



Advancing Landscapes in the Andean Amazon (ASLAA)

Work Plan

FY 2015

1 PROJECT COVER SHEET

1.1 NAME OF THE PROJECT:

Advancing Landscapes in the Andean Amazon (ASLAA)

1.2. DATES (START/FINISH):

AGREEMENT/ CONTRACT

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REPORT PERIOD

to

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Rainforest Alliance

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1.7. MECHANISM NUMBER:

AID-OAA-A-11-00055

1.8. OVERALL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Rainforest Alliance and its partners, Asociación para la Investigación y el Desarrollo Integral (AIDER) in Peru, and ECOLEX in Ecuador, have designed the Advancing Sustainable Landscapes in the Andean Amazon (SL) project with the goal of conserving biodiversity in two landscapes, Sucumbíos/Napo, Ecuador and Cusco/Madre de Dios, Peru. In the Sucumbíos/Napo landscape we are working with local stakeholders in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve (CWR), the Limoncocha Biological Reserve (LBR) and the buffer zone of Sumaco Napo Galeras National Park. Within Sucumbíos, we are working in the Putumayo, Cuyabeno, and Shushufindi cantons, from the bridge over the Cuyabeno River east to the Siona communities of Tarabeia, San Victoriano, and Puerto Bolívar, for a total of 128,000 ha. The LBR is located in the Shushufindi canton close to Yasuni National Park, where we are also working with tourism operations. In the buffer zone of Sumaco-Napo Galeras National Park we will work in the Hatun Sumaco parish that includes six indigenous and one mestizo community, including Hatun Sumaku, Wawa Sumaku, Wuamani, Patco Sumaku, Pucuno Chico, Volcán Sumaku and Challuayacu. In Madre de Dios, we are working in the province and district of Tambopata with the follow indigenous communities from the Ese Ejas, Shipibos, Yine, Amahuaca, Kicharunas ethnicities representing approximately 75,000 ha: Tres Islas, Palma Real, Infierno, Sonene, Puerto Arturo, and San Jacinto. In the upper and middle Tambopata, we are working in the Filadelfia area and with various tourism operations, representing approximately 3,000 ha. In the Cusco section of the landscape, we are working in the La Convencion and Calca Provinces, and Quellouno and Echarate and Yanatile Districts, found within the Ivochote and Llaco Yavero watershed and covering 13,500 ha (Cooperatives: Bioazul, Jose Olaya, Chaco Huayanay, Paquibo, Alto Urubamba, and Mateo Pumacahua and Asociacion Agricultura Ecologica). Our overall strategy is premised on addressing the principal threats to biodiversity and their drivers identified in the two landscapes that have the most significant impact and can be countered directly given the experience and expertise of RA and its partners in order to optimize impacts locally. The principal threats include habitat degradation and habitat loss due to wholesale deforestation or land-use conversion, while the drivers of these threats can be grouped into three areas: a) limited institutional capacity by local governments and communities for natural resource management; b) limited participation in and access to programs by local groups for resource management and sustainable production chains; and c) weak organizational capacity and market linkages of local producers and operators to grow local economic opportunities.

2. STRATEGY OVERVIEW

2.1. INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

2.1.1 IR1 - Selected Landscapes Managed Sustainably:

The SL is designed in accordance with USAID's IR1, and includes indigenous territories, protected areas, and private lands. The conservation of biodiversity in the two landscapes is the goal of the project, and will be accomplished by addressing the principal threats to biodiversity and their drivers identified in the two landscapes that have the most significant impact and can be countered directly given the experience and expertise of RA and its partners in order to optimize impacts locally given the scope and level of project investments. The SL is designed to protect and ensure the integrity of protected areas and the vulnerable buffer zones found in the two landscapes in order to contribute to protecting remaining, largely intact areas in the Andean Amazon. The strategy for the project is designed to meet USAID's three Activity Results for Area-Based Programs and builds on the assumption that local groups will protect their environment if more enabling conditions are created through building the capacity for local land-use and resource planning, strengthening local governance to carry out those plans, and growing economic opportunities that contribute to local livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. The proposed activities thus aim to create, cement, and catalyze change at structural level by making tools available to communities and local governments that can be adapted

to best suit the specific geographic, economic and cultural needs found in each landscape and community or group. The project will follow a multifaceted strategy addressing the need for improvements and changes at two levels: a) economic level- for example, a cluster of farms or community-based production forests and plantations in buffer zones or eco-tourism operations and the natural areas they are based on; b) structural level to address local governance, institutional capacities, small enterprise development, markets, and higher-level policy issues. Integrating sustainable forestry, agriculture and tourism activities across a high-biodiversity landscape reduces land-use pressures and maintains and improves habitat corridors for local wildlife. Such sustainable management minimizes GHG emissions while reducing deforestation threats. Incremental, long-term shifts in seasonal weather patterns (droughts, increased temperatures, changes in precipitation) alter the habitat that a species evolved in, sometimes to the point at which a previously optimal habitat becomes uninhabitable. Biodiversity is important to ecosystem resiliency and vice versa, and both are essential to maintaining forest carbon stocks. The project's support of improved agriculture or forest management will also build resiliency in managed ecosystems, and result in better resilience of the landscape, enabling adaptation. Focus in the final year of SL implementation will be on consolidating our work to date, achieving the results in each of the six results chains related to planning, governance and livelihoods, and emphasizing work with stakeholders that will produce results that increase impact and sustainability. Some of the anticipated challenges in implementing this work plan include complex social and economic dynamics and delicate US government to Ecuadorian government relationships. In regard to complex dynamics inherent to working in areas such as Sucumbíos and Madre de Dios where extractive industries such as petroleum and gold are prevalent and limited social governance and collective natural resource use structures exist, we will need to maintain a long term perspective with the understanding that it will take time to build the capacity of project stakeholders to collectively manage their natural resources and to build their confidence in utilizing more sustainable resource options to fulfill their livelihood needs. For the latter, there is little we can do apart from being prepared to propose an alternative plan for shifting the resources to support our work in other ICAA countries.

2.1.2 IR2 - Key Elements of Natural Resources Governance Functioning in Critical Landscapes:

The SL will directly contribute to the ICAA strategic framework by supporting activities that will work toward achieving the IR2 goal of improving key elements of natural resource governance in critical landscapes. Considering that all societies elaborate governance models and processes, systems for decision making and conflict resolution, institutions and rules, and that these processes are collective and involve diverse governance actors are diverse (state, private sector, communities, and civil society), in order to try to achieve an equilibrium of efforts, SL hopes to support a participatory and transparent process with the relevant actors to achieve consensus and harmonization of interests for biodiversity conservation. To achieve this we will develop actions that contribute to environmental and natural resource management by analyzing existing political, legal and institutional frameworks, land tenure, use and access, capacities of institutional and civil society actors, and institutional arrangements and decision making processes regarding environmental management policies. This will allow us to subsequently provide technical assistance for the development of legal tools, regularizing land tenure, strengthening the capacities of target actors, and facilitating conflict resolution. The involvement of the natural resource stakeholders in these activities will allow us to work toward developing adequate natural resource governance models. These actions will support ICAA lines of action 1-3, 5-6: Action 1: Improving the institutionalization and mechanisms for land regularization Action 2: Promoting the application of mechanisms for territorial conflict management Action 3: Develop capacities of authorities and indigenous peoples in the comprehension and management of mechanisms for land regularization, environmental rights and indigenous rights. Action 5: Develop civil society and indigenous organization capacities to influence environmental decision-making. Action 6: Providing access and dissemination of environmental and natural resources information.

2.1.3 IR3 - Increased Capacity to Utilize Payment for Environmental Services (PES)-like and other Economic Incentive Programs:

The SL will directly contribute to the ICAA strategic framework by supporting activities that will work toward achieving the IR3 goal of increasing the capacity of government and community members and leaders to plan and implement PES-like and other Economic Incentive Programs for conservation. In terms of the first line of action related to improving the generation of and access to information, we will work with the communities to provide information related to sustainable certification options and in Ecuador the national PES program, Socio Bosque, and the Ministry of Agriculture reforestation incentives program. In regard to the second line of action, strengthening technical and organizational capacities of actors within SL, we will work with the communities to assist and accompany them in complying with the technical and operational obligations associated with the project supported incentive programs. In terms of the third line of action related to integrating ecosystem services in planning, we will support the integration of ecosystem services in farm level and pre-cooperative land use planning in conjunction with productive alternatives such as sustainable forest management and agriculture where possible. One of the anticipated challenges in implementing this work plan is related to the fact that there is still progress to be made in government oversight and monitoring of the forests in the Socio Bosque program. To address this challenge, we will work toward building the capacity of the communities to self-regulate compliance with program objectives.

2.1.4 IR4 - Greater Understanding and Solutions for Key Environmental Issues:

The strategy for this IR is based on gathering evidence through case studies to test some of the hypotheses behind the SL conceptual framework, where the principal threats to biodiversity are identified as habitat degradation and habitat loss due to wholesale deforestation or land-use conversion and their main drivers or root causes are identified as unmanaged and unorganized logging, agriculture expansion, poor agriculture production practices and unmanaged tourism practices.

In the Napo and Cusco landscapes, we will develop a tool for multiple stakeholder land-use interventions aimed at improving land-use decision making by better understanding the dynamics of land use and cover change, which have important implications over the goods and services provided by biodiversity, agriculture production, forest resources, and the composition and structure of natural ecosystems. This tool will a) support local governments and other key stakeholders in decision making for conservation actions, b) illustrate and monitor spatial project implementation actions, and c) provide a landscape scale tool to show possible ICAA 2 project impacts on conservation and the main threats biodiversity and habitat loss.

In Napo we are financing a study that integrates remote sensing techniques and information to measure tropical forest degradation and determine forest degradation levels in a community based on the use of sustainable forest management practices. The specific objectives are (a) to establish a baseline on the structural aspects of forest degradation using remote sensing methods, (b) to relate structural forest degradation to the provision of ecosystem services using interviews, and (c) to compare the degradation conditions of two communities, one SL project community and one outside the SL Napo landscape.

In the Cusco landscape, we are working with small farm owners to better understand the impact of different agricultural management practices (organic, RA, traditional) as a basis for prevention of the rust disease in coffee farms. Additionally we will measure the linkages between the use of best management practices and productivity, quality and production costs as they relate to increasing producer income.

Finally for the Sucumbios area, the impact study aims to measure the impacts of improved water treatment systems implementing under the first phase of ICAA in the lodges operating in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve.

In regard to the research and analysis priorities proposed in the ICAA Action Plan SL will provide input directly or indirectly for:

- Sustainable use and management of biodiversity resources
- Identification of the drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss
- Economic incentives for biodiversity conservation and protection of indigenous territories
- Opportunity cost of land uses and conservation
- Impact of technical assistance initiatives on the conservation of biodiversity

SL will focus on Line of Action 1: Fund high priority research and analysis on key biodiversity, socio-economic and infrastructure topics.

2.1.5 Support Unit Services:

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2.2 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND USAID KEY ISSUES

2.2.1 Improve Policies and Policy Implementation

As mentioned in IR 1, the SL focuses on the conservation of protected areas and their buffer zones by addressing the biodiversity threats and their drivers found in each landscape. In order to address the secondary driver of limited natural resource governance at national and local government and community levels, one of our strategies focuses on promoting the development and adoption of policies and agreements for the participative and effective management of natural resources. We also provide training and technical assistance to ensure the policies are effectively implemented. For example, in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, we are helping tourism operations comply with reserve environmental regulations, while in Napo, MDD and Cusco we are working with indigenous and mestizo communities to develop land-use regulations related to project supported land-use zones for conservation, sustainable forest management, tourism, and agriculture. Basing policy development and implementation on solid land-use planning and livelihood activities together with strengthening local governance structures should not only help ensure the development of relevant policies, but also provide the required governance mechanisms and motivation for implementing them. The SL work contribute mainly to the line of action 1: Develop, adopt and support the implementation of policies, laws, agreements and environmental regulations.

2.2.2 Increase Gender Awareness and Gender-related Program Outcomes

The SL will assume a gender mainstreaming approach to ensure that gender and equity perspectives are central to all project activities. We will incorporate a gender focus in those activities with the greatest promise for generating positive impacts in the target groups identified in the project. The goal of the gender strategy is to achieve a balance of opportunities for both sexes principally in terms of access to information, capacity building, access to natural resources, and participation in planning activities and decision making related with the sustainable use of natural resources. The underlying principles of this approach include recognition of women as change agents, importance of full participation of women, recognition of women's multifaceted roles and hardships, and the role of men in gender issues (and their need to be engaged in the gender mainstreaming process). We are implementing an SL gender action plan that utilizes field level methodological tools as the principal implementation mechanism for achieving the SL gender goal, and have trained project personnel in gender topics to ensure effective implementation of the gender strategy, and the development of gender sensitive indicators (Line of action 4). Both the baseline and gender action plan will support the ICAA gender line of action 1 and 2 by developing knowledge and information on gender and environmental management, and disseminating and exchanging information and experiences on gender in environmental management. Regarding the latter, we will disseminate information generated by ICAA and other sources, and promote the exchange of information through the ICAA Gender and Conservation Community of Practice.

2.2.3 Strengthening of Selected Regional Organizations and Institutions

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2.2.4 Improve Region-wide Capacity for Conservation Through Training

The SL training strategy focuses on the capacity development at both the organizational and individual level for private land owners, communities and government staff. While the government capacity building is focused on land use management, climate change and key elements of natural resources governance with emphasis on IR 2, training for private land owners and communities is focused on sustainable natural resource management, improved sustainable livelihoods and support to access economic incentives for conservation and sustainable resource use aiming to achieve a sustainable management as mentioned under IR 1. We use a variety of training methodologies including technical assistance, traditional training, training in the field and exchange of experiences between regions or landscapes. The goal is to increase the knowledge and skills of key actors, exchange information between farmers and organizations and support capacity building in local organizations. A good example of how we are working to improve region-wide capacity for conservation through training is our work with tourism in protected areas. We initially began working on sustainable tourism strategies in Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, but the stakeholder interest in the work allowed us to expand our work to two other protected areas, Limoncocha and Yasuni. In addition, the same process is being carried out with seven other protected areas outside of the Amazon.

2.2.5 Increase Indigenous Peoples' Participation

In line with the SL IR1 strategy, the SL strategy for increasing indigenous people's participation is focused on providing support to indigenous groups to improve territorial natural resource planning and governance, and increase participation in economic incentives for sustainable natural resource use. This strategy coincides with the first line of action in ICAA's indigenous people's action plan, strengthening the capacities of organizations and authorities responsible for the indigenous people's policies through developing the capacities of indigenous leaders and organizations.

Both landscapes include activities that support participatory land use planning through zoning, development or updating of life plans (or development plans), and the monitoring of the implementation of the plans.

In the area of governance, SL works with indigenous communities to strengthen their governance capacity through institutional capacity building in the areas of natural resource planning, management, environmental and indigenous legislation, and decision making. To improve indigenous rights and incidence, we will also work toward facilitating conflict resolution, and the participation of indigenous groups in spaces for public discussion such as forestry or REDD+ roundtables.

Recognizing that indigenous groups constitute a key group of actors within the SL landscapes, and maintain important biological areas within their territories that are subject to pressures from productive and extractive activities that influence land use, SL will promote activities that increase income derived from their natural resources such as sustainable tourism, agriculture and forest management.

The same challenge of working in complex social and economic dynamics mentioned in the IR1 strategy is also relevant here, and we will address this challenge in the same fashion as mentioned previously. In implementing this Work Plan, we will work with the following indigenous groups in the Andean Amazon:

Amahuaca, Ese ejja, Kichwa, Kicharunas, Shipibo, Siona, Yine

2.2.6 Climate Change - Adaptation

The SL will contribute to USAID adaptation objectives by emphasizing activities that reduce the vulnerability of local communities and their livelihoods, with a particular focus on agriculture and food security. We will do so by employing a strategy of recognizing and strengthening land management practices that reduce vulnerability and enhance adaptive capacities of communities and ecosystems within our broader work to apply standards for best management practices that form the backbone of SL interventions. Many elements of these systems already include ancillary benefits for supporting adaptation and building farm resiliency, thus our focus is on proactive identification and strengthening of these to ensure their sound implementation. For example, SL diagnostics conducted on naranjilla farms in the Hatun Sumaku Parish included a focus on climate change awareness and adaptation practices, and technical assistance is being programmed to strengthen these components through implementing e.g. restoration on degraded areas, enhancing soil fertility, and water conservation. In specific landscapes, we are building on this approach through identifying potential future risks and vulnerabilities and engaging producers and local communities to prepare for these. In MDD, we have identified as a research priority changing phenological attributes of palm fruit trees – potentially due to climate change – as a risk to ensuring the continuous supply of ungurahui, aguaje, etc. As new data become available, we will seek to integrate this into BMP guidance and technical assistance for palm fruit harvesting. In Cuzco, we will work with up to 100 coffee producers to carry out vulnerability assessments, design adaptation plans to reduce their vulnerability and prepare for climate change. This is part of a broader work agenda to pilot implementation of the SAN Climate Module to serve as a ‘learning laboratory’ for how local producers can implement management systems and practices to build resiliency, adaptive capacity, and community-level responses to extreme weather events. Also in Cuzco, we aim to complete an analysis of the impacts of roya on coffee production – as roya outbreaks are associated with increasing climate variability, we anticipate the study will contribute to the broader research base on climate change and coffee production in the region. Our integrated approach to adaptation is complementary to existing project interventions at low-cost, and presents the opportunity to upscale work on adaptation that could not otherwise be achieved

2.2.7 Climate Change (REDD+, Sustainable Landscapes)

We will contribute to REDD+/Sustainable Landscape objectives by emphasizing activities that offer concrete examples of how project landscapes can transition to a low emissions/high sequestration pathway in the land-use sector, avoid/reverse emissions from deforestation and advance climate-smart agriculture. We will do so by employing a strategy of identifying and availing SL of opportunities to facilitate producer and community access to emerging government programs (e.g. SocioBosque, MAGAP reforestation incentives program, REDD+) designed to mitigate climate change and benefit local communities. In addition, through piloting the SAN Climate Module in Cuzco, we will build awareness amongst producers and supply chains of the climate mitigation services sustainably managed lands provide, and explore opportunities for coffee buyers to reward these services in their business relationship with producers.

Illustrative examples of how we will execute this strategy include:

- Implementation of conservation set-asides, reforestation/agroforestry activities; enhancements in soil fertility as part of technical assistance activities to farmers in Ecuador and Peru.
- Designing land management and zoning plans in consideration of emerging requirements for REDD+ and existing requirements for SocioBosque and the MAGAP commercial reforestation incentives program.
- Facilitating access to the SocioBosque and MAGAP programs.
- Implementing improved wastewater treatment systems for coffee producers in Cuzco; methane emissions from wastewater is a primary emissions hotspot in coffee production.
- Demonstrating the viability of sustainable forest and non-timber forest production (i.e. brazil nut, palm fruits) as viable REDD+ strategy options for local and native communities, in Madre de Dios.

It is important to note that in years 1-3 of the SL project, strategies and interventions in Madre de Dios, Peru and Napo, Ecuador were aligned with project objectives of the Net Zero Deforestation Zones project, which operated in the same landscapes and whose goal was to pilot scalable elements of REDD+ programs in those landscapes and contribute to REDD+ objectives at the national level. Although the NZDZ project concluded in September, 2014, we will continue to give continuity to high-impact NZDZ project interventions, and aim to leverage planning, governance and technical assistance work under SL to strengthen alignment with REDD+ and climate change mitigation strategies and policies, particularly in Peru.

3. NETWORKING AND SYNERGY

3.1. ANDEAN AMAZON LEVEL

The inclusion of two landscapes in the project presents an opportunity to share knowledge, best practices and lessons learned about effective, sustainable, scalable practices from two distinct areas of the Andean Amazon in order to foment a more comprehensive understanding of the best approach to promoting the protection and conservation of protected areas and buffer zones in the chosen landscapes and in other key global biodiversity hotspots. It will not only be beneficial for the project but also broadly for organizations and governments working elsewhere in the Andean Amazon as well as other biodiversity hotspots of the world. In order to facilitate information sharing our activities within each landscape will be analyzed together with internal regional coordination, including monthly and quarterly meetings, to promote lessons learned within the project, ICAA and the greater global community. Examples of shared activities in each landscape include measuring the limits of acceptable change related to tourism in protected areas, indigenous community land-use planning, the adoption of best practices in tourism and agriculture, strengthening productive activity roundtables, the incorporation of best management practices into policies, environmental governance, and producer group strengthening.

3.2. NATIONAL LEVEL

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3.3. SUB NATIONAL LEVEL

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3.4. LANDSCAPE LEVEL

The SL approach collaborating with ICAA participant and any other stakeholders within the landscapes and at other levels is to align our strategies and actions with the other stakeholders to ensure we take advantage of potential synergies, compliment efforts, and avoid duplication. This will increase our overall impact in conserving the Amazonian Andes in addition to the long term sustainability of our actions. To accomplish this we will share work plans with relevant stakeholders including ministries, provincial governance bodies, and municipalities, ICAA consortia and Support Unit, NGOs, projects and donors, and where possible develop joint action plans as we have done with MAE and MINTUR in Ecuador and DIRCETOUR and GOREMAD in MDD. Where similar activities with differing beneficiaries are identified we will share implementation tools and materials as well as experiences and lessons learned. To monitor progress, we will hold periodic meetings to review actions plans and agreements, and identify potential opportunities for collaboration. These collaborative activities will maximize our ability to leverage resources, expand learning, and contribute to program and/or region-wide conservation impacts. The expected challenges of this approach are principally related to the limited time and financial resources each actor has available for identifying and implementing collaborative activities, and sharing information or tools. Without resources dedicated to specific inter-landscape or stakeholder shared objectives, indicators or targets, each stakeholder's time is consumed by working toward meeting their own objectives and targets. Additionally, without having influence over other stakeholders' actions, it will be challenging to ensure that they fulfill their agreed commitments. To work toward addressing this issue, we will rely heavily on local and national government entities and USAID to help facilitate meetings and ensure that

commitments are carried out, while we also hope that the Support Unit will develop a vehicle for sharing information such as a knowledge management or communication system

3.5. OTHERS

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4. IMPACT OF LEVERAGED RESOURCES

In general, the nature of our work catalyzing improved environmental behavior and actions and integrating various public and private stakeholders into our activities will allow for collaborative activities to leverage resources. Some of the opportunities identified include the following: The SL will strengthen its activities in the Laco Yavero watershed in Cusco, Peru, with the significant government funds to be implemented by the Quellouno Municipality. The Municipality will work with 300 families in planting new cocoa plantations, quality control, productivity improvement, strengthening local organizations and marketing with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices and biodiversity conservation. Also Echarate and Quellouno Municipalities will deliver funds to local community groups to implement best practices in coffee and cacao in the buffer zone Megantoni Sanctuary. The Sustainable Development Model for Peruvian Coffee Project is executed by the Board and SCAN Peru where Rainforest Alliance is a member. This project will support the accomplishment of SL results by implementing a multi-platform for certification and agricultural productivity through organizations and agreements with coffee companies. Through the support of the local tour operators from Ecuador and Peru SL will work in the implementation of sustainable tourism principles in the destinations. Through funding of the Ministry of Agriculture of Peru, indigenous organizations and Brazil nut associations are presenting business plans to improve the competitiveness of Brazil nut organizations with organic and fair trade certification by optimizing processing through processing plants, and improving collection capabilities and post-harvest handling.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

During FY 14 we had to adjust our work plan in the Ecuadorian landscape due to the instructions from USAID to limit project support provided to the national government. This restructuring impacts our ability to achieve overall proposed indicator goals, specifically for shared Indicator 1: Number of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance. Consequently, we had to reduce our overall target from 322,954 hectares to 262,537 hectares. Another adjustment proposed to the PMP based on better than anticipated performance is related to the project targets for shared Indicator 7 (number of products related to the Andean Amazon generated by the ICAA partners increased) and 8 (number of disseminated copies of product related with the Andean Amazon generated by the ICAA partners increased). We propose to increase the overall project targets from 71 to 195 products for shared indicator 7 and from 46,694 to 384,301 disseminated copies for shared indicator 8.