Alto Mayo REDD+ Project
Impact Report

Q1-Q2 2022

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CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

Alto Mayo
REDD+ Project

Peru

Developer: Conservation International
Key Partners: Alto Mayo Conservation Initiative

Standards: VCS, CCB
Region: Peruvian Andean Amazon

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The Alto Mayo Protected Forest REDD+ project has conducted a prestigious Q-Grader certification course at the coffee laboratory, training cuppers from around the world. The project activities are expanding into Afforestation and Reforestation (ARR) activities, with field data collection underway ahead of verification and validation. A new women's association has been established, with >200 women participating from 15 communities.

Located in the Peruvian Andean Amazon, the Alto Mayo REDD+ project conserves the 182,000 hectare, 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. By effectively stemming some of the highest deforestation rates in Peru, the project is projected to generate 10.3M tons of Verified Emissions Reductions over 20 years.

8.4 MILLION
tCO2e emissions avoided to date

through the protection of 182,000 ha of tropical rainforest

33
IUCN REDLIST SPECIES
under protection measures

including Giant otters, Harlequin frogs, Andean Titi monkeys and Peruvian pigeons

>$1.3M
USD generated
for the local community

through the export of sustainable products, including coffee

Highlight 1

The first Q-Grader Certification Course conducted at the AMPF coffee laboratory

During the first quarter of 2022, the Alto Mayo project coffee lab was certified by the Coffee Quality Institute (CQI), permitting them to offer the Q-Grade Arabic certification training program. This certification is prestigious and notoriously difficult to achieve, with only 4,000 Q-graders currently certified in the world. A Q-Grader with the Arabic certification is able to assess whether a particular Arabica coffee passes the "specialty coffee" quality check through cupping - tasting and smelling the coffee. Further skills include assessing the raw green beans prior to roasting, identifying roasting types, procedures and mishaps, while also differentiating characteristics and flavours of beans based on fine details within cultivation, processing, transportation and storage.

The first Q-Grader Certification Course conducted at the AMPF coffee laboratory

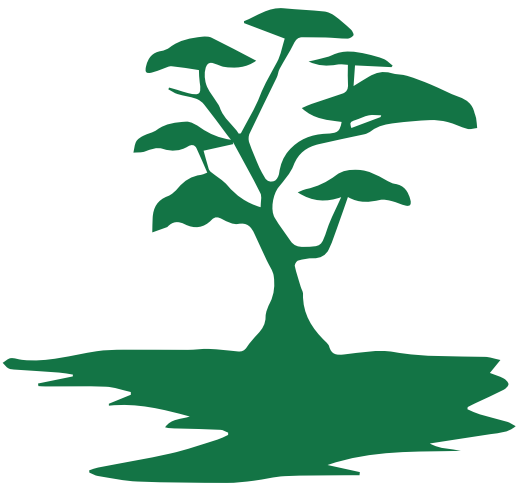*The Q-Grader Certification course participants, Alto Mayo (July, 2022)*

The first Q-Grader Certification Course at Alto Mayo was initiated during the second week of July - attended by 14 participants from around the world, including two local participants (the coffee lab assistant and the COOPBAM's copper) whose fees were subsidised by the project. Another course will be conducted in November with intermediary courses available throughout the autumn.

The expansion of the laboratory activities into Q-Grade training is a very important step for the local community - providing opportunities for high levels of education in preparation for opportunities in other areas of Peru and beyond. Furthermore, with more members of the COOPBAM achieving such certification, the quality of the local coffee can continue to improve. The project team has already seen significant improvements in the quality (and therefore grade) of the coffee, increasing the export price and income for the local community.

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Highlight 2

The AMPF REDD+ project is expanding its activities to include an Afforestation and Reforestation (ARR) component. As part of the validation process, the team is currently measuring biomass along the potential restoration sites - to be utilised for agroforestry and assisted natural regeneration. Initial results suggest that the potential removals could be 43,000 tCO2e per year. Within the last two quarters, nearly 4000ha of area has been geo-referenced by drones; 72% of which (2880ha) will be eligible for the ARR activities.

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Field data for Afforestation and Reforestation activities is underway

As part of the ARR initiative, 35 different native species will be planted with at least 15 species in each discrete area depending on the local microclimate and altitude with the aim of developing natural forest ecosystems in decades to come. Within the restoration zone, economic activities will be developed through the planting of orchids for vanilla and establishment of bee-hives for harvesting honey. Vanilla will be an important enterprise as it provides good potential income for families, particularly since protected area honey from mountainous areas can fetch high prices in the market.

The project team is optimistic about the effectiveness of future ARR activities, as the protection of the Alto Mayo Protection Forest thus far has already resulted in the successful restoration of previously deforested secondary forests within the project area. Furthermore, reforestation activities are already underway - with 8 tree nurseries in operation, producing >100,000 tree seedlings per year. To date, approximately 1 million trees have been produced (including those for coffee production) and delivered to local and regional communities.

Winay Wayna Orchid (*Epidendrum secundum*)

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Highlight 3

Creation of a new Women's Association

On March 8 of this year (International Women's Day), AMEDBAM was created: the Association of Entrepreneur Women and Defenders of the Alto Mayo Protected Forest, consisting of 227 members from 15 communities. The establishment of a new women's group is significant in this local context given the male-dominated hierarchy in rural areas - making it previously challenging for the project team to work directly with women (as opposed to the head of household). However, as the project team has established trust with the local communities, men have started to be open to the participation of women in various activities, including organic gardening, entrepreneurship in handicraft and coffee harvesting. This initial participation expanded across the AMPF region as more women became involved, ultimately leading to the growth from a handful of individual women's committees into the current association.

Recently, the AMEDBAM members participated in an Amazon Fair where they sold their handicrafts to local markets, generating $800 USD in income. The team is aiming to improve the quality of the product with the ultimate goal of connecting the association to international markets.

Right: Women's Association meeting where groups are brainstorming the responsibilities and goals of the new association

5 GENDER EQUALITY

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Challenge 1

Continued delays in the nesting process

The Ministry of Environment is facing some challenges in launching the Peru nesting process, as the FREL (jurisdictional Forest Reference Emission Level) and RENAMI (National Registry for Mitigation Measures) are taking much longe r than expected.

While an initial FREL proposal was submitted in February 2021, this has not yet been finalised. This delay is mainly due to political uncertainty within the country, resulting in continued rotation of ministry delegates. However, the Ministry of Environment in Peru (MINAM: Ministerio del Ambiente) announced that the final version of the FREL will be announced in August 2022. If this is the case, the project may begin the nesting procedure before the end of the year.

The project team estimates that the nesting process will result in a significant reduction in the quantity of VCUs that can be claimed going forward. While the annual budget of the project is high ($2M USD / year), the sale of VCUs to date will maintain the project until 2026 with further government funding extending the financial support to 2027. Whilst the project will conclude before the end of the decade, the team is aiming to secure a sustainable long-term financial mechanism so the activities can continue beyond the project's lifetime; the next rounds of VCU sales (including the ARR element) will be vital to realise this goal.

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Yellow-tailed woolly monkey (Lagothrix flavicauda)

Challenge 2

Undoubtedly, eco-tourism has been the economic activity most affected by the COVID pandemic. To alleviate the profit losses, strategic financial subsidies were implemented by the project team to ensure the eco-tourism entrepreneurs had sufficient support.

As national lockdowns were lifted, the project saw a return of tourists to the AMPF - although birding tourism continues to struggle. While 100 international tourists have visited the eco-tourism sites, this still represents 4-fold less than the pre-pandemic levels. However, the tourist season is just taking off (with a peak expected between August and October), so the team is optimistic for the upcoming season.

Peruvian pigeon
(*Patagioenas oenops*)

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