

# **Advancing Landscapes in the Andean Amazon (ASLAA)**

## **1.1 NAME OF THE PROJECT:**

Advancing Landscapes in the Andean Amazon (ASLAA)

## **1.2. DATE**

### **Agreement /contract finish:**

Tuesday, 29 September, 2015

### **Agreement /contract start:**

Friday, 30 September, 2011

### **Report period start:**

Monday, 1 April, 2013

### **Report period finish:**

Sunday, 30 June, 2013

## **1.3 PRIME PARTNER:**

Rainforest Alliance

## **1.4 NAME OF PROGRAM MANAGER**

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Mark Donahue

## **1.5. NAME OF USAID AGREEMENT OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE (AOR) OR CONTRACT OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE (COR):**

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## **1.6. NAME OF ALTERNATE AOR OR COR:**

Mónica Romo

## **1.7. USAID MECHANISM NUMBER:**

AID-OAA-A-11-00055

## **1.8. OVERALL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Our strategy is premised on addressing the principal threats to biodiversity and their drivers identified in two landscapes that have the most significant impact and can be countered directly given the experience of RA and its partners to optimize impacts locally. The threats include habitat degradation and 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.

RA and its partners, AIDER, and ECOLEX, designed this project to conserve biodiversity in two landscapes, Sucumbíos/Napo, Ecuador and Cusco/Madre de Dios, Peru. In the first landscape we work in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve (CWR), the Limoncocha Biological Reserve (LBR) and the buffer zone of Sumaco – Napo Galeras National Park. In Madre de Dios (MDD), we work in the district of Tambopata in the communities of Tres Islas, Palma Real, Infierno, Sonene, and Puerto Arturo. We also work with the Brazil nut gatherer associations RONAP, located alongside the interoceanic highway, and ASCART, in the Tambopata National Reserve. In the Cusco, we work in La Convención and Calca Provinces.

Within CWR, we work in the tourism area and with the Siona communities of Tarabeia, San Victoriano, and Puerto Bolívar, for a total of 130,000 ha. The LBR is located in the Shushufindi canton close to Yasuní National Park. In the buffer zone of Sumaco-Napo Galeras National Park we work in the Hatun Sumaco parish, which includes the Hatun Sumaku, Wawa Sumaku, Wuamaní, Patco Sumaku, Pucuno Chico, Volcán Sumaku and Challuayacu indigenous communities.

In Tambopata, we work with the Ese Ejas, Shipibos, Yine, Amahuaca, and Kicharunas ethnicities representing 75,000 ha approximately. In upper and middle Tambopata, we work in the Filadelfia area with tourism operations, representing approx. 3,000 ha. The combined land area managed by ASCART and RONAP totals forest concession areas of approx. 70,000 ha. In La Convención Province we work in Quellouno and Echarate districts and in Calca Province in Yanatile district, within the Ivochote and Laco-Yavero watershed and cover 13,500 ha of the following cooperatives: Bioazul, Jose Olaya, Chaco Huayanay, Paquivo, Alto Urubamba, and Mateo Pumacahua and Asociacion Agricultura Ecologica.

### **2.1.1 IR1 – SELECTED LANDSCAPES MANAGED SUSTAINABLY:**

Under AR1, sound landscape planning and use of sustainable natural resource management (NRM) practices, our main achievements in addressing the drivers of unmanaged tourism practices, ineffective implementation of NRM and planning, and lack of land-use regulation/zoning:

- In Ecuador, the criteria for sustainable destinations defined by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council were adapted and converted to a field tool for measuring the level of compliance in sustainable destinations. The tool was applied in CWR and LBR in Ecuador and Tambopata National Reserve (TNR) in Peru.
- Together with USAID and the Department of Interior (DOI), we met with officials from the biodiversity authority of the Ministry of Environment (MAE) to present the sustainable tourism strategy preparation document for CWR. With the recommendations and observations included, the strategy was presented to the national biodiversity director for review and approval.
- We have begun carrying out a consultancy to identify the socio-economic and cultural factors related to forest use in the Hatun Sumaku Parish, which will serve as an important natural resource planning input for our intervention strategies.
- In Peru, to reduce the potential negative impacts and improve the quality of tourist attractions, we provided technical assistance to TNR for locating camping places for bird watching in two major tourist attractions within the Reserve in the Alto Tambopata Site Plan.
- We finalized the study of limits of acceptable change for Sandoval Lake in the TNR, which is the basis for defining indicators, proposing regulations for boats entering the lake, and monitoring compliance with sustainability criteria and best practices.
- Thirty new site sheets for tourism resources in the Tambopata area were elaborated to be included in the MINCETUR (Ministerio de Comercio Exterior y Turismo) national database. These documents will support DIRCETUR in identifying conservation areas for tourism and promoting public or private investments in the attractions, and are the basis for the inclusion of tourism resources in regional territorial planning.
- We significantly advanced toward developing our gender analysis and action plan through five workshops with project staff and beneficiaries, including one in Colombia.

Under AR2, improved environmental governance, we attained the following achievements addressing the principal drivers of weak natural resource governance, ineffective implementation of natural resources management and planning, limited local participation in accessing, using and managing natural resources, and indeterminate policies for management and administration, and unmanaged tourism practices:

- In Ecuador, the tourism operations regulations manual for CWR and LBR was socialized with key stakeholders such as reserve rangers (including Yasuní National Park) to improve their skills in controlling and monitoring tourism activities and operators; the reserves are already implementing several regulations such as the prohibition of catch and release piranha fishing.
- The Ministries of Tourism, Interior, Defense and Environment signed an interagency agreement to strengthen and improve security in the tourism areas of CWR. The agreement is a positive response to the insecurity issues and reflects the initiatives we have been supporting such as: basic security protocol and communication systems for the tourism areas.

- SL participated with the local office of FSC (CEFOVE) to help define the national process for implementing risk assessment.
- Digital information was collected from the previous Sumaco program for the Hatun Sumaku communities to continue with the land regulation process for those that do not hold land title.
- In the Peru landscape, we came to an agreement with the Department of Legal and Physical Sanitation for Rural Property to strengthen their office through technical assistance aimed at updating information for titling of indigenous communities, and validating the resolution of territorial disputes.
- We strengthened the technical support group responsible for updating the Regional Biodiversity Strategy of the Regional Environmental Commission (CAR). We facilitated several meetings with the outcome of obtaining the commitment of the organizations to work together, and defining the methodology for updating the strategy.
- The environmental governance diagnostics and resulting improvement plans for AFIMAD, RONAP, PALSAMAD, Tres Islas and Puerto Arturo were drafted.

Under AR3, improved sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem resilience, we attained the following achievements that work toward addressing the drivers of lack of income generating opportunities, weak market penetration and competitiveness, lack of knowledge or application of best management practices, unmanaged and unorganized logging, and poor agricultural production practices:

- In Ecuador, we facilitated a visit by the regional MAGAP representative to present the national reforestation incentives program to project communities, resulting in solidifying the interest of several communities in participating in the program.
- In Peru, ASCART won approximately 60,000 USD of public financing from PROCOMPITE by presenting their business plan developed with SL assistance.
- Two Brazil nut organizations, ASCART and RONAP, accessed soft credits from AGROBANCO for around 44,000 USD and 22,000 USD respectively to finance the Brazil nut harvest, thereby lessening their dependence on companies who condition loans to the delivery of the product.
- RONAP acquired additional land (3,800 m<sup>2</sup>) for the construction of its processing plant from revenue resulting from the Brazil nut harvest trade agreements we supported.
- We developed low intensity participatory forest management plans for three communities, which were approved by the Regional Forest Authority, and are currently being implemented.
- Humberto Torres, project farmer, won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 7th regional cocoa competition held in Quillabamba. Through the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices on his farm, the quality of the cocoa has been improved, thereby increasing competitiveness.
- Credit organizations, RESPONSABILY and ECOCREDIT (IFIS) have included the rehabilitation and renovation of 400 hectares in Cusco through 50 farmer loans in their agendas.

- Based on a study we carried out, “roya”, a fungus that affects coffee plantations, was identified as a serious problem in coffee farms. SENASA, who was not aware of the gravity of the distribution of roya, was alerted about the incidence level.
- Seven tourism operations presented a proposal to the PromPerú Biocomercio project to obtain non-reimbursable funds to improve their installations and compliance with sustainable tourism criteria.

### **2.1.2 IR2 - KEY ELEMENTS OF NATURAL RESOURCES GOVERNANCE FUNCTIONING IN CRITICAL LANDSCAPES:**

Our main achievements under IR2 during the reporting period are related to USAID’s following line of actions:

Line of action 2 - Promote the application of territorial conflict management mechanisms

- We continued supporting the conflict resolution process between El Infierno and TNR. A memorandum of understanding has been signed, and the required legal documents have been presented to SERNANP for its approval. Subsequent to receiving SERNANP’s approval, the Ministry of Agriculture has to provide the final approval, and update the land title resolution.

Line of action 3 - Develop capacities of authorities and indigenous peoples in the comprehension and management of mechanisms for land regularization, environmental rights and indigenous rights

- We strengthened our relationship with FENAMAD to coordinate work and validate the SL interventions in native communities. FENAMAD is the highest regional representation of native communities and thus is a key stakeholder in terms of supporting SL activities with native communities.

Line of action 6 - Providing access and dissemination of environmental and natural resources information

- In Ecuador, a process of systematization and analysis to identify training needs on specific topics to be included in the development of training content is being carried out utilizing the information collected at the community and autonomous decentralized government levels. However, some critical topics such as tax authority processes, INCOP participation, and labor relations have already been identified. This participatory process will help increase the interest of community leaders to improve their management skills and utilize land use plans.
- We began providing technical assistance to the naranjilla round table in the Napo province by conducting a diagnostic of the current status of the round table, and inviting several additional support organizations to participate. These institutions include the Instituto Nacional de Economía Popular y Solidaria (IEPS) for supporting business plans, the Ministry of Health for sanitary registration, and the Coordination Ministry for production, employment and competitiveness.
- The forestry dialogue and coordination round table in Madre de Dios was reactivated in coordination with several other local actors including WWF, ACCA, AIDER, Rainforest Alliance, SPDA, and the regional government; one of the first activities was to contribute to the development of forest regulations and funding proposals. The round table is the first step to creating the community forest

management platform, where the communities will contribute to the elaboration of forest regulations.

### **2.1.3 IR3 – INCREASED CAPACITY TO UTILIZE PES-LIKE AND OTHER ECONOMIC INCENTIVE PROGRAMS:**

[Enter text]

### **2.1.4 IR4 – GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND SOLUTIONS FOR KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:**

We are developing a geographic and spatial database with metadata for Madre de Dios and Cusco to support the implementation, analysis and evaluation of some of our activities. This is part of a group of information sources that will also include socio-economic and biological studies databases in the intervention area, and will support the implementation of several case studies, landscape prioritization analyses, the establishment of biodiversity conservation baselines, and connectivity analyses.

### **2.1.5 SUPPORT UNIT SERVICES:**

[Enter text]

## **8. SUMMARY**

### **8.1 ACHIEVEMENTS:**

The Ministries of Tourism, Interior, Defense and Environment signed an agreement to improve security in CWR tourism areas. The agreement is a positive response to the insecurity in the area and reflects the initiatives we have been supporting.

The limits of acceptable change study for Sandoval Lake in TNR will be the basis for developing sustainable tourism indicators and regulations, and monitoring compliance.

Financial support was leveraged for farmers and Brazil nut organizations in Peru: RESPONSABILY and ECOCREDIT will finance 50 loans for coffee producers, and AGROBANCO will finance ASCART and RONAP with approx. \$44,000 and \$22,000 respectively.

### **8.2 CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENTS:**

The lack of response from the MAE and continuous change of authorities could affect the continuous coordination and alignment of activities with the Ecuadorian government. Also, each government has different priority topics, so each change requires adapting project activities to the new strategies. To address this, we continue to request and hold meetings with MAE and document agreements made, while also working at the more technical level with authorities that are less likely to change at the same time as higher level authorities.

As mentioned above, based on a study we carried out in 12 coffee farms, “roya” (a fungus that affects coffee plantations) was identified and visualized as a serious problem in coffee farms. According to a study 86% of the coffee crops were infected with roya. SENASA - who was not aware of the gravity of the distribution of this pest - was alerted about the incident level. The traditional control of the disease requires the use of chemicals, which is complicated since 70% of the farms are organic. We are working with SENASA to try to address the problem directly, and also working with the local government to explore the possibility of expanding their citrus fruit projects to some of the affected areas as an alternative or complement to coffee crops.