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INDUSTRY AND THE AMAZON

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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USAID PROMOTION OF BEST SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES IN THE AMAZON REGION ACTIVITY

FINAL REPORT (2019 – 2020)

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The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Amazon Regional Environmental Program (AREP) to mitigate negative impacts of infrastructure projects, extractive activities, and climate stress on the region's forests, water resources, and peoples.

USAID Promotion of Best Social and Environmental Practices in the Amazon Region Activity (the Amazon BMP Activity or simply the Activity) focuses on promoting best management practices by developing enabling conditions for their adoption, such as incentives and institutional strengthening, to reduce deforestation, ecosystem fragmentation, and water systems' contamination, and optimize relationships with local populations thereby contributing to the sustainable development and well-being of the peoples of the Amazon.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACM	Asociación Colombiana de Minería (Colombian Mining Association)
ACOLGEN	Asociación Colombiana de Generadores de Energía Eléctrica (Colombian Association of Electric Power Generators)
ACP	Asociación Colombiana del Petróleo (Colombian Oil Association)
AIDESEP	Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (Inter-ethnical Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon – Peru)
AFIN	Asociación para el Fomento de la Infraestructura Nacional (Association for Promoting National Infrastructure – Peru)
ANDI	Asociación Nacional de Empresarios (National Association of Colombian Entrepreneurs – Colombia)
ANLA	Autoridad Nacional de Licencias Ambientales (National Authority of Environmental Licensing – Colombia)
AREP	Amazon Regional Environmental Program
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAG	Country Advisory Group
CORPOAMAZONIA	Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Sur de la Amazonía (Corporation for Sustainable Development of the Southern Amazon – Colombia)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAR	Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Rights, Environment and Natural Resources)
DNP	Departamento Nacional de Planeación (National Planning Department – Colombia)
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ESG	Environmental, social and corporate governance
FEPIPA	Federação dos Povos Indígenas de Pará (Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Pará – Brazil)
FEPOIMT	Federação dos Povos e Organizações Indígenas do Mato Grosso (Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Mato Grosso – Brazil)
GeoPark	GeoPark Perú SAC
IBC	Instituto del Bien Comun (Institute for the Common Good – Peru)
IBRAM	Instituto Brasileiro de Mineração (Brazilian Mining Association)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IIMP	Instituto de Ingenieros Mineros del Perú (Institute of Mining Engineers of Peru)
INVIAS	Instituto de Vías Nacionales (National Roads Institute – Colombia)
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex

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MADS	Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development – Colombia)
MIAACC	Mesa Indígena Amazónica Ambiental y de Cambio Climático (Indigenous Amazon Roundtable on Environment and Climate Change – Colombia)
MINAM	Ministerio del Ambiente (Ministry of the Environment – Peru)
MINEM	Ministerio de Energía y Minas (Ministry of Energy and Mines – Peru)
MINTRANSPORTE	Ministerio de Transporte (Ministry of Transport – Colombia)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPIAC	Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana (Organization for Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon)
ORPIO	Organización Regional de los Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente (Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Orient – Peru)
OZIP	Organización Zonal Indígena del Putumayo (Local Indigenous Organization of Putumayo – Colombia)
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SENACE	Servicio Nacional de Certificación Ambiental (Environmental Licensing National Service – Peru)
SERFOR	Servicio Nacional Forestal y de Fauna Silvestre (National Forest and Wildlife Service – Peru)
SNMPE	Sociedad Nacional de Minería, Petróleo y Energía (National Society of Mining Petroleum and Energy – Peru)
SPDA	Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (Peruvian Society for Environmental Law)
SSRC	Services-Supplier-Consultant-Research-Companies
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TTT	Train the Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTEC	Universidad de Ingeniería y Tecnología (University of Technology and Science – Peru)
UNI	Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería (National University of Engineering - Peru)
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Strategy
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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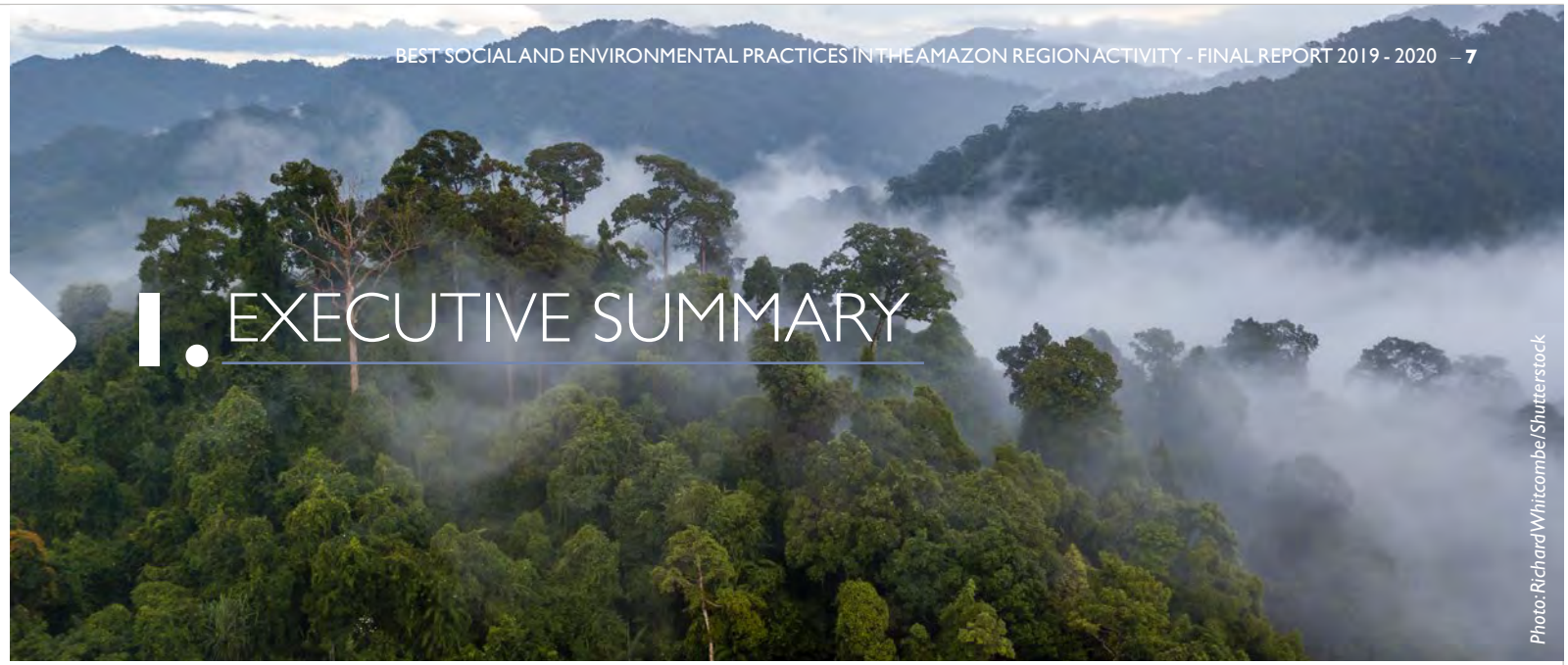

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FIRM STEPS ON A LONG BUT NECESSARY JOURNEY

In 2019, the USAID Amazon BMP Activity (the Activity) focused on establishing a framework for promoting the adoption and replication of environmental and social best management practices (BMPs)— i.e., practices that minimize the negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of development—in extractive activities and infrastructure projects in the Amazon regions of Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. Through a regional implementation strategy, the Activity established partnerships and collaborative agreements with key stakeholders from the private sector, the government, and civil society, including indigenous peoples. It also identified barriers to, and opportunities for the adoption of BMPs in the Amazon, identified and classified BMPs, and began a process of promoting and raising awareness of the benefits and effectiveness of BMPs designed to reduce environmental and social threats in the region.

Since the end of 2019, and due to USAID's decision to expedite the Activity's termination to May 2020, the Activity focused on completing processes and tools that could be transferred to business associations, government entities, and indigenous organizations with which the project collaborated. During this period, the

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Activity confirmed that the adoption of best management practices is a viable means of mitigating the negative impacts of development. The Activity also found cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration with indigenous and local peoples in the Amazon to be essential. These learnings, as well as other findings and recommendations that emerged out of our short implementing period, are being made available to all stakeholders, at their request, to support continuing efforts to benefit the forests, water resources, and peoples of the Amazon region.

This report presents the Activity's progress during its initial stage of implementation, as well as lessons learned and recommendations. As an introduction, and for context, the report begins with a description of the Amazon region's unique characteristics, including its cultural and natural richness and diversity. It also provides context on extractive activities and infrastructure projects, including how they contribute to economic growth in Amazon countries and impact the environment and society. In this context, the USAID Amazon BMP Activity sought to help reduce the impacts of development on the forests, waters, and peoples of the region, specifically concerning biodiversity loss, deforestation and forest fragmentation, and the loss of water resource integrity and quality, as well as the well-being of local peoples.

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The report's main sections elaborate on the Activity's achievements and lessons learned and recount success stories within the project's three main strategies: (1) developing enabling conditions for the adoption of BMPs, (2) promoting the adoption of BMPs with the private sector, and (3) raising awareness on BMPs to promote their replication.

Developing enabling conditions addresses the need for a favorable environment for the adoption of BMPs by companies. This strategy covers the Activity's work with public sector institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) through capacity strengthening, the development of incentives, the elimination of barriers, and facilitated dialogue. Among our achievements in this area is the definition of joint agendas with key government entities in Colombia such as the National Authority of Environmental Licensing (ANLA) and the Corporation for

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Sustainable Development of the Southern Amazon (Corpoamazonia), and, in Peru, providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM) to develop an incentives regime for the environmental certification for oil activities. In addition, in Peru, the Activity facilitated the inclusion of best practice guidelines in the Environmental Agenda for 2021, and established preliminary agreements with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Ministry of the Environment (MINAM) to include adequate sustainability criteria in the National Infrastructure Plan for Competitiveness.

As part of the Activity's cross-cutting strategy for gender equality and social inclusion is the train the trainers (TTT) program for indigenous leaders in Colombia and Peru, which trained more than 60 representatives of 28 indigenous organizations. Trainees, in turn, implemented 13 replication workshops in their communities, expanding the program's reach to around 380 people. Also, the report describes the Activity's capacity building interventions on gender equality and social inclusion with the private sector and subnational governments, e.g., with the Association for Promoting National Infrastructure (AFIN) and the Regional Government of Loreto, in Peru. It also developed tools such as the gender guide on best practices in gender equality in the extractive and infrastructure industries and a social inclusion reference guide with 30 experiences of best management practices applicable to the Amazon context.

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Promoting the implementation of best management practices with the private sector included establishing partnerships with business associations, such as the National Society of Mining Petroleum and Energy (SNMPE), AFIN, Institute of Mining Engineers of Peru (IIMP), and Peru 2021 in Peru; the Colombian Oil Association (ACP) in Colombia; and the Brazilian Mining Association (IBRAM) in Brazil. Such partnerships provided a collaboration arrangement for convening meetings, training, and exchanges between countries. These collaboration agreements also fostered the development of incentives and tools to promote BMP adoption and a commitment to the sustainability of the Activity's efforts. The Activity had also begun activities to

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facilitate site-level partnerships for the adoption of BMPs targeting specific projects; identified leading companies to promote the adoption of BMPs in the region; and promoted exchanges on technological innovation in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. Lastly, the Activity initiated engagement with financial entities to incentivize BMP adoption through improved financing requirements and guidelines.

Raising awareness for the promotion and replication of best management practices included a communication and knowledge management strategy to build public support for the adoption of BMPs. The Activity also formed Country Advisory Groups to provide opportunities for dialogue to inform implementation and developed a series of promotional and capacity building tools, such as the training toolkits for indigenous leaders, a BMP inventory, and a series of BMP reference guides. The series of guides and the associated interactive database will serve as references for companies that want to learn about BMPs that can mitigate the impacts of their operations in the Amazon region. These tools highlight the use of new technologies and innovations and refer to specific case studies and experiences in the implementation of select BMPs.

The report concludes with lessons learned and recommendations from the Activity's approach and its implementation between October 2018 to May 2020. The goal is to inform future conservation and sustainable development activities in the Amazon that involve work with the private sector.

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Photo: Gabriel Herrera

2. CONTEXT: MOVING TOWARD THE ADOPTION OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE AMAZON

Infrastructure, mining, and energy investment projects play a critical role in economic growth and development. These projects connect us, create jobs, and benefit countless adjacent industries and services that contribute decisively to national incomes.

Without proper planning and management, however, such projects can seriously damage the environment and trigger social conflicts, with particularly adverse effects on vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples and women. They can also compromise the viability of communities and their futures, especially in regions of significant natural and cultural value such as the Amazon.

Companies around the world are increasingly committed to promoting best management practices both to minimize adverse environmental, social, and economic impacts and to positively impact communities, in part by cultivating a shared vision among industry, the environment, and the people.

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A. THE AMAZON AND INDUSTRY

Covering more than 6.7 million km^2, the Amazon is the world's largest rainforest, accounting for about a fifth of the planet's forests. The Amazon River, the most abundant in the world and the backbone of the largest watershed on Earth runs more than 6,600 km, from the Andes to the Atlantic Ocean. It supports the Amazon biome, which contains at least one out of 10 terrestrial species and more than 30 million people in nine countries/territories.[1]

In addition to it being the world's most culturally and naturally diverse region, the Amazon provides invaluable services—such as food, water, medicine, timber, and various industrial inputs—and regulates global water cycles and the climate on which humanity depends.

Photo: Dr Morley Read/Shutterstock

Photo: Pan Demin/Shutterstock

1 Flores, M., Lopes Da Silva Jr., U., Malone, H., Panuncio, M., Riveros, J. C., Rodrigues, S., Silva, R., Valenzuela, S., Arancibia, D., Bara-Neto, P., & Symington, M. (2010). WWF's Living Amazon Initiative: A comprehensive approach to conserving the largest rainforest and river system on Earth. Lima: WWF. Recuperado de: https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?196095

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I. FORESTS, RIVERS, AND PEOPLES: GREAT DIVERSITY AND SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

Despite its obvious importance and immensity, the Amazon has lost approximately 20 percent of its forests in recent decades, with losses expected to exceed 25 percent by 2030. Roughly 90 percent of deforestation is caused by livestock herding and agriculture, both legal and illegal, made possible in part by expanding road networks that foster other activities such as illegal mining and logging that have direct, adverse impacts on the Amazon's forests, waters, and peoples.[2]

The effects on rivers, ravines, and lakes are not always as visible as those on forests. But, the integrity of the hydrographic system is vital to the Amazon as a whole. Impacts at a given site can have severe effects on much larger areas—or even compromise the entire biome. The rivers of the Amazon are increasingly affected by overexploitation of their resources, pollution, and fragmentation (i.e., loss of continuity of flows and cycles). For example, current estimates indicate that improper practices result in more than 200 tons of heavy metals [3] and thousands of barrels of oil, put into the Amazon's rivers and streams each year. Roads and other infrastructure can also contaminate water sources, erode soils, and fragment habitats. For example, hydropower projects often cause river silting and interrupt water flows, which affects various species' migration and reproductive cycles, as well as humans downstream.

The Amazon, which spans over eight countries and an overseas territory (French Guiana), is home to more than 30 million people. Of these, more than 1.5 million are indigenous peoples from 350 ethnic groups, of which around 60 are in some degree of voluntary isolation. [4] Increasing pressures to harness resources and facilitate access to the region threaten these groups and pose challenges to diverse cultures and local livelihoods. These challenges include territorial conflicts, limits on access to resources, cultural changes, displacement, and lack of access to new and emerging opportunities, among others.

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2 *Charity, S., Dudley, N., Oliveira, D., & S. Stolton (Eds.). (2016). Living Amazon report 2016: A regional approach to conservation in the Amazon. Brasilia y Quito: WWF Living Amazon Initiative. Recuperado de: https://wwf.panda.org/?270437/Living-Amazon-Report-2016*

3 *Dalberg Advisors. (2018). Healthy rivers, healthy people. Addressing the mercury crisis in the Amazon. WWF Report 2018. WWF Latin America / Caribbean. Recuperado de: https://wwf.panda.org/?338470%2FToxic-mercury-poisoning-the-Amazon*

4 *Flores, M., Lopes Da Silva Jr., U., Malone, H., Panuncio, M., Riveros, J. C., Rodrigues, S., Silva, R., Valenzuela, S., Arancibia, D., Bara-Neto, P., & Symington, M. (2010). WWF's Living Amazon Initiative: A comprehensive approach to conserving the largest rainforest and river system on Earth. Lima: WWF. Recuperado de: https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?196095*

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In this very complex and challenging context, while mining, hydrocarbon, energy and infrastructure are not the primary industries putting strain in the Amazon, they have a crucial role to play in ensuring the region's sustainability, specifically in relation to biodiversity and supporting the well-being of the Amazon peoples. Activities in these industries can trigger larger impacts by facilitating access to remote forest areas, expanding environmental degradation, and/or generating direct impacts on water sources and local social-cultural dynamics.

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II. OIL, MINING, HYDROPOWER, AND ROADS IN THE AMAZON

In recent years, several of the countries that share the Amazon watershed have experienced some of the fastest economic growth rates in the region and the world, partly driven by the mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors. In Colombia and Peru, for example, the mining and oil sectors combined account for half of all exports and four and 8.5 percent of GDP, respectively.[5] Although these are national figures and do not exclusively reflect the entire Amazon territory, they highlight the relevance of these activities for the economies of countries whose main hydrocarbon deposits are in the Amazon, as in Peru.

At present, more than 150 hydropower facilities are in operation in the Amazon, and more than 270 are under construction or planned.[6] Similarly, about 420[7] legal mining projects operate in the Amazon, with around 6,800 requests for new operations.

Lastly, since the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016, Colombia has built or plans to open nearly 3,700 km of new roads - mostly tertiary roads in the Amazon.[8] Brazil, meanwhile, has plans for a 1,000 km railway project (Ferrogrão), while Peru envisages facilitating waterways to improve river trade along over more than 2,600 km of Amazon rivers. Colombia and other countries in the region are planning similar initiatives. Research in the Brazilian Amazon shows that for each kilometer of formal roads built, an average of eight kilometers of informal trails penetrates the forest,[9] resulting in the formation of new settlements and leading to informal resource extraction. This finding illustrates the potential impacts of infrastructure projects undertaken without adequate planning.

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5 *Data extracted from http://data.worldbank.org*

6 *Charity, S., Dudley, N., Oliveira, D., & S. Stolton (Eds.). (2016). Living Amazon report 2016: A regional approach to conservation in the Amazon. Brasilia y Quito: WWF Living Amazon Initiative. https://wwf.panda.org/?270437/Living-Amazon-Report-2016*

7 *Charity, S., Dudley, N., Oliveira, D., & S. Stolton (Eds.). (2016). Living Amazon report 2016: A regional approach to conservation in the Amazon. Brasilia y Quito: WWF Living Amazon Initiative. Recuperado de: https://wwf.panda.org/?270437/Living-Amazon-Report-2016*

8 *Raisg (Red Amazónica de Información Socioambiental Georreferenciada) & Infoamazonía. (2019). Amazonía en la encrucijada. https://encrucijada.amazoniasocioambiental.org/story/caminos-selva-adentro*

9 *Charity, S., Dudley, N., Oliveira, D., & S. Stolton (Eds.). (2016). Living Amazon report 2016: A regional approach to conservation in the Amazon. Brasilia y Quito: WWF Living Amazon Initiative. Recuperado de: https://wwf.panda.org/?270437/Living-Amazon-Report-2016*

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B. AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

In this context, USAID developed the Amazon Regional Environmental Program (AREP), which seeks to build a future of shared economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental stewardship. As part of AREP, the USAID Amazon BMP Activity worked hand in hand with business leaders, business associations, governments, civil society, and other key players to encourage the adoption and replication of best management practices in the Amazon region of Brazil, Colombia, and Peru.

The Activity's overall objective was to mitigate the adverse impacts of extractive (mining and hydrocarbon) and infrastructure (transportation and hydroelectric) megaprojects impacting the forests, waters, and peoples of the Amazon. Specifically, the Activity focused on the loss of biodiversity, deforestation and forest fragmentation, and quality and integrity of water systems, and the well-being of local populations.

To achieve this, the Activity focused its initial efforts on identifying best social and environmental practices for megaprojects, then promoted the adoption and replication of these practices within the sectors prioritized by the Activity in the region.

Best management practices, defined as those that minimize the adverse environmental, social, and economic impacts that result from conventional industry practices and go beyond legal requirements, can be applied at all stages of the project cycle, from planning

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Photo: Anton Ivanov/Shutterstock

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to closure, through proper planning location, feasibility, design, construction, and implementation in line with the mitigation hierarchy.

In addition, best management practices have led to positive outcomes in matters such as impact prevention, mitigation, restoration, compensation, and improved community involvement. Adopting BMPs reduces risks and operating costs and can improve relationships with local populations, resulting in benefits for both the environment and the business.

Following the results chain methodology of USAID, the Activity established the following three strategic approaches that group actions oriented to a common focus to help reduce previously identified threats:

Strategic approach 1:
Develop enabling conditions for BMP adoption

Strategic approach 2:
Promote the adoption of BMPs

Strategic approach 3:
Increase awareness and promote replication of BMPs

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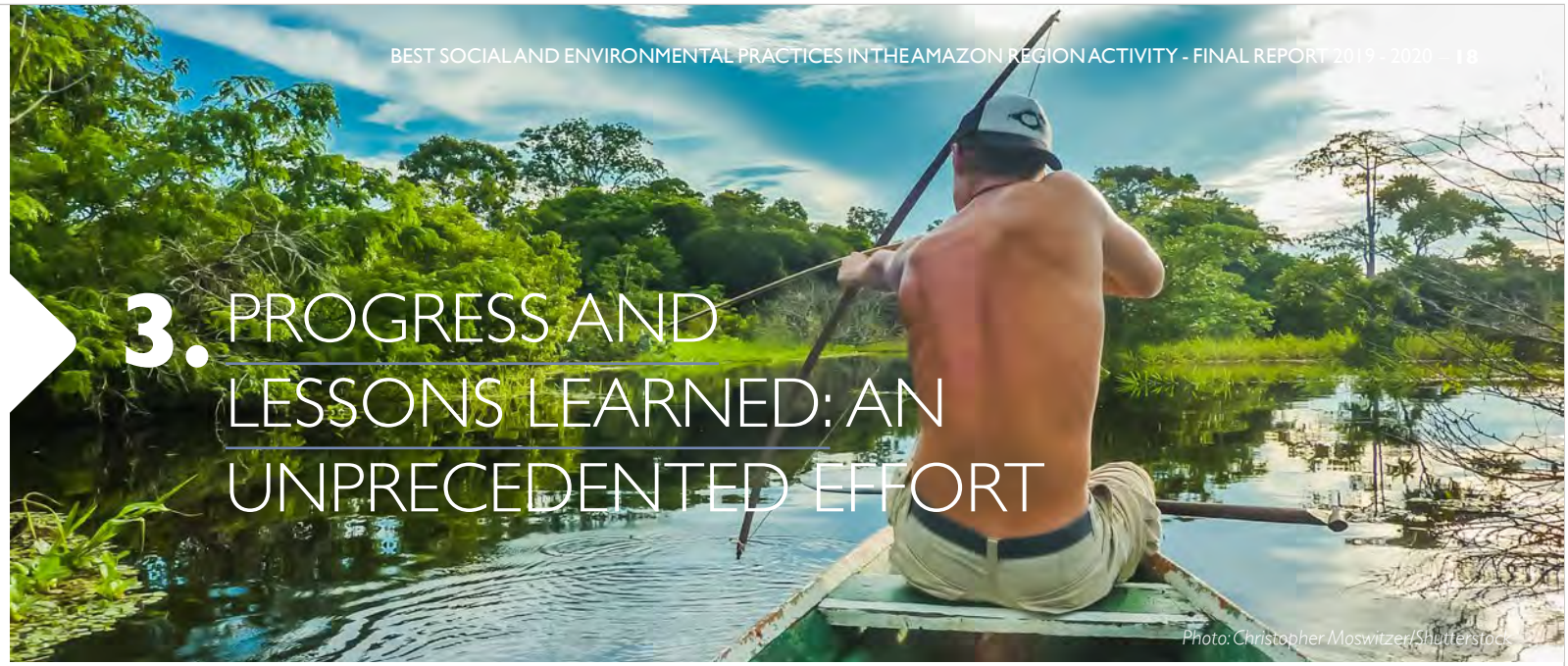

Photo: Christopher Moswitzer/Shutterstock

3. PROGRESS AND LESSONS LEARNED: AN UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT

During its implementation, the Activity focused on establishing a cooperative framework with key actors from the public and private sectors to promote the adoption and replication of best environmental and social practices in priority industries in the Amazon. The Activity primarily established alliances and collaboration agreements with government entities and private sector associations and companies and initiated capacity building programs with indigenous groups in the Amazon. The Activity also focused on analyzing and identifying opportunities and limitations for best management practices in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, targeting its strategic support toward existing initiatives, to ensure the sustainability of its interventions. The following sections present this information in greater detail.

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A. DEVELOPING ENABLING CONDITIONS

The adoption of best management practices requires a favorable enabling environment that encourages companies to adopt such practices, or, at a minimum, does not make it difficult for companies to do so. To this end, the Activity worked with government stakeholders and civil society organizations to improve governance and sector-wide planning by building capacity, establishing incentives, removing barriers, and creating opportunities and spaces for dialogue.

I. HAND IN HAND WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR

To enhance the enabling environment for BMP adoption, the public sector must create a legal framework that is clear, objective, transparent, and delimits the obligations and responsibilities of the agencies involved in environmental and social management. In addition, the public sector should work with regulated industries to create tools to properly communicate obligations and responsibilities and facilitate compliance. Moreover, the public sector can play an important role in encouraging companies to exceed the limits imposed by standard regulations, for example, by providing support to identify and adopt BMPs and incentivize innovation.

To help develop these enabling conditions, the Activity prioritized assistance to several different public institutions in Colombia and Peru, as described next.

Photo: USAID

Gabriel Quijandría, Vice Minister of Strategic Development of Natural Resources (Ministry of the Environment) of Peru, during a regional event on infrastructure and best practices held by the Activity in Brasilia.

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- ENVIRONMENT: STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

The Activity worked with environmental authorities and agencies to define the regulatory issues and internal capacity required to strengthen environmental governance and compliance in the country and the region.

In Colombia, we worked with ANLA and Corpoamazonia to develop joint work agendas relevant to the adoption of best practices in the extractive and infrastructure sectors, including defining instruments to be developed and capacity-building activities to be undertaken. These agendas were built on the foundation of ongoing initiatives (e.g., the ANLA strengthening plan) and needs identified by the environmental sector and the productive sectors. Agenda topics relate to strengthening the conservation of ecosystems and reducing potential negative impacts of the sector. Text Box # 1 details the work agendas agreed upon with both institutions.

Photo: USAID

Workshop to discuss the incentives regime proposal for the hydrocarbons sector in Peru, led by the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

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Laying the foundations for BMPs

#1

BUILDING JOINT AGENDAS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES IN COLOMBIA

Based on a collaborative exercise exploring stakeholder needs and interests, the Activity worked with ANLA and Corpoamazonía in defining key aspects to promote BMP adoption:

With ANLA:

External tools and regionalization. Align with the holders of monitoring and control tools in the Amazon to facilitate the exchange and incorporate available and updated information on the characterization and baselining of projects in the region.

Internal instruments. Support ANLA and interested sectors in developing, socializing, and disseminating the "Guide to dismantling and abandonment of projects."

Economic valuation. Facilitate contacts for and agreements on training sessions for local calibration and the use of the free MARXAN and InVEST software. Support the formation of expert panels that allow for the strengthening of an impact hierarchy analysis process.

Knowledge transfer. Contact international experts to define specific sensitivity criteria for the environmental licensing of projects in the Amazon as well as proposals for management measures. Transfer information, knowledge, and technical capacities to local environmental authorities so they can better fulfill their responsibilities.

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BUILDING JOINT AGENDAS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES IN COLOMBIA

Based on a collaborative exercise exploring stakeholder needs and interests, the Activity worked with ANLA and Corpoamazonía in defining key aspects to promote BMP adoption:

With Corpoamazonia:

Regulatory instruments. Develop terms of reference (clear guidelines for evaluators and users) and pilot evaluation exercise with an external expert and a local representative (from Corpoamazonia) on the adequacy of available facilities to treat and dispose of waste from hydrocarbon activities, as well as of the process to regulate the use of natural resources in prospecting and seismic exploration activities.

Generation of information and knowledge. Knowledge sharing and access to innovative, locally available environmental technologies through INNOVATEK technical exchanges, organized by the Activity.

Tools and guides. Design simplified information delivery tools for obtaining permits and licenses to allow license decision-making based on relevant information supplied by users. These tools could be used, for example, for licenses of Small Hydroelectric Power Plants (PCH) or tertiary roads.

Dialogue between stakeholders. Support exchange around the review of the environmental determinants for municipalities, specifically on improving the development of the instrument, demarcating the scope of action of the municipalities in relation to their territorial planning and allowing agencies' doubts to be cleared so they can make the most of this process.

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In Peru, to promote improved enabling conditions for BMP adoption, the Activity, worked with three civil society organizations to introduce goals on social inclusion and gender equality in the National Agenda for Environmental Action, "Environmental Agenda for 2021," which was approved on December 6, 2019.[10]

Other activities sought to develop incentives for BMP adoption within the framework of the National System of Environmental Impact Assessment. For example, with the National Environmental Certification Service for Sustainable Investments (SENACE), the Activity supported proposals to include incentives in the draft Supreme Decree on "Provisions for the Single Environmental Certification Process by the National Service for Environmental Certification for Sustainable Investments." Furthermore, the Activity supported dialogues to improve approaches to BMP application and environmental compensation.

In addition, on various occasions, the Activity promoted the exchange of information and experience with environmental regulation and the evaluation of the mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors between government authorities. These exchanges focused on topics such as experiences with BMPs implemented in Colombia and Peru; guidelines for evaluating and addressing potential environmental impacts; guides and technical standards on BMPs developed for the hydrocarbon sector; and procedures for environmental compensation in environmental licensing (certification) processes.

The Activity, in response to a request by ANLA and SENACE, had planned to support a series of meetings between the environmental agencies in the three countries to enhance their regional exchange on successful experiences and lessons learned.

10 *https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/438806/RM_N__380-2019-MINAM_-_Agenda_Ambiental_Bicentenario.pdf. The regulation approved by the Agenda is RM 380-2019-MINAM https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/438805/RM_N__380-2019.pdf.*

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- ## SECTOR AUTHORITIES: GENERATING SPACES FOR COLLABORATION AND JOINT DEVELOPMENT

The Activity worked closely with authorities from various sectors to incorporate the concept of BMPs into their institutional work, especially in the early stages of the project cycle (planning and design), when the role of the public sector is essential. In the case of transport infrastructure projects in the Amazon, working with the public sector is particularly important since most projects are led by the public rather than the private sector (see Text Box #2). Often, the public sector lacks the technical capacity and the resources to identify and implement BMPs and face regulatory barriers that prevent or hinder the implementation of BMPs.

For this reason, it was important that the Activity work with sectoral agencies. Specifically, the Activity sought to develop clear instruments to facilitate the adoption of BMPs at different stages of the project cycle—whether from a regulation standpoint or through incentives for the private sector— in those industries where they have the greatest potential for success.

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Laying the foundations for BMPs

#2

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, the Ministry of Transport (MINTRANSPORTE) and Instituto de Vías Nacionales (INVIAS), are key players for BMP adoption in the transport infrastructure sector in the Amazon. Mainly because these projects are tertiary roads connecting small towns, with relatively little freight and passenger traffic, making them hard to finance through tolls. As such, there is limited space for the private sector in the development of these projects.

For this reason, strengthening the capacities of MINTRANSPORTE and INVIAS was the best way to ensure that infrastructure projects adopt innovative practices that are respectful of the territory, minimize environmental and social impacts, and are built on an intermodal approach.

The Activity agreed to support the following activities:

- ☑ Conduct a methodological review of the construction of intermodal transport infrastructure plans, with an emphasis on the Amazon.
- ☑ Maintain the Inter-ministerial Environment-Transport Agenda and advise on the inclusion of topics of specific interest in the Amazon.
- ☑ Review Agreements 045 and 051 of the National Planning Department (DNP), aimed at defining environmental criteria for the approval of road infrastructure projects financed with resources from the General Royalty System.
- ☑ Generate basic information for decision-making in the case of the Troncal del Piedemonte project (formerly known as the Marginal de la Selva Highway) and regional work (with Peru and Brazil) to develop a decision-making tool for intermodality.
- ☑ Organize an event on technological innovation in transportation infrastructure to feed the sector with experiences from other countries.

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Laying the foundations for BMPs

#2

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN COLOMBIA

To promote BMPs and monitor this agenda, the Activity helped create the Roundtable for the Development of Sustainable Transport Infrastructure in the Colombian Amazon. The Roundtable involved sector entities, Amazonian territorial authorities, and guests from the environmental sector and civil society. It held two meetings in 2019, at which it discussed the proposed agenda and the concept of best practices and their scope with outgoing and incoming territorial authorities.

This space for coordination in the transport sector in the Colombian Amazon is highly valued by its members, who have expressed their desire to continue following the defined roadmap. In addition, the USAID Mission in Colombia expressed its interest in supporting the continuity of the Roundtable, for which it has established contacts with MINTRANSPORTE and the Ministry of Environment of Sustainable Development (MADS).

"...I would like to highlight . . . .the opportunity that you [the USAID Amazon BMP Activity] gave us to promote these inter-institutional working groups. . . focusing on planning from the local to the national level. In listening to you [the Activity], this is what we have been able to learn at these roundtable meetings (in Bogotá and Villavicencio) that we are now part of."

Magda Buitrago
Advisor
Ministry of Transport
Colombia

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In Peru, the Activity provided technical support to MINEM to prepare the Incentive Regime for Environmental Certification for Hydrocarbon Activities, involving the environment and hydrocarbon sectors to encourage the adoption of BMPs. It also provided technical support to ensure the Center for Convergence and Good Mining-Energy Practices (Rimay) could act as a public-private forum to promote BMPs in the Amazon.

Likewise, progress was made as follows:

The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Ministry of the Environment (MINAM): agreement to propose the inclusion of environmental sustainability indicators in the National Plan of Infrastructure for Competitiveness (PNIC).

The Ministry of Transport and Communications: agreement to develop mechanisms for their involvement in the specific processes to adopt best practices and guidelines for environmental governance in the transport sector.

The Regional Government of Loreto and some municipal governments of the region: engagement in the BMP adoption process and capacity building on BMPs. Along these lines, the Activity held a training workshop on best practices for social inclusion and gender equality for officials of the Loreto Regional Government.

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Success Story #1 | PROMOTING INCENTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION FOR HYDROCARBON ACTIVITIES IN PERU

Despite increasingly available knowledge, methodologies, and technologies for best social and environmental practices, lack of motivation and obstacles still prevent their adoption. Incentives—which can be reputational, regulatory, or financial—are among the best tools to promote the adoption and implementation of best practices, especially if they are first offered at the early stages of the project cycle.

Incentives can improve the overall performance of companies, government entities, and populations - and help stakeholders manage the adverse environmental and social impacts of industrial operations early in the project cycle, and enhance its positive results.

Against this backdrop, in Peru, the Activity focused on providing technical assistance to prepare the Incentives Regime for Environmental Certification of Hydrocarbon Activities, an initiative led by the General Directorate for Hydrocarbons Environmental Affairs at the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM).The participatory, multi-sectoral process began with a rich dialogue on the concept of best environmental and social practices, the aim of which was to build a shared vision of their nature and scope.This stage also included an intense exchange and analysis of concrete experiences of BMP adoption among business, government, and civil society organizations to identify relevant needs and proposals.The Activity also prepared a comparative analysis

Photo: Dr Morley Read/Shutterstock

of regulatory incentives to promote the adoption of BMPs in Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru.

The proposal developed based on this process defines "best practices as those measures or processes voluntarily adopted by the hydrocarbon activity's stakeholder which go beyond applicable regulations or official authority requirements to avoid, prevent, and/or mitigate any adverse environmental and social impacts as well as the

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Success Story #1 | PROMOTING INCENTIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION FOR HYDROCARBON ACTIVITIES IN PERU

degradation of natural resources, and which respond to the environmental protection objectives comprised in national, regional, local, or sector policies, as appropriate." In turn, the draft regulation establishes that identifying, adopting, and/or implementing a best practice should aim to achieve optimal results in the management of anticipated environmental impacts of hydrocarbon activities. Moreover, the draft regulation provided clarity on the minimum components that a best practice proposal should include, it cataloged best practices, and laid out the technical and administrative procedures for filing, review, and approval of best practices. Additionally, it covered implementation monitoring of best practices and gave guidance on incentives to encourage the adoption and execution of any environmental and social best practice, whether it be reputational, administrative, or fiscal incentives.

The draft regulation was published for consultation on December 31, 2019, and the comments and suggestions from government, business, and civil society organizations were subsequently systematized. In February 2020, the systematization was presented at a public hearing, after which the Activity provided further technical assistance to prepare a new proposal, later approved by MINEM and which will be sent to the Ministry of the Environment for opinion and final publication.

"… We appreciate the effective and ongoing support from the USAID Amazon BMP Activity (…) to prepare the Incentives Regime for Environmental Certification of Hydrocarbon Activities.

Supported by USAID from the beginning, this initiative has evolved through a participatory process bringing together business, civil society, and government organizations to build a legal regime that contributes to promoting best practices in hydrocarbon activities. We look forward counting with such important assistance in the future."

Martha Inés Aldana Durán
Director-General
General Directorate for Hydrocarbon Environmental Affairs
Ministry of Energy and Mines
Peru

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• LOOKING FORWARD

The main challenge in implementing best management practices in public sector projects is the limited availability of resources. This challenge could be overcome by carrying out a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis that takes into account the initial investment costs and costs avoided from the adoption of specific best practices. Costs avoided relate to reduced maintenance activities and reduced operational and social risks. The analysis should also look at how the application of best management processes can reduce environmental degradation that must be later addressed as environmental liabilities with high social and environmental costs.

Some key lessons:

Support the action plans and priorities of public entities, identifying the priorities that converge with project objectives, and avoiding duplication of efforts with other cooperation initiatives or projects.

Develop regulations, tools, or guidelines in a way that involves other actors beyond the public sector (e.g., the regulated sector, academia, civil society). This increases transparency, allows all stakeholders to come to a common understanding, and allows the knowledge generated by other actors to enrich regulations, tools, and guidelines.

Encourage subnational governments of the Amazon to adopt best practices in the region as they play a leading role in some sectors (for example, road infrastructure). They can also engage local civil society actors in dialogue to agree on best practices that address their main concerns and needs, thereby strengthening the governance of the territory.

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II. SOCIAL INCLUSION AS A CROSS-CUTTING THEME

The Activity recognized that the negative impacts of extractive activities and infrastructure projects in the Amazon have the greatest impact on vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, women, children, people with disabilities, Afro-descendants, and members of the LGBTQI community. For this reason, the Activity adopted a strategy to (a) incorporate social inclusion and gender equality concepts throughout all its activities and interventions and (b) identify and facilitate the adoption and replication of best practices for social inclusion and gender equality applicable to these industry sectors in the Amazon region.

To this end, the Activity carried out capacity-building activities for local populations, as well as for the private and public sectors, and developed tools on best practices for social inclusion and gender equality. It also promoted processes and practices to facilitate the active participation of vulnerable groups in site-level interventions, events, and in the Country Advisory Groups.

The Amazon BMP Activity supported the private sector in building and managing relationships with vulnerable groups on specific projects. In addition, at the sectoral level, for example, the Activity organized workshops with AFIN in Peru to strengthen the capacities of its partners on gender equality. The Activity also developed a basic gender equality guide for the adoption of BMPs and the Best Practices Reference Guide - Volume I Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, which not only addresses

Workshop with indigenous organizations under the framework of the Train the Trainers program, in Mocoa, Putumayo, Colombia.

Photo: USAID

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key concepts and problems but also includes examples of corporate best practices and specific experiences. For more detail about the guide, please see Success Story #6.

In working with local populations, the Activity prioritized engagement of indigenous peoples and their representative organizations at the national and local levels. This engagement aimed to increase understanding of concepts in a more transparent and better-informed way. Key themes included: territorial governance, indigenous rights, and best social and environmental practices, as well as build indigenous peoples' capacity to engage other stakeholders about the extractive activities and infrastructure projects that affect them. Thus, the Activity prepared the Train the Trainers (TTT) Program detailed in Success Story #2, which centered trainings on these themes and developed tools to facilitate the replication of learning in the communities of participants, contributing to the sustainability of these efforts.

• AN EXERCISE OF ANALYZING INDIGENOUS PERCEPTIONS IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

Through the Train the Trainers Program in Peru, the Activity was able to collect participants' perceptions of infrastructure projects and extractive activities in the region, especially in the hydrocarbon sector. Although the participant perceptions are not representative of all indigenous peoples' attitudes or even all people in the communities the participants represented, they are nevertheless relevant and useful. Participant perceptions were collected through observation by the Activity team and informal interviews during the training program.

The objectives of the analysis of indigenous perceptions were to:

- ☑ Compile the main perceptions (positive and negative) of program participants on industry sectors, especially of hydrocarbons in their territories.
- ☑ Categorize the identified perceptions to facilitate qualitative analysis.
- ☑ Identify the critical elements linked to the building of confidence by industry in the area.
- ☑ Identify opportunities to create governance conditions to undertake oil activities.

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The collected perceptions analyzed, tabulated, prioritized, and organized into seven categories, are shown in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Perceptions Matrix

Categories	Examples of participant interventions
Expectations regarding relationships with the oil industry	• Oil activity in the area is seen as a development opportunity, and participants see that it could bring access to a series of services: electricity, health, education, transportation, communications (internet, cell phones, etc.), and technology. • Oil companies generate opportunities for the local workforce. • Companies bring a series of benefits, including increased river transport, which makes it easier to transport and market the communities' products. • There is consensus on the need to have channels to approach companies and establish a dialogue. As one participant said, "Indigenous peoples cannot close ourselves to the world. It is necessary to learn to negotiate with companies." • The private sector is also perceived as a driver of value creation for its products and natural resources.

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Fears / Concerns	• The loss of cultural elements that are important for indigenous peoples and their cultural identities; and the lack of respect for sacred areas by companies; and the loss of spaces for relating to the elderly, which interrupts the transmission of cultural elements and ancestral traditions. • The lack of respect for indigenous rights, especially those related to land ownership, and loss of natural resources. • Damage to the health of communities, especially respiratory and digestive health. • The negative impact on family relationships derived from alcoholism, family violence, prostitution, human trafficking, and family abandonment. • The lack of consultation on the support activities and projects that companies implement, and which often do not respond to communities' real needs.
Role and presence of government	• There is a perception the government has historically abandoned indigenous peoples. However, they recognize the government's role in several important initiatives, such as bilingual education programs, the Beca 18 Program for young people, and health and vaccination programs. • They denounce a long delay in the process of the legalization of indigenous lands. • There is a lot of skepticism about how the prior consultation process is carried out and about the forest regime. • There is a concern that once the community establishes a relationship with the oil companies, the government will become more absent.
Non-government organization (NGO) role	• NGOs are perceived as allies of indigenous peoples, and there is a relationship of trust. Particularly, they mentioned World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Wildlife Conservation Strategy (WCS), Instituto del Bien Común (IBC), Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA) and Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR). • They have worked with these organizations on land regularization, natural resource management, institutional strengthening, political advocacy, and many capacity development processes that they value highly.

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Industry biases	• There is fear when interacting with companies because they consider that they are not prepared to negotiate. They know of some positive experiences but also many negative ones. • A recurring problem is that companies do not comply with the agreements made with the communities, and, as a result, dialogue breaks down. • In general, participants attribute the main changes that have occurred in their lives to companies. These include the loss of territories and natural resources and the decrease in hunting and fishing, among others. However, they also recognize that a large part of the responsibility for these issues lies with the peoples and communities themselves.
Need for information	• They have built their perception of the industry on their own experiences as well as those of other communities, not in their territories. They do not always know how the extractive sector works or its positive impacts. • Good practices are those that respond to the needs of indigenous peoples through processes of self-identification of needs and the design of strategies and mechanisms to meet them. • They relate best practices to indigenous rights and consider consultation as the first good practice.
Opportunities	• Use of local labor. Not only including men but also special programs for women that contemplate and reduce or eliminate limitations on women's access to employment due to the culturally assigned roles. • Use of local labor to supply companies with goods and services (e.g., construction of boats). • Promotion of the participation of communities' representatives in preparing the companies' operating plans. • The cultural identities of the communities. • Support in the consolidation and development of life plans and development of the programs and activities they contain.

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Photo: Christian Vinces/Shutterstock

Linked to the work with indigenous peoples was the Activity's support for the tripartite dialogue in Colombia between the government, the private sector, and the Organization for Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC). The purpose of the dialogue was to discuss specific actions for indigenous development concerning the infrastructure and mining and hydrocarbon sectors in the framework of the Indigenous Table on Environmental and Climate Change (MIAACC).

Finally, as part of its activities with the public sector, the Amazon BMP Activity supported the regional government of Loreto in Peru with a capacity-building workshop. The workshop was designed to increase understanding and knowledge about the gender equality approach and its relevance to industry, best practices for gender equality, and the role of subnational and local governments in promoting their adoption. The Activity had planned to hold similar workshops and develop specific guides for local authorities of the Amazon region in Brazil and Colombia.

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Success Story #2 | TRAINING INDIGENOUS TRAINERS ON BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Cooperation and dialogue with various stakeholders are critical to foster the adoption of social and environmental BMPs and to create a participatory and favorable environment in which companies can successfully adopt such practices.

As part of this process to build dialogue, the Activity worked individually with each stakeholder group. Our Train the Trainers Program was designed and implemented to prepare local populations for dialogue through agreements with the National Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon Organization for Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC) and the Putumayo Indigenous Zonal Organization Local Indigenous Organization of Putumayo in Colombia(OZIP); the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon (AIDESEP), and the Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Orient (ORPIO) in Peru; and the Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Pará (FEPIPA) and the Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Mato Grosso (FEPOIMT) in Brazil.

The Train the Trainers Program focused on strengthening the capacities of indigenous peoples to exercise their rights (especially those related to territory, consultation, and participation) and provide information on best practices (What are they? What is their potential to limit deforestation, pollution, and fragmentation of water resources and safeguard the rights of local communities and their ways of life? What are the benefits of adopting BMPs for companies, the environment, and for local peoples?). The program also sought to strengthen participant skills in dialogue, so they can effectively engage with industry and government on the extractive activities and infrastructure projects that concern them.

While the three countries shared these objectives, the program was tailored to the respective agreements reached with the various indigenous organizations directly involved in designing the program content and materials, recruiting instructors, and enrolling participants. The train the trainers methodology was used in the three countries to broaden the program's scope through replication workshops organized by the participants in their local communities.

Through four modules in Colombia and Peru, the Activity trained 63 indigenous leaders from 28 organizations using two educational toolkits. Thirteen people completed replication workshops that enabled them to disseminate learnings to more than 375 people. The results of the training were broadly positive, with 90 percent of participants in Colombia and Peru rating the course content, instructors, and methodology as excellent or very good.

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Success Story #2 | TRAINING INDIGENOUS TRAINERS ON BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Moreover, the program yielded valuable learnings to promote best practices, namely:

- ☑ Although the participants expressed a certain level of mistrust of extractive activities and infrastructure projects, they were inclined toward dialogue and expressed a desire to have their voices heard.
- ☑ It is essential to address issues related to extractive activities, infrastructure projects, and best practices from an indigenous perspective and through participatory mechanisms such that the indigenous organizations lead the discussion, analysis, and dissemination.
- ☑ The facilitation of meetings and workshops by the indigenous people allowed the topics to be dealt with comfortably, in an environment open to criticism and questioning, and to raise opportunities and recommendations to improve relations with private companies.

Although the Amazon BMP Activity's early closure and the COVID-19 pandemic prevented completion of the last training module in Peru and the two modules scheduled in Brazil, it is worth highlighting the interest of other projects across the region and from the indigenous organizations themselves, to continue these initiatives using the methodologies and toolkits developed by the Activity.

"We thank USAID and the team [of the Amazon BMP Activity] for their trust in the organization of indigenous peoples of the Colombian Amazon … it is important for projects to acknowledge the indigenous peoples' grassroots structures... and that it is necessary that external institutions ... give us the opportunity to work in our communities ..."

"... [the guidelines] are inputs left for use by OPIAC's organizational structure."

Julio César López
General Coordinator
Organization for Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon - OPIAC
Colombia

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B. PROMOTION OF BEST PRACTICES WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

As part of the AREP portfolio, the Amazon BMP Activity focused on the private sector, specifically promoting the adoption of BMPs on extractive and infrastructure projects to reduce negative impacts on forests, water resources, and populations of the Amazon. The private sector is well placed to develop practical, pertinent solutions that leverage the latest technology and to adapt those solutions to the biophysical and socio-cultural environment in which the projects will operate. To develop and adopt these solutions, however, the private sector needs enabling conditions, and these require the participation of other actors. As such, the Amazon BMP Activity sought the private sector's commitment by establishing partnerships with business associations and sector groups; promoting site-level partnerships between companies, populations, local authorities, and other stakeholders for BMP adoption on specific projects; involving leading companies in sharing their experiences and raising awareness on the benefits of adopting BMPs; and using technical exchanges to connect the private sector with companies providing technological innovation services, among other activities. In addition, the Activity planned to engage financial entities in promoting the adoption of BMPs through improved guidelines and financing requirements.

Photo: USAID

Private sector representatives participating at a workshop to discuss the incentives regime proposal for the hydrocarbons sector in Peru.

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I. SECTOR GROUPS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS, OUR KEY ALLIES

To create platforms that encourage sector innovation and promote social and environmental BMPs, the Activity established alliances with business associations in the three countries. Based on this experience, we confirmed that associations provide a sustainable and effective platform for dialogue between different actors and for promoting the adoption and replication of best practices in the Amazon region. In the case of the transport sector in the Colombian Amazon, the Activity supported the creation of the Roundtable for the Development of Sustainable Transport Infrastructure in the Colombian Amazon. More details on this experience can be found in text box # 2.

Signing of the partnership agreement with the SNMPE.

With Amazon BMP Activity support, these alliances:

1. Identified social and environmental BMPs applicable to the sector and disseminated information on the benefits of adopting best practices with their members and networks.
2. Co-organized working groups, training activities, and technical exchanges to learn, evaluate, and promote innovative best practices.
3. Prepared guides and tools to adopt and replicate BMPs.
4. Involved decision-makers and civil society actors in discussing specific BMPs.

A key element of the value-add of this joint work is the continuation of the incepted processes once the Activity concludes.

In all three countries, the Activity identified associations representing the sectors of interest that, due to their work on sustainability issues and the advances in best practices, could serve as a platform for dialogue between different actors and for the construction of actions that promote the adoption, both in the Amazon and in other regions.

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Thus, the Amazon BMP Activity established partnerships in Peru with the SNMPE, AFIN, IIMP, and Peru 2021; in Colombia with ACP; and in Brazil, with IBRAM.

Within the framework of agreements with these associations, the Activity co-organized a series of events in Peru that included an Executive Roundtable with the SNMPE and the IIMP during PERUMIN34 to discuss best management practices for the mining sector; technical meetings with the SNMPE to collect information and contributions for the incentives regime for the hydrocarbon sector; and two training workshops with AFIN on best practices and gender equality. In Colombia, activities included workshops with ACP on Resolution 4360-18 of the Supreme Court of Justice that declared the Colombian Amazon as a subject of rights, fostered dialogue on environmental governance tools for land use planning, and developed terms of reference to undertake seismic methods.

These alliances also served as a platform for announcing other Activity events, such as the validation workshops for the BMP inventory, technical exchanges, and the presentation of the BMP reference guides. The alliances helped us compile company experiences adopting BMPs as well.

In Colombia, the Activity developed technical documents for the hydrocarbon and transport infrastructure sectors with recommendations for different actors (with an emphasis on private sector actors). These documents constituted roadmaps for the adoption and replication of best practices in the short, medium, and long terms. More details are provided in Success Story # 3.

"Since its conception [the project], in its purpose of establishing best social and environmental practices for an industry like this, and being able to scale from the Amazon to other regions of the country and learn from other countries, the project made perfect sense ... It allowed us to see what we are doing well and what we are doing wrong."

Rafael Herz
Vice President of Operations and Sustainability
Colombian Oil Association
Colombia

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Success Story #3 | DEVELOPING ROADMAPS – PROGRESS IN COLOMBIA

As mentioned, the Amazon BMP Activity identified business associations and sector groups that were playing or could play a key role in promoting the adoption of social and environmental BMPs in the Amazon.

In Colombia, the Activity identified associations such as the Colombian Oil Association (ACP), the Colombian Mining Association (ACM), the Colombian Association of Electric Power Generators (ACOLGEN) and the National Association of Entrepeneurs (ANDI). The Activity signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ACP first, as a result of prioritizing sectors with activities and interest in the Amazon region. It was not possible, however, to identify a similar association in the transportation sector, as the Colombian Chamber of Infrastructure, which seemed the ideal interlocutor, did not have among its members any companies operating in the Amazon.

Through consultations with the Ministry of Transport, the Activity identified an opportunity to set up an inter-institutional arrangement exclusively tackling issues in the Amazon region, in which government agencies, including INVÍAS, departments, and municipalities, play the main planning, design, and execution roles for infrastructure projects. Thus, the Activity helped establish the Roundtable for the Development of Sustainable Transport Infrastructure in the Colombian Amazon, bringing together sector agencies, Amazon territorial authorities, and guests from the environmental and civil society sectors.

With both ACP and the Roundtable, the Activity developed detailed work agendas for the short and medium-term, identified priority social and environmental BMPs for each sector, and collected information on experiences with BMPs that could be used to encourage their adoption. In addition, the Activity helped collect information on progress, opportunities, and challenges for the adoption of BMPs, as well as on the role that different actors—public, private, and community—can play in promoting them.

Outputs of this assistance were included in a series of documents called "Current status and Recommendations for the Adoption of Social and Environmental BMPs," which provides an overview of the current status of BMP initiatives in each of the two sectors, including progress made, planned institutional management arrangements among agencies and sectoral organizations working in the Colombian Amazon, and proposals to adopt BMPs in this context and nationally.

For example, in the case of ACP, a medium and long-term agenda was proposed to promote adoption of BMPs recommending actions such as:

- Awareness-raising activities on the culture of sustainability in the sector and the concept of social and environmental BMPs as a complement to the mandatory actions within the framework of regulations and environmental licensing processes.

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Success Story #3 | DEVELOPING ROADMAPS – PROGRESS IN COLOMBIA

- Support and follow up to associated companies to adopt social and environmental BMPs in the concept and design phases of hydrocarbon projects in the Amazon.
- Sharing of experiences with national and international experts, and discussions on innovation in the hydrocarbon sector, to guide the promotion of new technologies for the hydrocarbon sector in the Amazon region.
- A review of the regulations of the hydrocarbon sector and its compatibility with territory zoning and environmental sustainability.
- The promotion of strategic regional analysis in sector companies to help fulfill biotic and investment compensation obligations of no less than one percent, by grouping measures to maximize environmental, economic, and social benefits, within the framework of the ANLA-ACP Sector Environmental Agenda.
- Capacity building programs for control entities, courts of law, judges, and prosecutors, on issues related to the environment, environmental management, and the hydrocarbon industry.

Once the documents were presented and disseminated, jointly with other relevant stakeholders, several public and private entities recognized the value of the tasks and expressed their decision to move forward. USAID has further expressed its intent to continue supporting the Roundtable, for which it has started talks with the ministries of Transport and Environment.

"… Great expectations were raised and we [the Colombian Ministry of the Environment], in some way, also became instrumental in calling other actors, because we see that the objectives are of great national interest […] and if this is not the case in the short term, we must continue to insist on engaging in these activities in the medium term. At any rate, we know what the pending tasks are, we share the objectives, and we have agreed to continue working on them."

Mario Orlando López
Sectorial and Urban Environmental Affairs Directorate
Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
Colombia

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II. IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN SPECIFIC PROJECTS

The implementation of BMPs at the site level to demonstrate reduced negative impacts on forests, water resources, and local populations requires agreements between the company in charge of the specific project, government authorities, and local communities. The agreement objectives are to increase the participation of stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous peoples, in decision-making; address local populations' needs and concerns about the project based on mutual commitments, respect, and transparency; and recognize the additional efforts by the company to adopt best practices.

To reach these agreements, the Activity designed a detailed process that, after identifying the priority landscapes based on their environmental and social vulnerabilities and the existing megaprojects in these areas, began with approaching the implementing companies to assess their interest and willingness to adopt best practices and make commitments in relation to other stakeholders.

The Activity signed intent agreements with the oil companies GeoPark Peru SAC in Peru and Amerisur Exploración Colombia in Colombia. It also reached preliminary agreements with PetroPeru and Río Tinto in Peru, Ecopetrol, and Gran Tierra Energy in Colombia, and Nexa Resources in Brazil.

It is important to emphasize that the Activity's role was to be objective and independent. As such, the Activity acted as a facilitator, creating space for discussion and negotiation between various stakeholders, including megaproject developers, indigenous communities, and local and regional government entities. The objective was to facilitate agreements between the parties to prioritize and implement social and environmental BMPs.

The Amazon BMP Activity identified best practices to meet the specific needs of the projects and shared this information broadly to encourage uptake, e.g., through INNOVATEK technical exchanges in Colombia, Brazil, and Peru. That is the case, for example, of ECOPETROL, as detailed in Success Story #4.

From the interactions with companies, the Activity found that their decisions to adopt BMPs are based on risk analysis. As such, companies that adopted social and environmental BMPs can reduce the component of risk of the business as compared to the continuation of traditional ways of implementing their activities.

This conclusion is based on the fact that the social and technical aspects of a project are connected to the expected cash flow of companies and that, if these aspects are properly managed, they provide improved investment recovery and reduced operating and environmental costs.

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The challenge for companies is to understand the benefits of BMPs adequately- as in addition to regulatory requirements- they can play an essential role in reducing the risk profile of project activities.

Going forward, it is important to propose a research agenda based on a comprehensive assessment of project risk, intended to demonstrate industry and financiers that the implementation of BMPs could lower overall project risks, thus reducing exposure to losses resulting from socio-environmental issues and, therefore, reducing the so-called Net Present Value Expected at Risk, which directly impacts the financial viability analysis of the projects.

Photo: Jess Kraft/Shutterstock

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Executive roundtable event with members of leading mining companies discussing BMP adoption and promotion (Arequipa, Peru).

III. LEADING COMPANIES AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

A core strategic focus of the Amazon BMP Activity was working with industry leaders who had a successful track record of technical, economic, social, and environmental performance and the ability to positively influence other key actors. These leaders would serve as ambassadors and change agents (or champions) for the adoption and replication of BMPs. This champion concept was expanded to include all similarly qualified opinion leaders.

The Activity envisaged strengthening the capacity of champions, specifically in communications, through support to define key messages, training in media relations, and assistance in publishing in the media, among other areas of action.

Under this framework, and after a rigorous evaluation, the Activity defined criteria to determine which global companies could act as champions in the Amazon. Subsequently, the Activity met with leading companies such as Nexa, Rio Tinto, Shell, and Peru LNG. Despite the interest shown by the companies, we were unable to complete this initiative due to the suspension of related activities and, ultimately, the Activity closure.

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IV. APPROACH TO INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

A key role of the private sector is to act as an agent for capacity building and technical knowledge of BMPs. Thus, the Amazon BMP Activity conducted extensive outreach to private companies and providers of innovative technologies for the key sectors. They shared their experiences at the INNOVATEK 2019 technical exchanges held in Colombia and Peru and at the Latin American Forum on Leadership in Infrastructure of CG / LA Infrastructure in Brasilia, where nearly 20 cutting-edge technological BMPs were presented to representatives of the government, sector groups, and companies from all over the region to initiate the process of BMP adoption.

The linking of private sector companies and associations in the region with leaders in various fields of environmental management to sensitize industry to promote and adopt BMPs was also key.

A third group of academic institutions—the University of Technology and Science - UTEC and the National University of Engineering - UNI of Peru, and the National University of Colombia—shared their experience in applied research, as well. The discussion involved the conceptualization and, subsequently, the design of quantitative modeling tools proposed for estimating the impact of reducing deforestation and degradation of water ecosystems through the implementation of BMPs within the framework of the Activity.

INNOVATEK technical exchanges on innovation and technology with industry leaders, held in Bogota, Brasilia and Lima.

Photo: USAID

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Success Story #4 | EARLY ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES BY ECOPETROL

The Amazon BMP Activity operated with the understanding that the adoption of BMPs is a long and complicated process. Widespread adoption of BMPs requires creating the right enabling environment, involves various players (communities, authorities, civil society, academia), and takes a significant communication effort to raise awareness of the impact of BMPs on the natural and cultural environment, as well as the benefits and costs of BMP adoption.

In some cases, however, the consideration and adoption of best practices happen on an accelerated timeline. This demonstrates potential to catalyze opportunities with companies whose main focus is innovation. Such is the case of Ecopetrol, Colombia's largest corporation, and its main hydrocarbon outfit, with over 50 years of operation in Putumayo in the Colombian Amazon.

After participating in various experience sharing events (17th Latin American Infrastructure Leadership Forum in Brasilia, and the INNOVATEK 2019 and an executive roundtable in Bogotá) and other Activity initiatives (e.g., development of an agenda with the ACP for the hydrocarbon sector), Ecopetrol asked for our support in designing prospective activities in one of its oil blocks. The aim was to incorporate some of the best practices to which the company had been exposed by the Activity, including satellite technology for initial non-invasive resource evaluation (OFT), treatment of solid and liquid waste without final onsite disposal, or circular economy approaches that include reuse, repair, restoration, and recycling.

Ecopetrol hoped to apply some of these practices on Block PUT-13, a project in the seismic exploration stage. Block PUT-13, which extends over 55,659 ha in the Puerto Leguízamo (Putumayo) municipality, is a site of extremely sensitive biodiversity—95 percent of the block's surface is covered by primary forest—reachable only down the Putumayo River.

For exploration, the company considered technologies other than conventional 2D seismic methods to identify possible oil deposits but eventually chose to stick to this technique due to contract-related restrictions preventing the use of alternative technologies. Nonetheless, the company made a great effort to design an exploration campaign that would significantly mitigate any eventual impacts on forests, soils, and water, and provide for eventual necessary compensation. This prospecting design, still pending of assessment and approval by the environmental authority, Corpoamazonía, included the following:

- The involvement of consultants and subcontractors from the campaign design for enhanced ownership and mitigation of impacts not initially considered.

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Success Story #4 | EARLY ADOPTION OF BEST PRACTICES BY ECOPETROL

- Clearing an area before the arrival of a prospecting exploration group to mitigate the accumulated impacts of two activities and the risks for workers and local populations.
- A reduction in the number of and area covered by mobile camps and setting up of logistics support stations, such as satellite camps, along the seismic line, which do not require forest clearance.
- Dry hygiene practices, with staff rotation every eight days.
- Collection of water only for Spontaneous Potential (SP) -feeding and drilling, from water sources along the seismic line, as available.
- Dry latrines in mobile and satellite camps, including helicopter evacuation of food waste, eliminating the need to dig infiltration fields and mitigating the risk of soil and water contamination.
- A reduction in the number and area of unloading points and helicopter landing pads.
- Drilling with "spiral" type equipment, which requires half the water for drilling, and with a reduced depth from 10 to 7 meters.
- Recording of seismic signals using 100 percent wireless, cable- and stringless geophones with internal batteries and a single sensor.

As a result of the successful early adoption of these best practices, an early triumph of the company's work with the Activity, the prospecting campaign will create zero local solid and liquid waste and reduce forest harvesting by 45 percent, as compared to initial 2017 estimates.

"… As a result of the work we had been doing [with the USAID Amazon BMP Activity] in our company, issues were raised, and we have prospective projects that we have rethought and are rethinking in Putumayo. This was largely motivated by all the work we have been doing with the Activity."

Francia Parga
Environmental Specialist
Vice Presidency of Sustainable Environmental Development
Ecopetrol
Colombia

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V. FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Project financing requirements—whether set by private financial institutions or multilateral entities such as the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)—are another important way to encourage private sector actors to adopt BMPs.

Companies, which base decisions on future investments and practices on probabilistic financial models often view the adoption of new processes as a risky proposition. Therefore, to encourage new practices, the Amazon BMP Activity began to meet with the executives of both companies and investors/financiers such as the World Bank, IFC, IDB, INVERLINK, and the PERMIAN Fund. These discussions aimed to demonstrate that the incorporation of best practices reduces the risk profile of projects and, therefore, the probability of failure.

Topics of discussion included the establishment of financing criteria associated with environmental and social BMPs, proposals to encourage the adoption of BMPs through REDD programs, and the use of project risk assessment methodologies.

Photo: Cristian Andriana/Adobe Stock

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Photo: Mykola Gomeniuk/Shutterstock

It is also important that financial incentives be linked to the transparency of data associated with the variables that generate risk (in this case, to the adoption of BMPs) and the participation of regulators. To this end, the Activity had been discussing with the industry and the financial sector a proposal to improve data transparency by developing a Virtual Tracking Guide, which could be implemented locally by the industry to provide reliable information online to all interested parties. By way of illustration, it is important to mention that initial discussions held with INVERLIK and the PERMIAN Fund were to formulate a methodology that could quantify the impacts of BMP adoption.

- LOOKING FORWARD

It is essential to keep in mind that when working with financing entities, efforts must be oriented toward designing, adjusting, and implementing financial incentives and guidelines, which can take different forms, including requirements for social or environmental safeguards or guides for project financing, as well as incentives such as reduced interest rates or more favorable loan terms. The reduction in the risk profile of its projects due to the adoption of BMPs must also be identified and associated with standards or BMP guides, specific to the Amazon, such as those developed by the Activity.

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Key lessons:

Based on discussions with the private sector about BMP adoption, it may take many years before practices and innovations are adopted, in part because the industry needs to assess the technical feasibility of these innovations and their benefits and costs (medium and long term investment costs, including those related environmental and operational costs).

The probability of companies implementing BMPs will depend on their risk propensity (more risk-averse companies will delay the decision to adopt practices that are not sufficiently proven, or whose cost-benefit analysis is not complete) and their technological innovation profile (companies more inclined to innovate, even socially, will be able to more quickly adopt the available solutions).

As such, technical exchanges, executive roundtables, and outreach events can catalyze adoption or at least lead to the analysis of alternatives for socio-environmental management through contact between solution providers and companies with particular needs.

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Key lessons:

While some regulations lack adequate incentives for the adoption of BMPs or based on the companies' perceptions may delay or hinder BMP adoption, the private sector generally views the best scenario as one in which there are effective authorities, with extensive technical and financial capacities, and rigorous, clear and transparent processes that reduce the risks of delays, interpretation, and corruption.

Activities with the private sector must be carried out in a concerted manner and with a clear understanding of the socio-economic conditions in their areas of work; this facilitates work with companies, communities, and the government in a symbiotic relationship.

Joint work is a great opportunity to share experiences, reduce transaction costs, standardize procedures and protocols, generate healthy competition between companies, and continuously raise the level of socio-environmental performance in the sector.

"… Best management practices make an impact when adopted collectively by the private sector …"

Dora Moncada
Environmental Affairs Coordinator
National Association of Colombian Entrepreneurs
Colombia

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C. AWARENESS RAISING: PROMOTION AND REPLICATION OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

1. RAISING AWARENESS: BEST PRACTICES AS A NEW PARADIGM

Given the nature and scale of its expected outcomes, the Amazon BMP Activity prioritized knowledge exchange, capacity building, and collaboration among key stakeholders as cross-cutting elements since its inception. Specifically, the Activity developed and implemented an integrated communications and knowledge management approach.

The purpose of this component was to build public support for the implementation of industry BMPs and environmental governance practices. The Activity established two complementary lines of action: (1) raising awareness on the need to promote a vision of sustainability for the Amazon; and (2) positioning industry BMPs as an effective and viable means of reducing threats to the region's forests, waters, and peoples.

During its first year, the Activity prioritized the development of communication actions and tools to promote collaboration between diverse stakeholders and foster a common understanding of best practices and their potential in the Amazon. These tools were also designed to facilitate the Activity's interventions at the site level, within the preliminarily selected landscapes.

Photo: USAID

Rinaldo Mancin, IBRAM's Director of Institutional Relations during a regional event with industry leaders and authorities, organized by the activity in Brasilia.

Our work in this area included developing planning tools and strategic guidelines, key messages, and a communications toolbox to promote the Activity among different audiences; holding events to introduce the Activity and position BMPs; and assessing relevant platforms to promote BMPs in the future, such as award schemes and other public recognition systems.

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In addition, we sought to identify and build opportunities with partners in the government, the private sector, and the media to develop a comprehensive and inclusive communications strategy for FY20. To develop the strategy, we planned to conduct a thorough assessment of the needs, opportunities, and perceptions of key stakeholders and audiences. These findings would then serve as a baseline to monitor compliance with the expected results, allowing the Activity to follow up on changes in perceptions, understanding, and attitudes toward best management practices and ensuring the sustainability of all communication actions.

Due to the early closure of the Activity, we were unable to complete this communication strategy and other efforts initiated under this component. We did, however, make significant progress in laying the foundation for a broad process of promoting BMPs among key actors in the region. Key areas of progress include:

- **Planning tools:** The Activity implemented an initial communications plan, which defined the general guidelines, objectives, audiences, key messages, channels, and tools, as well as a branding and marking plan, to help promote the Activity among key stakeholders.

Exchange meeting with media representatives in Lima.

Photo: USAID

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- **Communications toolbox:** The Activity developed the first set of communications tools, including videos, brochures, and frequently asked questions one-pager, in English, Portuguese, and Spanish. In addition, the Activity produced video interviews with more than 10 leading international professionals and decision-makers on BMP-related topics such as virtual reality modeling, remote exploration, and new remediation technologies in the extractive industries, as well as subjects such as sustainable development and stakeholder engagement.

- **Regular updates:** The Activity regularly distributed a newsletter with internal and external news, information resources, and information on events of interest. Each edition reached an average of 800 key stakeholders and decision-makers from the mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors in the region. In total, the Activity produced seven editions of the newsletter, of which five were disseminated in English and Spanish and four in Portuguese.

- **High-level fora:** The Activity participated in various business fora with key stakeholders from the public and private sectors to learn about industry trends and to promote best practices. This included high-level events organized by ACP and ANDI in Colombia and PERUMIN in Peru, among others.

In addition, the Amazon BMP Activity co-organized the 17th Latin American Infrastructure Leadership Forum (July - August 2019)—the largest forum of its kind—in Brasilia, Brazil, which, for the first time, incorporated the Amazon and BMPs as cross-cutting themes. The forum had more than 400 participants, exceeding the original projections for attendance by 50 percent. More than 20 renowned specialists and decision-makers from five countries led debates and presentations in four sessions organized by the Activity. These sessions brought together more than 180 attendees, increasing the visibility of best management practices and positioning the Activity as a key player to industry leaders, government representatives, academics, and journalists.

"The success of the event was largely due to the participation and involvement of the USAID's Amazon BMP Activity."

CG/LA Infrastructure

Washington, D.C.

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- OTHER EFFORTS INCLUDE:

- **Engagement of key media actors:** The Activity recognized the importance of identifying and assessing opportunities to collaborate with the media and press teams in key business associations, and strengthen their capacity and that of potential spokespersons to build thought leadership around BMPs. As such, in September 2019, the Amazon BMP Activity held the first exchange meeting with specialized media representatives in Peru, where we identified opportunities to generate and disseminate content, interviews, and stories about the Activity, BMPs, and innovation. Representatives of specialized media in mining, corporate sustainability, and technology, as well as press from leading business associations, participated. Finally, the Activity took advantage of existing opportunities and platforms to promote the Activity, including the film festival FICA Amazonía, held in Colombia.

- **Platforms for public recognition on best management practices:** in line with the efforts to generate incentives, the Activity identified business performance awards as an effective reputational incentive to promote the adoption and replication of BMPs. Instead of creating new awards, the Activity sought to introduce a BMP-related category within well-known award schemes. After evaluating existing platforms and finding no regional award system, the Activity identified opportunities for collaboration in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru and began promising discussions with SNMPE on potential sponsorship of one of their awards, with a focus on BMPs in the Amazon.

Photo: Ariel Ukulele/Shutterstock

Due to the early closure of the Activity, these initiatives, as well as other communications activities, were suspended while still at the initial or even conceptual stage. Eventually, all communication initiatives were canceled.

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Success Story #5 | ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Activity was two months from its completion when the new coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic hit the Amazon, a region particularly fragile because of its isolation and deficient health infrastructure and public services, and, above all, vulnerable human groups. National governments responded in a variety of ways, from social distancing to mandatory lockdown, which, in addition to creating uncertainty, constrained our ability to undertake the activities and honor the commitments under the Activity's terms.

The team quickly assessed ongoing activities and presented USAID with an adaptive management proposal to update the work plan without compromising the expected outcomes. To continue the Activity's work while keeping our staff and stakeholders safe, the Activity decided to substitute virtual events for face-to-face meetings, provide digital versions instead of printed documents, and cancel face-to-face events such as the fourth module of the train the trainers program scheduled in Peru.

Because of its nature as a regional project with teams operating in four countries, the Activity was familiar with the use of online platforms and virtual tools to coordinate, share, and collaboratively draft reports or other products. However, in this case, collaborative work was complicated by additional constraints, including lack of reliable internet bandwidth for some participants, and particularly challenging working conditions due to social isolation, namely the additional demands of everyday household responsibilities. Although the world seemed to be moving at a slower pace, the Activity team instead had to move faster to reach its proposed goals with fewer resources.

The Activity held six online seminars or webinars—three focused on a largely Colombian audience and three aimed at a broader audience—between April 28 and May 14, 2020. The last three events, organized to present the series of BMP reference guides prepared by the Activity, were carried out with simultaneous interpreting in Spanish and Portuguese, with participants located in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and the United States. Each event featured a main presentation and interventions by representatives of private sector associations (ACP and ANDI from Colombia, and the SNMPE from Peru), indigenous leaders (OPIAC), and government authorities (SERFOR and MINAM in Peru and Minambiente and Mintransporte in Colombia).

Organizing the virtual workshops posed challenges, as it required changes in the original tasks, including hiring professionals with experience organizing, directing, and conducting webinars and doing simultaneous interpretation; identifying the most convenient platform for the various types of meetings and simultaneous interpretation systems in two or more languages without incurring significant

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Success Story #5 | ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

additional costs; and changing the format of the face-to-face workshops from one workshop per country, to a series of three webinars to present three guides to audiences in various countries.

Given the regional nature of the Activity, these virtual workshops had several advantages, including setting up region-wide forums without the costs, logistics, and carbon footprint of a face-to-face event; enabling the simultaneous participation of people from different countries and speakers of different languages; securing the participation of high-level panelists, and convening a broader audience.

Before each webinar, the team defined a very precise agenda and held several rehearsals to check the quality of the Internet connections for speakers and panelists and test communication among team members via WhatsApp to assure seamless coordination of the event. After each webinar, we conducted a quick evaluation so that we could adjust and improve the next virtual meeting. For example, we were able to evaluate which options in the Zoom platform created a better experience and interaction for attendees.

Likewise, we were able to identify minor limitations, such as the lack of opportunities for spontaneous interactions between the participants, for example, during the refreshment pauses in face-to-face events, which allow us to gauge the level of interest or satisfaction among attendees. To overcome this limitation to the extent that we could, we actively encouraged participants to make comments and ask questions. After each virtual seminar, we shared materials such as presentations and recordings with all registered participants. Feedback from industry, government, and civil society participants has been extremely positive.

"A special recognition to DT Global for carrying out this closing phase with such a high degree of professionalism and for efficiently sorting out the difficult circumstances of the lockdown due to the pandemic. This experience will undoubtedly be considered by our Mission as a best practice for our project portfolio. Thanks to the DT Global team in charge of the Activity's implementation."

Ani Zamgochian
Deputy Director
Amazon Environmental Regional Program
USAID Peru

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II. COUNTRY ADVISORY GROUPS

The Amazon BMP Activity set up two Country Advisory Groups (CAGs), one in Colombia and another in Peru, and obtained commitments to set up a similar group in Brazil. Made up of senior representatives of the private, public, social, and academic sectors, the CAGs were convened to advise the Activity on identifying, implementing, and replicating best practices, drawing on members' experience and knowledge. They also provided feedback on the Activity implementation process.

These advisory groups made valuable contributions, reflections, and suggestions regarding identifying and systematizing challenges and lessons learned from previous experience in similar initiatives which can be used in future similar undertakings. These include:

Bear in mind that the implementation and dissemination of BMPs is a long-term process and that a project's execution period is too short and insufficient to achieve visible impacts.

Disseminate the concept of BMPs, specifically by compiling and reporting on the BMP inventory, to build confidence in the benefits of their adoption.

Identify opportunities to articulate BMPs in national and sectoral plans and programs (such as the National Infrastructure Plan of Peru or the National Development Plan of Colombia), as well as instruments for environmental and social management of projects (for example, compensation portfolios).

Link the implementation of BMPs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are fundamental for countries and regions and for which there are national and local agendas for compliance and monitoring.

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Consider the elements of environmental governance, both of the sector and investment project-levels, including participation, planning, transparency, and accountability, among others, to clarify the scope of good environmental governance practices in megaprojects and the criteria for measuring results.

Promote a permanent dialogue with indigenous peoples, e.g., identify BMPs with them based on previous experiences, promote the fair sharing of benefits, and incorporate their knowledge of resources and territories. Include other actors such as companies, government, and local authorities as well, so the discussions are inclusive.

Keep at the center of this dialogue the life plans of indigenous peoples, which are the instrument par excellence for the defense of indigenous peoples' territories and cultures. Many norms and the jurisprudence of the countries of the region indicate that any intervention in the Amazon must be legitimized with the indigenous peoples and other communities that occupy the territory in question and that any intervention must consider present and future generations of inhabitants.

In general, support useful dialogue and mechanisms to enable the sharing of experiences among the different actors or stakeholders.

Help create a shared vision of the territory, based on the many existing visions, but keeping in mind participatory land use is a central consideration and that there are zones in the Amazon of absolute or partial restriction, which must be explicit for the projects.

Make explicit the link between climate risk and forest and water management, with an emphasis on sectors such as road infrastructure or hydroelectric power plants, which must consider key aspects of climate resilience.

Consider the varying institutional capacities of the different levels of government and adopt strengthening programs to promote prioritized best practices.

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Scale up the replication of BMPs not only within the Amazon but also to other regions across countries, contributing to advanced sector environmental performance. Doing so will require the development of communication strategies.

Identify opportunities to facilitate the exchange of experiences between companies that have activities in several of the region's countries and take advantage of the capacities of various stakeholders to share BMPs at the regional level.

Identify the incentives for implementation that contribute to improving the predictability of investments and the promotion of virtuous alliances with communities and with the State.

Foster, through the adoption of BMPs, the support of the extractive and infrastructure industries to legalize informal, but legal, activities in the Amazon (e.g., small-scale mining), contributing to local development.

These Country Advisory Groups were set up to guide the Activity, so it is unlikely they will continue after the Activity ends. However, it is important to retain a similar platform for debates and discussions between companies, government institutions, and civil society organizations, despite this innovative strategy not having many precedents in the region. In addition, a group or mechanism that can offer a comprehensive, collective and objective view can contribute to the improved governance of a project such as this one, and facilitate its relationship with other ongoing conservation and local development initiatives, creating greater opportunities for the protection of the Amazon.

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III. TOOLS TO PROMOTE REPLICATION OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

As previously mentioned, replicating BMPs was an important approach to achieve the Activity's main objective. This replication would be enabled by a diverse set of activities, including the engagement of business associations, the establishment of strategic alliances, targeted capacity building, awareness-raising on the benefits of best practices, and the development of tools and incentives to facilitate region-wide adoption. During the implementation period, the Activity developed the eight tools, described below, which were transferred to business associations, indigenous organizations, and other USAID projects for their continued use in promoting best practices in the Amazon:

"This guide [on social inclusion and gender equality] collects how effectively companies, in alliance with communities, can make changes and make a difference. On the one hand, this is what companies are doing because they aim to ensure sustainable development for their activities… and because when wealth is obtained, it has to be shared with host communities…"

Janinne Delgado
Manager of Hydrocarbon Activities
National Society of Mining, Oil, and Energy
Peru

REPLICATION TOOLS

- **A toolkit from the indigenous training of trainers program in Peru,** including a flipchart, a primer, and a video.
- **A toolkit from the indigenous training of trainers program in Colombia,** including a training manual for indigenous leaders, map boards depicting types of indigenous territories, as well as territories of origin and traditional territories, a board game, an activity training guideline, and training presentations.

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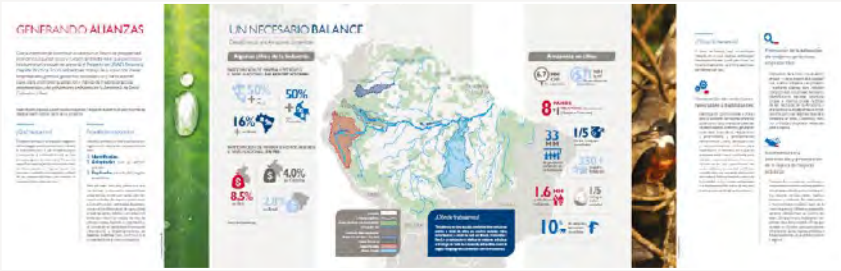

- **A scorecard to measure sector and project performance** in implementing best management practices.
- **A BMP inventory** compiling 80 experiences of implementing best practices developed as an interactive database that can be updated.
- **A gender guide** on best practices in gender equality for the extractive and infrastructure industries. The guide provides basic concepts and parameters to facilitate understanding and proper adoption of best practices targeting gender equality issues. It also provides examples that can be replicated.
- **Best practices reference guide - Volume I,** Social inclusion, and gender equality.
- **Best practices reference guide - Volume II,** Forest management, and biodiversity.
- **Best practices reference guide - Volume III,** Management of water resources, water bodies, and associated biodiversity.

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Success Story #6 | BEST PRACTICE REFERENCE GUIDES

To achieve its principal objective, the Activity initially focused on identifying best practices to be able to promote their adoption and their replication. The publication of a series of best management practice reference guides is the result of the Activity's efforts during its first year of implementation.

To encourage companies to adopt best practices and to engage authorities and civil society to support the effort, it is important not only to raise awareness of the benefits that best practices can yield but also disseminate specific best practices that can be applied in the Amazon context and have been successfully implemented by other companies in the past.

Although financial institutions, international business associations, the United Nations, and other groups have developed various tools to guide companies in the design and implementation of best management practices (e.g., guidelines, principles, and non-binding statements on safeguarding forests and water resources and engagement with local communities), the guides developed by the Activity aimed to fill a gap by providing guidelines focused specifically on development in the Amazon region.

The initial step included identifying proven best management practices in an inventory or database. To this end, the Activity identified the main threats to the Amazon and the main drivers (e.g., tailings polluting water bodies or deforestation connected to land-use changes, etc.). Then, it evaluated how these threats drivers were related to infrastructure projects and extractive activities and identified and selected proven best practices to address them. To validate the selected practices, the Activity conducted a literature review and held consultation meetings with sector experts.

BMPs that showed potential for application in the Amazon region were synthesized, organized, and consolidated in the inventory. The BMPs were included in an interactive database and three reference guides as follows:

- ☑ **Best practices reference guide - Volume I,** Social inclusion and gender equality
- ☑ **Best practice reference guide - Volume II,** Forest management and biodiversity
- ☑ **Best practices reference guide - Volume III,** Management of water resources, water bodies and associated biodiversity

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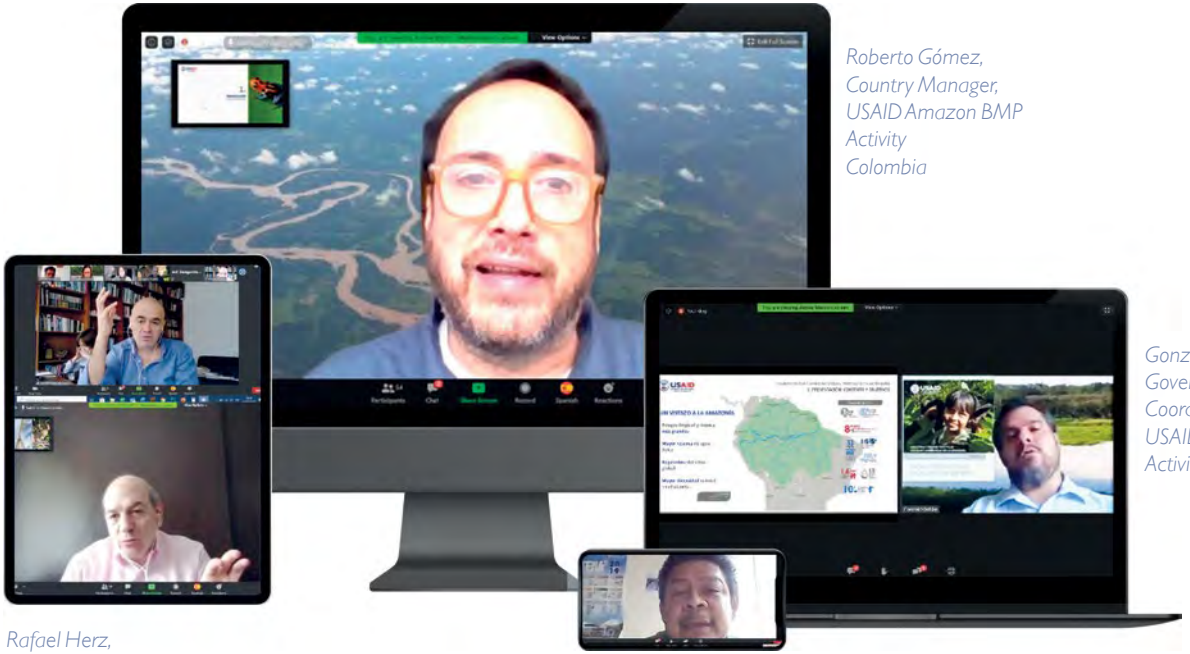

Roberto Gómez, Country Manager, USAID Amazon BMP Activity Colombia

Gabriel Quijandría, Vice Minister of Strategic Development of Natural Resources, Peru

Gonzalo Varillas, Governance Coordinator, USAID Amazon BMP Activity

Rafael Herz, Operations and Sustainability President Colombian Oil Association

Mateo Estrada, Territory, Environment and Climate Change Coordinator, Organization for Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon

> *Adaptability was a characteristic feature of the project, which allowed for a successful cycle of virtual conferences for the presentation of the best practices series, which gathered more than 50 government, private sector and civil society representatives in the region, per edition.*

Although the 80 compiled best practice experiences might not seem like many, they are concrete experiences with proven results, retrieved from trusted sources, and applicable in the Amazon region. This makes them valuable and of high relevance. This fact is even more

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Success Story #6 | BEST PRACTICE REFERENCE GUIDES

significant given the difficulty of finding examples or case studies that meet the required characteristics due to the limited amount of information shared by companies on their experience in the adoption of best practices.

An additional challenge was to identify best practices when involving new technologies. To fill this gap, the Activity included information on technological innovations in the two guides on environmental practices. Many of these were presented by technology development or vendor companies at the INNOVATEK technical exchanges organized by the Activity in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. The goal of this event was to enable a marketplace exchange to introduce companies in the Activity's target sectors to technology developers and vendors. This resulted in initial engagements with promising opportunities for innovative technology adoption by the companies.

The inventory represents an initial compilation that should continue to expand to make available additional experiences and practices that can benefit the Amazon and its peoples. This initial effort made available more than 80 examples of best practices, and 50 environmental BMPs case studies, and 30 social BMPs case studies in more than 40 countries. Some of the leading business associations in the region have already expressed interest in owning and expanding on the best practices inventory developed by the Activity.

"… The number of options and the number of solutions already available to solve these issues is impressive… there is no excuse for doing anything wrong… The means to do things properly and reduce the impact of infrastructure… on people's lives -are available. It is now a matter of making progress. To make progress in a challenging context … compounded by COVID also opens an opportunity … to rebuild a strong connection with biodiversity … to the extent that healthy ecosystems assure we won't have to face situations like the world faces today."

Gabriel Quijandría
Vice Minister of Strategic Development of Natural Resources
Ministry of the Environment
Peru

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THE USAID AMAZON BMP ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

A challenging reality

1

biome

3

prioritized countries: Brazil, Colombia, and Peru

17

months of effective implementation

Building capacities for sustainability

69 capacity building and dissemination events on best management practices

44% women / 56% men

1.496 persons trained and sensitized (leaders and representatives from the private sector, the government and civil society)

60+ indigenous representatives from 25+ organizations, trained as trainers on best management practices

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THE USAID AMAZON BMP ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Practical tools to promote best management practices

4

policies, laws, agreements or regulations approved as a result of the Activity's intervention

8

tools to promote best management practices adoption (inventory and guides, indigenous training toolkit)

First BMP reference guides applicable in the Amazon

3 BMP reference guides applicable in the Amazon

80+ best management practices identified

78 experiences implemented by

70 companies in

41 countries

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The following are recommendations and lessons learned from the Activity's implementation period between October 2018 to May 2020. They include insight into the Activity's primary implementation considerations and approach, as well as recommendations organized by key stakeholders. The goal of providing these recommendations is to inform future activities in the Amazon that involve work with the private sector, especially as it pertains to conserving and conducting responsible and sustainable development in the region.

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GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT AND ITS APPROACH:

- While infrastructure, mining, and energy projects bring much needed economic growth and development to the Amazon countries, they also pose significant environmental, social, and economic threats. Companies must find ways to minimize negative impacts—not only for the well-being of the communities but also for the sustainability of their business. As such, the premise of the Activity—working with the private sector to adopt best management practices—remains valid, and the adoption of BMPs will continue to be a sound way for the Amazon region to balance a desire for growth with protection of the environment and people.

- The adoption of social and environmental BMPs complements—rather than replaces—industry norms and regulations. As such, clearly defining the extent to which companies must comply with regulation requirements is a prerequisite to identify opportunities for the adoption of BMPs that go beyond requirements.

- In the medium and long term, the minimum performance standards outlined in regulations are likely to gradually increase, as has been the trend in the last decades. Such changes would present an opportunity to establish more ambitious BMP adoption goals that would enable an even higher level of corporate environmental performance, contributing to the conservation of the Amazon biome, its ecosystems, and the protection of its inhabitants.

- Efforts to reduce the negative impacts on the Amazon ecosystems require adequate inter- and cross-sectoral coordination and a clear understanding of stakeholder needs. Only then can one take coordinated action and align with the policies of the different sectors active in the Amazon territory.

- The coordination between sectors must be complemented by a transparent dialogue with local communities so that the interests of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, peasant communities, and other social groups in the Amazon region are, at a minimum, at the same level as those of the economic sectors.

- The Amazon BMP Activity recognized that the private sector in the Amazon region has the capacity and potential to be a powerful agent of change, that is why its emphasis on private sector engagement, while atypical for a conservation project, was appropriate. However, private sector

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engagement should be one part of a broader multi-stakeholder approach. This approach should emphasize meaningful participation by governments (national and local), peasants, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, civil society organizations, and academia to support, improve, and monitor private sector activities in line with their competencies and responsibilities.

- Getting the private sector to adopt social and environmental BMPs can be difficult—the BMPs are sometimes technically complex or require innovation, and companies are often risk-averse. As such, the adoption of BMPs should be viewed as a process that goes beyond the duration of a project. Continued support throughout this process is critical, even if it implies reviewing and adjusting the project's approach, as interruptions can cause frustration or rejection among stakeholders, hindering future efforts.

- Working with megaprojects in a region with so many differences between countries can be challenging and even limit the achievement of results. Moreover, in some cases—such as in Colombia and Peru—the cumulative impact of smaller development projects can be significant although they do not qualify as megaprojects or are comparable to the scale of project predominant in Brazil. As such, it is important not to assume a one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, it would be useful to support projects based on a comprehensive landscape approach that takes into account jurisdictional threats to biodiversity, forests, and communities.

- Adaptive management must be exploited to its full potential on projects like the Amazon BMP Activity to ensure that complex situations and risks can be properly addressed and managed. Establishing clear review milestones during implementation can be a helpful practice.

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INTERNATIONAL DONOR INSTITUTIONS:

- To maximize the impact of international donor assistance in the Amazon region, it is essential that donors share information and coordinate implementation strategies, so that project designs are complementary and not duplicative. Such coordination will enable practical assistance, including strategic and efficient solutions to achieve conservation and sustainable development goals in the region. Relatedly, early and continuous coordination with local actors from the various sectors (public, private, civil society, indigenous groups) in the design stage of new projects in the Amazon will increase stakeholder and beneficiary ownership and reduce risks during execution. Initial consultations between donors and key stakeholders in the Amazon are particularly important due to the inherent complexity in the region, including competing stakeholder interests, which implementing partners face when ramping up implementation.

- Strategic guidance and support from donors are paramount, especially when multiple projects fall under a regional program or contribute to the same strategy. This support could be direct or through a platform or regional support unit that facilitates the management, monitoring, integration, and communication between projects under the same program.

- Regional initiatives require coordinated planning and monitoring processes (e.g., during the pause and reflect activities) to inform complementary implementation strategies that facilitate achieving project results. Additionally, an integrated communication strategy should guide implementing partners in conveying a unified message that reflects a shared programmatic vision and anticipated impacts. Having a shared Amazon vision across projects can also lead to opportunities in knowledge sharing and peer to peer learning while supporting regional program objectives and contributing positively to the impact of public policies and decision-maker priorities.

- In this sense, effective communication at the program level becomes a critical element of strategic planning and project execution. This is particularly critical in the Amazon region context, where there is a diverse range of actors with different interests, backgrounds, and initiatives underway.

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PRIVATE SECTOR AND MEGAPROJECTS:

- Megaprojects in the Amazon are associated with an increase in environmental degradation and social conflicts, and they have frequently failed to meet sustainable development expectations. Companies responsible for megaprojects should review their methods carefully and, if necessary, rethink current development approaches in the Amazon. In this process, companies should prioritize the implementation of best management practices to ensure positive and inclusive sustainable development.

- Business associations and sector groups play a fundamental role in promoting the adoption of BMPs within their sectors and among their members. The Amazon BMP Activity produced tools such as the BMP reference guides that can be useful to them as they promote BMPs. These guidelines include an initial compilation of international best practices; evidence that adoption is technically feasible, economically viable, and financially justified; and the expected benefits for companies, the local communities, and the environment.

- It is also essential to emphasize the potential role of business associations to serve as a powerful forum for communication, dialogue, and coordination among company members and to foster collaboration with other key stakeholders. Business associations can help create synergies between companies with shared interests and encourage greater collaboration with other stakeholders, including governments, local communities, indigenous peoples, academia, and civil society organizations.

- It is important to note that some companies and business associations are already adopting BMPs without the Amazon BMP Activity's assistance. With guidance and some information, these companies—especially those more inclined to innovation and convinced of the benefits of sustainable development—can quickly become industry and regional leaders and help promote and facilitate replication of BMPs throughout the Amazon region.

- To establish adequate and effective impact management measures, it is essential to identify the indirect, cumulative, and synergistic impacts generated by groups of projects underway in different sectors in the Amazon region. As such, it is necessary to build capacity within the sectors to identify, assess, and manage such impacts. In addition, developing coordination mechanisms with other sectors and with local government authorities in the Amazon will strengthen territorial governance and facilitate the implementation of

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priority measures. Measures that will depend on effective collaboration with local governments include but are not limited to, for example, induced deforestation and impact monitoring on water and hydrobiological resources. Areas of capacity strengthening include impact assessment, performance monitoring of impact management measures, and prosecution and sanctioning of those responsible for driving indirect impacts.

- Although many of the private sector companies engaged by the Amazon BMP Activity already had access to cutting-edge information and technology for their projects, linking information and technology solutions to their social and environmental management strategies could add value. Likewise, research and innovation think tanks could also contribute to the development of innovative solutions to advance sustainability in the Amazon.

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS:

- Throughout the Activity's implementation period, agencies from different sectors and levels of government expressed their interest in supporting the adoption of social and environmental BMPs. It is clear to them that widespread implementation of BMPs will improve environmental performance across the sectors, and yield benefits in fulfilling national environmental performance and sustainability goals. Some agencies recognize that improving performance standards could be an opportunity in the medium term and realize that greater benefits can be achieved when BMP adoption becomes regular practice across sectors.

- Large infrastructure and extractive industry projects must prioritize comprehensive and rigorous management from the planning stage, in which government institutions play an essential role. Otherwise, adverse social, environmental, and economic impacts can severely reduce their contribution to development, hamper their long-term sustainability, and likely seriously affect the natural and cultural environment, thus compromising their current and future operations.

- Public sector institutions should develop a permanent strategy to review and update regulatory guidelines and tools. These tools should be updated according to the evolution of regulations, reflect evolving conditions and socio-environmental needs, and align with international commitments. Better alignment can contribute to the continuous improvement of socio-environmental performance.

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CIVIL SOCIETY:

- The successful implementation of social and environmental BMPs is only possible if local populations participate from the earliest stages of the project cycle. Early involvement can contribute to community acceptance and understanding of such practices. Moreover, early participation can lead to better engagement by civil society actors by allowing them to participate in monitoring actions based on the universal, transparent, and traceable information shared by all stakeholders.

- Indigenous organizations at the national and local levels are interested in working with private sector companies and are actively seeking opportunities for constructive dialogue. While such dialogue should not replace the necessary consultation processes that are the right of the communities, it does create opportunities for discussions based on shared, transparent information. Interactions between indigenous groups and the private sector should involve relevant government organizations and make clear that the interests of communities and civil society organizations have the same value as those of government and private sector groups.

- To ensure dialogue between indigenous groups and the private sector is effective, more must be done to build on efforts to strengthen capacities of indigenous leaders such as those implemented by the Activity through a strategy to "train the trainers." Such training seeks to improve the effectiveness of indigenous groups in private sector dialogue and reduce traditional asymmetries.

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION OF MEGAPROJECTS:

- International financing institutions have requirements for social and environmental safeguards for the megaprojects they finance. While these requirements contribute to global sustainable development, they do not always fully align with the challenges unique to projects in the Amazon region. As such, international financing institutions should find ways to incorporate the complexities of working in the Amazon into their requirements. Doing so could help strike a balance between infrastructure and extractive projects and ecological and socio-cultural considerations.

- In addition, the requirements of financial institutions should be accompanied by incentives to reduce the risk profile of megaprojects, which are ultimately assumed by the financial institutions themselves, and monitoring processes that can help guarantee that investments in the region fully comply with these requirements.

- Investors and financial institutions are increasingly aware of the importance of environmental, social, and corporate governance elements in ensuring long-term competitive financial returns. As such, there is an opportunity for them to develop specific parameters for their investments in the Amazon region.

- A final recommendation to foster the responsible investment of resources from the extractive and infrastructure sectors (e.g., taxes, royalties, transfers, concessions, tolls) is to strengthen collective efforts between government, industry, and communities to improve the regulation of the investment and monitoring of those resources. In addition, it is important to take advantage of transparency initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and share with the community information on management of non-renewable resources. This can facilitate trust-building and more informed dialogue between private companies, the government, and civil society.

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