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“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Co-ops and the Climate Change Mitigation Activities: Handling with Low Carbon Businesses in the Rural Sector.

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Abstract

The current situation regarding to climate change has aroused concern worldwide and brought in a broad range of potential mitigation and adaptation activities with local, national and global benefits. Such activities have been developed through the efforts of many organisations, governments and enterprises, and range from the development of lower-emission technologies to better land-use practices in agriculture and forest lands. Given that carbon emissions reductions also deliver a range of benefits, including short and long-term business opportunities as well as increased awareness of social and environmental responsibility, many producers and consumers associations have organised their members toward low carbon businesses.

Guided by the principle of concern for the community, co-operatives may have a comparative advantage to adopt measures in order to contribute to the reduction of atmospheric GHGs. Thus, co-operative associations in rural areas with their basic values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy and solidarity, have launched some initiatives to offset carbon emissions including adopting renewable sources of energy provided by wind and solar technologies, planting biofuel crops and implementing land-use and forestry based carbon sequestration projects through crops, forest and grassland management. By engaging in the emerging low carbon businesses, co-operative associations in rural areas worldwide can obtain benefits for themselves while contributing to achieve global targets. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to describe the social and economic context that has motivated co-operatives enterprises to tackle climate change mitigation in rural areas and to identify the portfolio of activities that have been developed so far, with emphasis to the social and environmental benefits achieved.

Keywords: Climate change, co-operative associations, rural areas