Preface

Latin America is one of the most important regions of the world in terms of biodiversity and ecosystems. The region's rich biodiversity provides invaluable benefits to human health, well-being and the broader economy. However, large-scale deforestation to clear land for agriculture, mining, energy and infrastructure projects, over-extraction of natural resources, invasive species and climate change are placing enormous pressure on the region's natural wealth.

This report summarises key findings and lessons learned in the area of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use from the OECD Environmental Performance Reviews conducted for five Latin American countries between 2013 and 2017: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

The report highlights the leadership of the region in the use of payments for ecosystem services. It shows that terrestrial and marine protected areas in some Latin American countries cover a surface far surpassing the international Aichi Targets of 17% and 10% respectively by 2020. Innovative solutions such as conservation trust funds are increasingly used to bridge the large biodiversity finance gap. The report also points to the particularly high potential for nature based tourism in Latin America, especially in coastal and marine ecosystems.
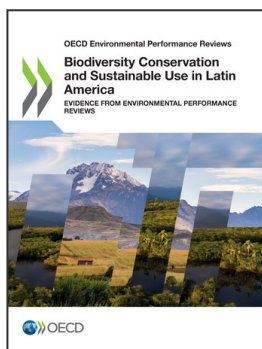
The report describes remaining challenges that need to be addressed. The rate of deforestation in South America has slowed down, but remains among the highest in the world. Economic instruments such as charges and fees for pollution are still in the early stages of development. Despite growing water scarcity risks in the region, irrigation practices have yet to significantly shift to modern water saving practices. Environmentally harmful subsidies continue to provide perverse incentives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Agricultural support systems have yet to be reformed to discourage pesticide use.

The report builds on the wealth of policy analysis provided in the Environmental Performance Reviews. It is the result of a constructive dialogue between the OECD and its member and partner countries participating in the OECD Working Party of Environmental Performance. I am confident that this effort will be helpful to improve our understanding of the challenges for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and to identify good practices and innovative solutions to improve the management of biodiversity in Latin America and beyond.

Rodolfo Lacy

Director, OECD Environment Directorate

From:

Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in Latin America
Evidence from Environmental Performance Reviews

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264309630-en