



Energy & the Environment

From its tropical rainforests, Amazon jungle, deserts and marshes to the perpetual snowfalls in the Andes Mountains, Colombia's unique climate and wide-ranging ecosystems make it the second most biodiverse country in the world. As a nation with many precious natural resources, the Government of Colombia has put in place a series of policies and initiatives to preserve biodiversity and protect the environment.

Colombia's commitment to environmental conservation and energy diversification has received international recognition. For example, in 2008 and 2010, Yale University ranked Colombia in the top 10 in its Environmental Performance Index (EPI), a biennial report which ranks 163 countries on the achievement of established environmental policy goals.

Clean Energy Diversification

Colombia is developing a strong diversified energy portfolio composed of clean renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, wind and solar power, and biofuels. The Government of Colombia is also embarking on an ambitious domestic private-public initiative to harness in sustainable ways its vast wealth of energy resources by developing a globally competitive bioindustry sector, including biocommerce, biotechnology, and environmental services.

Cooperation with Other Countries

On the international front, Colombia is engaged in global efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and is a party to the Copenhagen Accord and the Kyoto Protocol. Colombia is also working with other nations in the Western Hemisphere to advance the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas.

In addition, in 2008, Colombia and the United States

Key Facts:

- With 56 percent of Colombia covered by natural forest, the country is home to up to 55,000 species of plants – which is 15 percent of the existing species in the world.
- Colombia is the only country in South America to have both a Pacific and Caribbean coast.
- Colombia ranks third in world water resources and produces more fresh water than India or the continental United States.
- Its marine territory is twice the size of Spain and is divided into 18 ecological regions – nine in the Pacific and nine in the Caribbean.
- The rugged Andes Mountains form a geographic spine through the country from north to south.
- The eastern and southern portions of the country are covered with the dense and tropical Amazon jungle, which is among the world's most valuable natural resources.
- The Colombian side of the Amazon jungle is home to 10% of the world's biodiversity, and produces 15% of the world's oxygen.
- Colombia is also the home of the highest seaside snow mountain – La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.



signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to advance clean renewable energy policies. The MOU expresses the intention of both countries to cooperate in the areas of non-conventional, renewable, clean energy sources through academic exchanges, agricultural and technological research and development, and scientific, technological, and business collaboration. The MOU also encourages the sustainable production and consumption of biofuels, and the promotion of sustainability projects in Colombia that create jobs, provide food security and better living conditions for rural populations, and encourage alternatives to illicit crop cultivation.

Environmental Protection Initiatives

One of the most hazardous threats to Colombia's pristine ecosystems is the international drug trade. Drug traffickers' use of harmful chemicals, their clearing of forests through slash-and-burn techniques, and other damaging practices are destroying Colombia's flora and fauna, contaminating its water supplies, and depleting the nation's environmental wealth.

To combat this problem, the Government of Colombia has instituted a number of initiatives aimed at protecting the environment and combating the detrimental effects of the drug trade. One initiative is the Shared Responsibility Program, which raises awareness of both the social and environmental impacts of drug production, which is fueled by high consumption levels abroad. For more information, please visit www.sharedresponsibility.gov.co/en/.

In addition, the Program for Ranger Families offers technical, economic, and social support to rural, indigenous and Afro-Colombian families living in areas that are affected by or are at risk for development of illicit crops. These families are helping to protect the nation's forests by not growing or replanting illicit crops following government eradication. Since 2003, more than 60,000 families have helped to protect Colombia's forests. Colombia has also launched cultivation programs in natural parks that support the growth of native medicinal plants as an alternative to illicit crops.

Colombia is an ecological treasure and protection of its natural resources is not only important to the country, but also to the world.

Learn more about today's Colombia at www.colombiaemb.org

Key Facts (continued):

- 1,870 species of birds also are indigenous to Colombia – which represents 20 percent of the world's total birds species.
- More than 800 species of freshwater fish coexist in the warm and clear waters of the Caribbean and Pacific oceans and Colombia's 4,500 basins, 1,200 rivers, 1,600 lakes and 1,900 swamps.
- Colombia is home to 753 species of amphibians, the largest number in the world.
- The country ranks first in the world for the most species of birds – more than 1,800 – and has the second largest species of butterflies, roughly 3,000.