During the 2000-2003 period, the State of Zacatecas grew by an average annual rate of 5%. The State of Tabasco, however, showed absolutely no growth during the same period.

Nicaragua

While in the Caribbean region the concentration of income in the richest decile dropped from 48% to 40%, in Managua it rose from 43% to 51% during the same 1998-2001 period.

Ecuador

In the urban sectors of the Sierra, the extreme poverty rate is around 5%. In the rural coastal zone, however, it reaches 43%.

Peru

Urban income is practically twice that received by rural families.

Bolivia

In the indigenous municipalities the proportion of the population whose basic needs are not met, is more than 36% above that of the national average.

Chile

Life expectancy for a child born in the rural area of Loncoche is 14 years less than if he or she had been born in the wealthy Las Condes district of Santiago.

Guatemala

In the Metropolitan region, women’s electoral participation reaches 47%, in the rural north, only 22%.

Honduras

In the Islas de la Bahía Department, the literacy rate is 95%, while in Lempira it reaches 60%.

Colombia

While Antioquia rose from being eighth to the second province with the highest level of human development during the 1990s, the poor provinces of Chocó, Cauca and Nariño remained in the last three places during the same period.

Brasil

Between mid 2005 and 2006, around 14,039 square kilometres of Amazon rain forest was lost. In spite of the scale of this figure, it is 25% lower than the area lost during the 2004-2005 period.
**TERRITORIAL DIFFERENCES**

In the rural areas of Latin America there are around 70 million people living in poverty and 40 million who are extremely poor. Huge imbalances in access to resources and in power relationships between social groups have prevented economic growth from leading to improved living conditions for these people. Dynamics of growth with social exclusion have led to adverse impacts on the environment in rural areas, where people are dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods and wellbeing.

However, there are also rural areas that are able to develop successfully, achieving economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The societies in these rural territories have been able to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities offered by a new context of globalisation, trade liberalisation, accelerated technological innovation, decentralisation processes and new actors and social movements.

**A NEW LATIN AMERICAN APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Recognition of such huge disparities in the Latin American rural sector, and the need for an integrated understanding and coordinated actions to reverse this situation, have set in motion the Rural Territorial Dynamics Program.

Within rural territories, there is an imbalance between economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Hence the need for a form of development that resolves the conflicts between these objectives. This requires approaches that integrate multiple factors including geography, natural resources, economic systems, market dynamics, institutional frameworks, social actors and movements, and a restructured role for the public sector.

Now is the precise moment to begin constructing a new Latin American vision of rural development. A vision based on a broader conception of the rural environment that extends beyond just an agriculture and which recognises the importance of urban-rural links as a stimulus for growth and development, takes into account the different livelihood strategies of rural households, and encourages the formation of innovative social coalitions.

**AREAS OF RESEARCH**

Our aim is to provide answers to four central research questions as follows: What social coalitions exist in the territories? What role do such coalitions play in the formation and maintenance of institutions? What are the effects of such institutions on the distribution, use and productivity of tangible and intangible assets? And finally, what are the development outcomes processes in terms of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability?

**REVITALISING LATIN AMERICAN RURAL TERRITORIES**

At the end of five years we expect to have facilitated a Latin American network incorporating a diverse range of actors in territorial rural development, linked to networks and experiences in other regions. This network will have made progress in establishing theoretically consistent and empirically validated visions and strategies for revitalising Latin American rural societies in socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable ways.

On this basis, the network will contribute effectively to the formulation of policies and strategies for rural development and their practical application.

**A NETWORKED PROGRAM**

The basis of the program is applied research and capacity development in different rural areas throughout Central America, the Andes region and the Southern Cone. These areas will form the core of an open and functional network that seeks to link up multiple actors and interest groups, encouraging opportunities for dialogue, debate and synthesis at Latin-American level.

The Rural Territorial Dynamics Program is organised in five components: applied research, capacity development, international dialogue and networks, post-graduate education and communications.
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PARTNERS
The Rural Territorial Dynamics Program is coordinated by Rimisp - Latin American Center for Rural Development, in collaboration with the following partner institutions:

• Danish Institute for International Studies
• Department of Economics, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
• Group for the Analysis of Development, Peru
• Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

Rimisp - Latin American Center for Rural Development
A regional non-profit organisation set up in 1986, which promotes organizational learning and innovation in public and private policies, projects and programs, in ways that advance social inclusion, equity, well-being and vibrant democracies in Latin American rural societies. Rimisp works in close collaboration with individuals and organisations, public and private, national and international, at the Latin American and Caribbean level.