

## **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:**

Tuesday, 1 October, 2013

#### **Report period finish:**

Tuesday, 31 December, 2013

### **1.3 PRIME PARTNER:**

Rainforest Alliance

### **1.4 NAME OF PROGRAM MANAGER**

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

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### **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 Rainforest Alliance 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 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, 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 (TNR). In Cusco, we work in La Convención and Calca Provinces.

Within the 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 (38,000 ha), 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 are listed below.

*To work toward strengthening the capacity of local actors and government entities for NRM,*

- A communal zoning map of El Infierno was approved by the general assembly, and will serve as a key tool for managing commercial productive activities.

- GOREMAD incorporated the natural resource and cultural tourism maps we helped DIRCETUR develop into their planning exercises, which for the first time will allow for tourism projects to be included in their activities and budget, as well as inform the Madre de Dios (MDD) territorial land-use planning project.
- The first version of the Tambopata tourism attractions map was presented to DIRCETUR.
- The Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment (MAE) accepted the proposal presented by the NGO Peace Nexus for providing technical assistance on the security issues to support the development of a security plan for CWR.
- The consultancies to identify the socio-economic and cultural factors related to forest use in the Hatun Sumaku Parish and to analyze existing naranjilla and cocoa production practices in Parish and the naranjilla value chain were conducted. The results are now be used to develop the forestry and agriculture strategies for the parish.

*To help local actors and governments develop NRM plans that better reflect the local environmental and economic realities and needs,*

- The study on the limits of acceptable change in Lake Sandoval was approved by the SERNANP tourism unit, and they recommended its use to help develop the Sandoval Lake Site Plan, which will include tourism regulations.
- The Brazil nut Forest Management General Plan for RNTAMB was completed and presented to the relevant actors in MDD. The plan updates and improves sustainable Brazil nut use in the reserve, encompassing 85 concessions and two native communities.
- Four risk management plans for tourism operations in CWR were approved by the National Secretariat for Risk Management, bringing the total approved plans to five.
- The Hatun Sumaku parish elaborated the first draft of its land use plan which incorporates sustainable land use practices and was derived from a participatory process.

Under AR2, improved environmental governance, our main achievements are listed below.

*To work toward strengthening the capacity of local actors and government entities for NRM,*

- We assisted the DIRCETUR to develop a project concept for funding from GOREMAD for tourism training and the establishment of biodiversity interpretation and Amazonian arts centers; an important achievement considering that previously DIRCETUR did not have the technical tools to access public funds.
- In Cusco, through collaboration with the Echarati municipality, we trained 180 cocoa producers and 25 municipal technicians in sustainable agriculture practices.
- Together with the MAE we evaluated all 13 tourism companies operating in the CWR for compliance with sustainable environmental regulations and criteria. Twelve of the operations achieved the minimum required score of 90% compliance needed for obtaining 2014 patents, an improvement from an average 59% compliance in the initial evaluation.

*To improve local participation in accessing, using and managing natural resources and policies, laws, or agreements for management and administration,*

- The community of El Infierno updated and approved their communal statutes through a participatory process aimed at improving the conditions for communal planning and resource use.

Under AR3, improved sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem resilience, our main achievements are listed below.

*To improve understanding and application of best management practices, and increase weak market penetration and competitiveness,*

- In Cusco, we trained producer organizations (Cooperativas José Olaya, Megantoni, CEPROCEC, Maranura, Chaupimayo, Chaco Huayanay, COCLA) and private businesses (Bioazul SAC, HVC exportaciones, AICASA) in high quality coffee production and the application of climate friendly agriculture practices.
- We developed an agreement and trained 30 professors from Prorural and the Centro Rurales de Formación en Alternancia in Cusco; the professors will incorporate agriculture best management practices in their primary education curriculums.
- In MDD, for the first time four families in Boca Pariamanu jointly harvested 20,000 board feet of lupuna (Ceiba pentandra) using low impact logging techniques, resulting in the establishment of a seed fund for the purchase of a timber resaw machine for the community.
- Four native communities (Boca Pariamanu, Puerto Arturo, Tres Islas and Palma Real) increased their primary processing efficiency, leading to an average increase in income of 6%.
- Puerto Arturo established an agreement with CANDOR LATAM to sell 500 barricas of Brazil nut (around 30,000 kilograms) from the 2014 harvest. Initial agreements were also established between RONAP and Universidad Nacional Amazónica de MDD for Brazil nut oil production.
- The Brazil nut organizations RONAP, AFIMAD, ASCART established preliminary commercial agreements with international buyers and restaurants in Cusco to sell their product with additional value added.
- Tres Islas established an initial agreement with CANDELA for implementing a peeling center in the community.
- In Ecuador, 35 participants completed a 26 day course on tourism in protected areas.

*To improve capacity for NRM and access to government and other conservation and development programs,*

- We launched the first round of our small grants program in Peru. After providing information and guidance to potential applicants, our technical staff accompanied the interested actors in the elaboration of proposals, and our selection committee made up of consortium members and USAID evaluated ten proposals. The five winning proposals are:
  - PALSAMAD – increase the production capacity of its aguaje and/or unguarhui fruit processing plant through the purchase of a pulper and improved management of the cold chain.
  - Bawaaja Expeditions – recuperation of organic material to expand the ethno botanical garden the Ñape medicinal center.
  - Tres Islas Brazil nut committee – increment communal revenue from the sale of Brazil nut through acquiring equipment for the collection center and artisanal processing plant.
  - Palma Real handicrafts committee – increase production and improve the quality of handicrafts, and strengthen the commercialization capacities of the community handicrafts center.
  - Casa Hospedaje Sandoval Tocón – improve the competitiveness and sustainability of their tourism services by incorporating clean technologies for power and waste management.

### **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*

- The native community of El Infierno concluded their territory regularizing process, with the inclusion of the land that previously overlapped with the Tambopata National Reserve.

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*

- As part of the land tenure regulation process in the Hatun Sumaku parish communities a preliminary agreement with MAE to delineate populated areas subject to legalization was established.

Lines of action 5 and 6 – *Develop civil society and indigenous capacity for participation in environmental decision-making and provide access and dissemination of environmental and natural resources information.*

- We facilitated the participation of eight representatives from four local organizations from the community forest management group of the forestry dialogue and coordination round table in MDD in the socialization of the wildlife and forestry law regulations.
- Sixty-eight Brazil nut concession holders in the TNR participated in the updating and validating of the RNTAMB Brazil nut management plan, specifically contributing to the revision of natural resource use regulations related to their access, use and consumption.
- The MDD forestry roundtable incorporated community forest management and Brazil nut collection into their lines of action, as well as the formal incorporation of project beneficiaries.
- An agreement with the autonomous decentralized provincial government of Napo was reached to coordinate and implement an Environmental Leadership School (ELA) with participants from the Hatun Sumaku parish. Course materials were developed, around 35 participants identified, and the course will begin in January 2014.

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

In the last quarter of 2013, AFIMAD obtained Fairtrade certification as a second-level grass-root organization, and although this is a very important step toward institutional sustainability, the certification cost is high at over \$7,000. With our support AFIMAD is correcting its statutes to be considered as a first-level grass-root organization, which will reduce the certification cost by almost 75%, resulting in bringing them closer to sustainability.

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

*Strengthen dialogue and improve dissemination of applied research and analysis:*

To strengthen the capacities of managers of protected areas in the Ecuadorian Amazon we organized an exchange experience among staff of the Cajas National Park and the Cuyabeno, Yasuni and Limoncocha protected areas.

This initiative takes advantage of Cajas National Park's extended experience in monitoring and investigating water resources and tourism and wildlife, issues of great importance for Amazonian protected areas due to their relationship to biodiversity conservation. The specialists analyzed tools that can be replicated in the Amazon that will result in maximizing the positive and minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on biodiversity.

*Fund high priority research and analysis on key biodiversity and socio-economic topics:*

Landscape analysis: Meetings with local governments in Cusco and Napo were held to present the methodology, discuss the needs of the governments and identify information and studies that can support the analysis.

Degradation study: The field methodology for assessing forest degradation was developed and the field work will be start in January.

## **8. SUMMARY**

### **8.1 ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Twelve tourism operations in CWR for the first time are complying with environmental regulations in protected areas by increasing their compliance of sustainability criteria from 59% to over 90%.
- The Brazil nut Forest Management General Plan for RNTAMB was completed through a participatory process involving 85 concessions and two native communities, which will result in more effective utility of the reserve, as well as improved participative conservation.
- Through participatory NRM and use, and improved extraction techniques, native communities in MDD are increasing their income from the forest. Boca Pariamanu created a seed fund for the purchase of a timber resaw machine for the community, and four native communities increased their primary processing efficiency by 6%.

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

- The main challenges for the regularization of land tenure is that the existing geographical information from former projects needs to be validated by the communities and accepted by the MAE.
- To improve the CWR security inter-institutional agreements were signed with consortium support, but a concrete action plan to continue the implementation was only developed

recently. To help move the process forward, we have facilitated collaboration with the NGO PeaceNexus to provide technical assistance on security issues.