



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR WATER SECURITY (NIWS)

Peru faces an acute water crisis that is intensifying with climate change, as the extreme droughts, floods, fires, and landslides of recent years show. Natural infrastructure (like forests and wetlands) help to manage this crisis, both for upstream rural communities and downstream water users. Through NIWS, USAID is working to scale-up efforts to protect and restore natural infrastructure for water security and climate resilience while closing gender gaps in natural resources management.

In the last decade, Peru has garnered international attention for leading a paradigm shift to incorporate natural infrastructure as a central solution to address water risks. Scaling-up this new approach has met numerous challenges, including the lack of a robust portfolio of quality projects; a lack of capacity, tools, and information; and critical gender and social gaps. NIWS, a unique collaboration led by Forest Trends, USAID, and the Government of Canada, has provided key support to this shift since it started in December 2017. In May 2023, NIWS was extended to continue implementation until December 2027.

### HOW DOES THE ACTIVITY WORK?

NIWS works in partnership with natural infrastructure investors including regional governments, water utilities, national agencies (including *Reconstrucción Con Cambios*), and private companies to **mobilize investments in natural water infrastructure**. NIWS works to grow and diversify a portfolio of public and private investments in natural infrastructure, and to bring an existing pipeline of projects to

PHOTO: FOREST TRENDS

implementation, strengthen implementers' capacities to manage risks, and document the multiple benefits these projects generate. NIWS also works with national and subnational authorities, project developers and implementers, local communities, universities, and civil society to **strengthen the governance and enabling environment for natural infrastructure investments**. To ensure sustainability, NIWS is working to strengthen individual and institutional capacities across technical and strategic skills and increase collaboration within the complex system that facilitates investment in natural infrastructure for water security.

## RESULTS TO DATE

In its first phase (2017-2023) NIWS achieved the following:

- Developed a portfolio of over 80 natural infrastructure projects valued at over US \$440 million with local funders and over 240 local communities, with \$20 million of investments from that portfolio already invested.
- Strengthened capacities of more than 5,000 professionals to develop, manage, monitor, and communicate investments in natural infrastructure for water security.
- Increased credibility and clarity for decision-makers regarding the water benefits of natural infrastructure interventions, including original research and a series of systematic reviews.
- Developed a suite of new tools to guide the identification, design, and management of effective, equitable and sustainable interventions in natural infrastructure.
- Strengthened a common, multi-sectoral vision for natural infrastructure for water security in Peru, which contributed to improvements to over a dozen policies, plans, and regulations and recommendations from the OECD Water Governance Initiative for strengthening financing for NI.
- Strengthened the capacity of institutions to develop and implement natural infrastructure projects, such as reducing the time from idea to agreement for these projects by Lima's water utility by 73%.
- Secured the first institutional commitments and policy changes from the leading authorities in Peru's water sector to address gender gaps in water management.
- Recognized, trained, and connected over 100 women leaders through the Leadership Program for Women in Water Management.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- At least USD 120 million of planned natural infrastructure investments, including at least USD 15 million from the private sector. **Mobilized** investments have finalized all technical documents, received all relevant approvals, and confirmed budget allocation for imminent implementation.
- Tangible benefits of natural infrastructure investments are documented, including: 1) At least 150,000 people (50% women) supported to adapt to the effects of climate change; and 2) at least 20,000 hectares of priority natural water infrastructure under improved management.

- At least 19 institutions show **improved performance on nature-based solutions** for water security and climate resilience, including at least 14 on closing **gender gaps**.
- **Improved knowledge and capacities on nature-based solutions** for water security and climate resilience in over 2250 professionals, including at least 1225 women.
- Three to four local partners will have strengthened organizational functions and meet criteria for a Transition Award with USAID.

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

**IMPLEMENTER:** Forest Trends

**PARTNERS:** Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN), the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law (SPDA), Descosur and Imperial College London

**DURATION:** December 6, 2017 to December 2027

**USAID FUNDING:** \$30,000,000

**REGIONS:** Arequipa, Cusco, Lima, Moquegua, Piura, and San Martín

**COORDINATOR:** Alison Macalady

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** (51-1) 958-049-313

**EMAIL:** [amacalady@usaid.gov](mailto:amacalady@usaid.gov)