



Alto Mayo: establishing a sustainable economic model in the Amazon

Reversing the trends of forest loss and degradation in the Amazon is one of the most pressing global sustainable development challenges of our time. This Project is helping Awajun indigenous communities and migrant farmers become effective stewards of the landscape's natural resources.

Supporting global biodiversity and regulating climate change

Nestled in the foothills of the Andes and sloping down into the Amazon lies one of Peru's most biodiverse regions, the Alto Mayo landscape.

The area is a biodiversity hotspot and an Alliance for Zero Extinction site. It's home to record-high numbers of endemic bird and orchid species and three of Peru's endemic monkey species.

The Alto Mayo landscape covers approximately 700,000 hectares and has a population of more than 230,000 people. Since 2001, this area has lost around 15 per cent of its forests with the deforestation frontier expanding in the mostly intact Awajun territories.

This deforestation is driven by unsustainable farming practices, much of which stems from migrant farmers who rent land from the Awajun and use practices poorly suited to the region's tropical soils.

Working together

Conservation International has been working in this area since 2008 to establish a model landscape for sustainable economic development in the region and the country. Initiatives are designed to enhance the benefits nature provides such as clean water, climate stability and ample biodiversity. These are essential for the maintenance of healthy land and forests to sustain agriculture, tourism, energy and other economic activities.

With the support of the BHP Foundation, this project will enable the conservation of remaining forests while promoting productive activities in Alto Mayo, including coffee and cacao agroforestry systems and alternative economic activities such as aquaculture and products derived from medicinal plants. In this way, the project will support national efforts to reduce deforestation and associated greenhouse emissions and contribute to long-term green economic development and biodiversity conservation targets.

A new development paradigm

Finding viable economic alternatives for indigenous people to become effective conservation stewards of their lands is critically important to secure the future of the Amazon. Incentives to transform migrant production systems are also essential as farms and forests depend on each other for the production of food and natural forest products.



Conservation International and its partners, including FERIAAM (the Indigenous Federation of Awajun people in Alto Mayo) and the regional government of San Martin, are advancing a sustainable landscape demonstration that can serve as a model for the Amazon region.

Over this four-year project, an alternative and inclusive development pathway for the Amazon region will be put in place, providing sustainable economic options to both Indigenous communities and migrants. By ensuring the right enabling conditions and incentives are in place for everyone to adopt best practices and new economic business models based on the region's biodiversity, the Project will help empower Indigenous communities and migrants to become effective stewards of the landscape's natural resources.

However, systemic change in social and environmental practices cannot be attained in four years. The Project will therefore create a long-term financial mechanism to help these communities achieve economic self-sufficiency in an environmentally sustainable manner after the completion of the first phase of the project.



Conserving the environment for future generations

BHP Foundation's Environmental Resilience Global Signature Program was developed to drive new ways of conserving and sustainably managing natural environments for the benefit of future generations. We do this by investing in large-scale projects which aim to improve how the environment is valued, enhance conservation planning, and share learnings with others.

The projects we support bring together international institutions, governments, civil social and business, aligning our aspirations behind a common goal to achieve lasting change by seeking to:

- deliver high-impact, enduring interventions in areas of international significance
- engage with people who live in the landscapes to involve them in our efforts, build their capacity and support their livelihoods
- use these projects to pilot new approaches and share our learnings so that others can take them on with confidence
- develop replicable environmental policy frameworks to advance the future of conservation.

The Foundation believes resilient environments are fundamental to thriving societies. They sustain cultures and livelihoods, provide food security and water resources, support biodiversity and address climate change. We help to manage natural environments, conserving them for the benefit of future generations and improving how their resources are valued.

Together, Conservation International and the BHP Foundation will empower the Awajun communities and migrant farmers to turn the tide against deforestation in the Alto Mayo landscape and pilot an inclusive alternative development pathway for the Amazon region.

For more information on the BHP Foundation and the Environmental Resilience Global Signature Program, visit bhp.com/foundation.

'This project will provide critical resources to empower the communities to be a voice for the people of the Amazon in a way that has never happened before.'

Jennifer Morris
President, Conservation International