

## **Workshop; “Community Management of Ecosystems in Andean and Amazon Countries”**

Community leaders from South and Central America met to exchange and enrich each other's experiences with community management of ecosystems. The workshop “Community Management of Ecosystems in Andean and Amazon Countries”, organized by the Indigenous and Peasant Farmers Coordinators on Community Agro Forestry in Central America (known as ACICAFOC, the Spanish acronym), Forest Trends, CICDA, and AFINCO in the village of Bum Bum in Venezuela, concluded with a hand full of positive aspects.

The workshop was carried out in the State of Barinas from the 16th to the 23rd of February. Indigenous peoples, mestizo farmers and Afro-American community leaders from the South and Central American countries participated, and the event was supported by the Forestry Department of the government of Venezuela and other international organisms and institutions.

Eighty per cent of the participants who attended the workshop on community management of ecosystems went out of their respective countries to live and experience this community interchange, in which they shared with each other their local experiences for a week to enrich others.

Thirty applications, out of the one hundred and twenty that reached ACICAFOC's office, were selected to guarantee the richness and diversity of the community experiences. The representatives considered this workshop a social investment for the community processes and called upon the cooperation of others to make social investments in human capital.

During this intense week of exchange, the groups that participated in the Workshop agreed to create a Latin American Network on Community Forestry led by community organizations, where community product quality and origin can be verified and trusted.

In addition, institutional compromises were made. Firstly, the participants agreed to support the cooperative societies of Rio Zapa, La Victoria and La Roma, in order to create the Forest Reservation Ticoporo and Caporoa community forest concession; secondly they agreed to initiate a process of integrated management for an extension of 47,000 hectares of land. This was a technical proposal that will be supported by a multidisciplinary team from ACICAFOC, the Forestry Department of the government of Venezuela and the cooperative societies benefiting from the concession, starting with the work at the end of March 2004.

At the end of this successful workshop, filled with important lessons and positive aspects, ACICAFOC wishes to thank the support of AFINCO and the Cooperative societies for hosting this workshop; the Government of Venezuela for welcoming everybody; Forest Trends for their support, trust and follow-up in this process, which has strengthened their working relationship; and the Norwegian Fideicomisum and the project RUTA for their financial support.

ACICAFOC wishes to extend a special thank you to the workshop participants for their active participation and their valuable contributions, hoping that the methodologies of the Indigenous and Peasant Farmers Coordinators on Community Agro Forestry in Central America will serve as tools for their respective communities and knowing that the feedback will be of great use to the Association.

For additional information please contact Alejandra Martin:  
[amartin@forest-trends.org](mailto:amartin@forest-trends.org)