

## **A LANDSCAPE / LIFESCAPE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY IN THE TROPICS: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SANREM CRSP AT THREE SITES**

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The Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP), funded by U.S. AID, aims to develop principles and methodologies for achievement of sustainable ecosystem management at the watershed and landscape scale. In contrast to much of the earlier literature in environmental, agricultural, and ecological science which portrays humans as the despoilers of ecosystems, the SANREM approach acknowledges the role of people as integral actors who must be directly engaged in sustainable development if it is to be successful. The SANREM approach, therefore, uses an interdisciplinary, farmer-participatory research, training and information exchange strategy to bridge between scientific knowledge and local expertise in the resolution of problems. A landscape ecology approach is used to describe and understand the complex internal, external, and interactive processes within and between the individual ecosystems of a toposequence transecting two or more agroecological zones. Coupled with the landscape notion is that of “lifescape”, or the human dimension, which includes economic, cultural and social aspects in interaction with the physical and biological dimensions of ecosystems. Interventions appropriate to the local farm community members are designed and evaluated in concert with the ultimate users who are involved in all steps of the research process. The approach includes emphasis on collaboration between biological and social scientists and development practitioners in the U.S. and host countries. It also strives for interinstitutional collaboration that involves private and public institutions from each country as well as the U.S.

The SANREM project is considered one of the first of its kind, a pioneering effort to solve complex natural resource and sustainable agriculture problems involving a wide range of stakeholders who may have conflicting interests among themselves. These stakeholders include local communities, international research and development organizations, U.S. universities, host country universities and government agencies, local government and nongovernment organizations (NGOs). Also, there is a need to address experimentally a hierarchical range of spatial and temporal scales across a landscape. In attempting to meet these challenges, we have many successes, many failures and many lessons learned. This chapter outlines the experiences of SANREM at the core sites in the Philippines, Burkina Faso, and Ecuador, and presents critical lessons learned in implementing a large landscape-scale research and education program.

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For full text refer to: Rattan Lal (ed), 2000. *Integrated Watershed Management in the Global Ecosystem*, Soil and Water Conservation Society, CRC Press Boca Raton, London, New York, Washington, D.C., pp. 209-222.