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AMAZON VISION

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CONTRACT INFORMATION

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Data and geographic references in this publication are extracted from fiscal year 2021 Mission-level performance reports and are subject to change.

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ACRONYMS

AIRR	USAID Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources
AREP	USAID Amazon Regional Environment Program
CINCIA	Center for Amazonian Scientific Innovation
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
FY	Fiscal year
LPA	USAID Land for Prosperity Activity
MJTP	Médio Juruá Territory Program
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PCAB	USAID Program for the Conservation of Amazonian Biodiversity
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SCIOA	USAID Strengthening the Capacity of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

An aerial view reveals the vast forests of the Alto Purús region in Peru. Photo credit: Jason Houston

INTRODUCTION

The Amazon basin is home to the world's largest tropical rainforest, a vast area larger than the contiguous United States. This dense tropical region contains multiple unique ecosystems, which provide essential benefits such as water filtration, carbon sequestration, and global climate regulation. More than 30 million people call the region home, including approximately 1.6 million Indigenous Peoples, whose lives and livelihoods are interconnected with the rainforest. For generations, they have stewarded the region's natural resources. Internal and external forces increasingly place pressure on the Amazon's resources, landscapes, biodiversity, and peoples, and the world is running out of time to ensure its survival.

A healthy Amazon benefits everyone on the planet, especially those who live and work in the region. But the region faces serious threats: over the last four decades carbon uptake, biodiversity, and ecosystem productivity have declined. Climate change; expansion of human settlements; unsustainable energy and agricultural development; mineral extraction; and criminal activities such as farming illicit crops, illegal logging, gold mining, and land trafficking increasingly threaten the region's forests. The Amazon's remarkable biodiversity—accounting for about one-third of all known plant, animal, and insect species—is also under threat.[1] Alarmingly, parts of the Amazon rainforest have transitioned from carbon sinks to carbon sources and are now emitting more carbon than they sequester.[2] Scientists fear the deforestation of the Amazon will lead to catastrophic effects elsewhere on the planet that would be impossible to reverse.[3]

To address these threats and preserve the region's ecosystems, the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID) developed the Amazon Vision in 2016. This framework establishes a concerted and strategic regional response across USAID's efforts in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Guyana, and Suriname. The Vision describes, guides, and measures USAID's investments and conservation impact at a regional scale and encompasses the work of the Amazon Regional Environment Program (AREP), bilateral Missions, and USAID/ Washington projects in the Amazon.

The purpose of this report is to share progress toward the Amazon Vision's ongoing efforts to maintain a healthy and resilient Amazon basin. This document describes the challenges and accomplishments of USAID's biodiversity and sustainable landscape initiatives through this lens.

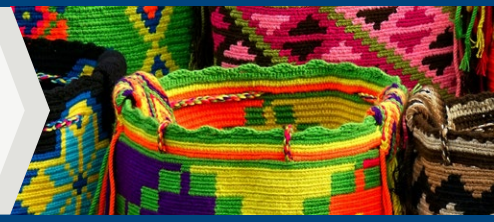
USAID strives to support a healthy and resilient Amazon basin that is valued by society, ensures human well-being, and safeguards our global climate. To achieve this, the Vision has four overarching goals:

GOAL 1

Decrease deforestation, forest degradation, and greenhouse gas emissions

GOAL 2

Foster an environmentally friendly economy



GOAL 3

Protect key landscapes and species

GOAL 4

Secure the rights, resources, and health of forest-dependent communities

SPECIAL TOPIC:

Interagency Investments in the Amazon

The U.S. Government has a long history of supporting Amazon conservation efforts and recognizes that protecting the region's forests is critical to addressing climate change.

USAID and other agencies, including the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), work together to advance conservation in the region by increasing the availability of transparent information, mobilizing financial resources, assisting natural resource managers, and building political will to conserve forests and other important ecosystems. In 2021, the White House signaled its renewed commitment to climate action, releasing the Plan to Conserve Global Forests, launching several initiatives, and pledging funds to address deforestation in the Amazon basin and other key geographies. In addition to making plans to renew contributions to the Green Climate Fund, the United States launched multiple initiatives to leverage government and private sector finance for forest conservation.

The U.S. Government contributes to multiple international funding mechanisms that finance activities in the Amazon region, including the Global Environmental Facility, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, and the Forest Investment Program. In addition, the U.S. Government supports efforts to strengthen local skills and transnational cooperation to respond to conservation crimes and prevent and manage fires in the region, such as through the USFS/USAID South America Regional Fire Program and the Partnership for the Conservation of Amazon Biodiversity (PCAB). Initiatives such as SilvaCarbon, SERVIR-Amazonia, and the recently launched Forest Data Partnership employ satellite and geospatial data to monitor changes in tropical forests and land use in the Amazon basin, collecting information essential for sustainably managing natural resources, as well as combating illegal logging, addressing climate change, and fulfilling national and international reporting commitments.

The U.S. Forest Service is helping train the next generation of Peruvian forest regents. Regent is a position created under Peru's new Forest and Wildlife Law to ensure forests are sustainably managed. Photo credit: Diego Perez/USFS

HOW USAID IS IMPROVING CONSERVATION IN THE AMAZON

ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE AMAZON

As one of the largest conservation donors in the Amazon, USAID continues to prioritize investments in the region.[4] **As of fiscal year 2021, the cumulative value of USAID's environmental investments in the region totaled nearly $445 million.**[5] This includes activities that combat deforestation, conserve biodiversity, create environmentally friendly economic opportunities, improve the management of important landscapes, and support Indigenous rights. USAID's Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru bilateral Missions strategically collaborate with host governments, civil society, the private sector, and other local actors to achieve the Agency's overarching conservation and climate goals. Working with key actors at the regional level, AREP seeks to address basin-wide and transnational threats through a coordinated regional approach.

USAID and its partners in the Amazon region preserve and strengthen the resilience of the rainforest. **In fiscal year 2021,[6] USAID leveraged or mobilized a total of nearly $349 million from its partners in the public,**

FEATURED ACTIVITIES

Regional Portfolio

- Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources
- Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Grand Challenge
- South America Regional Fire Program
- Strengthening the Capacity of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon

Colombia Portfolio

- Amazon Alive
- Land for Prosperity
- Natural Wealth
- Paramos and Forests

Brazil Portfolio

- Médio Juruá Territory Program
- Partnership for the Conservation of Amazon Biodiversity

Peru Bilateral Portfolio

- Center for Amazonian Scientific Innovation
- Forest Alliance
- SilvaCarbon
- Sustainable Management of Forest Concessions

This is a sample of the 30+ USAID–funded activities in the Amazon Region; they are highlighted throughout this report. Countries in light blue had regional activities, but no bilateral programming, in fiscal year 2021.

private, and civil society sectors. During the same time frame, USAID activities also contributed to **improved land management of more than 45 million hectares** across the region. Improving land management and limiting deforestation significantly reduce or even prevent greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change. U.S. Government interventions in the Amazon resulted in the reduction, sequestration, or avoidance of approximately **33.9 million metric tons of CO_2**, the equivalent of greenhouse gas emissions from more than **7.3 million gas-powered passenger vehicles driven for one year**.

USAID is committed to furthering economic development in the region while improving environmental protection. **Between fiscal years 2020 and 2021, USAID Missions documented an increase in the number of people in the Amazon region reporting improved economic benefits as a result of USAID programs**. USAID activities expanded into new territories, grew their partnerships, and implemented innovative approaches, which contributed to **improved economic benefits for 96,279 individuals in fiscal year 2021**, compared to 86,921 individuals in fiscal year 2020. U.S. Government assistance and transnational and regional collaboration made these achievements possible.

$445 million
toward the implementation of all environmental activities from 2015–2026

$349 million
leveraged/mobilized from partners

45 million+ hectares
have improved land management

33.9 million metric tons of CO_2
have been avoided

96,279 individuals
have improved socio-economic conditions

Photo credits from left to right: Jorge E. Martínez Santamaría/USAID, Tom Vierus, Iván Macias/Colombia Oculta, Maik Kleinert/Unsplash, and USAID/Peru

USAID staff provide COVID-19 vaccine training along with prevention and awareness information in Peru. Photo credit: USAID/Peru

SPECIAL TOPIC:

USAID's Response to COVID-19 in the Amazon

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the Amazon region, disrupting health care systems, supply chains, and access to essential services, as well as the operations of USAID activities. The shift to virtual platforms proved challenging for some USAID activities, particularly those working with Indigenous communities in remote areas.

Programs such as the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Program to Combat Wildlife Trafficking and the International Education Institute of Brazil's Roraima project postponed or suspended a majority of their trainings and face-to-face meetings. The natural environment also suffered during this period, as economic impacts, lockdowns, and restrictions on government monitoring and enforcement activities contributed to significant increases in deforestation and conservation crimes throughout the Amazon region.

USAID initiatives across multiple sectors supported host countries through the latest waves of the pandemic, addressing economic and health-related challenges. The Reactivation Colombia activity provided job training to individuals and assistance to small businesses to increase income during the pandemic. In partnership with the Government of Brazil and regional nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), USAID/Brazil launched the Partnership Platform for the Amazon Solidarity initiative to respond to the needs of Amazon communities. The partnership provided COVID testing, intensive care unit beds, and hygiene kits as well as low interest loans and financial advice to Amazon businesses in the face of the economic downturn. The fund, launched with $2.3 million, mobilized an additional $3.5 million from the private sector. The Amazonian Hope Medical Program provided urgent and free medical services to riverside communities in Peru's Loreto and Ucayali regions. The Strengthening the Capacity of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon (SCIOA) activity worked with Indigenous Women of the Brazilian Amazon to bring internet or mobile access to communities during the pandemic to advance the agendas of Indigenous women, and strengthen their participation in all facets of governance.

GOAL 1

DECREASE DEFORESTATION, FOREST DEGRADATION, AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

1. Enable countries to access forest conservation finance
2. Support low emissions development strategies
3. Improve monitoring to reduce hydrologic and fire risk

THE CHALLENGE

As economic demands and development pressures continue to rise, so do deforestation and degradation. Deforestation, in combination with more frequent droughts, wildfires, and higher temperatures, is disrupting the Amazon's hydrological cycle and creating a dangerous feedback loop that contributes to further forest degradation.[7] Amazon forests are now drier and more vulnerable to frequent fires, so more trees are consumed and more long-stored carbon is released.[8] Models predict that as much as 40 percent of the current Amazon forest could be lost by 2050 if current trends continue.[9] In addition to causing rising levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere, deforestation contributes to biodiversity loss and increased poverty. Indigenous Peoples and local communities living in the Amazon, whose economies and livelihoods depend upon rainfall and other natural resources from the forest, remain particularly vulnerable to disruptions in the water cycle that can lead to major events such as droughts, wildfires, and severe flooding. Providing incentives for sustainable forest management, such as through conservation finance and carbon markets, and increasing the availability of forest monitoring data can enable governments and communities to make management decisions that have the potential to reduce or even prevent deforestation, degradation, and greenhouse gas emissions.

This drone photograph shows the effect of agriculture on deforestation in Upper Sepahua River, Peru. Photo credit: Jason Houston/USAID.

OUR PROGRESS

This goal aims to reduce emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation and minimize the potential impacts of fire, drought, and flooding. Alongside its partners, USAID is providing the tools to monitor and prevent deforestation, investing in reforestation efforts, and improving the economic value of forests by enabling countries to access forest conservation finance mechanisms such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). The Colombia Paramos and Forests activity provided the tools for participation in conservation finance, training Indigenous communities on REDD+. In Brazil, the USAID–funded PCAB employs a multi-pronged approach to preserve the integrity of the Amazon's biodiversity and improve local livelihoods. PCAB focuses on strengthening protected area management, reinforcing sustainable value chains for non-timber forest products, and promoting private sector partnerships for economic development. When communities benefit more from the production of non-timber forest products, they have an incentive to sustainably manage natural resources and keep forests standing. In an effort to address high deforestation levels in the Amazon, PCAB worked with communities across the region to consolidate, monitor, and improve the management of protected areas.

In fiscal year 2021, U.S. Government assistance supported **sustainable natural resource management or biodiversity conservation training for 12,896 individuals**. Training can help better prepare communities to react to local crises. In Colombia, for example, the Amazon Alive activity trains local communities in fire response and prevention (see page 9 for more detail). USAID also addresses deforestation through market-based mechanisms. In March 2021, Indigenous Peoples in the Brazilian state of Roraima learned to operate drones for territorial management through "Bem Viver," a project designed under PCAB. The training also introduced them to two technological platforms, the Indigenous Amazon Observation System and Indigenous Climate Alert, which can be used to monitor fire risk and deforestation.

SUCCESS STORY

PREPARING FIRST RESPONDERS FOR FIRE SEASON IN GUAVIARE, COLOMBIA

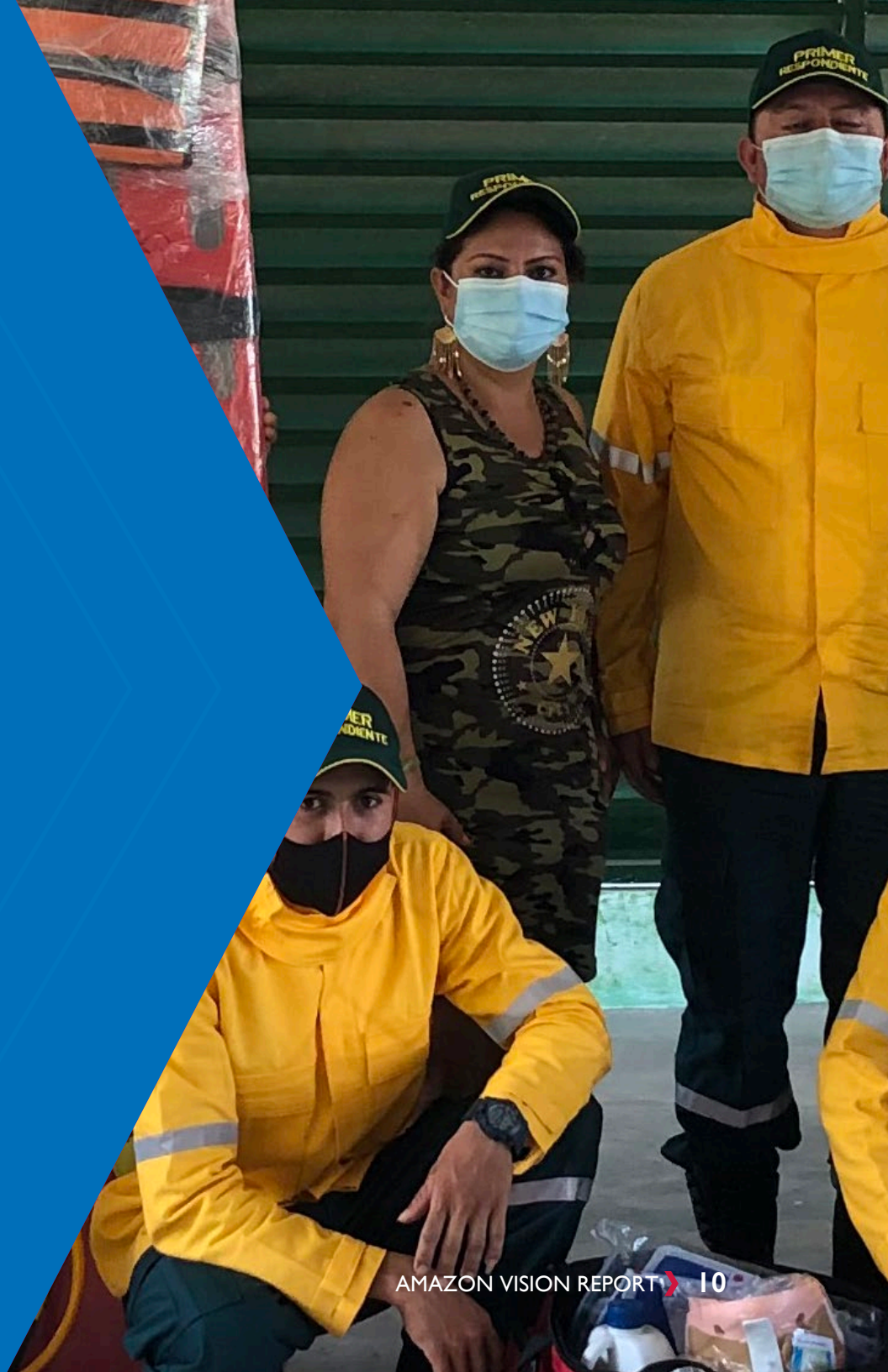
The Amazon Piedmont is a vast region at the transition from the Andes Mountain Range and the Amazon River basin. The first three months of each year are prone to forest fires due to scarce rainfall, intense winds, and high temperatures.

As practices such as cattle ranching, agricultural expansion, and illegal crops increase, so do the frequency and severity of the fires, posing an even greater threat to the region's rich culture and habitat.

USAID/Colombia's Amazon Alive activity launched in fiscal year 2021 and developed a Forest Fires First Responders strategy to help prevent and mitigate forest fires in Guaviare, Colombia, one of the areas most vulnerable to their effects. Amazon Alive identified a group of individuals from local community action boards for training on environmental and safety protocols, as well as in procedures that suppress, mitigate, and eliminate forest fires. Ahead of the 2022 fire season, volunteer fire departments trained and certified a total of 10 teams, comprising 134 people, and provided them with personal protective equipment, backpack fire pumps, and other tools.

Using skills and materials from the training, first responder teams stopped 30 forest fire outbreaks that threatened homes, crops, and wildlife during the dry season in the first three months of 2022. "The first thing we do is identify the personnel that will go to each outbreak, making sure we have the uniforms and the tools to attend to the emergency…. At each site, we develop actions to stop the spread of the fire, such as creating fire lines, extinguishing with fumigators and motorized pumps, cleaning the territory around the fire, removing materials with which the fire can feed and spread," says Juan Carlos, one of the first responders who participated in the trainings. Amazon Alive will continue to prepare first responders, providing training and skill building opportunities, and connecting them with key actors.

Photos page 9 and 10: First responders received training and necessary equipment to fight forest fires through the Amazon Alive activity. Photo credits: Amazon Alive/Chemonics



GOAL 2

FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ECONOMY

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

1. Increase sustainable livelihoods
2. Promote best practices to foster an environmentally friendly economy
3. Strengthen forest sector governance

Specialists in mercury contamination and aquatic biodiversity from the Center for Amazonian Scientific Innovation (CINCIA) sample sediment in Manu National Park, Peru, for ongoing environmental mercury studies. Photo credit: Jason Houston/USAID

THE CHALLENGE

Exploitation of the Amazon rainforest—through illegal or unsustainable mining, agriculture, and cattle ranching, for example—accelerates deforestation and threatens the food security and livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Cattle ranching in the Amazon is a primary driver of deforestation, accounting for 80 percent, while 9 percent of Amazon forest loss between 2005 and 2015 is attributed to illegal mining.[10,11] Land grabbing, or the seizure of large parcels of land for commercial purposes (often by private interests), also disrupts the region's fragile ecosystems and forest-dependent communities' way of life. Despite legal protections for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Peru, Indigenous land rights in these countries are insufficient, leaving their land and people—who are often impoverished and oppressed—vulnerable to land grabbing, illegal deforestation, and an influx of artisanal and small-scale miners.[12] National efforts to foster economic development often prioritize investments in activities that threaten habitats and pressure communities to participate in unsustainable economies. Sustainable economic development and improved forest governance are necessary to lift forest-dependent communities out of poverty.

OUR PROGRESS

This goal aims to provide an alternative to these illegal or unsustainable activities by generating sustainable livelihood opportunities and improving forestry sector governance. Across the Amazon region, a total of **96,279 people experienced improved economic benefits** derived from sustainable natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation as a result of U.S. Government assistance. As an incentive for local workers to adopt sustainable practices, the Natural Wealth activity in Colombia supports conservation through private sector partnerships, such as facilitating the sale of carbon credits from sustainable cattle ranchers to LATAM airlines. In fiscal year 2021, **LATAM purchased 174,000 carbon credits from ranchers in the Orinoquía natural region, generating $630,000**, in exchange for their efforts to conserve flooded savanna ecosystems. Additionally, in fiscal year 2021, the Green Gold Forestry company and USAID partnered under the Sustainable Management of Forest Concessions to establish a sustainable management model for forest concessions in Peru's Amazon rainforest, implementing a no-logging regime across more than 200,000 hectares. The partnership is transitioning Peru's Amazon rainforest financial model from logging to a sustainable, multiple revenue stream model, including environmental services (selling carbon credits to offset carbon emissions), non-timber forest products, ecotourism, and research.

Number of Individuals with Improved Economic Benefits

Innovation is essential for fostering environmentally friendly economies, and USAID supports the use of new ideas, partnerships, and technologies to provide economic benefits while protecting the environment. In Peru, both the National Service of Protected Natural Areas and the Association of Artisanal Miners Tauro Fátima applied innovations in reforestation and restoration from the USAID–supported Center for Amazonian Scientific Innovation (CINCIA). Using seedlings from CINCIA's high-tech nursery in Mazuko, these activities are restoring degraded lands affected by illegal mining and mercury contamination. During fiscal year 2021, U.S. Government assistance has supported innovations in Brazil and Peru, such as fostering public-private partnerships to encourage sustainable development.[13] At the regional level, USAID and its partners launched the Artisanal Mining Grand Challenge to identify innovator teams to develop solutions to the negative effects of artisanal gold mining in the Amazon basin.

Formalization of sectors and land rights is important for both economic development and environmental sustainability. In Colombia, the Land for Prosperity Activity (LPA) uses a model that encourages individuals to voluntarily exchange illicit crop cultivation for land titles, a method tested in rural, conflict-ridden areas (read more about LPA on page 17).

SUCCESS STORY

STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL AUTONOMY FOR WOMEN IN BRAZILIAN FISHING COMMUNITIES

Fishing is an important livelihood for Indigenous and other communities living along the Juruá River in Brazil. Both women and men in these riverine fishing communities play essential roles in the fishing industry: while men fish for pirarucu—the world's largest scaled freshwater fish—women process, clean, and sanitize the fish.

However, despite their essential contributions to the supply chain, women in these communities are often unpaid and excluded from meetings and decision-making about fisheries.

The Médio Juruá Territory Program (MJTP), funded through a public-private partnership with Natura, promotes sustainable livelihoods while conserving biodiversity. As part of its efforts to strengthen the sustainability of fishing practices and bring value to the fisheries supply chain, MJTP works with women's associations in the region to build women's capacity to collectively organize, generate their own income, and strengthen their financial autonomy.

As a result of the activity, more women are now paid for their contributions to pirarucu management practices and generate income through the collection of andiroba and murumuru seeds. Through the intervention of MJTP and other initiatives, women's roles in the fishing industry have become increasingly recognized. In 2020, the activity provided mentorship to 160 women, focusing on female entrepreneurship and social cohesion. The first phase of the activity concluded in 2021, and a second phase is now underway under the umbrella of the Partnership Platform for the Amazon. In the coming years, USAID will continue working with local partners and organizations to amplify female entrepreneurship, strengthen supply product chains, and increase sustainable management.

Photos page 13 and 14: Fishing is an important source of income for the riverine communities living along the Juruá River in Brazil. Photo credits: Bruno Kelly

A clouded butterfly rests in the rainforest of Ecuador.
Photo credit: Herbert Bieser/Unsplash

GOAL 3

PROTECT KEY LANDSCAPES AND SPECIES

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

1. Reduce environmental crimes in protected areas
2. Build capacity for improved management in key landscapes

THE CHALLENGE

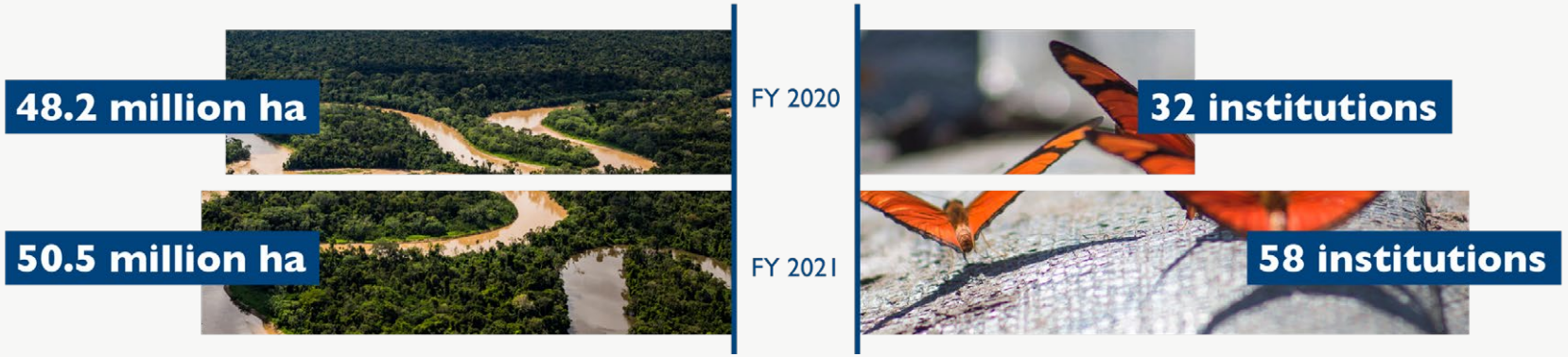
One of the greatest challenges to protecting key landscapes and species is managing conservation areas across the remote areas of Amazonia. This is particularly true for Indigenous communities and local authorities who have limited capacity and resources to enforce laws and regulations. Protected areas are critical to preserving and maintaining habitats, preventing catastrophic biodiversity loss and slowing climate change.[14] Designating protected areas can help prevent destructive and unsustainable practices such as poaching and illegal harvesting, logging, land trafficking, and mining, which also often expose communities to conflict and insecurity. However, some policies that promote economic development are at odds with efforts to prevent these unsustainable practices. This can create a dangerous environment for local actors who speak out against such illegal activities. Environmental defenders, especially Indigenous Peoples defending their traditional lands, are vulnerable to threats and violence. Nearly 100 murders of environmental defenders in the Amazon region were reported in 2020.[15]

OUR PROGRESS

This goal focuses on strengthening the management of conservation areas and Indigenous lands to protect key landscapes and species threatened by climate change, pollution, poaching and illegal harvesting, and economic pressures. USAID partners with global and local actors to combat environmental crimes in protected areas and provide tools to improve management, frequently drawing on the expertise of other U.S. Government agencies like USFS and USFWS. As a result of activities like Natural Wealth and the Amazon Indigenous Rights & Resources (AIRR) activity, which works to strengthen Indigenous Peoples groups' abilities to monitor and detect illegal activities, **50.5 million hectares of biologically significant areas are under improved natural resource management**. Across Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, **12,896 people have received training in sustainable natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation** and **58 institutions have improved their capacity to sustainably manage landscapes** as a result of U.S. Government assistance.

Policies, laws, and regulations are shifting to better align with and address biodiversity conservation and other environmental concerns. In fiscal year 2021, USAID partnerships with government and local actors brought about the proposal, adoption, or implementation of **92 laws, policies, or regulations that address biodiversity conservation or other environmental themes**. These partnerships also trained **1,600 individuals in improved conservation law enforcement practices**, which community-based agencies, organizations, and communities are currently applying. USAID funding and engagement with civil society organizations in Ecuador contributed to important achievements: In 2020 Ecuador ratified the **Escazú Agreement**, a regional pact to protect environmental defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean, paving the way for the agreement to go into effect in 2021; and Ecuador joined the **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative**, which has brought more accountability to the national government's handling of energy and mining tenders through a requirement to make all tenders publicly available.

Improved Institutional Capacity and Land Management in the Amazon from FY 2020 to FY 2021



Hectares under improved management

Institutions with improved capacity

SUCCESS STORY

FORMALIZING LAND RIGHTS IN CHIRIBIQUETE NATIONAL PARK

Chiribiquete National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage site and has the distinction of being both Colombia's largest national park and the largest protected tropical rainforest in the world. Its forests are rich in biodiversity and play a critical role in regulating rainfall and temperature.

Unfortunately, illicit crops, land grabbing and occupation, agricultural expansion, and cattle ranching threaten the area. Deforestation inside the protected area has rapidly increased since the 2016 peace accords. Informal land rights can exacerbate these threats, making it difficult for authorities to address illegal or unwanted activities within their jurisdictions because governments and citizens often lack clarity about land rights.

Through LPA, USAID supports the Government of Colombia's efforts to encourage rural economic development and sustainable natural resource management by formalizing land tenure and property rights. LPA plans to work in 70 municipalities over the life of the activity; in fiscal year 2021, LPA began piloting a land formalization model in five municipalities, including those in the buffer zones surrounding Chiribiquete. The pilot focuses on adding the areas around Chiribiquete to national land registries and issuing legal land deeds.

LPA will also pilot a program for ranchers and farmers in the buffer zone to lease land for commercial and subsistence activities and mobilize government and private sector investments through public-private partnerships to promote legal economic development and improve citizens' quality of life. LPA plans to issue more than 20,000 land titles by 2024.

Photos page 17 and 18: Chiribiquete's natural wealth includes biodiversity like the scarlet macaw as well as traces of ancient civilizations. More than 75,000 pictograms depicting animals and humans have been discovered in the park, with some believed to be 20,000 years old.
Photo credits: Iván Macias/Colombia Oculta (page 17), Arturo/Adobe Stock (page 18).

GOAL 4

SECURE RIGHTS, RESOURCES, AND HEALTH OF FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

1. Increase sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities
2. Strengthen the rights and resource management capacity of forest-dependent communities
3. Increase the capacity of forest-dependent communities to participate in conservation finance

THE CHALLENGE

Indigenous and other forest-dependent communities in the Amazon have a deep-rooted history with the rainforest, dating back tens of thousands of years. Traditional communities play an essential role as stewards of the rainforest, harnessing a rich knowledge and understanding of the Amazon's ecosystems built on centuries of reliance on the region. Today, close to half of the remaining intact forests in the Amazon basin are in Indigenous territories.[16] Working with and learning from local stakeholders is integral to preserving these important areas for biodiversity.

The effects of climate change, such as flooding, droughts, and more extreme El Niño cycles, combined with economic demands and development, such as large-scale infrastructure, agriculture, and mining, infringe on Amazonians' security and livelihoods. Rural and Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to this development due to their direct reliance on the forests's natural resources and their limited economic and social resources.[17] Not only are communities actively excluded from decision-making, and denied recognized rights over their land and resources, they are frequently victims of conflict and violence.

The Forest Alliance supports Indigenous communities in Ucayali, Peru, to conserve and manage their forested lands under an innovative model with the private sector.
Photo credit: Forest Alliance

OUR PROGRESS

This goal aims to increase sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities, strengthen their rights and natural resource management, and build their capacity to participate in—and benefit from—conservation finance. To secure the rights, resources, and health of forest-dependent communities, USAID partners with local actors to support sustainable, locally led solutions, entrepreneurship, and self-governance. USAID activities focus on building the skills of these communities in a variety of areas, from managing finances to exercising their rights. Through the SCIOA activity, **13 Indigenous organizations** in Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname received institutional capacity assessments and tailored technical assistance. By 2021, 12 of the 13 organizations showed an improvement in their organizational performance. In Peru, the Forest Alliance activity works with Indigenous communities in Ucayali to establish geo-referenced community boundaries and register their land titles at the National Public Registries, critical steps for securing their land rights. The Forest Alliance demonstrates the importance of community oversight, deforestation monitoring, and quantifying reduced greenhouse gas emissions for REDD+, a model that generates economic, social, and environmental benefits for communities. **The efforts of the Ucayali communities led to the sale of Verified Carbon Units equal to 223,717 tons of CO_2 in fiscal year 2021, providing $500,000 in direct investment for communities**.

Over the past year, AIRR worked with its partners across Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil to build Indigenous Peoples' capacity to advocate and negotiate for their rights, monitor lands, and grow businesses (see page 21 for more detail), with future work planned in Guyana and Suriname. In fiscal year 2021, AIRR contributed to the **improved management of 1,473,149 hectares of biologically significant habitat** through projects centered around participation of Indigenous Peoples in territorial planning processes and territorial management practices.

USAID works to incorporate the rights and interests of forest-dependent communities across the Amazon basin by fostering meaningful foundations for partnerships across rural communities, NGOs, and other local and national organizations. National-level efforts are also making important contributions. AIRR support to the Amazon Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador enabled the organization to prepare a Strategic Action Plan for the first time, which included recommendations to the Ecuadorian Government around strengthening the capacity of Indigenous organizations, gender equity, and information sharing.

SUCCESS STORY

GROWING INDIGENOUS ENTERPRISES IN THE AMAZON

AIRR aims to increase the participation of Indigenous actors in the Amazon economy, encouraging Indigenous enterprises to grow sustainably while conserving biodiversity. AIRR supports Indigenous enterprises through a combination of grants, loans, markets, and learning opportunities, such as "Amazon Space," a series of dialogues for Indigenous entrepreneurs to exchange experiences.

In fiscal year 2021, AIRR partners selected 25 Indigenous enterprises in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru to receive tailored business mentoring, technical training, and financing, with the goal of enabling these enterprises to expand into new markets and integrate their goods and services into established value chains.

The winners include two community-based initiatives in Ecuador: **Andi Wayusa**, producers of energy drinks made from dried wayusa leaves, and the **Shuar Cultural Center**, a Shuar-operated tourism company in Orellana. One of the Brazilian winners was **Associação de Moradores Agroextrativistas e Indígenas do Tapajós**, an association that sells cassava and derivatives such as flour, tapioca, and black tucupi (an ancestral sauce made from cassava).

In Peru, winners included the **Asociación de Productores de Plantas Medicinales**, an association that uses their Amazonian medicinal expertise to promote the sustainable use of Amazonian plants with medicinal properties to improve the lives of the Kichwas native communities in San Martin, producing products such as *sangre de grado* (resin of *Croton lechleri*), black basil (*Ocimum sanctum*), and cat's claw (*Uncaria tomentosa*). The Colombian winners included a Kamentsa Indigenous women–led association, **Arte Colibrí-Artesanías**. The company promotes ancestral culture through art that reflects the pictographs and engravings on surface rocks found across Putumayo today. The company produces woven wool textiles, beaded jewelry, and wood carvings that have been featured in fairs in countries across the world.

Photos page 21 and 22: Two community enterprises from Ecuador are receiving support through AIRR. Andi Wayusa uses dried wayusa leaves to produce an energy drink, and the Shuar Cultural Center is a Shuar-operated tourism company. Photo credits: Joel Heim/WWF Ecuador

ENDNOTES

1 IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Calls on the Brazilian and Other Governments and Citizens to Help Halt the Fires in Amazonia. 2019.

2 Gatti, L.V., Basso, L.S., Miller, J.B., et al. "Amazonia as a Carbon Source Linked to Deforestation and Climate Change." *Nature*. 12, 595, 388–393 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03629-6

3 Boulton, C.A., Lenton, T.M., & Boers, N. "Pronounced Loss of Amazon Rainforest Resilience Since the Early 2000s." *Nature Climate Change*. 12, 271–278 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-022-01287-8

4 Strelneck, D. & Vilela, T. 2017. International Conservation Funding in the Amazon: An Updated Analysis. Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Palo Alto, California

5 This value includes USAID investments in current and concluded activities that began as early as 2015/2016 and are planned to conclude by 2026, with two exceptions that began earlier.

6 USAID's fiscal year 2021 started on October 1, 2020 and ended on September 30, 2021.

7 *Nature Climate Change*. 2021.

8 Gatti, L., Basso, L., Miller, J., et al. "Amazonia as a Carbon Source Linked to Deforestation and Climate Change.: *Nature*. 2021.

9 Feng, X., Merow, C., Liu, Z., et al. "How Deregulation, Drought and Increasing Fire Impact Amazonian Biodiversity. *Nature 597, 516–521* (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03876-7

10 Global Forest Watch Dashboard. 2016. https://www.wri.org/research/undermining-rights-indigenous-lands-and-mining-amazon

11 Sonter, L. J., Herrera, D., Barrett, D. J., Galford, G. L., Moran, C. J., & Soares-Filho, B. S. "Mining Drives Extensive Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon." *Nature Communications, 8* (1), 1013 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-017-00557-w

12 Quijano Vallejos, P. Veit, P. Tipula, P., & Reytar, K. 2020. Undermining Rights: Indigenous Lands and Mining in the Amazon. World Resources Institute.

13 Support includes innovations related to the Mission's private sector engagement portfolio. Some represent private sector partnerships that directly implement innovative governance and finance models for sustainable development through integrated territorial management (e.g., Territorio Medio Jurua). Others represent innovative finance (e.g., Amazon Biodiversity Fund, SITAWI Crowdlending), while the remainder represent monitoring, evaluation, and learning innovations (e.g., TerraBio biodiversity monitoring, IPE's Participatory Biodiversity Monitoring, Social Network Analysis for the Partnership Platform for the Amazon).

14 Gomes, V.H.F., Vieira, I.C.G., Salomão, R.P., et al. "Amazonian Tree Species Threatened by Deforestation and Climate Change." *Nature Climate Change*. 9, 547–553 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-019-0500-2

15 The Global Witness report "Last Line of Defence" shows that 91 killings of environmental defenders in the Amazon region were documented in 2020: 65 in Colombia (the deadliest country per capita for environmental defenders), 20 in Brazil, and six in Peru. According to the authors of the report, these "figures are almost certainly an underestimate."

16 Forty-five percent of remaining intact rainforests. FAO and FILAC

17 Almudi, T., Sinclair, A.J. "Extreme Hydroclimatic Events in Rural Communities of the Brazilian Amazon: Local Perceptions of Change, Impacts, and Adaptation." *Regional Environmental Change* 22, 27 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-021-01857-0

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