“The dynamics of drugs in the forests of the Colombian Amazon”
Background

Deforestation and illicit crops in the Amazonian region

Technical cooperation to effectively address deforestation:

Enforcement challenges to face deforestation
• The Amazon is the region most affected by deforestation since it concentrates 62% of the country's deforestation (Ideam and SMBYC, 2020).
• Illicit crops and the consolidation of coca production centers have resulted in the loss of natural resources and impacted protected areas.
• In specific areas of the country, deforestation has been facilitated by the presence of organized crime networks that are related to illicit economies and activities leading to the destruction of forests and natural resources.
Deforestation rates have increased in the last two years, according to official data.

Deforestation is concentrated in the Amazon Region of Colombia. The most affected municipalities are located in the departments of Meta (municipality of La Macarena), Caquetá (municipality of San Vicente del Caguán) and Guaviare (municipality of San José del Guaviare).
Official information underlines that the relationship between illicit crops and deforestation is not direct and unique. In the Amazon Region of Colombia, only 11% of the territory shows a coincidence of both phenomena: deforestation and illicit crops. 30% of the illicit crops and 11% of the deforested areas are present in those areas. That relationship translates into approximately 8,000 ha deforested out of the 71,000 that IDEAM reported in 2019 for that area.
Dynamics related to deforestation in Colombia

Unsustainable expansion of cattle ranching

Illicit crops

Unauthorized Infrastructure and roads

Expansion of agricultural frontier

Fires

Illegal mining extraction

Criminality and organized crime activity

Praderisation

Cross-cutting issue: Land grabbing.

Causes and Drivers tend to change over time and there is not a unique cause or direct driver of deforestation. The damage to natural resources, including forest, covers a wide range of legal and illicit dynamics.
Technical cooperation to effectively address deforestation:

- **Promote**
  - complex cases: preventive, follow-up and intervention actions, police and interagency operations in criminal, administrative, land, registry and cadastral.

- **Support**
  - rural and ethnic communities and territorial authorities for the generation of alliances and preventive actions.

- **Generate**
  - alliances with countries and international agencies.

- **Create**
  - synergies between national and local institutions, and civil society to impact the territories.

- **Consolidate**
  - multidisciplinary environmental units for the institutions.

- **Train**
  - officials, judicial servants, civil society and local communities.

- **Develop**
  - instruments for the georeferencing of information, the monitoring, follow-up and interoperability of data for decision making.

**How? IMPACTING AREAS OF SPECIAL ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE**
More than 1,434,023 ha. of special ecological importance impacted by the program

What do we do?
Addressing environmental crime in line with the Agenda 2030 (deforestation, land grabbing, illegal hunting, illegal trafficking of flora and fauna, illegal fishing, pollution, illegal mining, among others).

- Main facts 2021
  - 123 actions related to cases and police operations developed for the investigation of environmental crimes
  - 392 officials, judicial servants and civil society sharing experiences with countries and international agencies in best practices to fight deforestation
  - 15 national, regional, and local entities with strengthened capacities to prevent and address environmental crimes
  - 9 preventive, follow-up and intervention actions developed
  - 1,434,023 ha. of special ecological importance impacted by the program
  - 87 mentors strengthening environmental units of national and local institutions
  - 3 interagency action developed to strengthening institutional capacities of Defense and Security entities
  - 1,110 actions developed in administrative, environmental, land, registry and cadastral matters
• Need to strengthen local capacities.
• Capacity building is critical for effective policy implementation.
• Poverty leads to an unsustainable use of resources.
• Combating wildlife and forest crime has not usually been seen as a priority when addressing organized crime.
• Detection, investigation and prosecution of associated illicit financial flows is essential.
• Limits of public resources for environmental control and prosecution.