

Q2 2020

Alto Mayo Conservation Initiative
Impact Report



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Q2 2020 Summary

Resilience and adaptive management in the face of COVID

The project's key stakeholders – conservation agreement signatories, the protected area coffee cooperative, rangers, and technicians – continue to be supported by the project, and have found a way to maintain the implementation of crucial field activities.

The Alto Mayo Protected Area coffee cooperative achieved its 6th organic certification, renewed its Fair-Trade certification, and exported four quality coffee containers to Germany

Leveraging the REDD+ project to attract financing for small scale entrepreneurial infrastructure and technical capacity building

Despite COVID, project field teams have been able to proceed with the project's 5th REDD+ verification, gathering critical socio-economic data





The Alto Mayo Protected Area coffee cooperative (Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Bosque del Alto Mayo - COOPBAM) achieved its 6th organic certification, renewed its Fair-Trade certification, and exported four quality coffee containers to Germany

Peru's economy has been badly impacted by COVID. An estimated 3 million+ people have permanently lost their jobs, and there is tremendous uncertainty about the timeline for recovery.

Within this context, the performance of COOPBAM is noteworthy. The cooperative, due to the lock down, completed its 6th organic certification process remotely during Q2 of 2020, a first. During the quarter 82 tons (four containers) of specialty coffee were exported to Germany, and deals for an additional 12 containers were closed - these will ship through November 2020. The cooperative is well on track to meet its target of selling a total of 20 containers, which will bring an estimated \$1.6 million of income to the 377 families who are members of COOPBAM.

This income substantially anchors the livelihoods of the families living in the protected area, whose unsustainable agricultural practices drove high deforestation rates in the Alto Mayo prior to the REDD+ project. Through the vehicle of the voluntary conservation agreements, these families now have a compelling and durable alternative, showcasing the impact of effective market-based conservation through REDD+ – particularly in light of the economic devastation taking place in Peru and elsewhere around the world.



Highlights



Leveraging the REDD+ project to attract financing for small scale entrepreneurial infrastructure and technical capacity building

The project's long term sustainability depends on developing successful small scale entrepreneurship within and around the Alto Mayo Protected Forest, including crop diversification and eco-tourism. A key element of the strategy is to link entrepreneurs associated with the Protected Area to public funding opportunities; many are available through Peruvian Government programs that provide seed capital for small scale entrepreneurs.

Last year the Reserva Arena Blanca was the first bird-watching entrepreneurial venture to be awarded public funding; it received US\$20,000 from "Turismo Empeñe", a public fund from the Ministry of Tourism. Building on this success, during Q2 2020 the project supported the Urkuchaqui Tourism Committee and COOPBAM to develop new proposals for a public fund that invests in infrastructure improvement and technical development for small holders entrepreneurship. While tourism has effectively been shut down due to COVID, these funds will help Urkuchaqui prepare to ramp up once conditions improve; for COOPBAM, funds will be used to build warehouses and offices to support the cooperative's growing operations. The proposals request a total of US \$350,000.

The REDD+ project has played a critical role in helping these organizations to build the effective governance and technical capabilities needed to access these funding streams. These skills are essential for these organizations to empower themselves and become successful and autonomous.



Despite COVID, project field teams have been able to proceed with the project's 5th REDD+ verification, gathering critical socio-economic data

The REDD+ mechanism is the main financial source supporting the protection of the Alto Mayo. The 5th REDD+ verification is a necessary step to be achieved this year to uphold the continued operations of the conservation initiative. Notwithstanding COVID, the project has conducted a good portion of the verification process remotely.

The most challenging phase of this process is gathering the socio-economic information, which is mainly done by person-to-person surveys. Because of COVID, the project team had to be creative to collect the information by other means, for example through telephonic surveys. By the end of Q2 most of the needed field information had been gathered, and the team has started to write the Monitoring Impact Report.

An important related development, highlighting the importance of the verification activity, is the decision by the Peru's National Protected Area Service (SERNANP) to extend its partnership with Conservation International (CI) in co-managing the protected area beyond 2022. Previously, the project's long term plan called for CI to transition out from its role, as SERNANP's capabilities strengthened and in line with planned increases in public funding for protected area management. With COVID, budgets have been cut significantly and the long term public funding outlook is unclear at best. Without REDD+, there is no plausible way to fund the 80 staff people currently involved in managing the protected area; only 11 are paid for through public funds.

This situation highlights how indispensable REDD+ is in situations such as Alto Mayo, where public financing is insecure and where shocks such as COVID can undermine hard-won progress in advancing long term conservation and sustainable development.





COVID is requiring creative coordination with all stakeholders to support local people and protect the Alto Mayo Protected Forest (AMPF)

Because of the economic devastation caused by COVID, new migration is taking place into the protected area, while existing local people within the project area are struggling to protect their families from the virus spread and to deal with the hard economic conditions.

In this context, the project team and its stakeholders are joining efforts to support local communities beyond the project outcomes. This includes delivering PPE, cleaning, and food supply kits to all the families, including both subscribers and non-subscribers to the voluntary conservation agreements.

Alto Mayo Protected Forest rangers, COOPBAM staff, and technicians from key project partner the Association of Andean Ecosystems (ECOAN) are on the front line supporting local people.

Even in the lock down, AMPF rangers remains in the field, jointly protecting the AMPF with local people

The project is supporting local people to face COVID impacts, delivering PPE, cleaning and food supply kits



Challenges



Even in the lock down, AMPF rangers remain in the field, jointly protecting the AMPF with local people

After 10 years of implementing the project, it is clear that in the places where project teams have had a more permanent presence, such as the ranger stations, local people have become convinced of the benefits of conserving the forest and are willing to work proactively with SERNANP rangers and other project staff.

When the Peruvian government decreed a national lock down in response to COVID, many local people were concerned that rangers might reduce their activities, because of the growing risk of new immigration to the project area, and increased risk of illegal activities.

In response, the AMPF Head Office designed a new schedule for the rangers to maintain their presence at the ranger stations. In addition to rangers providing PPE and other support to local residents, they began organizing surveillance with community members. As part of these efforts, new checkpoints were established at the entrances of the villages to prevent new migration and/or the presence of strangers. These checkpoints, which are staffed by local residents, have also become distribution centers for PPE and other resources.

At the start of the project, this kind of cooperation would have been unthinkable, as the forest communities and SERNANP were in sustained, active, and often violent conflict. This transformation in the dynamic between Government and the settlers in the Protected Forest is one of the most significant achievements of the REDD+ project.



The project is supporting local people to face COVID impacts, delivering PPE, cleaning and food supply kits throughout and beyond the protected area

Rural areas such as the greater Alto Mayo region have been particularly impacted by COVID; it is much harder to afford and implement the recommended actions set forth by the national Health Authorities. In addition, by mid-May the health system began to collapse as virus spread began to accelerate. Community members requested assistance from the project at that time.

In response, the project invested in a special benefit package that was delivered to all the 1,300 families within the AMPF, and an additional 1,200 kits delivered to the indigenous communities living in the buffer area outside but adjacent to the protected area. The kits included PPE, cleaning and basic food supplies and were delivered with the support of COOPBAM, AMPF rangers and the project technicians.

Keeping conservation momentum among local people is challenging during these difficult times. The voluntary conservation agreement subscribers are still strongly supporting the protection of the protected area, and the project recognizes their immense efforts and trust. This action shows the depth of the personal relationships that have been established among the project stakeholders, and again spotlights the crucial role that REDD+ is playing in ensuring durable conservation, health, and livelihoods in the face of an overwhelming global cataclysm.



Impact Over Time



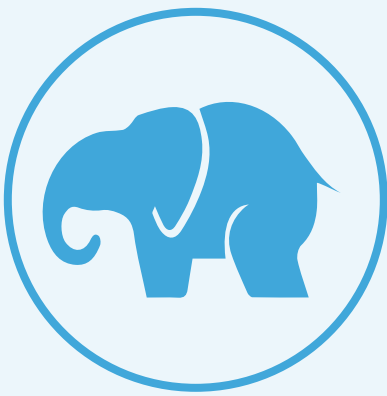
Forest Impacts



- ✓ Deforestation reduced by **75%**
- ✓ Adoption of ecological farming practices by **1,033** families has eliminated agrochemicals and significantly improved productivity
- ✓ **187** improved cooking stoves have been built, reducing **52%** of firewood use



Wildlife Impacts



- Stable protection of **1,000** unique species, including rare birds, amphibians, the giant armadillo, and other endemic plants and animals of global importance
- Zero** incidents of orchid trafficking registered (2018-19), vs. **120** registered between 2008-18



Impact Over Time

Community Impacts



- Conservation agreements signed by **1,033** families in the protected area
- 120** formal jobs created by the project (2016-18), with **20** additional jobs created by the protected area coffee cooperative
- \$3M** in revenue earned by protected area coffee cooperative since 2016



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