

Alto Mayo REDD+ Project **Impact Report**

**Q1-Q2
2021**



**EVER
LAND**

**CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL**



Alto Mayo REDD+ Project

Location: **Peru**

Project Proponent(s): **Conservation International**

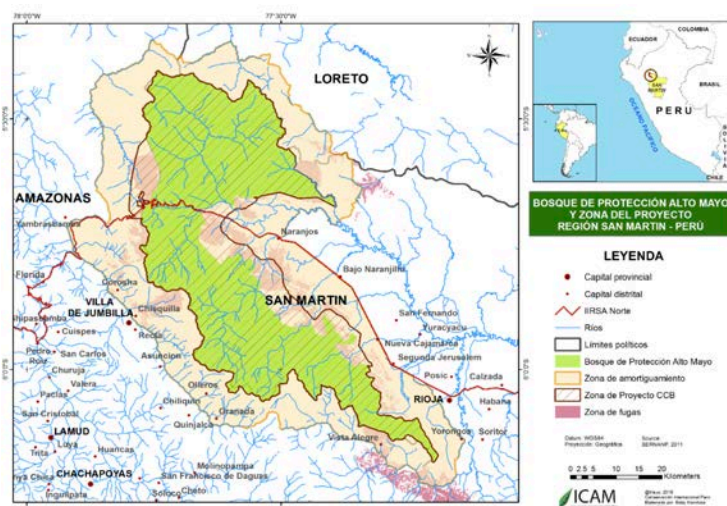
Key Partners: **Peru National Service of Natural Protected Areas**

Standards: **VCS, CCB**

Resilience in action

In the middle of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Peruvian people struggled to survive as their economy and health services literally collapsed. In spite of this, the Alto Mayo project team continued supporting its community, including: the COOPBAM cooperative, subscribers of the conservation agreements, surveillance committees and any individuals who reached out for help during this difficult time. In the midst of economic unrest, the project's initiatives have flourished. In 2020, the COOPBAM cooperative exported a record amount of coffee beans starting last June. While coffee prices peaked in the last five years, dragon fruit and vanilla reached their highest prices in its history, providing significant financial relief for families that signed the conservation agreements.

Additionally, the team provided support to link more investments to restart ecotourism initiatives. During the first half of the year, a \$500,000 proposal moved forward to the final phase of evaluation; in addition, entrepreneurs restarted operations with bird guides ensuring health and safety protocols were in place for international tourists.



8,405,807 tonnes of CO2 emissions avoided to date
700,484 tonnes of CO2 avoided per year

About the Alto Mayo REDD+ Project

Located in the Peruvian Andean Amazon, the Alto Mayo REDD+ project conserves the ecologically rich Alto Mayo Protected Forest (AMPF), which has been designated an Alliance for Zero Extinction site due to its critical importance to the survival of Peru's endemic fauna and flora. Although the Peruvian government established the AMPF in 1987, the park has faced intense deforestation pressure from illegal logging, the influx of migrants and unsustainable farming practices. The project conserves the 182,000-hectare AMPF by providing essential funding for forest management, and through a unique community-based conservation model involving over 1,000 families. By effectively stemming some of the highest deforestation rates in Peru, the project is projected to generate 10.3M tonnes of Verified Emissions Reductions (VERs) over 20 years.



Building a new generation of skilled coffee cuppers

During the last 10 years, the project has invested enormous resources to improve coffee production in the AMPF. Major milestones have been achieved with support from the entire supply chain. The commitment to the coffee sector in the Alto Mayo is now ready for its next big step – creating a robust team of exceptional coffee cuppers.

The project quality coffee lab has been visited by the Coffee Quality Institute (CQI) and their recommendations will help the project improve operations so that it can meet the requirements needed to be certified for training Q graders (individuals who are credentialed by the CQI to grade coffee using industry standards developed by the CQI.)

In parallel, the cupping training is prioritizing COOPBAM. Two teenage boys who are sons of the cooperative's members, have been selected to build their coffee quality skills and hope to become future COOPBAM coffee cuppers.



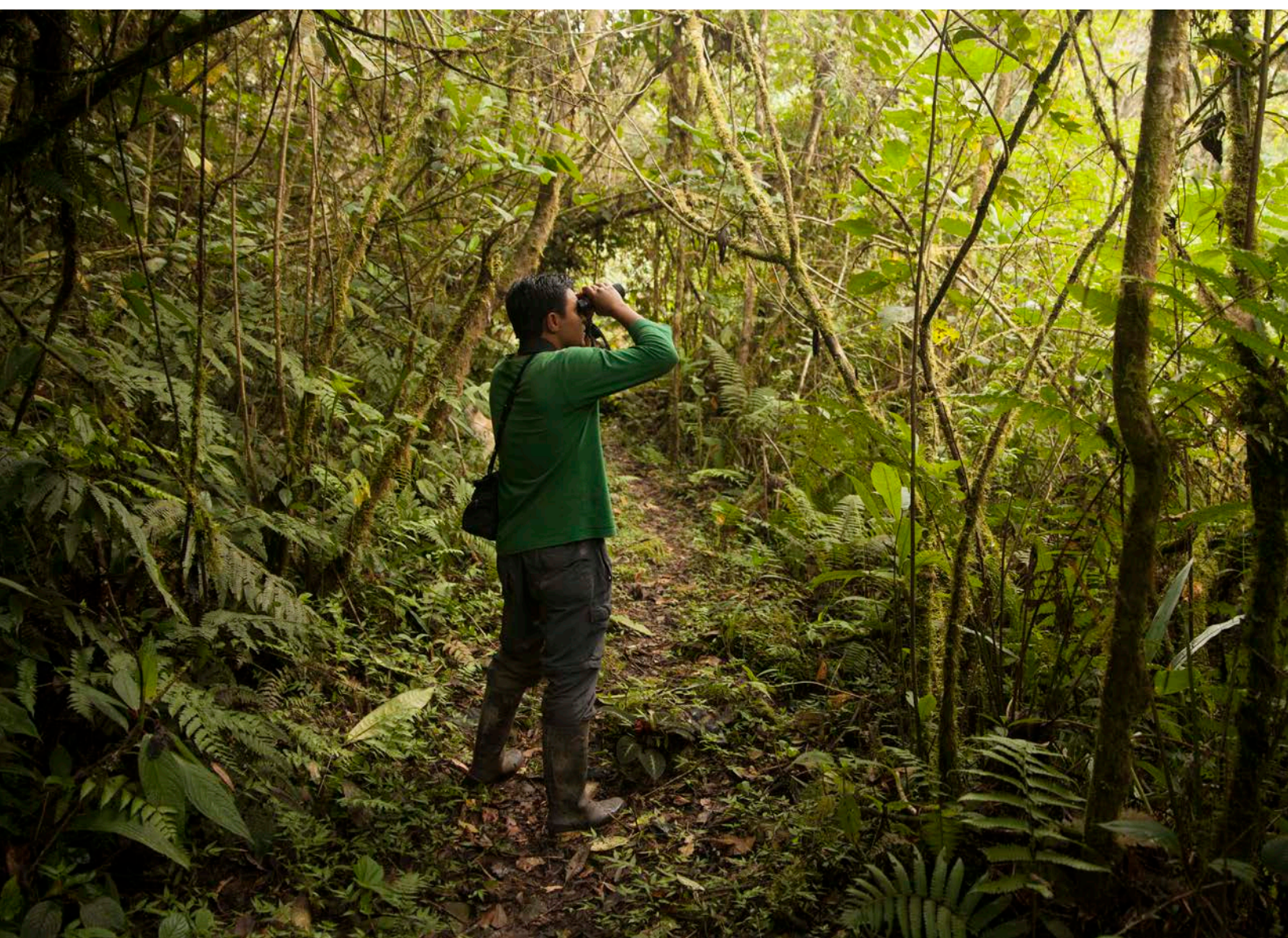
Reactivating ecotourism entrepreneurships



The ecotourism industry in Peru has suffered a significant economic loss during the pandemic. It has been more than 18 months since birdwatchers visited the project, forcing ecotourism entrepreneurs to find other ways to generate income. Even though the project is subsidizing essential costs associated with the ecotourism ventures, restarting the operation was critical to the survival of each of the entrepreneurships. Since COVID infections have recently waned, vaccinations have begun, and restrictions have been lifted, local tourism has started to slowly return.

Birding guides have visited the project to evaluate if health and safety conditions are in place to encourage visits from international visitors. The first international group was expected to visit in October with ecotourism expected to return to normal early next year.

Finally, to encourage tourism in rural areas the government issued a Request for Proposals to provide up to \$500,000 to businesses working in the area. The project team submitted a concept note that was selected as a finalist. After providing the full project description, they are waiting to hear if the project will receive some of the funding. This new financing will be fundamental to restarting the ecotourism entrepreneurships promoted by the project, including one in the Awajun Indigenous communities.



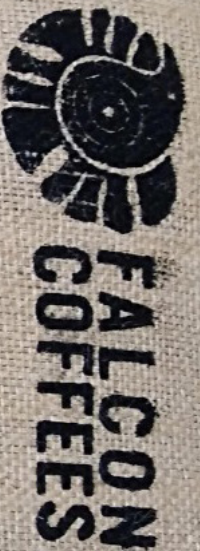
Coffee exports milestone by COOPBAM



The clearing of forests to grow sun-grown coffee is the main driver of deforestation within the AMPF. A project strategy to counter that was to have a cooperative that linked their technical skills to specialty coffee markets where buyers paid a higher price for coffee that was produced by using conservation practices.

Since its founding in 2015, COOPBAM has been exporting quality coffee beans produced with the project's support and it set a record last year by exporting approximately 17 containers. The majority was exported to specialty markets, generating revenues that were critical in helping community members during the pandemic.

Coffee prices have continued rising this year and are the highest they have been in the last five years. Middlemen are even paying in advance for coffee and it is encouraging to see their loyalty to COOPBAM. In the first three months of 2021, five containers of beans have been filled and are ready to export.



COOPBAM

30 / 846 / 2242

WASHED PERU ARABICA

COFFEE GRADE 1

FALCON Ref: P190512

KG M: 1000016887

KG M PO# 4000040811

FLO FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED

ORGANIC BIOLATINA

CERTIFIED / PE-BIO-118

FOR FURTHER

PREPARATION ONLY

N.W: 69.00 Kg

PRODUCT OF PERU
NORFOLK, VA, US



Challenges & Opportunities

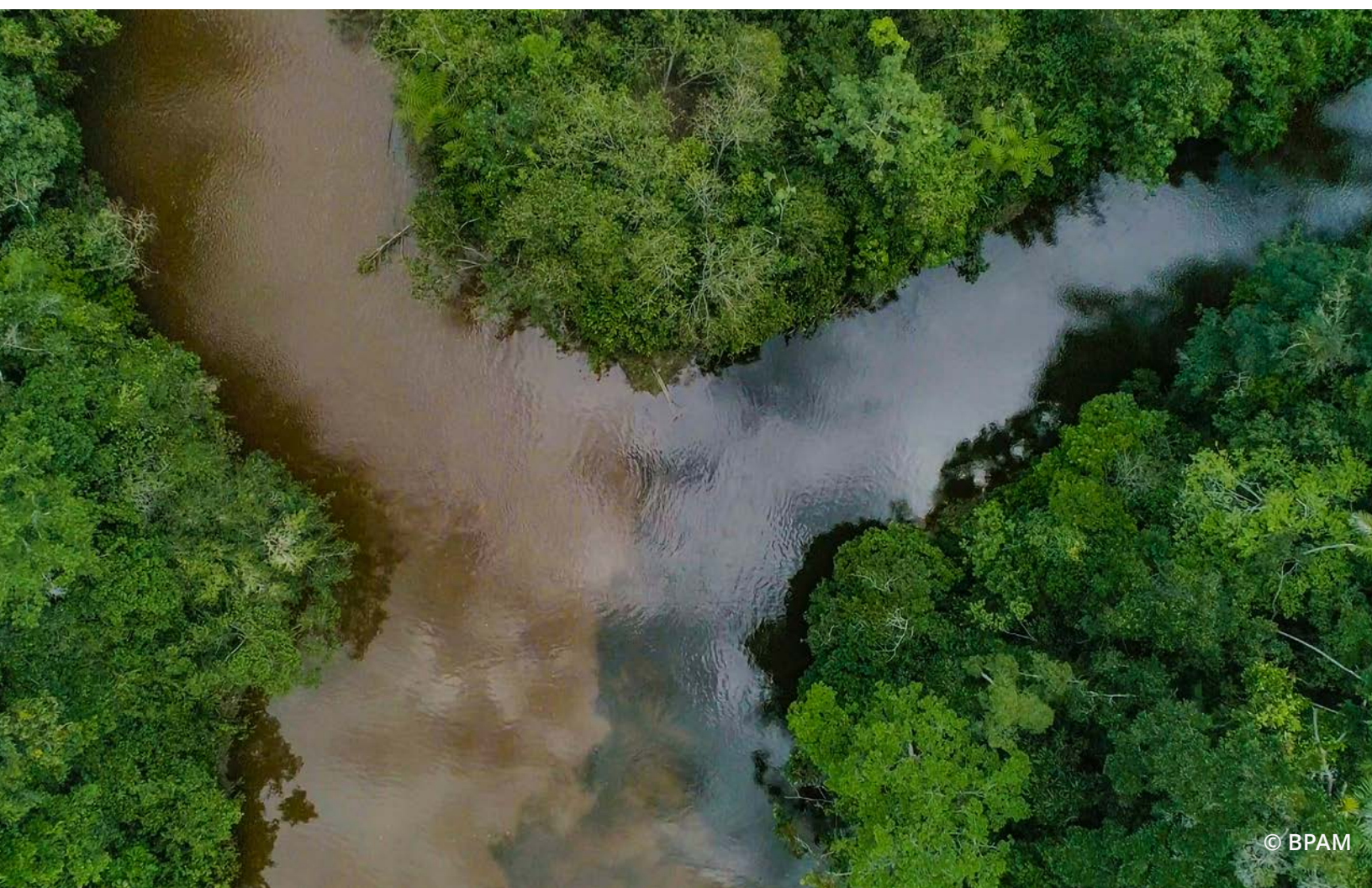
Conservation providing important relief to rural communities during COVID-19

Since the first COVID case was reported in Peru, more than 200,000 people have died, three million have lost their jobs, and children in rural communities have not been able to go to school. The country's economy is the weakest it has been in the last few decades.

Under these conditions, conservation activities such as those promoted by the REDD+ project have provided vital economic relief for rural people whose main livelihoods depend on them.

Resilience against the worst impacts of COVID has been a direct result of community members being able to diversify their sources of income by using conservation practices. With technical assistance from the project, crop yields over the last year and a half were virtually guaranteed. Economic externalities increased the price of coffee, dragon fruit and vanilla -- to at least double what it had been in previous years and increased income to the families selling the products. In addition, embroidered goods and Melipona honey provided additional revenue for sellers. Increased tourism, even at reduced rates, also generated revenue.

The cooperative also invested in satellite connectivity to provide two villages with internet access so students could attend online classes.



Development of the first dragon fruit association within a protected area



In 2016, around 10 individuals who signed conservation agreements took the risk to start managing dragon fruit production under the project proposal. Local markets paid one dollar per kilogram and it was not seen as a lucrative business.

When the lockdown started in 2020, many of the project's subscribers and their families were managing and selling dragon fruit. The money generated from their sales provided much-needed economic relief to the families during what is still an economically challenging time.

In the first six months of 2021, dragon fruit production increased dramatically, selling at the highest in its history. In order to create more opportunities to link dragon fruit production to other markets, the project is promoting the first dragon fruit association within a protected area. This exciting development aims to continue diversifying the economic opportunities for people in the protected area to improve their livelihoods while preserving this precious ecosystem.



Political context



With a new administration in power in Peru, new officials are now in leadership positions including at the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and the head of Sernanp -- the main authorities the project works with to manage the protected area. The government is expected to finalize policies for harmonizing its REDD+ jurisdictional and nested programs in the next nine months. The policies are needed in order to ensure that Alto Mayo and other REDD+ projects continue receiving critical private-sector funding that Peru can use to meet its conservation goals.

