuelo Porra. These took place for 10 consecutive days and affected donor visits (WFP, 2021).

Finally, preventing migration and stamping out corruption in Central America has also been on the political agenda of the Biden administration in the United States³⁵. It was proposed that Vice President Kamala Harris oversee a proposed US\$4 billion effort to tackle "root causes" of migration, starting in Guatemala. Improved climate information services, tailored, comprehensive information that farmers can use, in a language that is understandable, to manage agricultural risk and forecast seasonal changes (FAO KII). Being able to anticipate droughts or floods could enable communities to make more informed decisions, maximize crop production, and improve food security—all of which could affect their propensity to migrate.

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³⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/09/guatemala-president-otto-perez-molina-cicig-corruption-investigation>

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