

Peruvian indigenous community build commercial alliances with companies and strengthen its forest governance

By the EU Delegation to Peru



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"Here, wood is not cut down as other loggers do. This is a certified community implementing a management plan (...) The community signed a treaty with the company, selected its own wood and is paying the company's services with the contractors."

Carlos Vasquez. President of FECONAPA (Federación de Comunidades Nativas Ashéninka de la Provincia Atalaya).

The Ashéninka Puerto Esperanza's community dreamed to earn money thanks to forest's management without conflicting with wood merchants, common in the Amazon.

Years ago, the community tried to manage small-scale exploitation, and even though she learnt a lot during the process, incomes were limited and the internal organization for managing trade and communal incomes was really weak.

Since 2011, with Amazonia Viva's support, Puerto Esperanza has opted for large-scale management and has seek partners in a sector then perceived with suspicion: logging companies.

In order to do so, the company improved its ability to control operations and negotiations, thanks to a team of social, environmental and administrative monitors. It reinforced its coordination with its federation, the FECONAPA, who accompanied and guided her during negotiations.

In addition, the community ensured the incomes' contribution to the collective well-being. To do so, they designed an investment plan for community needs (in terms of health, education, transport and equipment) and for funds' allocation for each family of the community.

Finally, regarding forests' sustainability, the community of Puerto Esperanza opted for FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)' forest certification. This allowed her to establish agreements with two certified companies, including Consorcio Forestal Amazónico - CFA with which she signed an operation contract resulting in sales amounting to US \$ 1.6 millions.

Between October and November 2014, the community celebrated the opening of its new facilities: community and health centres, a forest management office ; and its leadership gave various equipment such as boats, computers or others. These investments were possible thanks to the 300 000 US \$ earned by the community.



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Besides, the community gave more than US \$ 1000 on average to each of its 88 families, and has provided resources to launch harvesting operations in 2015.

"It's gratifying for us to have something that we can see and use. We are very happy about these new premises resulting from the sale of our certified wood. There is much more to do, this is just the beginning, but we are moving forward" said Mario Vásquez, a community environmental monitor.

Although the CFA Company went bankrupt in 2014, the community of Puerto Esperanza kept managing its forest initiative and is now distributing its wood supply for 2015, while implementing its investment plan. At the moment, three companies manifest their interest in working with the community.

The native community of Ashkéninka Puerto Esperanza strengthened its ability to develop equitable wood business by doing a sustainable and certificate use of its wood and investing its money in local development.

Colombia and Peru's Amazon hosts a huge biological and cultural diversity and provides important environmental goods and services at local and global levels. These are threatened by progress in deforestation and forest degradation, leading to the disappearance of valuable species, the increasing of Amazonian communities' poverty level and of greenhouses gases emissions contributing to climate change.

The causes of this situation are diverse, but among the structural ones we can name the lack of economic competitiveness of woods' legal products (in comparison with illegal or alternative exploitation of the earth). The challenge is to conserve the Amazon's wood while exploiting it in a sustainable way for the development of the present communities.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=benx2QABgOc>



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Amazonia Viva Project:

Duration: 3 years and 10 months (March 2011 – January 2015)

Partners in Colombia: two state-owned entities (CORPOAMAZONIA and the Institute SINCHI) and WWF. Partners in Peru: DAR, SNV, TRAFIC and WWF

Targeted regions: Tarapacá (Colombia), Ucayali and Madre de Dios (Peru). But the project had national impact.

2 300 beneficiaries in two countries, including: Indigenous people and organisations, concessionaire and permit holders of forests' exploitation, networks of non governmental or mixed actors linked to forest management and government officials.

Budget: 3 133 130€. EU contribution: 80%

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