CIAT’s mission, Inter-Ministerial Committee For Territorial Development, is to define the government’s policy in what regards regional planning, protection and management of watersheds, sanitation, urban planning and equipment. The institution was created as a response to an alarming assessment and to the necessity of coherent and coordinated actions in regional planning sector.

An Alarming assessment

The Haitian territory is deteriorating. Cities as well as the countryside present the aspect of an ongoing deterioration making populations’ lives more and more difficult and drawing serious threats on the future.

There are several causes to that degradation:

- Demographic pressure,
- An inadequate land-ownership system;
- Poor spatial organization;
- Poor water resource management;
- Non renewal of soil fertility;
- Agricultural structures not producing sufficient revenues and conducive of soil-eroding farming practices;
- Anarchic development of cities (spontaneous neighborhoods with precarious and even dangerous living conditions without access to basic services) …

Necessity of coherent and coordinated actions

The rehabilitation of Haiti’s environment can only come from concerted and simultaneous actions all over the territory. The multiplicity of actors (national, regional and local-level public agencies, promoters, national and international NGOs …), the cross-cutting nature of the issues and the need for a shared strategic vision have put in the open the necessity for an organism in charge of conceiving and proposing a strategic, institutional and operational framework.

That instance must allow for the restoration of the State’s fundamental role and to legitimize its function over the territory, to give a second breath to decentralization and find the paths toward a regional planning adapted to the national realities.
CIAT and its attributions

Created out of a decree by the Prime Minister dated January 30, 2009, the Inter-ministerial Committee for regional planning is presided by the prime Minister and regroups the following ministries:
- Ministry of the Interior and of local authorities (MICT),
- Ministry of Economics and Finance (MEF),
- Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (MPCE),
- Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARND),
- Ministry of Public Works, Transportation and Communications (MTPTC),
- Ministry of the Environment (MDE).

Its main attributions:
- Coordinate and harmonize the government actions,
- Insure the revision of the legal, regulatory and institutional framework of regional planning,
- Guarantee the distribution of the necessary human, technical and financial resources,
- Insure the supervision, control and follow-up/evaluation of the ongoing actions in the field.

The Technical Secretariat, organizer of CIAT

The main attributions of the Technical Secretariat under the Prime Minister’s authority:
- Insure the implementation of the orientations defined by CIAT,
- Receive, Study and give an orientation to any program or project of intervention and analyze its relevance,
- Look for the coherence of the programs with the government general policies,
- Insure a well-balanced distribution of basic services throughout the territory,
- Look for territorial cohesion and judicious spatial planning of town and country,
- Spread that information, put out reports and recommendations,

The technical secretariat rests upon four units that are described in what follows. Furthermore it hosts the Vulnerability Reduction UNit and the Pilot Program for resilience in the face of climatic changes. It also has a GIS unit.

The various units associate the municipal and communal sections local authorities with their work, they are in direct contact with the operators and heads of projects working in the field: NGOs, consulting firms, joint enterprises …
Regional Planning and Development
The creation of that unit comes as an answer to the numerous problems incurred due to the loss by the Haitian State of the mastering of its territory’s management, the weakness of the coordination between local and national institutions and the need to make sure that all national and international actors are working in a coherent and orderly manner on the national priorities defined by the government.

The unit’s objective is to bring a technical support to concerned local and national institutions, mostly in developing the approach and the tools at the regional level which is comparatively more operational and insures better management of the relation between town and country planning and decentralization.

This unit is also a place for concertation among the various concerned agencies implicated in elaborating at the national level, a vision of regional planning and of prospective projects at the regional level.

Urban Planning and Habitat
The Urban Planning and Habitat unit is in charge of coordinating and harmonizing public intervention in the areas of urban planning and habitat. Its creation is in response to the strong demographic growth within the urban poles and the development of the cities by way of spontaneous residential neighborhoods where neither the minimal construction norms nor access to basic services is insured. Its role is all the more crucial as the January 12, 2010 catastrophe and the matter of providing new housing to the victims exacerbated the urgency to find decent housing solutions for a huge portion of the population.

This unit, with the support of the focal points mandated by the Ministries that are represented in CIAT, must answer to certain urgent needs in terms of urban planning such as the creation of adapted urban planning tools. It must also clarify, enrich and popularize the legislation concerning urban planning. This unit is the place for elaborating the master plans of the large urban centers as well as of the definition of references that are necessary to the elaboration of every plan for urban development, in concertation with the various concerned agencies. Finally, the unit’s work involves facilitating the passage from feasibility studies to implementation by executing pilot projects that can as a trigger by promoting the good practices that fit into the frameworks that were defined earlier.
Watershed and Water Resources Management
The unit, with the support of the focal points mandated by the Ministries represented in CIAT must coordinate and match public interventions in this area.
CIAT considers the watershed as a basic unit for the analysis and orientation of interventions in what concerns local planning and development. Consequently the unit’s task is to develop knowledge tools and elaborate frames of reference aiming at an integrated management of the watersheds from the ridge of the mountains to the littoral.

Legislation, Institutions, Land tenure
The Legislation, Institutions and Land tenure unit is in charge of analyzing, coordinating at the national level all activities pertaining to land tenure matters, and to propose a legal framework to remedy to land ownership’s insecurity.
The January 12, 2010 earthquake simply put into evidence the profound institutional weaknesses. Failings exist notably at the level of the system for the identification of properties, of persons and of rights. Reinforcing those three pillars is to guarantee land ownership security and to allow the institutions to better perform and respond to the expectations of the population.
This unit’s approach is cross-cutting reflecting the nature of the land tenure issue in Haiti. It works in collaboration with all the units that form CIAT, maintains a constant dialogue with the concerned national institutions, the international institutions and the NGOs operating in the field.
This coordinating and leading role will allow to strengthen the capacities in regional planning, in housing policy and to promote better coordination among the actors in the land tenure sector.

Reducing Vulnerability
The creation of the Vulnerability Reduction Unit (CRV) responds to the urgency to restore the indispensable balance within an environment that has become fragile essentially through man’s own interventions, by contributing to the reduction of natural threats impacts such as earthquakes, hurricanes, landslides, floods which Haiti is regularly confronted to. Its mission to is to address in a rational and coordinated way, with the other concerned partners, the issue of Disaster Risk Management in Haiti, toward a better protection of human beings and of public as well as private investments. It aims at building and promoting a good knowledge of the natural threats and at participating in reducing the country’s vulnerability by facilitating the integration of risk management in economic planning and regional planning.

Climate Change
Considering the necessary efforts to adapt to climate changes in terms of regional planning, CIAT has been designated by the Government of Haiti as the focal point for the PPCR initiative (Pilot Program for Climatic Resilience) financed by the Climate Investment Fund (CIF), a multilateral fund created by the World Bank and IDB. That initiative is being implemented by CIAT Technical Secretariat in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment’s Climate Changes Direction. It will allow to identify and finance investments that give a priority to the country’s adaptation to threats induced climatic changes in various priority sectors such as agriculture, coastline management and post-earthquake reconstruction.