



## Connectivity corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region

### Part I: Project Information

#### Name of Parent Program

Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program - Phase II

#### GEF ID

10259

#### Project Type

FSP

#### Type of Trust Fund

GET

#### CBIT/NGI

☐ CBIT

☐ NGI

#### Project Title

Connectivity corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region

#### Countries

Ecuador

#### Agency(ies)

WWF-US, CI

#### Other Executing Partner(s)

Ministry of Environment and Water

#### Executing Partner Type

Government

#### GEF Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

**Taxonomy**

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Productive Landscapes, Biomes, Tropical Rain Forests, Forest, Amazon, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Forest, Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach, Influencing models, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, Private Sector, Local Communities, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Beneficiaries, Gender results areas, Awareness Raising, Capacity Development, Participation and leadership, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Mainstreaming, Agriculture and agrobiodiversity, Sustainable Livelihoods, Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques, Sustainable Agriculture, Income Generating Activities, Ecosystem Approach, Sustainable Pasture Management, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Demonstrate innovative approach, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Partnership, Participation, Information Dissemination, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Communications, Education, Behavior change, Public Campaigns, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Community Based Organization, Academia, Women groups, Access to benefits and services, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Knowledge Generation, Knowledge Exchange, Learning, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Theory of change, Innovation, Enabling Activities

**Rio Markers****Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 2

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 1

**Submission Date**

6/13/2020

**Expected Implementation Start**

10/1/2021

**Expected Completion Date**

10/31/2026

**Duration**

60In Months

**Agency Fee(\$)**

578,147.00

**A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS**

<b>Objectives/Programs</b>	<b>Focal Area Outcomes</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>GEF Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Co-Fin Amount(\$)</b>
BD-1-1	Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors	GET	3,469,724.00	25,094,491.00
LD-1-4	Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape	GET	917,432.00	6,200,950.00
IP SFM Amazon	Promoting effective coordination for sustainable forest management	GET	2,036,697.00	13,766,110.00
<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>			<b>6,423,853.00</b>	<b>45,061,551.00</b>

**B. Project description summary**

**Project Objective**

To improve the ecological connectivity of two priority landscapes, the Putumayo ? Aguarico and the Palora-Pastaza, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, through the establishment of two connectivity corridors and associated management mechanisms, to ensure the long-term biodiversity conservation of its ecosystems.

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
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Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 1: Establishment of two connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes.	Technical Assistance	1.1. Increased area of connectivity corridors created in the two project landscapes.	1.1.1. Technical documentation submitted for approval by the MAAE (or other competent authorities) for the designation of the two new connectivity corridors, including an analysis and definition of the ecological, socioeconomic (including gender and intercultural approaches) and political viability of each corridor.	GET	2,134,067.00	17,508,345.00
		1.2. Management of corridors and conservation areas have been strengthened.	1.2.1. Planning and management instruments, including the components of financial sustainability of connectivity corridors, are developed and endorsed by local authorities. 1.2.2. Ecological monitoring systems in the two corridors are developed and implemented.			

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 2: Implementation of sustainable productive activities in the two connectivity corridors.	Technical Assistance	2.1. Increase of productive areas, in or around connectivity corridors, under SLM	2.1.1. Training program and assistance package for the promotion of SLM practices in the two connectivity corridors designed. 2.1.2. SLM training program, including gender and intercultural approaches, to selected producers in the two connectivity corridors implemented. 2.1.3. SLM practices implemented in selected plots of the two connectivity corridors equitably benefiting men and women producers.	GET	2,178,721.00	17,698,617.00
		2.2. Bioeconomy initiatives have been strengthened in the two connectivity corridors.	2.2.1. Bioeconomy initiatives, in each connectivity corridor, have been equipped, trained, and / or linked to potential markets, with a gender and			

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 3: Enabling conditions for ecological connectivity.	Technical Assistance	3.1. Legal, administrative, technical, and institutional conditions developed for the sustainable management of the connectivity corridors.	<p>3.1.1. Regulatory and public policy instruments integrate the connectivity corridors needs in the planning and land management of the landscapes under intervention.</p> <p>3.1.2. Inter institutional, inter-sectoral, multilevel governance platforms created and operational for the management of landscapes and connectivity corridors (1 per landscape).</p> <p>3.1.3. Capacity development program for relevant public entities and local actors involved in the planning, management, and monitoring of landscapes, connectivity corridors, and conservation areas, with a gender and intercultural approach</p>	GET	897,542.00	5,565,629.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 4: Monitoring, and evaluation, knowledge management and regional coordination	Technical Assistance	4.1. Project monitoring and evaluation data contributes to efficient decision making and to adaptive project management	4.1.1. Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan informs the project's adaptive management.  4.2.1. Effective coordination at the national level and with the ASL program.  4.2.2. Knowledge management and communication products developed and disseminated	GET	907,652.00	3,063,960.00
Sub Total (\$)					6,117,982.00	43,836,551.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
GET			305,871.00	1,225,000.00		
Sub Total(\$)			305,871.00	1,225,000.00		
Total Project Cost(\$)			6,423,853.00	45,061,551.00		



**C. Sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type**

<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Investment Mobilized</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment and Water (MAAE)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	20,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Amazon Special Territorial Circumscription (CTEA)	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	20,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,290,689.00
GEF Agency	WWF-US	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	770,862.00
Civil Society Organization	WWF Ecuador	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	2,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	CI Ecuador	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
<b>Total Co-Financing(\$)</b>				<b>45,061,551.00</b>

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

Due to the COVID pandemic and government budget cuts from a receding economy, the MAAE's overall budget was reduced, and thus the amount of co-financing that they were able to provide. However, with the institutionalization of the CTEA and its common fund, the CTEA increased its initial co-financing for the project. CI-Ecuador co-finance will support a total amount of USD 1,000,000 in grants dedicated to complement activities financed by the project, especially related to conservation management strengthening, bioeconomy initiatives investments, and connectivity corridor governance. Co-financing to the project comes, in first place, from the MAAE (USD 20,000,000) and is comprised of staff and operational costs for coordination and planning, and for management of the protected areas. The SCTEA will provide co-financing of USD 20,000,000 from the revolving fund of the Amazon, destined towards supporting the implementation of the PIA, that includes grants for GADs and indigenous groups to implement conservation and sustainable production activities, as well as land-use planning and intersectoral governance platforms. This fund is in addition to the funds that GADs receive from the national budget, and are allocated based on proposals by the local governments presented to the SCTEA. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock will provide USD 1,290,689 in co-finance for activities related to the ECAs and capacity-building of smallholder producers in Component 2. WWF Ecuador co-finance is

comprised with a total of USD 2,000,000 in grants which will contribute to work with indigenous peoples, life plans, and bioeconomy initiatives in the Putumayo Aguarico landscape. WWF US co-finance is comprised with a total amount of USD 770,862 and CI-Ecuador co-finance supports a total amount of USD 1,000,000, in grants, to support field technical and financial activities related to the project, specifically for conservation management strengthening, bioeconomy initiatives, and connectivity corridor governance.

**D. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>
WWF-US	GET	Ecuador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	3,469,724	312,276
WWF-US	GET	Ecuador	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	917,432	82,568
WWF-US	GET	Ecuador	Multi Focal Area	IP SFM Amazon Set-Aside	2,036,697	183,303
<b>Total Grant Resources(\$)</b>					<b>6,423,853.00</b>	<b>578,147.00</b>

**E. Non Grant Instrument**

NON-GRANT INSTRUMENT at CEO Endorsement

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Includes Non grant instruments? **No**

Includes reflow to GEF? **No**

F. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required

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PPG Amount (\$)

200,000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

18,000

Agenc y	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programmin g of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)
WWF- US	GET	Ecuador	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	200,000	18,000
Total Project Costs(\$)					200,000.00	18,000.00

## Core Indicators

### Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	50,000.00	0.00	0.00

#### Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	50,000.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
Akula National Park	125689	Select Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		50,000.00		

#### Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	W DP A ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	120000.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	118,000.00		

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	2,000.00		

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)**

Title

Submitted

**Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated**

<b>Total Target Benefit</b>	<b>(At PIF)</b>	<b>(At CEO Endorsement)</b>	<b>(Achieved at MTR)</b>	<b>(Achieved at TE)</b>
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (direct)</b>	0	212644	0	0
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (indirect)</b>	0	0	0	0

**Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector**

<b>Total Target Benefit</b>	<b>(At PIF)</b>	<b>(At CEO Endorsement)</b>	<b>(Achieved at MTR)</b>	<b>(Achieved at TE)</b>
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (direct)</b>		212,644		
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (indirect)</b>				
<b>Anticipated start year of accounting</b>				
<b>Duration of accounting</b>				

**Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector**

<b>Total Target Benefit</b>	<b>(At PIF)</b>	<b>(At CEO Endorsement)</b>	<b>(Achieved at MTR)</b>	<b>(Achieved at TE)</b>
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (direct)</b>				
<b>Expected metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (indirect)</b>				
<b>Anticipated start year of accounting</b>				
<b>Duration of accounting</b>				

**Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)**

<b>Total Target Benefit</b>	<b>Energy (MJ) (At PIF)</b>	<b>Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)</b>	<b>Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)</b>	<b>Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)</b>
<b>Target Energy Saved (MJ)</b>				

**Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)**



Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment**

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
<b>Female</b>		1,600		
<b>Male</b>		2,400		
<b>Total</b>	0	4000	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

Core Indicator 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use; Indicator 1.1: Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness. The project will support the creation of two connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes (one corridor in the Putumayo ? Aguarico with an estimated area of 15,000 ha, and a second corridor in the Palora-Pastaza landscape, with an estimated area of 35,000 ha). Through Component 1, the project will undertake the processes needed to declare these 50,000 ha under protected status, based on the newly established Environmental Code and the recently approved Ministerial Agreement. Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas): 20,000 ha. Indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity: 118,000ha. This indicator captures the landscape area being managed to benefit biodiversity, but which is not certified. 18,000 has correspond to forest areas that will be sustainably managed by the bioeconomy initiatives as a result of project support. In addition, the project will work to mainstream and prioritize conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in each of the connectivity corridors, within local government PDOTs. The project will work to update the PDOTs to include connectivity corridors in their objectives, strategies, and priority investments that will result in an improved management of, at least, additional 100,000 has. Indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems. In the two target landscapes, the project will implement actions related to promotion of SLM practices in a total of 2,000 ha. The 120,000 ha reported under this Core Indicator 4 will be located in or around (in the buffer zones) the two new connectivity corridors to be officially designated under Component 1. The Core Indicator targets have been estimated based on a preliminary GIS analysis of potential connectivity

corridors options in the two project landscapes (See Annex 2 of Project Document) and taking into account existing productive areas and existing baseline of complementary bioeconomy initiatives. Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emission mitigated; Indicator 6.1: Carbon sequestered, or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector. The calculation of GHG emissions according to the official Ecuadorian methodology for the 4 years of project duration is 212,644 tonCO<sub>2</sub>. This amount considers the two landscapes of intervention and the deforestation rate for the country between 2014-2016. Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment. The beneficiaries include the men and women residing in the two corridors that will directly benefit from the ecosystem services and biodiversity as a result of the conservation and sustainable production activities in these areas. The latest census implemented by the National Institute for Statistics and Census (2010) indicates a total population in the preliminary identified corridors of 3,653: 646 men and 503 women in the Putumayo-Aguarico Corridor, and 1,268 men and 1,236 women in the Palora-Pastaza Corridor. Additional beneficiaries of the project will also include government personnel who will benefit from project-supported trainings and government agency staff who will be empowered with capacity building and data. Based on the above assumptions, the estimated number of direct beneficiaries as co-benefit of GEF investment is estimated as 4,000 (at least 1,600 of which are women). The targets of all Core Indicators will be updated after Y1, when the planned technical analysis, on the ground assessments, participatory processes and FPIC activities will determine the final connectivity corridor options to be proposed for designation.

## Part II. Project Justification

### 1a. Project Description

#### *Project Scope*

The Amazon Region contains both the largest tropical rainforest and the largest river (in terms of water discharge volume) in the world. Considered one of the most diverse regions on the planet, the Amazon rainforest hosts at least 10% of the world's known species, including endemic and endangered flora and fauna, and provides significant ecosystem services to people worldwide. However, the forest faces several threats that are increasing its fragmentation, destabilizing forest dynamics and accelerating biodiversity loss.

The GEF funded Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program (ASL) II aims at supporting the ecological integrity of the globally significant Amazon landscapes. The World Bank is the Lead GEF Agency for the program and, in that role, coordinates the program level activities supported by the regional coordination grant. The program is composed of a series of country-driven projects that contribute to the overall goal of the Program. Government agencies involved in the implementation of the country projects, GEF Agency partners, and the GEF Secretariat are all represented on an ASL Program Steering Committee. The objective of this program is to improve integrated landscape management and conservation of ecosystems in targeted areas in the Amazon region, and includes Child Projects in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname.

One of the ASL II Child Projects is the proposed "Connectivity Corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon". The objective of this Child Project is to improve the ecological connectivity of two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon, Putumayo - Aguarico and Palora-Pastaza, through the establishment of two connectivity corridors and associated management mechanisms, to ensure the long-term biodiversity conservation of its ecosystems.

Establishing individual PAs has been the primary focus of traditional in situ conservation. However, science shows that the most innovative solution to maintain ecosystem services, avoid species extinction and preserve biodiversity in PAs is to create connectivity among these PAs. According to a study conducted in 2019, natural landscape features found adjacent to PAs were determined to be crucial to facilitating species movement, gene flow and species distribution (Stewart Darlington, Volpe et al., 2019[1]<sup>1</sup>). Animals were proven to utilize these contiguous natural landscape features over "stepping stones" of non-connected PAs. Another study found that new species colonize habitats connected by corridors 5% more than species located in habitat patches connected only through stepping stones (Damschen et al., 2019[2]<sup>2</sup>).

To achieve long-term conservation goals, active measures must be taken to reduce fragmentation and maintain, enhance, and restore ecological connectivity among and between PAs and forest remnants (Belote et al., 2020[3]<sup>3</sup>). The government of Ecuador has recently established the ecological connectivity model for the country, with the Ministerial Agreement No. MAE-2020-019, issued on May 22, 2020, that includes the technical standard for the design, establishment, and management of connectivity corridors in Ecuador (for additional information, see section 1.4 National and Sectoral Context). The proposed project will create enabling conditions and capacities for the implementation of this Ministerial Agreement, and will put it into action, creating one connectivity corridor in each of the

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two priority amazon landscapes, selected for their ecological relevance, the convergence of a relevant baseline of local initiatives, existing conservation gaps, and important emerging threats to forest loss and fragmentation.

*Environmental Significance of the Special Amazonian Territorial Circumscription (CTEA) and proposed Project Landscapes*

In Ecuador, the Amazon Region, or CTEA, for its acronym in Spanish ? see Figure 1-), has a total area of 116,588 km<sup>2</sup>, and occupies 41% of the country (Ministry of Environment & United Nations Development Program-UNDP, 2017). Its global importance lies in its high levels of biodiversity (the Ecuadorian Amazon lowlands host 4,857 species of herpetofauna, of which 235 are endemic the Ecuadorian Amazon, and 5,000 species of vascular plants); carbon storage capacity (with a storage of 1.53 giga / ton of carbon) and water resources (provision, regulation and maintenance), with 81% of the national water resources located in eight Amazonian watersheds (Ministry of Environment & UNDP, 2017). According to the last population census (INEC (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses), 2010), the area is home to 739,814 people, including 11 indigenous nationalities: Achuar, A'i Kofan, Andwa, Kichwa, Quijos, Secopai (Secoya), Shiwiar, Shuar, Siona, Waorani and Zapara (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon - CONFENIAE, 2020).

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[1] Frances E. C. Stewart, Siobhan Darlington, John P.Volpe, Malcolm McAdie & Jason T. Fisher. (2019) Corridors best facilitate functional connectivity across a protected area network, (2019) 9:10852 | <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-47067-x>

[2] Ellen I. Damschen, Lars A. Brudvig, Melissa A. Burt, Robert J. Fletcher Jr., Nick M. Haddad, Douglas J. Levey, John L. Orrock, Julian Resasco, Joshua J. Tewksbury (2019) Ongoing accumulation of plant diversity through habitat connectivity in an 18-year experiment, SCIENCE 1478-1480

[3] R Travis Belote, Paul Beier, Tyler Creech, Zachary Wurtzebach, Gary Tabor, A Framework for Developing Connectivity Targets and Indicators to Guide Global Conservation Efforts, BioScience, Volume 70, Issue 2, February 2020, Pages 122?125, <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biz148>

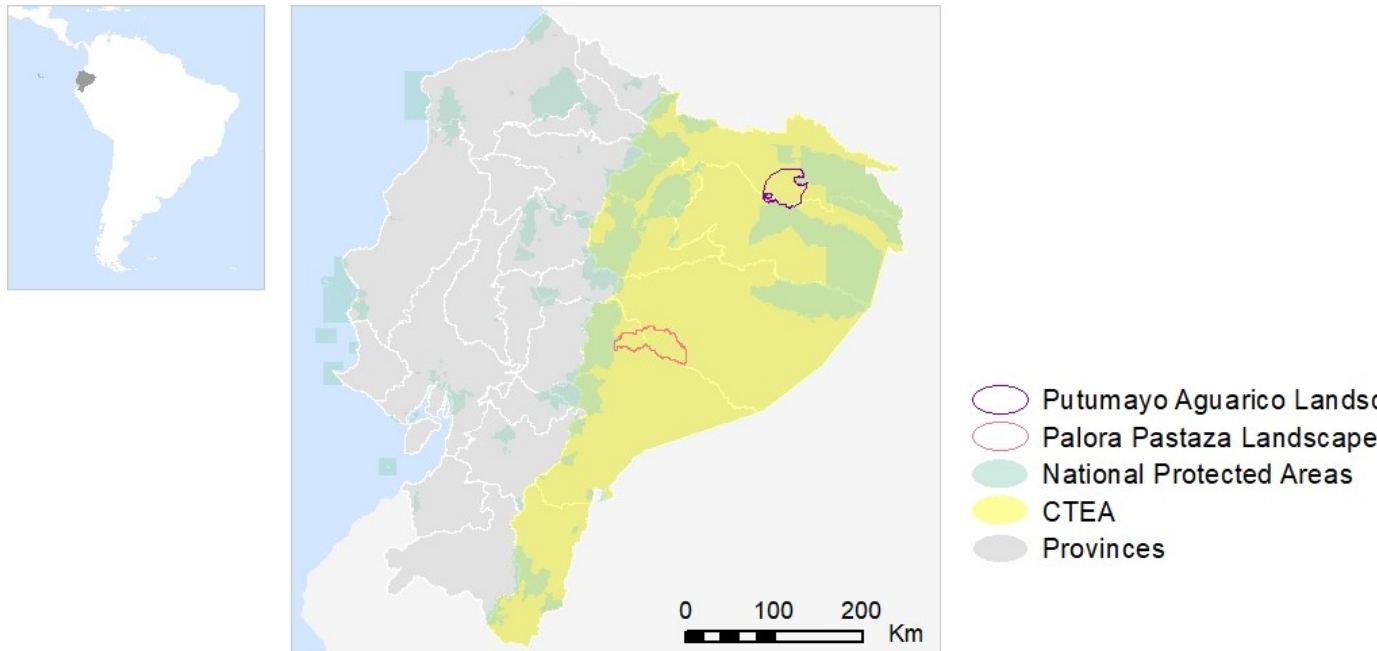


Figure 1: Map of the Special Amazonian Territorial Circumscription, and the two project landscapes

The two proposed project landscapes, Putumayo ? Aguarico and Palora - Pastaza, cover about 3% of the CTEA's surface, and include the two main Ecuadorian tributaries of the Amazon River (The Napo and Pastaza rivers). The two landscapes play a significant role in connecting areas of high conservation value, acting as biological corridors, providing buffers for PAs, and supplying other globally important ecosystem services. Several indigenous nationalities live in both landscapes and their practices, traditional knowledge and cultural beliefs have existed for centuries, providing an immense amount of knowledge about the tropical Amazon, with an important intrinsic cultural value.

In 2013, the Ministry of Environment implemented an analysis based on the Pressure, Status, and Response framework, to assess the conditions of remnant vegetation and ecosystems, at the national level. The assessment considered variables such as the intensity of human activities, the ecological importance, and the existence of on the ground conservation management efforts, including the management of the National System of PAs. Based on this analysis, the Ministry of Environment identified 11 priority zones for the establishment of connectivity corridors at the national level (See map in Figure 2).



Figure 2. Map of priority zones for the establishment of connectivity corridors (Ministerial Agreement MAE-135-2013 (MAE, 2013))

The Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape is located in the eleventh priority zone, and this is one of the reasons why this landscape was selected for the project. While the Palora-Pastaza landscape doesn't fall entirely in one of the zones prioritized by this Ministerial Agreement (it is located at the north of zone #9), it was selected by the project because it covers a key conservation gap on the central-eastern part of the Ecuadorian Amazon, a territory of high ecological relevance. Furthermore, in this landscape, there is an interesting convergence of baseline initiatives and a strong support from local stakeholders (including local governments and indigenous communities), and the Ministry of Environment, to work on biodiversity conservation and connectivity corridor initiatives.

Both landscapes have important remnants of native vegetation cover with relevant biodiversity and ecosystem services; presence of core habitats with diverse conservation management (PAs, Socio Bosque Program-PSB, protected forests); potential for the establishment of new local conservation areas; and high level of threats to the fragmentation of the natural ecosystems, as described in the following sections.

#### *The Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape*

The Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape has extends over 144,915 ha, and covers 2 provinces (Orellana and Sucumb?os), 4 municipalities (Orellana, Shushufindi, Cuyabeno, and La Joya de los Sachas) and 9 parishes[1] (San Roque, Limonchocha, Shushufindi, Pa?acocha, Tarapoa, Aguas Negras, Aljeandro Labaka, El Ed?n, and Pompeya). It has a population of 10,993 people, of which 4,458 (41%) are

indigenous, including communities of the Shuar, Kichwa, Waorani, Secoya, and Siona indigenous nationalities[2] (RAISG, 2017). The landscape is integrated into the great wetland of the Ecuadorian Amazon with 78% of it covered by forests; mostly evergreen lowland forest of the Putumayo-Caquet? Aguarico (59.8%), followed in extension by the Palm-flooded forest of the Amazon floodplain (13.1%) (Ministry of Environment, 2018).The biomass in the landscape stores approximately 18.7M ton of carbon (Woods Hole Research Center, 2019), equivalent to 132 TonC/ha, representing a higher than average carbon storage capacity within the Ecuadorian Amazon(123 TonC/ha).

The Putumayo - Aguarico landscape connects three important PAs of the Ecuadorian SNAP: the Limoncocha Biological Reserve, the Cuyabeno Fauna Production Reserve, and the Yasun? National Park (WWF, CI, 2019), which together cover about 58.5% of the landscape area. Other conservation areas are also present in the landscape, with 14.6% declared as Protected Forest and Vegetation; 20.8% conserved under the PSB[3], 14.59% declared as a RAMSAR site and 3.31% of the landscape area is recognized as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) (Ministry of Environment, sf). See map in figure 3 below, showing the conservation areas of the Putumayo Aguarico landscape.

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[1] In Ecuador, local governments are divided in three jurisdictions: a province (state), municipality (city) and parish (town). A group of parishes make up a municipal jurisdiction, while a group of municipal jurisdictions form the province.

[2] Ecuador recognizes 14 indigenous nationalities in the country. This term is used to describe a group of millenary peoples that have a historic identity, language and common culture and live in a determined area with their own governance bodies and traditional social, economic and political systems.

[3] The PSB provides economic incentives to private and community landowners with native ecosystems who commit to conserving those areas for 20 years. Until September 2020, the program has 2.647 agreements to conserve 1.6 million hectares, benefiting 178.000 people, with an annual investment of USD \$10.5 million in incentives. Until 2018, PSB has invested more than USD \$90 million.



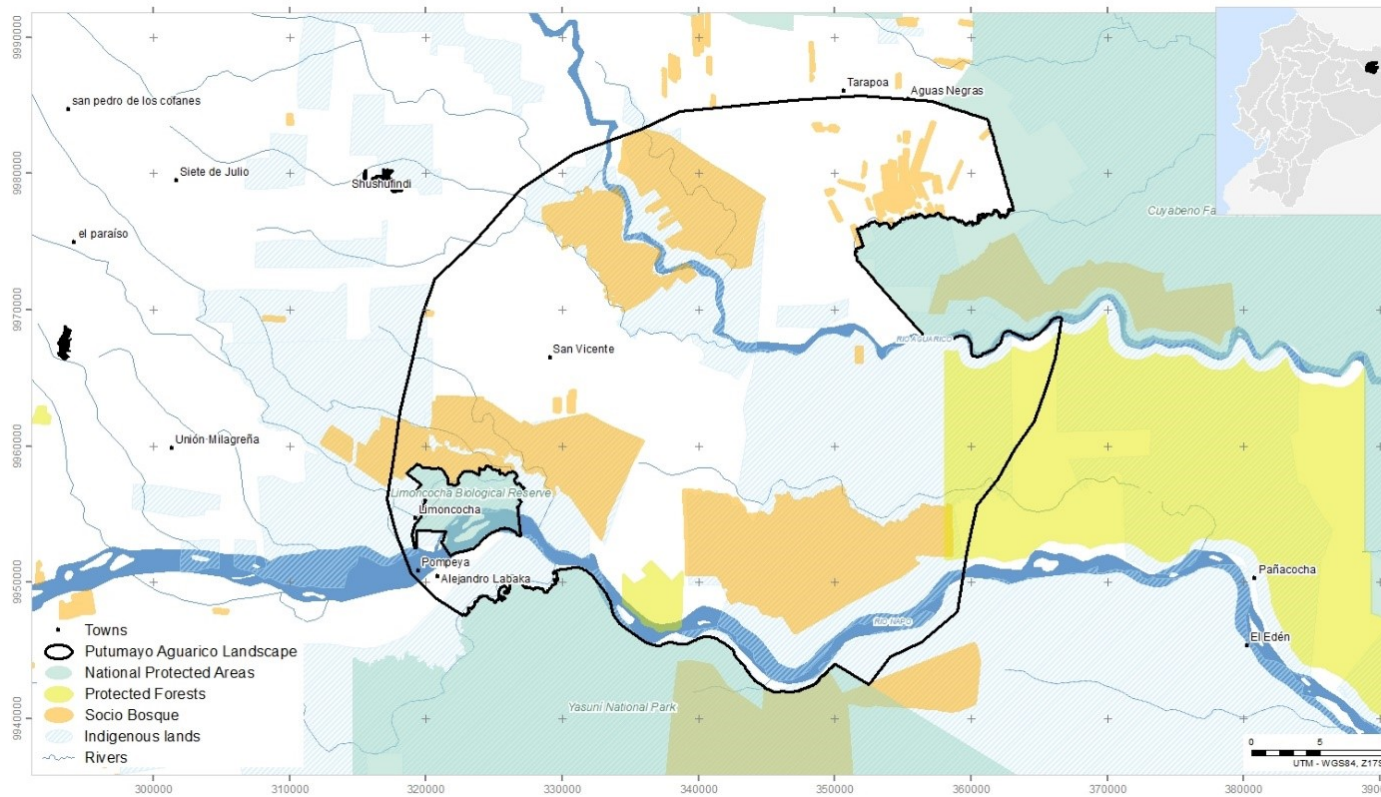


Figure 3. Putumayo Aguarico Landscape Conservation Areas

The landscape also plays a key water flow regulation function in the Napo River basin and is known as one of the main routes for bird migration and transit of large animals (WWF, 2017). As many as 12 species of fauna with some level of threat, as indicated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, are present in this area. Among these are the Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*) (VU), giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) (EN) and river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis* and *Sotalia fluviatilis*) (EN) that inhabit the aquatic ecosystems of the seasonal flooded forests of the landscape (Site Information Service Ramsar). Threatened mammals like the jaguar (*Panthera onca*) (NT) and the lowland Amazonian tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) (VU), that need large connected forested areas to maintain viable populations, are also found in this landscape.

Currently, 24% of the land use in the Putumayo - Aguarico landscape corresponds to an agricultural mosaic in which grasslands (5%) and crops (11%) predominate (Ministry of Environment, 2018) (see Figure 4. Putumayo ? Aguarico Landscape Land Use Map). The most frequent crops are African oil palm, cocoa, coffee, and banana (SIGTIERRAS, nd). Grassland, cocoa and coffee farms present an important opportunity to improve the conditions to provide ecosystem services through increasing forest biomass with native species (eg. through living fences and agro-silvo-pastoral systems). Complementarily, some small bioeconomy[1] initiatives, implemented mainly by indigenous communities, can be found in this landscape; although they are incipient, they represent an opportunity for sustainable forest management. These bioeconomy initiatives include the following: sweet water fish like paiche (arapaima gigas) and cachama (piaractus brachipomus); citronella; guayusa (ilex guayusa); ungurahua (oenocarpus bataua); turmeric, ishpingo (amazon cinnamon); morete (mauritia flexuosa); sachá inchi (amazon peanut); and community nature-based tourism.



[1] Bioeconomy initiatives, according to Ministerial Agreement 034, refers to 'public, private, academic, community or association initiatives linked to the sustainable use of native biodiversity that contributes to its value and the conservation of natural heritage?' (MAE, 2019). Bioeconomy initiatives, according to Ministerial Agreement 034, refers to 'public, private, academic, community or association initiatives linked to the sustainable use of native biodiversity that contributes to its value and the conservation of natural heritage?' (MAE, 2019).

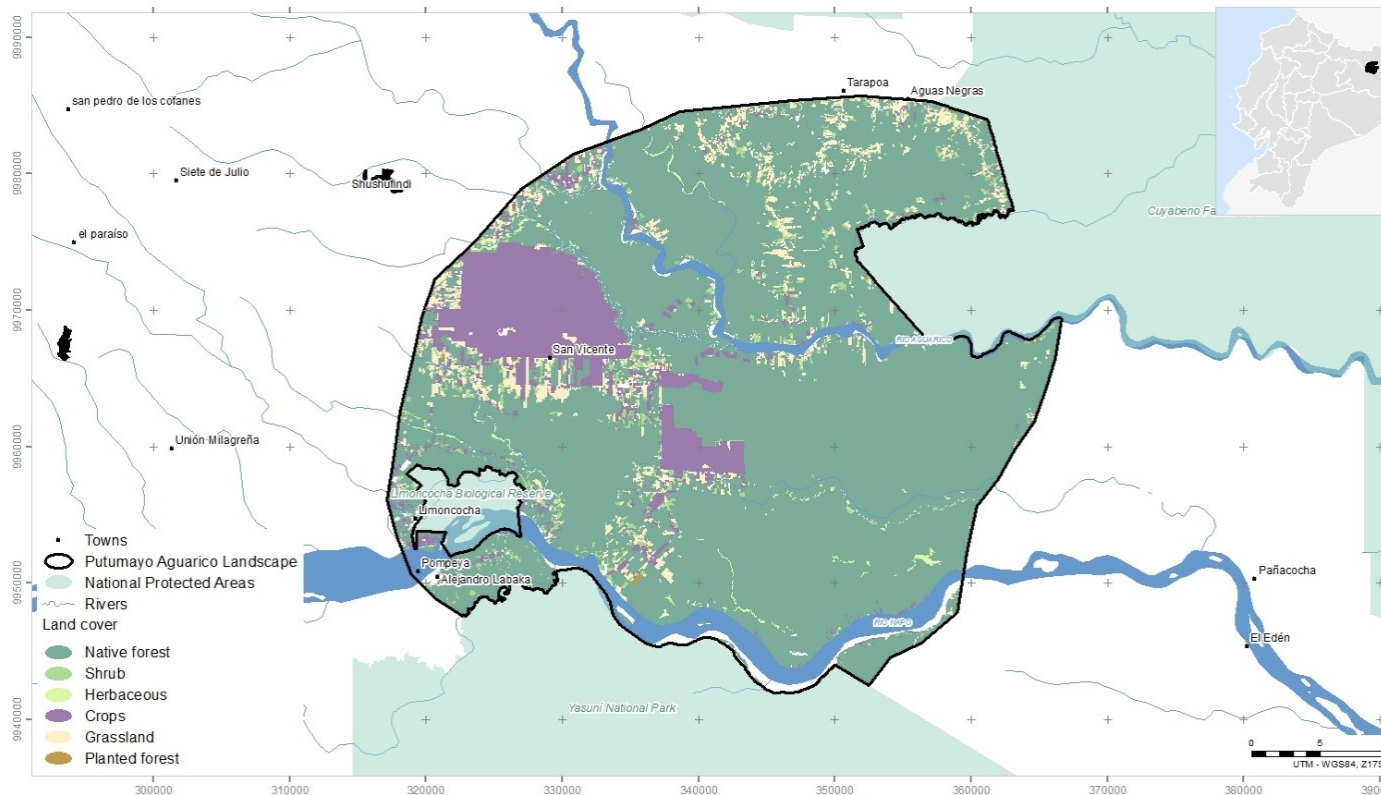


Figure 4. Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape Land Use Map

These characteristics make Putumayo-Aguarico a critical landscape for maintaining and restoring long-term forest connectivity to provide uninterrupted habitats for improved species mobility and genetic resource exchange. The ecosystem services the landscape provides such as energy flow and carbon mitigation heavily depend on connectivity.

*The Palora - Pastaza Landscape*

The Palora - Pastaza landscape comprises 2 provinces (Pastaza and Morona Santiago), 4 municipalities (Pastaza, Palora, Huamboya and Pablo Sexto) and 6 parishes (Simón Bolívar, Sarayacu, Arapicos, 16 de Agosto, Huamboya, and Pablos Sexto), and covers an area of 178,129 ha, most of which is forested (86% of the landscape), followed by grasslands with 9% of the territory, and just 0.4% of land dedicated to crops: cassava, sugar cane, banana, and the most recent and expanding is pitahaya (SIGTIERRAS, nd). As in the Putumayo-Aguarico landscape, some emerging bioeconomy initiatives can be found in this landscape such as the use of ungurahua (*oenocarpus bataua*), morete (*mauritia flexuosa*), cachama (*piaractus brachipomus*), vanilla, sachá inchi (amazon peanut), and ginger products as well as community nature-based tourism which are all implemented mainly by indigenous communities. The population inside the landscape is 10,137 individuals, of whom 7,737 (76%) belong to the indigenous Shuar, Achuar and Kichwa nationalities (RAISG, 2017).

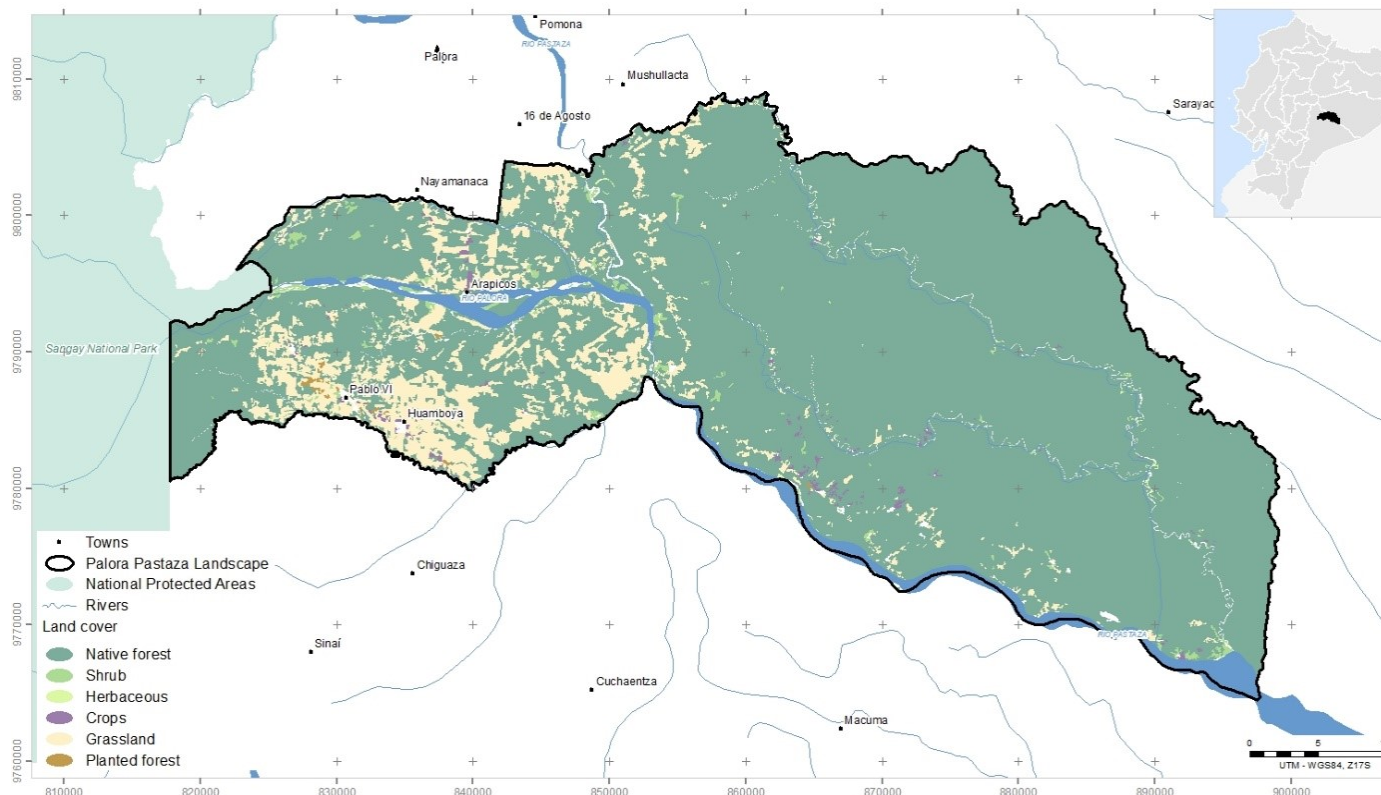


Figure 5. Palora Pastaza Landscape Land Use map

The Palora - Pastaza Landscape plays a significant role in regulating the water flows that descend from the Andes and tribute to the Pastaza River. The landscape is also home to mainland forests, located in the foothills of the Andes, characterized by their high biodiversity and levels of endemism. The most representative ecosystems are the Piemontano evergreen forest in the north of the eastern Andes mountain range (37%), the evergreen lowland forest of the Tiger-Pastaza (23%), flooded forest of the Amazon floodplain (10%), and the piedmont evergreen forest of the Condor-Kutuk mountain range (9%) (Ministry of Environment, 2018).

Carbon storage in biomass in this landscape is approximately 21.4 Mton of carbon (Woods Hole Research Center, 2019), which is equivalent to 121 TonC/ha.

Approximately 15% of the landscape is designated under national conservation categories (1.4% Protected Forests and Vegetation and 14% PSB), while 23% of the landscape area is internationally recognized as an IBA (Ministerio del Ambiente, s.f.) (see Figure 5. Palora Pastaza Landscape Land Use map). This landscape is also home to at least 17 species of fauna with some level of threat according to the IUCN Red list. In this landscape, the proposed corridor will connect the core habitats of the Sangay National Park, and in the East, the forest in hands of indigenous communities, including the Achuar, Kichwa and Shuar peoples. See map in figure 6 below, showing the conservation areas of the Palora Pastaza landscape.

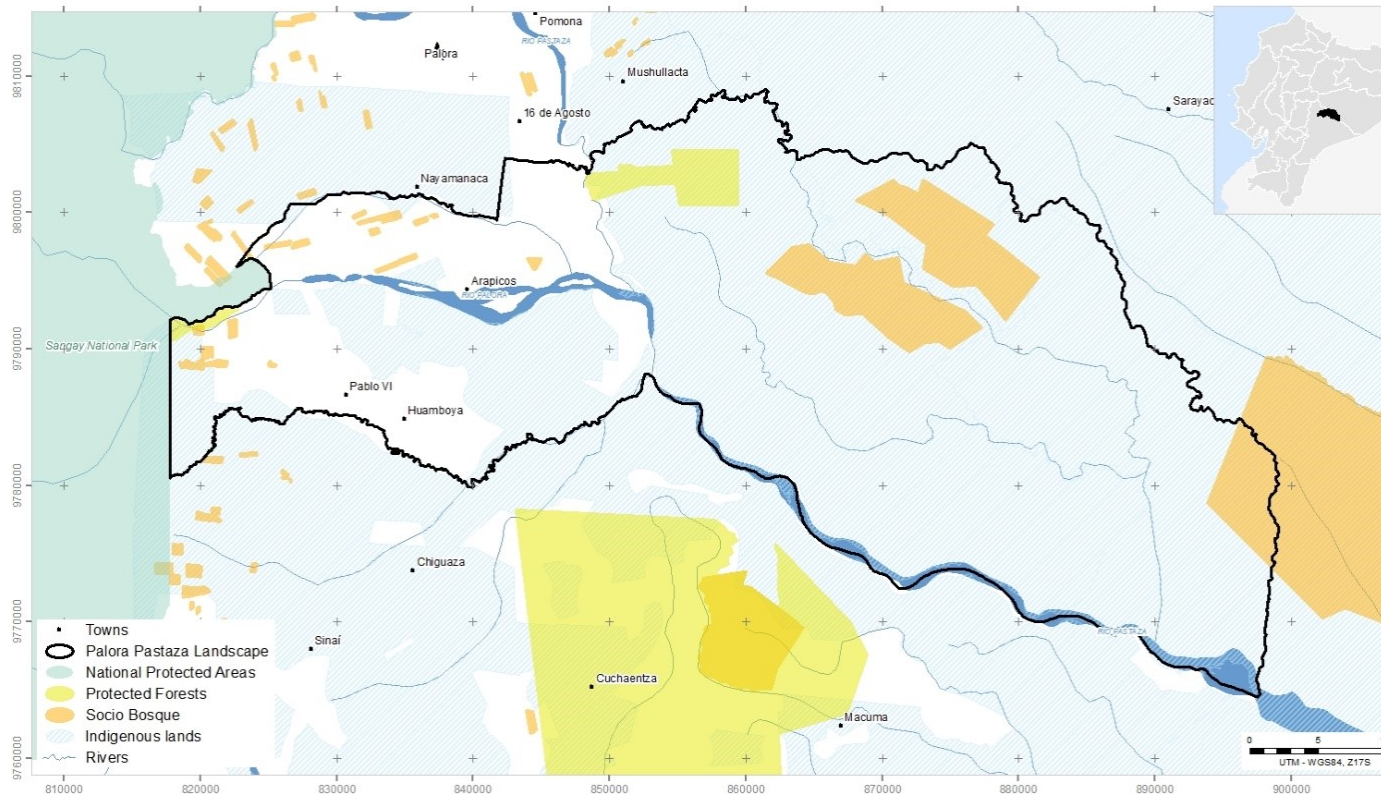


Figure 6. Palora Pastaza Landscape Conservation Areas

The spatial patterns of the recently deforested areas (2014-2016) show a process of severe fragmentation between the Amazon and the Andes (MAE 2017). The high concentration of deforestation in the piedmont forests along the main access roads (i.e. Troncal Amaz?nica E45, Troncal Amaz?nica Alterna E45A, E10, E40, E451) has accentuated fragmentation in the Southern Amazon, particularly in the Kutuk? mountain range where the Palora-Pastaza landscape is located. Hence, restoring connectivity between these areas is one of the main actions that will contribute to preserving the ecosystem integrity of the Amazon basin. Due to its strategic geographical location and its relatively high native forests cover, this landscape plays a key role as an ecological corridor between the Sangay National Park, several Protected Forest and Vegetation areas, and community forests under the PSB (WWF, CI, 2019).

Both landscapes are located in one of the Jaguar Conservation Units identified in 2006 by a group of researchers and institutions at the regional level. Jaguar Conservation Units are significant because they are the areas with the greatest potential to maintain viable and healthy jaguar populations in Ecuador (Espinoza, 2006). The presence of this species in the landscapes is a good indicator of the health status



of the landscape ecosystems and can guide the identification of priority biological corridors within the landscapes (Conde et al., 2011).

### Environmental Problem(s), Threats and Root Causes

The environmental problem this project proposes to address is the habitat fragmentation and lack of connectivity among Protected Areas and other conservation areas, and associated loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity of the Ecuadorian Amazon forest, in the two selected landscapes.

This environmental problem is reflected in the loss of vegetation cover and loss of representative habitats (the Ecuadorian Amazon went from 14.5 to 12.6 million hectares of native forest, between 1990 and 2016 - MAE, 2018). Between 2014 and 2018, the deforested area in the Putumayo - Aguarico landscape was 3,810 hectares (MAE, 2019), and the average annual deforestation rate during the last 30 years has been 1,050 hectares per year. In addition, the risk of future deforestation is the second highest in the CTEA (Ecuadorian Special Amazonian Territorial Circumscription), with a projected loss of 1.5% of the remaining native forest area during the 2016 to 2025 period (Sierra, 2019). Figure 7 below shows the landscape's historical deforestation evolution.

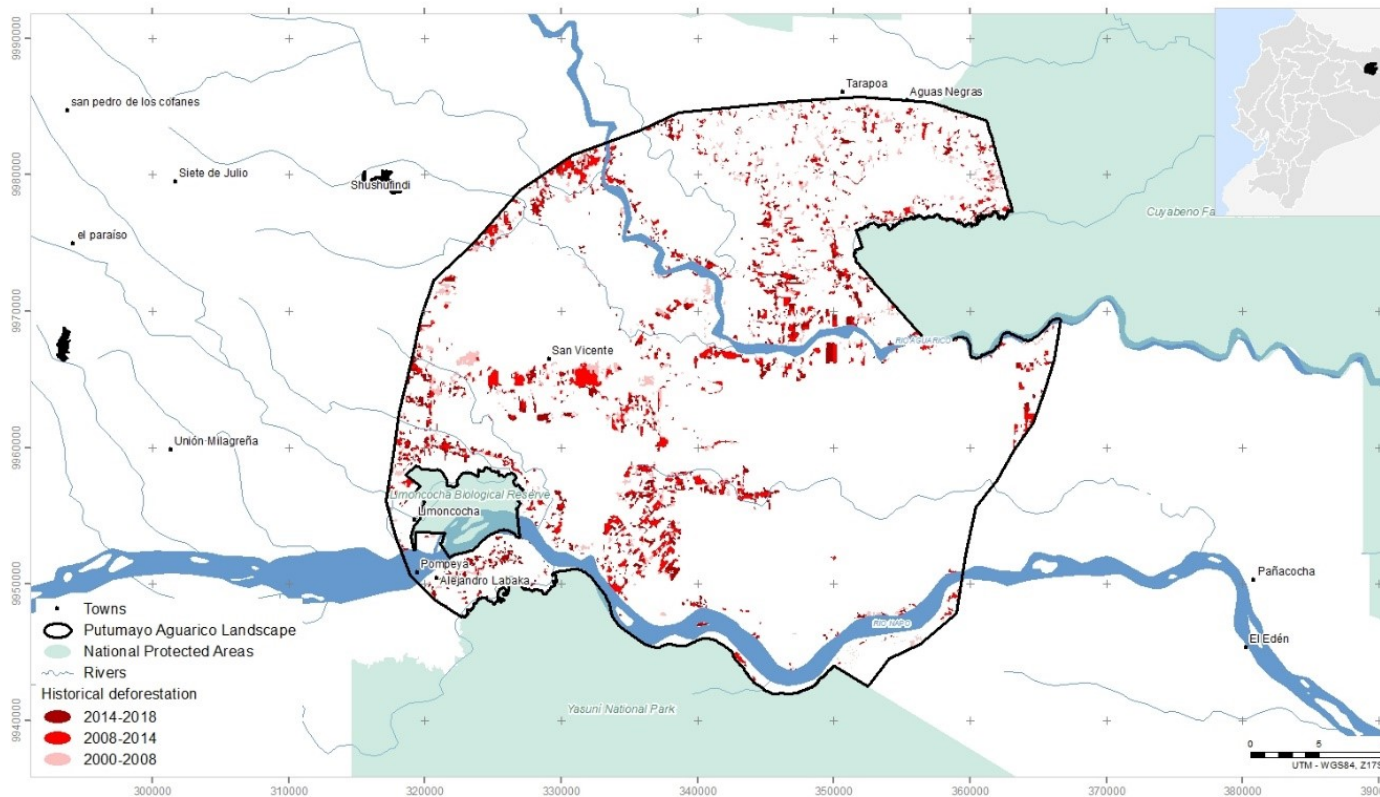


Figure 7. Deforestation in the Putumayo Aguarico Landscape

In the Palora - Pastaza Landscape, the average annual deforestation rate during the last 30 years has been 1,100 ha / year. However, between 2016 and 2018 the deforestation rate recorded by the Ministry of the Environment increased to 1,734 ha / year, mainly related to the conversion of forests to pastures. Figure 8 shows the historical deforestation evolution in the landscape.

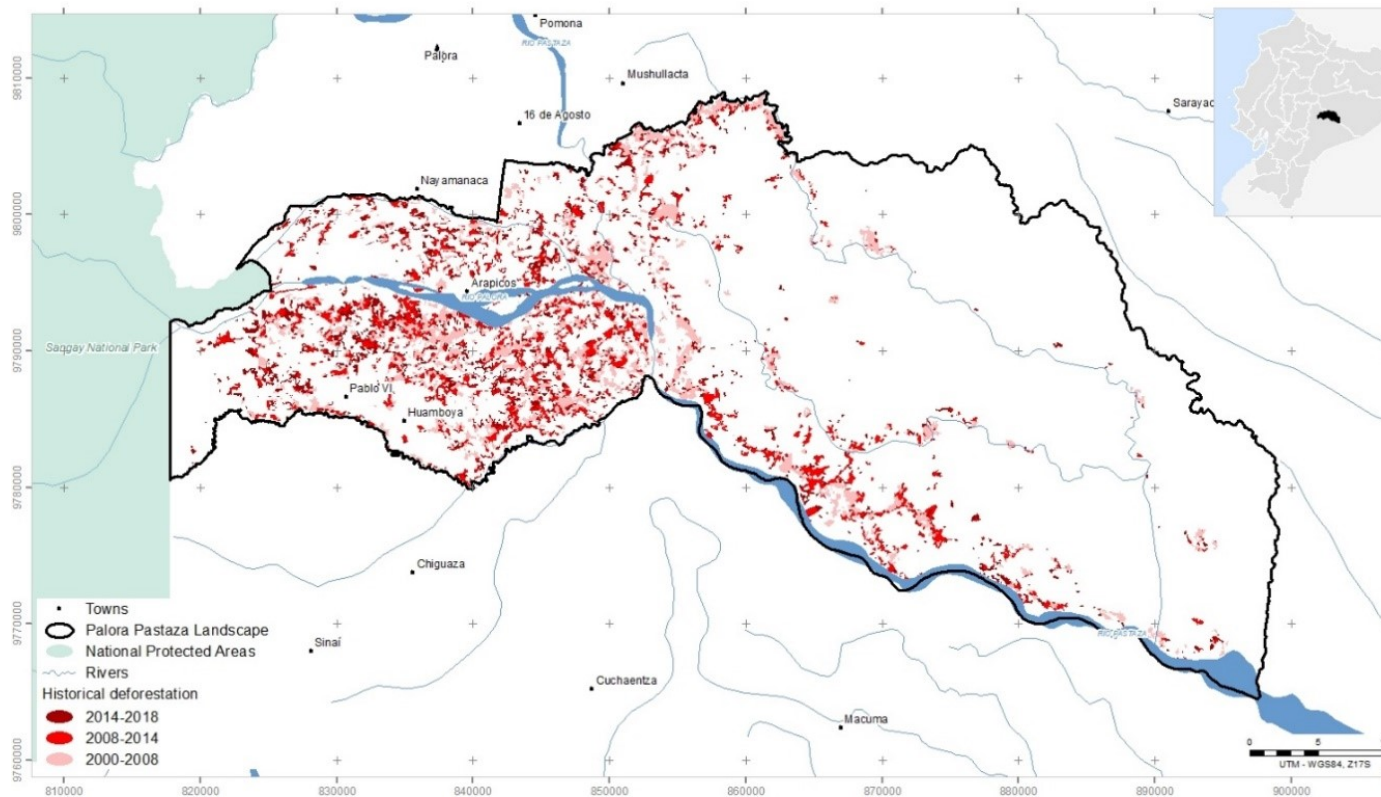


Figure 8: Deforestation in the Palora Pastaza Landscape

A report spanning 35 years, demonstrated that habitat fragmentation within forests reduces biodiversity by between 13 and 75% (Haddad, Brudvig, Clobert, Davies et al., 2015) [1]. Habitat loss and fragmentation are a leading cause of biodiversity loss worldwide. Species loss, decreasing population sizes and significant range contractions are caused by human activities that have negative impacts on biodiversity as well as on the ecosystem functions and services. In the project landscapes, there are still important remnants of exuberant tropical humid forests, that are rapidly disappearing. If the deforestation processes presented above continue, it is expected that within a few years, the PAs in those landscapes will remain as if they were islands surrounded by an ocean of agricultural land.

This process of fragmentation or division of large habitats into small, isolated patches of vegetation has important biological and socio-economic consequences. The consequences, from the biological point of view, occur at different levels, ranging from changes in the populations genetic characteristics to changes in the distribution of species and ecosystems. Only those species that have small ranges of distribution or modest habitat requirements, such as many plants and invertebrates, would survive on these islands. The habitat fragmentation produced by deforestation in both landscapes causes an increase in the vulnerability and risk of loss of species such as the jaguar (*Panthera onca centralis* and *P. onca onca*), and the peccary (*Tayassu pecari aequatoris* and *T. pecari pecari*), which require large and ecologically connected areas to maintain viable populations (WWF, 2017).

Additionally, the loss of habitat increases the probability that certain species will come into conflict with humans, a phenomenon that occurs in both landscapes, but with a higher record of cases in the Putumayo - Aguarico landscape, and with special emphasis on the jaguar. The loss of forests, combined

with the degradation of the remaining patches due to unsustainable activities such as logging and subsistence hunting, results in a decrease of available prey for the jaguar. Therefore, the species turns towards domestic animals to supplement its diet, which leads to human wildlife conflict and jaguar hunting to eliminate threats the species pose. (Wildlife Conservation Society-WCS- Ecuador, 2010; Espinosa, 2012). This increased proximity between wildlife, domestic animals and humans increases, in turn, the risk of zoonotic disease spillover like COVID 19.

The fragmentation of the natural ecosystems in both landscapes has also direct and indirect negative effects over daily activities carried out by indigenous and rural communities. For example, there are local communities and indigenous groups that depend on hunting for their subsistence. Soil degradation, alterations of water cycle, and modifications of local climate dynamics are some other examples of negative consequences of the environmental problem described. Lastly, deforestation also aggravates the effects of climate change in both landscapes. For example, since 2013, landslides and floods associated with extreme climatic events have been registered in both landscapes mainly near deforested areas[2].

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[1] Nick M. Haddad, Lars A. Brudvig, Jean Clobert, Kendi F. Davies, Andrew Gonzalez, Robert D. Holt, Thomas E. Lovejoy, Joseph O. Sexton, Mike P. Austin, Cathy D. Collins, William M. Cook, Ellen I. Damschen, Robert M. Ewers, Bryan L. Foster, Clinton N. Jenkins, Andrew J. King, William F. Laurance, Douglas J. Levey, Chris R. Margules, Brett A. Melbourne, A. O. Nicholls, John L. Orrock, Dan-Xia Song, John R. Townshend. (2015) Habitat fragmentation and its lasting impact on Earth's ecosystems. SCIENCE ADVANCES: E1500052

[2]At less than 510 m from deforested areas in the Putumayo Aguarico landscape and at less than 130 m from deforested areas in the Palora - Pastaza Landscape. Risk and Emergencies Management National Service (SNGRE for its acronym in Spanish), 2018.

### **Threats and Drivers**

During the project preparation phase, a series of workshops and interviews with key landscape experts and stakeholders were organized to identify and prioritize main threats to connectivity and biodiversity conservation. The list of identified threats to biological connectivity in the two project landscapes included issues such as unsustainable logging and hunting, unsustainable infrastructure development and unplanned settlement expansion, expansion of the agricultural frontier and unsustainable agricultural practices, amongst others. From the list of identified threats, the expansion of the agricultural frontier and the unsustainable agricultural practices were selected as the most important and urgent threats to connectivity in the two project landscapes, that the project should directly tackle.

#### *Expansion of the agricultural frontier*

The Ecuadorian Amazon registered relatively recent processes of agricultural frontier expansion (compared to other regions of the country). In large part, due to the oil production in this region, and the associated road construction and settlement processes. In addition, the agrarian reform policies applied in the region in the 1960s and 1970s led to the conversion of forested areas to agricultural lands. The deforestation created by those processes in the two intervention landscapes generated complex mosaics of fragmented forest remnants blended with crops and pasture areas.

Even though the rate of conversion of forests to agricultural uses within the two landscapes has decreased in the last decade, agricultural expansion continues to be a critical driver of deforestation in the landscapes, intensifying the breakdown of latitudinal and altitudinal connectivity in the ecosystems. On one hand, degraded forests that have been accessed for timber extraction, are quickly being

replaced by pastures or crop fields (MAE, 2016). On the other hand, both these landscapes have crop productivity yields that are less than half in comparison to other amazon regions in Ecuador and other countries. This low productivity directly encourages the clearing of forests for agricultural production purposes (Castro et al, 2013) (MAE, 2016).

In the Northern Amazon region of Ecuador, where the Putumayo - Aguarico landscape is located, the expansion of pastures and perennial monocultures of African palm, cacao, and coffee have been the main drivers of deforestation. By 2014, pastures occupied 57% of deforested lands, followed by agricultural mosaic with 19%, then coffee with 7%, cacao with 5%, and African palm with 4% (MAE, 2016). Cacao, African palm, and palmetto hearts have had a significant expansion between 2000 and 2008, representing 28% of the agricultural area. These products are intended for export, while livestock breeding production is intended for national consumption (Castro et al, 2013).

As presented above, in the Palora - Pastaza Landscape, between 2016 and 2018 the deforestation rate increased to 1,734 ha / year, mainly related to the conversion of forests to pastures. Currently, livestock breeding farming represents approximately 9% of the total area of this landscape (MAE, 2018).

The growth of temporary crops in monoculture farming systems, such as corn, cassava, tree tomato, and other crops destined for national consumption, has also been an important driver of deforestation in the Central Amazon region (Ministry of the Environment, 2018) where the Palora - Pastaza landscape is located. During the 2000 - 2008 period, the main expanding land use in this area was temporary crops that grew by 92,000 hectares at the expense of other agricultural and forest uses of land (Castro et al., 2013). In the last 10 years, there has been an important and accelerated introduction of the cultivation of Pitahaya, another transitory crop that adds pressure and has contributed to the deforestation of several forest areas in the municipality of Palora in the Morona Santiago province (Castro et al., 2013) (MAE, 2018).

#### *Unsustainable agricultural practices*

The development of agriculture within the Amazon region originally responded to the need for food for subsistence in a complex ecosystem that, due to the composition of its soils, the levels of rainfall, and temperature fluctuation, does not support conventional agriculture (MAE, 2017). The Amazonian populations settled and established agriculture in chakra systems, traditional biodiverse agroforestry systems developed in forest clearings and forested areas of higher altitude. With the entry of settlers to the Amazon as part of the migratory process, much of the production for sustenance has been replaced by production as a source of income, which is reflected in a growing linkage between the area and the agricultural markets of Ecuador (Castro et al. al., 2013). This production takes place in intensive agricultural and livestock breeding systems that are not suitable for the soils and climate of the region. Production is thus characterized by intensive use of the soil, excessive use of water, intensive use of fertilizers and phytosanitary products, the exposure of the soil to the climate, and little diversity of plants. The impact of these productive systems upon the ecosystems is severe and is reflected in a loss of biological diversity and diminished ecological connectivity, as well as in the degradation of agricultural soils and the pollution of rivers.

#### **Root Causes**

There are underlying and structural factors that aggravate the above presented threats. Although the project will not implement direct actions to address these root causes, their general conditions need to be considered in the intervention landscapes to adequately contextualize project activities.

#### *Poverty*

A relationship of interdependence between poverty and environmental degradation has been demonstrated in this region of Ecuador. In 2014, poverty in the Ecuadorian Amazon region affected 47.7% of the population, double the national average of 25% in the same year (ECV. INEC 2015). The

lack of access to public services (health, education, security), along with limited opportunities for employment and income generation, create added pressures on natural resources, particularly forests located in rural areas. While there is a high percentage of employment in the agricultural sector in both project landscapes, the low productivity of the land, combined with little access to education, health and other public services results in high levels of poverty. This is evidenced by the high percentages of Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) in both landscapes, reaching an average of 97% and 92% of the population in the parishes of Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape and Palora - Pastaza Landscape, respectively (INEC 2010).

#### *Extractive development model*

The current economic model within the country depends on the intensive use of natural resources, which puts pressure on the ecosystems of the Amazon region (Carvajal, 2016). Currently, Ecuador is positioned as a producer of raw materials in the extractive industry, mainly crude oil. Although the revenue generated by this activity has allowed the State to finance itself (in March 2019 the oil balance was establishing exports of USD 797 million (CONAFIPS, 2019)), the distribution of resources historically has not been equitable. The municipalities with extractive activities endure the bulk of the environmental and social impacts of production. These impacts directly affect the area of influence of the Project. 100% of the Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape and 96% of the Palora - Pastaza Landscape have oil blocks, and 306 wells operate in the north alone (Ministry of the Environment, 2014). In the same manner, in both landscapes, there are 35 mining concessions for non - metallic and construction materials (aggregates and stone) (Ministry of the Environment, 2014). In addition, both landscapes are affected by the impact of agricultural activities, especially by the expansion of monocultures such as African palm (Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape, with 9%) and grasslands (Palora - Pastaza Landscape, with 9%). Both cause habitat loss and render the land infertile and unusable (Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, 2017).

#### *Weak public environmental institutions*

Ecuador has been immersed in an economic crisis for the last several years, mainly as a consequence of the global oil crisis that reduced national revenues from oil exports, and was exacerbated by the effects of the Covid - 19 Pandemic in 2020. In addition, there has been a high level of political instability in the country. For example, between May 2017 and May 2020 there were several changes in authority in the MAAE, resulting in challenges for the continuity and sustainability of public environmental policies, programs, and projects.

As a result of this economic crisis, public environmental institutions, at the national and local level have been weakened. The MAAE has been one of the most affected public institutions in the country, registering a budget decrease of more than 50% in the last 6 years (\$117.2M in 2013, and \$51.9M in 2019), 85% of which is allotted to cover staff expenses.

Since the end of 2019, due to a need for optimization and austerity of public spending, the former Ministry of the Environment (MAE) began a merger process with the National Water Authority (SENAGUA). Between 2017 and 2020 (before the merger) the MAE had already reduced its staff by nearly 300 employees, including technical staff and park rangers, threatening the continuity of key activities, such as the patrolling and monitoring of PAs, and the continuity of emblematic public programs, such as the PSB. After the merger and in the coming months, additional layoffs resulted from greater budget restrictions imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic crisis. And with projections for an economic downturn in Ecuador of approximately 9% in 2021, it could mean additional budget cuts for the public sector, including the MAAE. In addition, with the new Organic Statute of the MAAE, there are important modifications, particularly regarding the offices of the MAAE on the ground at a provincial level. Through the new Organic Statute, 24 provincial offices of the MAAE are eliminated and 10 Zonal Offices assume the responsibilities and jurisdiction at a local level, both for Environment (regarding forests, wildlife, and environmental quality) and water (water resources, irrigation, and drainage, and drinking water and sanitation). The changes in the institutional structure and capacity, as



well as in the budget availability, could potentially undermine the overall environmental capacity of the MAAE.

### *Climate Change*

Tropical ecosystems are among the most vulnerable to climate change. The impacts of climate change are being felt in Ecuador in increased temperatures, seasonal shifts in rainfall patterns, and severe and recurrent droughts and floods, with adverse effects on most vulnerable sectors, including agriculture. Climate change projections indicate that, in Ecuador, the frequency and severity of extreme weather events will continue to increase, escalating the expected adverse consequences of these climate related events.

More specifically, projected changes in precipitation, combined with current and projected deforestation patterns, will make the Ecuadorian Amazon region more prone to flooding (MAE 2017). Several high-resolution regional and global models suggest an increased rainfall in the western Amazon. However, these projections must be confirmed through specific models for the Ecuadorian Amazon region, that need to consider its hydro-geological and geomorphological characteristics.

Another expected impact of increasing temperature and precipitation in the Ecuadorian Amazon region are the proliferation of vectors, responsible for several severe human diseases like Malaria, Dengue, and Chagas (Mato et al. 2019). This is particularly relevant for both landscapes because of the high indigenous population. According to a study by Pan et al. 2010, the health patterns of indigenous peoples, which are highly vulnerable to these diseases, are linked to social, economic, and cultural variables that determine land-use changes and deforestation patterns (Mato et al. 2019). Furthermore, increased temperatures and precipitation can have a negative effect on livestock productivity due to heat stress, the propagation of cattle diseases, and proliferation of crop pests, which can contribute to increased forest clearing to expand production. For additional information on climate change and the risk assessment of the project, see Section 3.4 Risks and Proposed Mitigation Measures.

### **Barriers**

The project will address existing barriers for the establishment of two functional connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes, described below:

#### **Barrier 1: Limited capacities of national and local governments to design and implement functional connectivity corridors.**

As discussed in previous sections, while PAs are essential, they are no longer considered as sufficient alone. Conservation practitioners and scientists have demonstrated that conservation of species, ecosystems and habitats can only be achieved if PAs are functionally connected (Trombulak & Baldwin, 2010; Resasco, 2019). This approach entails a shift in conservation practice, from a limited focus on PAs to a broader focus on larger spatial scales, in which many species and ecological processes operate and in which what happens outside PAs affects the health of ecosystems inside these PAs (IUCN, 2019).

In Ecuador, the SNAP has traditionally adopted an institutional, administrative, and financial approach centered on ?site management?. This approach prioritizes inward PA management, which isolates them from the positive and negative interactions that exist within the surrounding territory. This approach started to change towards a broader one in 2013, with the publication of the Ministerial Agreement 105 which issued guidelines and identified 11 prioritized areas for the establishment and management of connectivity corridors. In 2020 this approach was fully endorsed by the MAAE through the Ministerial Agreement 019 which established the technical guidelines for the design, formal designation, and management of functional connectivity corridors across the country. Although MAAE, through these agreements, sought to diversify conservation mechanisms across the country, by incorporating local

governments and other stakeholders to promote conservation and connectivity, there are still financial, institutional, and technical barriers that need to be overcome to fully implement this integrated approach.

In the project landscapes, the PAs of Cuyabeno and Yasun? (in the Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape), and Sangay, (in the Palora - Pastaza Landscape), are among the SNAP's largest and most complex PAs of the country (MAE, 2015). The establishment of connectivity corridors among those PAs will support their long-term conservation goals. That effort will require the effective involvement of key central and decentralized stakeholders with jurisdictions over the territories surrounding the PAs, that can complement the PA management efforts done by the central government. Amongst the local stakeholders, the Decentralized Autonomous Governments (GADs) play a key role because, by law, they can declare and manage different categories of conservation areas in their territories. Their role is especially important in the face of the current fiscal adjustment by the national government, that has led to a reduction of the already scarce resources dedicated to the SNAP.

Many GADs have expressed willingness and interest in strengthening conservation actions to promote ecological connectivity among PAs in their territory. However, they have also expressed that they do not have the experience, resources, nor capacity necessary to carry out these processes. During the workshops and interviews with stakeholders in the two landscapes, from this project development process, the following barriers were highlighted: i) Limited technical and financial capacity of relevant institutions to prepare baselines, maps, and technical documents to guide and justify the creation of new conservation areas such as the connectivity corridors; ii) Limited experience in convening, facilitating, and structuring participation and management of multi-stakeholder platforms; iii) Lack of tools to plan and manage new conservation areas from a broader ecological PA connectivity perspective; and iv) Limited experience in design and implementation of financial sustainability mechanisms and strategies.

**Barrier 2: Lack of articulation and stakeholder coordination within the territorial planning processes in the two project landscapes.**

To be successful in creating functional and sustainable connectivity corridors, the connectivity corridors will need to be effectively integrated in the existing territorial planning processes, in the two project landscapes.

Territorial planning in the Ecuadorian public sector includes processes at various levels and sectors, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) and the MAAE, at the national level; the CTEA, at the Amazon territory level; and the three levels of GADs, who are responsible for Land Use (PDOTS) and Management Plans (PUGs) in their territories. These processes, very often, lack coordination, resulting in contradictions regarding urban and infrastructure planning, economic activities promotion, and conservation of natural resources in the Amazon region.

On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities in the Ecuadorian Amazon region have traditional planning processes, called Life Plans, in which they shape their models and visions of territorial development. Although Life Plans are mentioned in current standard and public policy instruments[1], they have not yet been officially defined in legal - technical terms. Therefore, there is no clarity regarding how Life Plans relate to the other existing planning or land use management instruments, such as PDOTs or PUGs, or how these should be observed by the GADs, and other authorities with abilities to regulate land use in these territories. This barrier is very relevant for the establishment of the project connectivity corridors, since indigenous territories represent large areas of the two project landscapes.

The Organic Law for the Integral Planning of the Amazon Special Territorial Circumscription establishes a regional planning subsystem for the Ecuadorian Amazon territory. As a key element of this subsystem, in 2016, the State issued the Integral Plan for the Amazon (PIA, for its acronym in Spanish), as the highest-level territorial planning instrument for the Amazon Special Territorial Circumscription". The elaboration of the PIA, led by the Technical Secretary of the CTEA, involved the participation of various territorial stakeholders. Its implementation, has shown, again, difficulties associated with coordination mechanisms and implementation of obligations on behalf of different governmental and non - governmental entities.

This lack of articulation between the different territorial processes and governmental entities and local actors with territorial planning and management competences is a key barrier that the project will need to overcome in the two project landscapes. Both the Integral Plan of the Amazon and the testimonies collected during the workshops, also highlighted the lack of enabling conditions, in legal, technical, administrative, and institutional terms, necessary to promote and implement ecological connectivity in the existing territorial planning processes and the lack technical capacity and tools for facilitation and management of inter- institutional participatory platforms.

**Barrier 3: Limited technical and financial capacity for conservation friendly agriculture production and for bioeconomy initiatives, in the two connectivity corridors to be proposed by the project.**

As explained in the threats section, agricultural production in the two project landscapes is currently mainly dominated by the production of coffee, cacao, banana, oil palm, and livestock breeding, mostly utilizing unsustainable production practices. These intensive production systems ensure short-term income but compromise the health of the ecosystems and the wellbeing of human populations. In addition, the value chains for these products are controlled by intermediaries who impose prices and conditions upon producers that lack bargaining power (Murphy, 2006; Salazar, 2013). These two barriers have limited the possibility of developing sustainable production systems compatible with the biodiversity conservation of the Amazon region and that contribute to the eradication of poverty faced by populations that currently depend on agricultural production.

The territory included in and around connectivity corridors the project will establish, in the two project landscapes, includes some of the above-described intensive agriculture production areas. In those areas, with direct influence over the connectivity corridors, the project will promote a shift of paradigm towards a more sustainable agricultural production, in accordance with the connectivity objectives of the corridors. This objective presents several barriers, highlighted by the producers during the preparation of the project: i) Lack of technical capacity (in agroecology and business) and of opportunities for the training of qualified labor in sustainable agricultural production practices; ii) Underused production (e.g., greenhouses, stables) and post-harvest infrastructure (e.g., cellars, tanks), which frequently is deteriorated due to a lack of maintenance, and inefficient use.

On the other hand, the bioeconomy activities in the two project landscapes present an interesting economic potential and are compatible with the conservation of the amazon natural ecosystems. However, they are still incipient and present several shortcomings to become real alternatives to the intensive agricultural model previously described. Some of the most important barriers for the development and upscaling of the bioeconomy initiatives are: i) Limited application of associative strategies to promote aggregation and the quality of the offer, with the goal of taking advantage of economies of scale; ii) Lack of knowledge surrounding the population dynamics of the biodiversity and species that are exploited; iii) The lack of access to information, financing, technology, and markets; iv) Insufficient application of strategies for adding value and differentiation based on comparative advantages; v) Lack of market intelligence on the existing demand for biodiversity-based products and services (tastes, preferences, competitors, etc.).

**Barrier 4: Insufficient regional coordination to address common problems in the Amazon region and insufficient mechanisms to share knowledge at the local, national, and regional levels.**

As mentioned throughout this section, the creation and management of connectivity corridors, represents a shift in the standard operations of the responsible public institutions and organizations linked to the management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity in Ecuador.

Although there is information generated by different projects and / or initiatives related to connectivity corridors, this information is often dispersed and not available. There are no mechanisms in place to identify and disseminate the knowledge and successful experiences generated by different national and regional institutions and organizations, let alone exchange this knowledge and lessons with the other Amazon basin countries. Consequently, there is a need to have educational and communication products, as well as learning networks, to allow the capitalization and scaling up of good practices and lessons learnt.

Decision-making, planning, and course correction depend, to a large extent, on being able to have access to reliable information at the central and local levels. In a similar manner, the ability to

coordinate between institutions at national level depend on existing mechanisms for coordination and information sharing.

Additionally, many of the efforts carried out by different organizations, civil society, and the state institutions are hampered by a weak communication strategy to the public and other institutions that work in the project areas of influence. One of the greatest challenges requires adequate knowledge management and continuous adaptation of communication to ensure an effective commitment to inform and raise awareness, as well as to coordinate actions within and around the intervention sites.

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[1] Life plans are referred in the Organic Law for the Integral Planning of the Amazon Special Territorial Circumscription (LOCTEA), Ministerial Agreement 083 of 2016 of the MAAE, and the National Development Plan 2017- 2021.

2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects;

The analysis of the baseline?or "scenario without the GEF project" over the next six years? presented below, summarizes the ongoing or planned actions that the government and other key stakeholders will undertake in the coming years to address the barriers towards the creation and sustainability of two connectivity corridors in the two selected landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon. The baseline scenario includes projects and investments in areas such as PAs management and strengthening of other forms of conservation; promotion of sustainable agriculture practices and strengthening of bioeconomy initiatives; articulation of territorial planning processes and coordination of key territorial stakeholder in the two project landscapes. The section identifies entry points, by theme, for the project to complement those initiatives, identifies the gaps that the project will help to fill, and the results of the baseline the project will influence.

### *Biodiversity conservation and ecological connectivity*

The following Table 1 summarizes the projects or initiatives that contribute as baseline to Component 1, specifically related to connectivity corridors and conservation initiatives.

Table 1. Baseline initiatives that contribute to Component 1.

Project	Source of Funding	Executing Entity	Timeline	Budget
Ministry of Environment and Water	General State Portfolio	MAAE	Present	Pending
PASNAP	KfW	MAAE	2020-2023	5.5M Euros

Project	Source of Funding	Executing Entity	Timeline	Budget
PSB	General Portfolio of the State and international cooperation	MAAE	2008-Present and ongoing	\$688,548
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Project (PSB-Northern Amazon)	KfW	MAAE through the Forest Conservation and REDD+ Program (PCB REDD)	2011-2023	7,312,324.50 Euros
Project for Strengthening Technical and Institutional Capacities of the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Cuyabeno, G?epp?, Airo Pai, Huimeki, La Paya Corridor	TBD	MAAE, GIZ and WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society)	2020-2021	179,000 Euros

### Ministry of Environment and Water

The MAAE is the governing authority for environmental policy and management in the country. As such, the MAAE leads policies, initiatives, and projects (government funded and funded by external donors) and executed in partnership with other organizations, that are most closely associated with Component 1 of this project. Specifically, the MAAE's Directorate of Protected Areas and Other Forms of Conservation regulates and manages the SNAP and other AECBs, such as buffer zones, corridors and PSB. Below we've highlighted both areas that are key to the project implementation: 1. PAs and connectivity corridors and 2. PSB.

#### *PAs and Connectivity Corridors*

Of the annual budget allocated through State funds, the MAAE invests USD 1,0713,371 in the Northern Landscape for the management of the Yasun? National Park, Cuyabeno Fauna Production Reserve and Biological Reserve, while for the Southern Landscape it makes an annual investment of USD 91,500 in the management of the Sangay National Park. To complement State funds in PAs, since 2016 MAAE has implemented the PASNAP, which contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and

the population's livelihoods nation-wide.[1] The PASNAP has three components: i. the consolidation of the PANE; ii. the integration of new subsystems to the SNAP and the establishment of bio-corridors; and iii. strengthening the SNAP's financial sustainability. In the Amazon, it carries out activities within the provinces of Orellana, Sucumbos, Pastaza, and Morona Santiago. In its second phase, the PASNAP is implementing activities that support connectivity with the Pas (linked to Component 1 of this project) and the financing of bioeconomy initiatives in the Northern Amazon (linked to Component 2 of this project). Through components 1 and 2 of this ASL GEF project, the results that PASNAP intends to develop regarding the management of PAs under a landscape and connectivity corridors approach will be complemented and leveraged. The project will coordinate closely with the MAAE and PASNAP to ensure complementarity in activities on the ground and alignment in methodologies.

Components 1 and 3 will reinforce the work on landscape connectivity issues, given that the MAAE does not have a specific technical team or a specialized unit dedicated to the subject, and that there is a need to develop a regulatory framework that complements the existing one. The Ministry must coordinate with the GADs regarding environmental management and land use planning Through its Zonal Directions, which constitute deconcentrated administrative units of the MAAE within the territory. In this context, there is a gap between the MAAE and the GADs to manage their conservation units from an integrated landscape perspective, due to limited experience, and to technical and institutional capacity. To help fill the gap, this project will create and strengthen the capacities of the MAAE and GADs, regarding sustainable landscape management and conservation corridors.

#### *PSB*

The PSB is a public policy through which the Ecuadorian State provides an economic incentive for individual and collective owners who commit to the preservation of their native forests through agreements signed for 20 years. It is implemented by the MAAE with an investment in the Northern Landscape of USD 513,261.03 (until 2018), and in the Southern Landscape of USD 175,287.37 (until 2018). In the Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape, 45 individual and 7 collective agreements have been signed, totaling more than 30,000 hectares under conservation. In the Palora - Pastaza Landscape, 18 collective agreements have been signed totaling 25,067 hectares.

The implementation of the PSB is also supported through the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Project (PSB-Northern Amazon) as part of the cooperation agreements between the governments of Ecuador and Germany, and part of the MAAE initiatives to reduce the rate of deforestation and contribute to the conservation of forests and preservation of biological diversity. The objective of the PSB-Northern Amazon Project is to expand and consolidate forest conservation activities through the PSB through the following activities: 1. the payment of financial incentives to associated communities in the provinces of Sucumbos, Orellana, and Napo; and 2. forest governance.

The gaps identified in PSB are the following: weak coordination between program participants which, if improved, could help position them as strategic stakeholders regarding the territory's governance; weakness in conservation proposals for the areas that are under the agreement; and a lack of investments to incentivize economic/productive initiatives. Successful initiatives that improve the economic and productive sectors will provide financial security to stakeholders beyond just the incentive term and associated sustainable practices will reduce long-term pressures on the forests. This project will consider PSB conservation areas as core habitats within the connectivity corridors and will work with current PSB participants, complementing existing conservation actions, land-use planning, and sustainable production to allow for the long-term sustainability of the conservation areas within the connectivity corridors. In addition, the project will strengthen the conservation of existing areas in the program by expanding new conservation areas in each landscape as part of the connectivity corridors. To achieve this, the project will strengthen the capacities of the PSB participants in related issues, allowing for the development, complementarity, or improved execution of the sustainable production activities they carry out at the farm level.

### **Project for Strengthening Technical and Institutional Capacities of the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Cuyabeno, G?epp?, Airo Pai, Huimeki, La Paya Corridor**

This project has the following objectives: i. Strengthening of institutional strategic capacities to adequately assume the functions and competencies of the Technical Secretariat of the Trinational Program; ii. Promote the consolidation of technical capacities to facilitate the management of the Cuyabeno, G?epp?, Airo Pai, Huimeki, La Paya Conservation and Sustainable Development Corridor; and iii. Strengthen biological monitoring, as well as enforce control and surveillance in prioritized sites of the Cuyabeno, G?epp?, Airo Pai, Huimeki, La Paya Conservation and Sustainable Development Corridor. The support of this project is directly related to component 1, especially for the development of actions that strengthen the integration and management of conservation areas, in this case at the trinational level. One foreseeable challenge could be the need to improve the management of PAs under a landscape approach and in the connectivity corridors.

### ***Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Bioeconomy Initiatives***

The following Table 2 summarizes the projects or initiatives that contribute as baseline to Component 2, specifically related to sustainable production and bioeconomy initiatives.



Table 2. Baseline initiatives that contribute to sustainable agriculture practices and bioeconomy initiatives.

Project	Source of Funding	Executing Entity	Timeline	Budget
ATPA	General State Portfolio	Ecuadorian government through the MAG	2019-2023	\$13.5M
Project for the Promotion of Financial Instruments and Land Use Planning for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation (PROAmazonia)	Green Climate Fund (GCF)	UNDP	2018-2022	\$41,172,739
Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage / Bioeconomy Program	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	GIZ	2018-2021	10M Euros
WWF-Ecuador: Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD) Project	DGD- WWF Belgium	WWF Ecuador	2017-2021	\$4M (Phase 1) \$4M (Phase 2)
WWF-Ecuador: Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources Activity - AIRR	USAID	WWF Ecuador	2019-2024	\$680,918

### Agenda for the Productive Transformation of the Amazon Region (ATPA)

ATPA is a public policy aimed at the conversion of agricultural production in the Amazon towards sustainable production systems. It promotes the implementation of three strategic lines: a) Land use planning; b) Gender equity; and c) Internalization of environmental costs within production processes. The Project will contribute to the replicability and scaling up of sustainable production initiatives promoted by ATPA at the farm level, in a broader context of connectivity management in the two intervention landscapes. Component 2 will contribute to the commercialization of the endeavors promoted by the ATPA, by supporting the production, promotion, marketing, and access to market opportunities. It will also leverage ATPAs efforts and approaches in strengthening capacities for sustainable production. Similarly, it will help to strengthen and promote an integrated landscape approach, which the ATPA currently lacks, linking land use planning processes at the farm level and

with the PDOTs to ensure ecological connectivity. In relation to component 2, a lack of innovation, value added, and commercialization of Amazonian ventures has been identified, which highlights the potential of biodiversity to generate a local economic model that replaces unsustainable extraction practices within the forest.

### **Project for the Promotion of Financial Instruments and Land Use Planning for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation (PROAmazonia)**

PROAmazonia seeks to generate a transition towards a low emission development model, through the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation, the development of financial and market tools for the sustainable use of the land, the strengthening of supply chains for deforestation free products, policies and strengthening of the financial sustainability of the existing programs. It also supports the development of PDOTs in the Orellana, Sucumbios, Morona Santiago, and Pastaza provinces; of the Huamboya, Palora, and Pastaza municipalities (Palora - Pastaza Landscape); of 80 Life Plans and several PUGs. The project also promotes the transition of 45,000 hectares to sustainable production systems through five field schools with 1,000 palm producers and access to credit for coffee and cacao producers who are transitioning to forest-friendly processes.

PROAmazonia will be complemented by the project for *Results-Based Payments for reduced deforestation in 2014* which will provide continuity and complement actions promoted by PROAmazonia and for the REDD+ Action Plan. The project components are: (1) Support inter-sectoral articulation and mainstreaming of climate change and REDD+ in public policies and in the main territorial planning instruments at the level of GADs, communities, peoples and nationalities; (2) Support the transition to sustainable deforestation-free agriculture; (3) Sustainability of areas under forest management and increase the production and commercial use of non-timber forest products; and (4) Integrate the operational components of the PA REDD+.

The Connectivity Corridors Project will consolidate the current coordination processes and will link them with the objective of effectively managing the connectivity in the intervention landscapes (Component 1), through the establishment of management committees in the two corridors. In addition, it will enhance the benefits that the communities may obtain from forest products for the development of bioeconomy initiatives (Component 2). Communities will also benefit from the replication and scaling of initiatives that take place within the Kichwa communities located near the Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape, among other bioeconomy initiatives that are considered important to position and consolidate certain value chains of forest-friendly products/services. Through component 3, the Connectivity Corridors Project will support the implementation of PDOTs, PUGs, and Life Plans, in aspects related to the connectivity of Amazonian landscapes.

### **Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage / Bioeconomy Program**

The program is funded by BMZ and implemented by GIZ, with a global amount of 10 million euros (1.9 M euros in the southern landscapes). It is scheduled to end by October 2021. The intervention area in the Amazon covers the provinces of Pastaza and Morona Santiago. Its objective is the conservation of PAs and the sustainable use of their biodiversity as a basis to catalyze the transition to a more sustainable and resilient economic model. The program implements actions within the Palora - Pastaza

Landscapes, located in the lower area of the Sangay National Park. It provides technical and financial support for the development of bioeconomy initiatives in 10 promising areas (e.g., tourism, vanilla, and bamboo). It also coordinates with the GADs to strengthen their role within the production chains and as a facilitator for market access and the inclusion of the bio economy in its PDOTs.

CI-Ecuador is an executing partner of this project, especially for the development of species management plans for bioeconomy initiatives, the generation of participatory methodologies for monitoring the sustainable use of biodiversity and updating Life Plans within the Kichwa and Achuar communities. The Connectivity Corridors Project will leverage the lessons learned from this project regarding sustainable production initiatives linked to community territorial planning, to scale planning at a landscape level to that of a corridor level. In addition, the Connectivity Corridors Project can fill the gap related to the strengthening and commercial articulation of the bioeconomy initiatives supported by the GIZ, by increasing coordination in the supply of Amazonian products, and improving access to the local and national markets (Component 2).

### **WWF-Ecuador**

WWF-Ecuador currently implements two key projects relevant to the Connectivity Corridors Project: 1. The Project financed by the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD) and 2. Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources Activity (AIRR). Both projects will be key to providing co-funding for activities in the Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape, particularly for Component 2 and Component 1.

The first phase of the DGD project (2017-2021) works in communities from the Mira, Pastaza, and Putumayo basins to "improve their socio-economic quality of life through an improvement in protection of their forests and sustainable productive systems". It includes the following components: 1) Sustainable productive systems based on the adequate use of forest resources contribute to the improvement in income and food security of rural populations, 2) PAs and other conservation strategies, managed in a comprehensive and participatory manner to contribute to the provision of environmental services and the well-being of communities, and 3) Development of political and social awareness that is favorable to the protection of forests and biodiversity. Thus far, this project has provided the social, political, and cultural context needed to accompany the design of the Connectivity Corridors Project project, as well as establish relationships with key partners. The second phase (2022-2027) of the DGD project is currently being designed strategically to complement this Project, with an emphasis on supporting livelihoods of vulnerable IPLC by strengthening long-term conservation areas, women's empowerment, education for sustainable development, bioeconomy initiatives (ecotourism, NTFP, and cocoa).

The AIRR (2019-2024) funded by USAID is a regional project implemented in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador that seeks to improve participation of indigenous peoples in the sustainable economic development of the Amazon, ultimately leading to the conservation of biodiversity and reduction of forest loss. In Ecuador, the project focuses on indigenous bioeconomy initiatives in the Putumayo Basin that are equitably and sustainably scaled to regional and global markets.

Through these projects, WWF-Ecuador's work will complement the Connectivity Corridors Project project as co-finance for the implementation of activities in the Putumayo-Aguarico landscape related

to local conservation areas, sustainable production, and bioeconomy initiatives, particularly with indigenous peoples. While the ASL project will include indigenous peoples and nationalities as key stakeholders, it encompasses a broader audience in the implementation of its activities. The AIRR project will co-finance ASL activities through a Landscape Coordinator and support in bioeconomy initiatives. WWF-Ecuador's work will also complement activities in both corridors through forest-based tourism and restoration inside and outside productive systems.

### ***Territorial planning processes and coordination of stakeholders***

The following Table 3 summarizes the projects or initiatives that contribute as baseline to Component 3, specifically related to governance and intersectoral coordination platforms and participatory mechanisms.

Table 3. Baseline initiatives that contribute to Component 3.

Project	Source of Funding	Executing Entity	Timeline	Budget
Council for Planning and Development of the Special Amazon Territorial Circumscription	General State Portfolio with royalties from public and private companies within the mining, oil, and hydroelectric sectors	Ecuadorian Government through the Technical Secretariat of the CTEA	2018-Present	\$90M in 2020
CI-Ecuador: Our Future Forests ? Amazonia Verde	Government of France	CI-Ecuador	2020-2022 (Phase I)	\$2,593,000
CI-Ecuador: Bio-Andean Cacao: Project to support the sustainable development of a cacao sector of excellence in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru	French Development Agency (AFD)	CI-Ecuador	2019-2022	\$173,963

### **Council for Planning and Development of the Special Amazon Territorial Circumscription**

The Council of the CTEA is the Ecuadorian State agency in charge of the articulation and inter-institutional coordination between the different levels of government, with the citizens and the public and private sectors of the Amazon. Among other functions, the Council is responsible for approving the guidelines and directives for the creation and coordination of the implementation of the PIA and for

issuing criteria and guidelines for the prioritization of the interventions within the CTEA: PDOT, PUGs, Life Plans, and other territorial management tools within the Amazon. They will also define criteria and guidelines for the distribution of the Common Fund that finances the macro projects of the CTEA. The Council operates through the SCTEA (mentioned in section 1.4 of the National and Sectoral Context) which is responsible for preparing, coordinating, and monitoring the PIA.

The gaps that the Connectivity Corridors Project aims to address (Component 3) are related to the development of approaches, instruments, and regulations that contribute to the integrated management of the landscapes and connectivity corridors, as well as their inclusion in the various existing planning and management tools of the Amazonian territory. The Connectivity Corridors Project will also contribute to implementing the PIA, in particular the Territorial Planning, Production, and Environmental components, which CI-Ecuador supported in developing.

### **CI-Ecuador**

CI-Ecuador is currently implementing two projects that will contribute co-financing for the Connectivity Corridors Project, as well as leverage established relationships with key stakeholders at a national level as well as in the Palora-Pastaza Landscape. The first project, Amazonia Verde, seeks to preserve the forest remnants in the Amazon Basin through the empowerment of indigenous peoples and nationalities, linking innovative financial mechanisms to encourage conservation. It has four broad components: 1. ensuring the protection of new conservation areas and improving the management of existing conservation zones; 2. empower indigenous leaders and communities; 3. identify and implement sustainable value chains; and 4. strengthen indigenous knowledge management. Being a project strongly linked to the management and participation of indigenous peoples and nationalities in Pastaza and Morona Santiago provinces, Connectivity Corridors Project can strengthen the link that these groups have with the multi-actor articulation spaces within the corridors (Components 1 and 3), something that is not considered in Amazonia Verde. In addition, it can leverage the knowledge and lessons learned from the bioeconomy initiatives implemented within indigenous territories, linked to the conservation of forests in Achuar and Kichwa territories (Component 2). The Connectivity Corridors Project will also be able to harness the participatory monitoring processes of Amazonia Verde (which include using Earth Observation data to monitor indigenous territories) to strengthen Component 4. Amazonia Verde will be key to providing additional technical and logistical support for the Connectivity Corridors Project (including co-financing of partial time of an Achuar indigenous community specialist and sustainable production and bioeconomy field technician, as well as a vehicle).

The second, Bio-Andean Cacao project seeks to contribute to the consolidation of the organic and sustainable fine and aromatic cacao (CFA) sector in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. This project promotes organic and sustainable CFA chain, incorporating favorable national support and the protection of the environment and its rich biodiversity. It is linked to Connectivity Corridors Project through component 2 of sustainable production and will provide lessons learned on the conservation agreement methodology with smallholder producers through the promotion of "conservation cacao", that link productive activities to better agricultural practices for forest preservation. The gap that Connectivity Corridors Project fills is to link these cacao initiatives and elevate them to be incorporated in planning processes at a landscape level in the Palora - Pastaza corridor (Component 3).

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[1] The project is currently in its second phase. The first phase was carried out during 2016-2019, and the lessons learned from it are included in section 3.7 of Lessons Learned of this ProDoc.

3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project; ?

### *Objective and theory of change*

The objective of this Child Project is to improve the ecological connectivity of two priority landscapes, the Putumayo ? Aguarico and the Palora-Pastaza, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, through the establishment of two connectivity corridors and associated management mechanisms, to ensure the long-term biodiversity conservation of its ecosystems.

The project theory of change aligns with the ASL II Program (see Annex 1 Alignment between the ASL II Program Framework and the Ecuador Child Project strategy), and is built upon the threats, root causes, barriers, and baseline presented in the previous sections. It is based on the logic that the ecological integrity of the landscapes, dependent on the biological connectivity between the existing PAs and other landscape forest remnants, can be maintained if:

- a gender sensitive participatory process, coordinated through interinstitutional and multisectoral governance platforms leads to the identification of two connectivity corridors, consented by involved indigenous peoples and nationalities through an FPIC process, and to the formal designation of the connectivity corridors by the MAAE,
- fragmentation and other agricultural threats to ecological connectivity are reduced through the promotion of SLM practices in key intensive agricultural production areas in and around the two connectivity corridors,
- alternative sustainable livelihoods for the men and women of the corridor communities are promoted via the strengthening of bioeconomy initiatives, that are compatible with the biodiversity conservation of the corridors,
- enabling conditions are created for ensuring the effective integration of the connectivity corridor objectives in territorial planning instruments and capacities of the two landscapes,

During the project preparation phase, a preliminary Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis identified three potential connectivity corridor routes for the Putumayo-Aguarico landscape and two connectivity corridor routes for the Palora-Pastaza landscape, using SNAP, BVP and PSB areas as core habitats. These alternatives were identified considering a preliminary characterization of the landscape conditions based on forest remnants, fragmentation, isolation, and ecosystem services (carbon) in each landscape, as well as pressures and threats from infrastructure (roads), vegetation conversion

Given the baseline and proposed lines of action, the project's Theory of Change is shown in the figure 9 below:

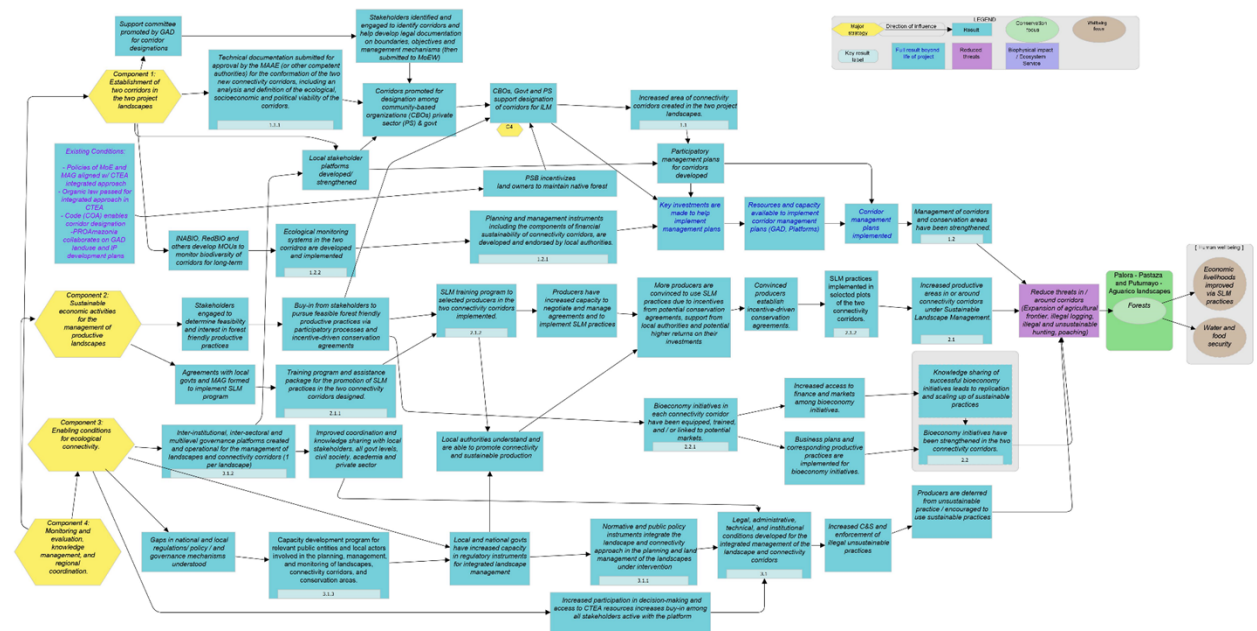


Figure 9: High level Theory of Change representation of project intervention

## Project Components and Expected Outcomes

The project "Connectivity Corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region" aims to improve the ecological connectivity of two priority landscapes, Putumayo ? Aguarico and Palora-Pastaza, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, by establishing two connectivity corridors and associated management mechanisms, to ensure the long-term biodiversity conservation of its ecosystems. This objective is intended to be achieved during the 5 years of project execution, through the implementation of four interrelated Components:

### **Component 1: Establishment of two connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes.**

Component 1 seeks to implement a technical analysis to select the best connectivity corridor route, based on geospatial, social (including gender and intercultural approaches), economic, cultural, ecological, and political criteria. It will also include activities to fulfill the necessary requirements established in Ministerial Agreement 019 and to submit the technical documentation required for the MAAE to officially designate a connectivity corridor each project landscape. Finally, under Component 1 key planning and management tools for the management of the corridors will be prepared.

### **Component 2: Implementation of sustainable productive activities in the two connectivity corridors.**

Component 2 seeks to decrease threats to connectivity in the two proposed corridors, by promoting sustainable agriculture production practices in key areas of the corridors, based on the assessments done in Component 1. In those key productive areas, the project will promote land-use planning at a farm level and SLM practices. In the connectivity corridors, the project will also promote alternative bioeconomy initiatives to reduce pressure on native forests and incentivize alternative forest friendly income generating initiatives.

### **Component 3: Enabling conditions for ecological connectivity.**

This component seeks to establish the enabling conditions for effective and participatory corridor management through three strategies: 1. Development of standards, public policy, technical or administrative instruments that contribute to the connectivity and integrated management of sustainable landscapes; 2. Strengthening key stakeholders' capacities for corridor management; and, 3. Establishment of inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and multi-level governance platforms for the participatory identification and management of the corridors.

### **Component 4: Monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, and regional coordination.**

Component 4 focuses on developing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation plan that will allow for effective and efficient project management and provide information for effective decision-making within the adaptive management of the project. It also seeks to promote spaces for dialogue and



knowledge exchanges at the national and regional levels, in order to leverage successful strategies and lessons learned from other initiatives. Finally, this component is directly linked to the first three components, ensuring timely communication of key information about the actions and impact of the project throughout its implementation.

All project outcomes, outputs and activities take into account the baseline scenario presented in Section 1.4, and are designed to address the project barriers identified in Section 1.3. A summary of outcomes and outputs by component can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: Project Components, Outcomes and Outputs

Components	Outcome	Outputs
Component 1: Establishment of two connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes.	1.1. Increased area of connectivity corridors created in the two project landscapes.	1.1.1. Technical documentation submitted for approval by the MAAE (or other competent authorities) for the designation of the two new connectivity corridors, including an analysis and definition of the ecological, socioeconomic (including gender and intercultural approaches) and political viability of each corridor.
	1.2. Management of corridors and conservation areas have been strengthened.	1.2.1. Planning and management instruments, including the components of financial sustainability of connectivity corridors, are developed and endorsed by local authorities.  1.2.2. Ecological monitoring systems in the two corridors are developed and implemented.

Components	Outcome	Outputs
Component 2: Implementation of sustainable productive activities in the two connectivity corridors.	2.1. Increase of productive areas, in or around connectivity corridors, under SLM.	<p>2.1.1. Training program and assistance package for the promotion of SLM practices in the two connectivity corridors designed.</p> <p>2.1.2. SLM training program, including gender and intercultural approaches, to selected producers in the two connectivity corridors implemented.</p> <p>2.1.3. SLM practices implemented in selected plots of the two connectivity corridors equitably benefiting men and women producers.</p>
	2.2. Bioeconomy initiatives have been strengthened in the two connectivity corridors.	2.2.1. Bioeconomy initiatives, in each connectivity corridor, have been equipped, trained, and / or linked to potential markets, with a gender and intercultural approach.
Component 3: Enabling conditions for ecological connectivity.	3.1. Legal, administrative, technical, and institutional conditions developed for the sustainable management of the connectivity corridors.	<p>3.1.1. Regulatory and public policy instruments integrate the connectivity corridors needs in the planning and land management of the landscapes under intervention.</p> <p>3.1.2. Inter institutional, inter-sectoral, multilevel governance platforms created and operational for the management of landscapes and connectivity corridors (1 per landscape).</p> <p>3.1.3. Capacity development program for relevant public entities and local actors involved in the planning, management, and monitoring of landscapes, connectivity corridors, and conservation areas, with a gender and intercultural approach.</p>

Components	Outcome	Outputs
Component 4: Monitoring, and evaluation, knowledge management and regional coordination.	4.1. Project monitoring and evaluation data contributes to efficient decision making and to adaptive project management.	4.1.1. Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan informs the project's adaptive management.
	4.2. Strengthening of national and regional coordination and knowledge management.	4.2.1. Effective coordination at the national level and with the ASL program.  4.2.2. Knowledge management and communication products developed and disseminated.

## **Consultation, FPIC and Project Strategy**

During the project development period, the process of consultation with local government and local community stakeholders, and with indigenous communities, in the two landscapes, was initiated (in person in 2019 and, due to the pandemic, through virtual means from early 2020) by the project development team, including WWF and CI staff, Project Preparation Grant (PPG) consultants, and local and national government staff (including MAAE). There was overall interest and an initial agreement to support the project from indigenous communities' representatives at both landscapes. There was initial indication of support from representatives of producer organizations and indigenous communities, including representatives from the Kofon, Kichwa, Siceoya, Siona, Achuar, Shuar, and Waorani indigenous nationalities, to creating corridors (Component 1), so long as incentives are built in for communities, and that these strategies align to their own goals. IP communities' representatives noted they want to be part of the project, using corridors to secure their areas of conservation, and to bring bioeconomy support to their productive lands, in line with the objectives of their territory Life Plans. Representatives of local and indigenous communities expressed particular interest in the proposed support for bioeconomy initiatives under Component 2.

The initial reviews and consultations at local to national level undertaken in project development suggests that there is scientific rationale to create corridors in the two landscapes, and political support for a corridors approach and an associated enabling legal framework. In year 1-2 of project implementation, geospatial analysis and ecological and connectivity surveys will identify possible appropriate spatial areas for establishing corridors, based on ecological information, location of existing and planned major infrastructure and political and social will to participate in these corridors. During this same time, the consultation and FPIC process will continue more deeply to assess local community and especially indigenous community perspectives on establishing corridors. If, after these consultations, the project doesn't obtain FPIC to the formal designation of the connectivity corridors, there will be a revision of the Component 1 strategy, and approaches consented with IPs to maintain ecological connectivity in the two landscapes would be sought. A detailed description of the project Outcomes and Outputs is included below.

## **COMPONENT 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF CONNECTIVITY CORRIDORS IN THE TWO PROJECT LANDSCAPES. (GEF budget USD 2,294,234 and co-financing USD 20,135,001).**

### ***Outcome 1.1: Increased area of connectivity corridors created in the two project landscapes.***

The Project proposes to establish a connectivity corridor in each intervention landscape as a conservation area, following the provisions of the recently issued Ministerial Agreement 019 of May 22, 2020, of the MAAE, which incorporates protection mechanisms, sustainable use of biodiversity, and restoration of landscapes with remnants of ecosystems that hold global importance. This outcome is of strategic importance for the conservation of the Ecuadorian Amazon region, especially for the

maintenance and recovery of biological connectivity among the natural areas that are part of the SNAP, BVP (*Protective Forests and Vegetation*), PSB, and of the collective territories of indigenous peoples.

This approach will be complemented with the promotion of bioeconomy initiatives and sustainable agricultural production practices that contribute to the connectivity of the landscape (Component 2) and the strengthening of enabling conditions for integrated landscape management (Component 3). As mentioned in the baseline and national and sectoral context, there are several initiatives underway to design connectivity corridors in the country, of which only the Sangay Podocarpus Corridor has been legally declared based on recently issued regulations. The Project will capitalize on the experience generated by those initiatives and will align to the new legal framework for connectivity corridors. WWF is currently supporting the process of creating the Llangantes-Sangay corridor through a project that started in June 2020 (see section 1.5. Baseline Scenario), which also has as one of its outcomes, the creation, together with the MAAE, of a network of conservation corridors in Ecuador as a space for coordination and exchange of experiences at the national level, between actors linked to created or in the process of being established corridors. This initiative will be an important baseline for the project.

The connectivity corridors to be established in the two landscapes will together add up to at least 40,000 hectares, the conservation of which will help prevent the emission of approximately 212,644 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> eq.

**1.1.1. Technical documentation submitted for approval by the MAAE (or other competent authorities) for the designation of the two new connectivity corridors, including an analysis and definition of the ecological, socioeconomic (including gender and intercultural approaches) and political viability of each corridor.**

During the design phase of this project, a preliminary GIS analysis, based on socio environmental criteria, was carried out in order to identify potential corridor alternatives in both intervention landscapes. The detail of this exercise is presented in Annex 1. Output 1.1.1 will complement and deepen this exercise in order to generate the necessary information to allow decision makers to select one connectivity corridor option in each landscape. This activity, technical in nature, consists of gathering spatial, biological, forestry, social, economic, and cultural information in the territory, in order to characterize and evaluate each of the preidentified connectivity options (3 options in the Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape, and 2 options in the Palora - Pastaza Landscape).

The more detailed analysis to be implemented in the initial phase of the Connectivity Corridors Project implementation, will use an ecosystem services and biological connectivity approach in each landscape. The product will describe the viability of each corridor alternative within the two project landscapes, as well as evaluate the potential of each of the proposed corridors to identify the best and most viable corridor route. This analysis will be based on a multi-criteria prioritization evaluation, which will be implemented in a participatory manner with key stakeholders, especially MAAE, GADs, SCTEA, academia, and indigenous and local communities. The participatory process will be design with an gender equity perspective. This product must meet the technical requirements established in Article 6 of Ministerial Agreement 019 for the design of connectivity corridors.

Once the connectivity options are defined, Output 1.1.1 seeks to prepare the required technical documentation, in accordance with the guidelines established in Article 8 of Ministerial Agreement 019, for the designation of the connectivity corridors. The required documentation includes: 1) Diagnosis of the connectivity corridor, 2) Feasibility analysis, 3) Participation process of the actors, with gender equality perspective in the process, 4) Description of the limits of the proposed corridor, and 5) Information on the basic and thematic cartography. Under this output, the project will also

design the conceptual, legal, and institutional framework related to the connectivity corridors and will secure the agreements and / or letters of commitment of key actors to participate in the sustainable management of the corridor.

#### Activities:

- ? Carry out a characterization and connectivity analysis in each landscape of the project (Putumayo - Aguarico and Palora - Pastaza). This multi-temporal analysis, including geospatial, cultural, socioeconomic (including gender and intercultural approaches), ecological<sup>[1]</sup> and political information, will provide information that allows decision-makers to better understand the fragmentation, conservation gaps, key biodiversity conservation areas, land use change and soil management, and threats to the core habitat in the landscapes.
- ? Based on the characterization and connectivity analysis, implement a multi-criteria analysis to define potential cost-effective solutions for the creation of the corridors in each landscape.
- ? Implement the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) process when indigenous peoples and nationalities are involved, as a criterion for the selection of landscapes and as an ongoing process throughout the lifecycle of the project. Additionally, local communities will also participate in the consultation processes. More details on the FPIC process can be found in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 6).
- ? Based on the selection of the connectivity routes in each landscape, identify and select forest remnants that are unprotected within each corridor and identify additional conservation alternatives, such as new local conservation areas or PSB areas.
- ? Carry out a feasibility analysis of the incorporation of connectivity corridors in land use planning, especially taking into account the competencies of the GADs, considering the inclusion of corridors in the PDOTs and other complementary plans.
- ? Implement workshops and meetings with relevant participants for the review, discussion and validation of analyses carried out in each landscape and selection of the connectivity proposals and of new conservation areas to be declared as such. These participatory processes must be with a gender equity perspective and include duly documented with meeting minutes, photographs, lists of participants, among others.
- ? Generate information with the biophysical, social, economic, and cultural characterization of the selected connectivity corridors, including the following:
  - ? *Physical aspects*: Characterize the soil, water, and air resources;
  - ? *Biological aspects*: Describe the state of the ecosystems; the vegetation cover, and land use; flora; fauna; identification of conservation values and environmental services;
  - ? *Social, economic and cultural aspects*: Describe the situation of the local population, especially in relation to demographic aspects, gender and intercultural approach, economic aspects and the access to basic services, production systems, among others.
  - ? *Connectivity aspects*: fragmentation, conservation gaps, species migratory patterns, among others.
- ? Present a map with the geographic location, limits, and surface area of the proposed connectivity corridors, in agreement with the format of the Technical Annex of Ministerial Agreement 019, with their respective shapefiles and alphanumeric database.
- ? If consent is generated through FPIC process and other stakeholder consultations, submit the complete files with the documentation required for the creation of the connectivity corridors to the

responsible authorities (if FPIC is not obtained, as explained above, there will be a revision of the Component 1 strategy in order to achieve IP's consent to ecological connectivity approaches).

? Advocate for the creation of the corridors and monitor the administrative and political process.

? Socialize the process with stakeholders involved in the management of both landscapes and communicate relevant information to the general public in both landscapes, with a gender and intercultural approach.

Related programs and projects: SCTEA; PASNAP; ATPA; PROAmazonia; PSB.

Implementation Mechanism: Directed by the Project Management Unit (PMU), in coordination with corridor platforms in each landscape (established in Component 3) and in coordination with the SPN of the MAAE (has jurisdiction over the establishment of connectivity corridors), the Forest Monitoring Unit of the MAAE (provides information) and the SCTEA. The technical documentation will be prepared with the support of a consultancy, with the supervision and participation of geographers from CI and WWF (through co-financing), as well as with the technical team of the PMU in the landscapes. The socialization, including meetings and workshops within the framework of the platforms for each landscape (component 3), will be led by the technical team of the PMU. FPIC will be led and documented by the PMU safeguards specialist.

***Outcome 1.2. Management of the two new corridors and conservation areas have been strengthened.***

Since May 2018, the Amazon region has had an organic law that articulates the integral planning of the CTEA with the National System of State Planning. This law defines a set of criteria and parameters that are mandatory for the public sector and indicative for the other sectors. Therefore, the establishment and management of the connectivity corridors should be integrated into the formal planning of the territory and public policy cycle.

By mandate of Ministerial Agreement 019, the design of corridors must be a participatory, inclusive process, and agreed upon jointly with the local participants who legitimize their existence in a social, political, legal, and institutional manner.

In a similar way, for adequate management of the corridors, it is important to clarify and have an agreement upon definition of the roles, responsibilities, and commitments of the different social and institutional participants that will participate in the initiative.

This outcome is closely linked to Component 3 of the project where the corridors platforms for the participatory management of the corridors, as well as the ordinances, resolutions, and agreements necessary to ensure the inter-sectoral articulation of the corridors will be established.

The generation of participatory planning and management instruments for the corridors, in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Agreement 019, will need to be linked to priority existing and planned activities and investments in the landscapes, and coordinated with existing territorial planning schemes in the Amazon region.

The outcome is dependent on obtaining FPIC for the formal designation of the connectivity corridors. Consultations during project preparation phase indicated initial agreement from the representatives of Indigenous Populations and local communities in the two landscapes, for the formal designation of the connectivity corridors. Nevertheless, FPIC will be implemented throughout the different phases of the project, and specially in Component 1, in activities such as the identification of connectivity corridors options and definition of the final connectivity corridors proposal. If, after these consultations, the project didn't obtain FPIC for the formal designation of the corridors, there would be a revision of Component 1 strategy, to include alternative approaches consented with IPs to maintain ecological connectivity in the two landscapes. Outcome 1.2. would need to be reviewed to align to the approaches consented by IPs.

**Output 1.2.1. Planning and management instruments including the components of financial sustainability of connectivity corridors, are developed, and endorsed by local authorities.**

As established in Ministerial Agreement 019, and once the connectivity corridors have been selected, the project will ensure that the planning and management instrument of the corridor is articulated with the priority actions and investments in the landscapes and corridors. This articulation is multilevel and includes the relationship within the framework of the implementation of the PIA, the PDOT as well as the PUGs of the Life Plans in which the corridors are located. It will also consider the management plans of related conservation areas and the Life Plans of indigenous peoples, which are the institutionalized management instruments of the Amazon territory.

The project will support the MAAE in coordinating with the GADs, the sectoral entities with jurisdiction in the territory, and the public, private, and indigenous community stakeholders that are interested and have influence in the design, establishment, and management of the corridors.

Once the connectivity corridors options have been participatorily defined and consented by Indigenous People, and agreed by all national and local stakeholders, the team will develop the required technical documentation and management instruments, as stated in the Ministerial Agreement 019. The MA requires the connectivity corridors management plans, the annual operation plans and the five years management plans, as part of technical expedient for the designation of the corridors.

Activities:

1. Develop participatory management plans for the two corridors, which include:

- Mapping of stakeholders.
- An action plan with roles and responsibilities agreed upon by all the involved parties, within the context of the corridor platforms (to be created under Component 3).
- Prioritization of short (0-4 years), medium (5-10 years) and long-term (11+ years) actions.
- Identification of activities to be funded and implemented directly through this project and by other available resources.
- Design and implementation of a participatory mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of goals, investments, and management outcomes.
- Design of mechanisms and instruments for operational planning.



- Identification of strategies and mechanisms for the financial sustainability of management plans.
2. Develop the Five-Year Management Plan with programs, projects, and activities considering at least the following aspects:
    - Administrative and financial management including the components of governance, policy and legislation, financial sustainability and strategic alliances;
    - In situ and ex situ conservation, with the components of areas under categories of conservation, ecological restoration, reintroduction of native species and management units;
    - Research on the biotic, socio-environmental, and logistical components;
    - Communication, training, dissemination, and participatory environmental education;
    - Sustainable production alternatives, with the components of incentives, training, ecotourism, agro ecology, and co-responsibility (which will be linked to Component 2 of the project).
  3. Participatory development of the Annual Operation Plan with goals and indicators that respond to annual management milestones, framed within the Five-Year Management Plan
  4. Update the planning and management instruments in existing conservation areas within the corridors, to align their conservation objectives with those of the connectivity corridors. This includes:
    - Technical support for the updating of the management and investment plans of the existing conservation areas located within the two corridors and,
    - Capacity building for the operational management of the conservation areas.
  - e. Support the implementation of activities defined in the management plans. Special attention will be placed to identify and strengthen ancestral practices of women and elders in relation to biodiversity conservation. Final list of activities to be funded will depend on the final connectivity corridors options and their management plans, and will be selected from the following list of eligible activities, with an emphasis on:
    - ? Strengthening of control and surveillance processes for conservation areas (training and small equipment acquisition);
    - ? Strengthening methodologies and processes for the monitoring and reporting on the conservation and threats status (technical assistance);
    - ? Develop baseline and monitoring of natural resource use (Small equipment's and operational support);
    - ? Development of tourism and visitor management plans for the conservation areas (technical assistance);
    - ? Environmental communication and education program activities.
    - ? Trainings of the management teams of current conservation areas (including PSB, local government conservation areas, private conservation areas, among others).

Implementation mechanism: Directed by the PMU, in coordination with corridor platforms in both landscapes and in coordination with the SPN (competencies in connectivity corridors) of the MAAE. The technical documentation will be prepared by a consultancy. Grants will be provided to GADs, NGOs and SCOs (to be determined after the corridors have been selected) for the implementation of activity e.

Related programs and projects: SCTEA; PASNAP; PROAmazonia; PSB; Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage / Bio economy Program (GIZ).

### **Output 1.2.2. Ecological monitoring systems in the two corridors are developed and implemented.**

Ecological and socio-economic monitoring is an essential mechanism to guide decision-making for corridor management, ensuring their functionality and efficiency of investments aimed at the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the land. The ecological and socioeconomic monitoring that will be promoted by the project will be articulated with the National Biodiversity Monitoring System (SINMBIO, for its Spanish acronym), with the National Biodiversity Institute (INABIO, for its Spanish acronym), the SCTEA (Center for Information Governance), and the MAAE are implementing and will include the active participation of indigenous and local communities (Valdés et al., 2019[2]).

The project will take advantage of the limited experience in monitoring ecological corridors in the country (ex. Podocarpus - Sangay conservation corridor) and will contribute to efforts in order to standardize the use of methodologies and generate a standard information base to enable nationwide comparison.

The INABIO and the National Biodiversity Network (RedBio) bring together the most prestigious and experienced universities and researchers in ecological monitoring within the country, and the project will develop a strong working relationship with these organizations. Due to the temporary nature of the project, this product seeks to design an ecological connectivity monitoring system and to strengthen capacities for its future implementation.

Support through this output will include selection of monitoring tools and indicators especially focused on reviewing the structure of the ecosystems and including connectivity indicators in each of the two selected landscapes. Information will be collected on key aspects such as the deforestation of native forests, dynamics in land use change, connectivity of remnant natural ecosystems, fragmentation processes.

#### Activities:

(a) Design of participatory monitoring systems with indicators and methodologies related to the conservation objectives in the corridors, their connectivity relationships, and the social dynamics of the environment, in order to evaluate the impacts of management actions.

- ? Develop a conceptual framework for corridor monitoring
- ? Define indicators and the development of their respective technical forms

- ? Establish protocols for the data collection and processing
- ? Determine minimum requirements for information management
- ? Establish mechanisms for the access, use and dissemination of data and relevant information.

(b) Socialization and validation of indicators and of monitoring methodologies within the corridor platforms, with GADs, universities, indigenous communities, and other local actors.

(c) The establishment of agreements with INABIO, RedBio, IKIAM, and UEA for the articulation of monitoring systems to the SINMBIO, Center for Information Governance, and that will allow linking the information collected through participatory monitoring with GADs, indigenous and local communities, and other relevant stakeholders. In the same manner, the agreements must include actions to strengthen capacities for sustainability of corridor monitoring (linked to Component 3 of the project).

- ? Analysis of the current state and opportunities for cross-operational capacity of existing systems.
- ? Define protocols and processes to harmonize and integrate the monitoring systems of the corridors with the platforms managed by INABIO and SCTEA.
- ? Pilot the monitoring system to test functionality.

(d) Implement capacity-building activities related to data gathering and monitoring methodologies (in coordination with Output 3.1.3).

(e) Implement the first phase of the monitoring system, including:

- ? Information gathering, calculation and report of base line indicators in at least two monitoring time periods;
- ? Integration of data with the respective platforms (INABIO and SCTEA);
- ? Permanent coordination with managers and diverse actors in corridors;
- ? Develop the processes for capacity building and training of the managers in the corridors to establish participatory mechanisms and collaboration for the sustainability of the monitoring system in the long-run and for the use of this information in local management.
- ? Accompany the dialogue process for the establishment of the monitoring system governance mechanisms.

Implementation mechanism: Implemented through grants to INABIO, IKIAM and UEA.

**COMPONENT 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE PROPOSED TWO CONNECTIVITY CORRIDORS (GEF budget USD 2,294,234 and co-financing USD 8,054,004).**

Component 2 aims to move productive areas into more sustainable land management, for the purposes of connectivity, in the two proposed corridors. In the case that the two proposed corridors are not agreed through the consultation with IPLCs or by government authorities, the strategy listed under component 2 will be retained, as it still contributes to connectivity and conservation friendly practices in the overall landscape.

***Outcome 2.1: Increase of productive areas, in or around the proposed two connectivity corridors, under SLM.***

The impact on the ecosystems of intensive agriculture and cattle raising systems present on both landscapes is high, and is reflected in a loss of biological diversity and diminished ecological connectivity, as well as in the degradation of agricultural soils and the pollution of rivers. In this context, it is essential to adopt Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices that guarantee the permanence of vegetation cover and shade, that protect the soil from the impacts of rain and temperature, that retain nutrients for greater soil fertility, and that do not contaminate water sources. These practices promote ecological connectivity, ensuring the permanence and reproduction of hundreds of plant and animal species. Additionally, these practices combined with market-based strategies (Outcome 2.2) could increase the productivity and profitability of the production systems at the family level, and therefore reduce direct pressures (ex. deforestation, land use change and illegal hunting) upon the native forest within the corridors.

To achieve this outcome the project will promote the adoption of agroforestry and silvopasture practices adapted to the bio-physical and socio-cultural context of Amazonian agroecosystems, and based on the experience developed by other projects such as GEF Napo, PROAmazonia, Climate - Smart Livestock breeding, as well as other NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) initiatives such as Maquita Foundation and Ecuadorian Fund for Peoples Development (FEPP, for its acronym in Spanish). In this sense, the project will work with small and medium producers who currently maintain intensive livestock breeding systems or monocultures, whether perennial (corn, cassava, etc.) or transitory (cacao, coffee, fruit trees, etc.).

The establishment of ECAs in each corridor will strengthen capacities and engage farmers for the implementation of these practices. Then, through the establishment of agreements with local producers, and the implementation of assistance packages, the project will support farmers in the implementation of SLM practices. The project will focus investments in prioritized sites inside the two corridors, elected for their connectivity within the landscape (as determined by the assessments of Output 1.1.1), the willingness of landowners to adopt and maintain good practices, the ability to identify and establish synergies with other projects and investments for potential replication, and the number of beneficiaries.

The specific outputs and activities of this component are described below:

**Output 2.1.1.: Training program and assistance package for the promotion of SLM practices in the two connectivity corridors designed.**

The intervention will start with the design of a training program to build local capacities and promote SLM practices in selected farms (selected based on potential to contribute to connectivity) inside the two proposed corridors. The design of the training program will be based in the concept of ECAs, which use participatory methods to exchange local knowledge and practical experiences to solve problems related to local production and marketing systems.

In parallel and in coordination with the GADs and the MAG, the project will design assistance packages for the implementation of SLM practices in farms inside the corridors. These packages will consider technical assistance that the project, the GADS and the MAG can provide to farmers, as well the mechanisms to deliver inputs and equipment that the farmers will require for the establishment of the SLM practices. In this sense, nurseries associated with the two landscapes will be strengthened to guarantee the provision of plant species necessary for the development of the practices.

Coordination will be permanent with the provincial and county GADs, the MAG (ATPA), PROAmazonia, WWF DGD Program and CI Amazonia Verde project, in order to replicate their experience and complement planned investments in both landscapes.

#### **Activities:**

? Establish agreements with local provincial and / or county governments and the MAG, for the joint implementation of the program within the framework of its competences and initiatives to promote production.

? Design the training program of SLM practices, with an ECA approach. This includes training content, methods, and logistics, as well as the identification of facilitators and technicians for the training and implementation of best practices. The training will be taking in account the differentiated needs and knowledge of men and women.

The training program will be designed in close coordination with local governments and the MAG, as well as with other agencies that have production development programs for these areas, such as PPD, ProAmazonia, WWF, CI, among others.

- ? From the analysis and information generated in outcome 1.1, select the specific agricultural areas within the landscapes suitable for the implementation of SLM practices, taking into account the following criteria: contribution to connectivity within the landscape, regularity of land tenure, willingness of land owners to adopt and maintain good practices, synergy with other projects and investments, greater potential for replication, and number of beneficiaries involved.
- ? Select SLM practices (agroforestry, silvo-pastoral, and soil rehabilitation) to be promoted by the Project in productive areas, to support the restoration of degraded areas and conservation of priority areas, taking into account ecological connectivity, soil conservation, and biodiversity conservation criteria, within the two intervention landscapes.
- ? Based on the previous assessments, design assistance packages to be implemented in the farms. These packages should include technical support, as well as the inputs and equipment needed to establish the SLM practices.

- ? Identify non-invasive plant species necessary to implement the selected SLM practices and carry out a mapping and diagnostic of nurseries associated with the corridors regarding their capacity to supply the identified plants.
- ? Provide training and equipment to the selected nurseries for the reproduction and sale of plants necessary for the implementation of the SLM practices. The equipment may include seeds, planting and gardening tools, materials for the building of nurseries, among the most important.

Implementation Mechanism: The PMU will lead the design of the training program with the support of a consultancy, and in close coordination with local governments and the MAG. Based on the analysis and information of outcome 1.1 of the project, the PMU will carry out the site selection analysis, while coordinating with the local governments, ATPA - MAG, and PROAmazonia. The strengthening of nurseries will be subcontracted to a consultant.

Related projects and programs: Productive promotion initiatives of the provincial and parochial GADs (by competence), ATPA - MAG, PROAmazonia; DGD-WWF, Amazonia Verde - CI.

**Output 2.1.2 SLM training program, including gender and intercultural approaches, to selected producers in the two connectivity corridors implemented.**

Based on the program designed in Output 2.1.1, and in close collaboration with the GADs and MAG, the Project will implement an ECA in each corridor. The general methodological scheme of an ECA involves a group of producers meeting periodically in a local farm, under the guidance of a trained facilitator[3]. There, the local production system is discussed, focusing on the topic of interest; the effects of two or more alternative practices aimed at solving the problem is observed and compared (one of these following local practices and the other testing the "good practices" being proposed). The participants debate and make decisions after having carried out observations and analysis directly in the plots of land.

At least two groups in each corridor will be trained with the ECA, in two periods: one during the second year of the project and other during the third year.

Activities:

- Develop an agreement with demonstrative farms in the two corridors, to house the ECA programs.
- Provide outreach to local producers in each landscape through workshops, meetings, visits, and promotional material, to gauge their interest and work towards participating in the Program.
- Implement the enrollment process and select participants with equity approach. The ECAs will be designed to host between 15 and 30 participants.
- Acquire the needed materials for the implementation of the modules (2.2.1)
- Build a baseline of knowledge and attitudes of participating farmers on sustainable production practices.
- Implement the training modules of the ECAs (2.2.1)
- Measure and report changes in knowledge and attitudes of participating farmers on sustainable production practices.

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Implementation Mechanism: The PMU, with the support of specific consultancies and subgrants, will lead the implementation of the ECAs, in coordination with the local governments, MAG, and ATPA. Agreements with local farmers will be established, to house the ECA in the field training modules.

Related projects and programs: Productive promotion initiatives of the provincial and county GADs (depending on their competencies), ATPA - MAG, PROAmazonia; DGD - WWF, Amazonia Verde - CI.

**Output 2.1.3 SLM practices implemented in selected plots of the two connectivity corridors equitably benefiting men and women producers.**

For the implementation of the assistance packages, Farm Conservation Agreements will be signed and implemented with landowners, reflecting land plot plans where the practices are to be implemented, factoring in the current situation of the farm and the capacity of each family. This planning instrument will be the road map and the basis of commitment for the adoption and maintenance of good practices on the farm. Then, the project will implement the assistance packages, for the implementation of committed practices in property design.

Activities:

- ? Establish conservation agreements with producers who have participated in the training and who are willing to adopt sustainable practices on their farms. These agreements will establish in a general way the contributions that the project will provide, as well as the contributions of the owner for the implementation of the practices thereof.
- ? Design the land plot zoning in a participatory manner (ensuring the inclusion of women's voices), considering the possible practices to be implemented according to the situation and possibilities of each family. This includes measuring, mapping and establishing areas to incorporate those practices, and their effects on the ecosystem and management of the farm. Once the land plot design is approved by the owner and by the project, it will become a constitutive part of the conservation agreement signed by the owner. The property designs will include all of the information on the area to be implemented, such as materials, supplies, technical assistance, etc. that are required for the operation of the aforementioned and will be accompanied by details of the contributions that each of the parties (owners, the GADs, MAG, and project) will provide for its implementation.
- ? Provide the technical assistance and materials that are agreed upon in the land plot plan for the implementation of SLM practices on the farms. The materials that the project will provide may include plants and seeds, fertilizers, materials for fences, materials for the building of bio digesters, water troughs, planting, and gardening tools, among others.

Implementation Mechanism: The PMU, with the support of specific consultancies and subgrants, will lead the implementation of the ECAs, in coordination with the local governments, MAG, and ATPA. The actions will also be coordinated and articulated with WWF's DGD projects and CI's Amazonia

Verde project, which has sustainable production components to be implemented in other landscapes within the Amazon region.

Related projects and programs: Productive promotion initiatives of the provincial and county GADs (depending on their competencies), ATPA - MAG, PROAmazonia; DGD - WWF, Amazonia Verde - CI.

**Outcome 2.2: Bioeconomy initiatives have been strengthened in the two connectivity corridors.**

The objective of this outcome is to increase the conservation value of the forests that facilitate the connectivity corridor by strengthening bioeconomy initiatives. The Project will focus on supporting bioeconomy initiatives that are underway and that have the potential to succeed in local, national, and international markets, with the goal of strengthening and improving aspects of value addition and commercialization, particularly focusing on Indigenous Peoples beneficiaries. Existing bioeconomy initiatives in both landscapes, that could be supported are related to the sustainable harvest, process, and commercialization of sweet water fish like paiche (*arapaima gigas*) and cachama (*piaractus brachipomus*); citronella; guayusa (*ilex guayusa*); ungurahua (*oenocarpus bataua*); turmeric, ishpingo (amazon cinnamon); morete (*mauritia flexuosa*); sacha inchi (amazon peanut); and community nature-based tourism. This outcome is based on the assumption that increasing the profitability of sustainable production systems at the family level, will reduce direct pressures (ex. deforestation, land use change and illegal hunting) upon the native forest within the corridors.

For this, previous experiences of the PPD, WWF, and other organizations in the Amazon region, will be taken as a reference, and coordination with projects that are currently implementing similar activities (PROAmazonia, FFF, PSB, ATPA, AIRR, GIZ) (See section 1.5 Baseline) will bring the previous lessons learnt to the two project landscapes.

**Output 2.2.1: Bioeconomy initiatives, in each connectivity corridor, have been equipped, trained, and / or linked to potential markets, with a gender and intercultural approach.**

As explained in the section on barriers, Amazonian bioeconomy initiatives are in the early stages of development and present multiple weaknesses that limit their inclusion in the market. There are few associated endeavors that have managed to establish productive value chains and even fewer cases of community companies that maintain stable links with national or international markets. However, the demand for goods and services from the Amazon forest is extremely high, mainly from international markets, which provides a big opportunity for Amazon producers.

Several organizations and projects are working systematically in the development of Amazonian bioeconomy initiatives and in their commercial articulation. Therefore, there is a base of information, experiences, and methodologies that the Project will use to evaluate the potential for the development of bioeconomy initiatives in the landscapes, and select those that have greatest potential within the national and international markets. The bioeconomy initiatives that will be selected to receive support from the ASL Project will have to meet the following criteria: come from sustainable production systems that are located within the connectivity corridors identified in Component 1; be associated with existing conservation areas within the connectivity corridors (like PSB or local government



conservation areas, or PA buffer zones); have the potential for linkage with existing markets; be inclusive of women and youth; present complementary financing potential; and, have the opportunity to complement other Amazonian products offered.

The activities under this Output will be implemented in close coordination with other projects and bioeconomy initiatives that are being carried out within the landscapes and other areas of the Amazon region, and will have a special focus on productive activities of women and other vulnerable populations. These activities will be implemented once the corridors have been identified and while the documentation from Component 1 is being developed. Based on methodologies that are already being used to strengthen capacities of bioeconomy initiatives in the Amazon region (ex. methodology growing with your business - PNUD; products with territorial identity - PPD, Indigenous Companies - NESsT - WWF - AIRR) the necessary adaptations will be made so that these tools respond to the approaches and purposes of the Project and realities of the landscapes. Technical and financial assistance will be provided for the formulation and implementation of business plans that will allow producers to have access to opportunities within the respective value chains. This will be complemented with the identification and evaluation of value chains of forest-friendly products / services, identifying responsible markets and strategies to be able to access these markets. The Project will ensure that technical assistance and access to financing favors women, youth, indigenous communities, and associative initiatives, in order to promote fair and supportive production systems and thus achieve equitable access and distribution of the benefits of biodiversity.

#### Activities:

- ? Systematization of available information on the demand for non-timber forest products, which will allow the identification of potential markets for bioeconomy initiatives, including a specific analysis in each landscape.
- ? Evaluation of the potential of existing bioeconomy initiatives within the landscapes, with a special focus on productive activities of women and other vulnerable populations, and selection of bioeconomy initiatives to receive support within the scope of the project in the two landscapes will take into account at least the following criteria: come from sustainable production systems that are located within the connectivity corridors identified in Component 1; have linkage potential with internal and external markets; be inclusive to women and youth; present complementary financing potential; have the ability to complement other Amazonian products; and, do not negatively impact the corridor biodiversity values.
- ? Evaluation of the value chains of the selected bioeconomy initiatives, including the different activities of the production processes, with the goal of identifying where there is, or may be, added value to the product or service and how to make that company or production process competitive. Among other things, this aims to increase productivity, or add value to the product or service, increase income and reduce pressure on biodiversity.
- ? Detailed analysis of the capacities, limitations, and weaknesses of the selected bioeconomy initiatives.

- ? Development of a strengthening strategy for the selected bioeconomy initiatives, from a value chain approach, which will include one or more of the following aspects: development of business plans, cooperative or association mechanisms, traceability mechanisms, promotion and marketing strategies of products, and the establishment of links with local and international markets.
- ? Establish alliances with organizations and universities to develop monitoring mechanisms and management plans to ensure that bioeconomy initiatives are sustainable and prevent overharvesting.
- ? Implementation of the strengthening strategy for each selected bioeconomy initiative, which could include the following activities:
  1. Design and implementation of training modules in business, legal matters, accounting, and financial management that will be used to accompany the selected bioeconomy initiatives. Training materials in business management will be designed for the particular context of each of the landscapes (indigenous people, rural workers, youth, women, etc.)
  2. Technical assistance provided for the formulation and implementation of business plans for the selected bioeconomy initiatives. The project will support the implementation of business plans, covering operating expenses and small equipment costs.
  3. Technical assistance in the search for financing (whether credits, investments, or donations) for the implementation of business plans.
  4. Design and implementation of promotion and marketing strategies for products and/or services offered by the selected bioeconomy initiatives.
  5. Technical assistance to establish commercial links between suppliers of non-timber forest products and national and international companies (retail companies, networks)

Implementation mechanism: The PMU, in collaboration with the MAG, SCTEA, GADs, and others, will collaborate to identify potential bioeconomy initiatives and, together with consultants such as NESst or others, will implement the evaluations and design and implement the strategy for strengthening capacities and business plans of the bioeconomy initiatives.

Related projects and programs: Initiatives to promote the production of the provincial GADs (by competition), ATPA-MAG, PROAmazonia, German Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage (GIZ), AIRR-WWF, Amazonia Verde-CI.

### **COMPONENT 3: ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY (GEF budget USD 917,694 and co - financing USD 20,135,001).**

#### **3.1. Legal, administrative, technical, and institutional conditions developed for the sustainable management of the connectivity corridors.**

This outcome seeks to incorporate the approaches of connectivity and integrated landscape management into the main instruments that guide land use planning, and management at the different levels of government. For this, it is essential to coordinate with the governing public entities in matters of national and sectoral planning to develop the normative and public policy instruments that will support the legal provisions related to the management of natural landscapes and connectivity corridors. With this general enabling framework, the project will develop the specific administrative instruments that contribute to an efficient and effective operational management of the connectivity corridors.

Considering the technical and administrative complexity involved in the creation and management of the connectivity corridors within the landscape context, it is necessary to design and execute capacity building activities for officials of the main public entities involved in territorial management, as well as leaders of indigenous peoples and nationalities that have a fundamental role in guiding the planning and management of collective territories. Finally, as mentioned in the 2017-2021 National Development Plan and the PIA, the variety of public and civil society actors, legal regimes, institutional frameworks, jurisdictions, competences, functions, and attributions, among others, evidence the need to strengthen multi-level coordination and governance mechanisms for territorial management.

**Output: 3.1.1. Normative and public policy instruments integrate the landscape and connectivity approach in the planning and land management of the landscapes under intervention.**

This output is aimed at strengthening the processes initiated from the SPN of the MAAE, to regulate the creation and management of the connectivity corridors, as well as to complement the technical instruments (criteria and guidelines) already developed to incorporate landscape and ecological connectivity approaches in the PDOTs and PUGs of the GADs of both landscapes. Technical assistance will be provided to the MAAE, GADs, and SCTEA for the development, updating, or reform of planning, regulatory and technical instruments, so that they are aligned with the conservation objectives of the proposed connectivity corridors in each landscape. Furthermore, the project will accompany GADs, SCTEA, and other relevant stakeholders in implementing the regulatory and technical instruments that are developed. A key activity of this product will be to provide support to the MAAE so that these instruments are made official from the government agency responsible for national planning so that their application is binding in the National Decentralized Participatory Planning System (SNDPP). In the same manner, it will support in formally establishing the required mechanisms for the management of the selected connectivity corridors, closely linked to Component 1 of this project.

Activities:

? Based on the information from Component 1 for connectivity corridors in landscapes, conduct a legal and regulatory gap analysis of normative instruments (ordinances and resolutions) and national and local public policies that promote the following: i) the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (linked to Component 1 of the project); ii) management of the landscape connectivity corridors (including development plans, land use planning, and other sectoral instruments); and iii) The consolidation of sustainable development in the corridor matrix (linked to Component 2 of the project).

? Provide technical assistance to national and local governments and the SCTEA for the development or updating of regulatory instruments and prioritized public policies, to incorporate sustainable landscape management and ecosystem connectivity approaches into their actions.

Implementation Mechanism: The PMU, with specific support of consultants, will be in charge of the legal analysis and will provide technical assistance.

Related projects and programs: PROAmazonia; Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage / Bio economy Program (GIZ); Payment for Results to Ecuador for the Reduction of Deforestation 2014 (PNUD) and SCTEA

**Output: 3.1.2. Inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and multilevel governance platforms created and operational for the management of landscapes and connectivity corridors (1 per landscape).**

The success of corridors has been directly linked to the involvement and support of local committees and planning teams. Determining these committees and stakeholders as well as conducting a social assessment in the corridor early on will allow for a unified team to identify potential challenges during implementation and strategies to overcome these challenges, factoring in partner participation (Lombard et al., 2010[4]<sup>4</sup>; Keeley et al., 2018[5]<sup>5</sup>). This approach is integrated by the project with the creation of the inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and multilevel governance platforms, that will serve as the participatory management mechanisms for the connectivity corridors.

Based on Ministerial Agreement 0019 and on the general definitions established by the MAAE regarding Participatory Management Groups as a valid mechanism to promote participatory management of connectivity corridors, the Project will facilitate the construction of a functional governance model relevant to the social cultural context of the landscapes where the corridors will be declared. This output is aimed at the formation of a Participatory Management Group that considers aspects related to the structure, functions, attributes, scope, financing, among others, and that will be defined progressively as the governance model matures. This Management Group will be formalized by means of memorandums of understanding, conventions, agreements, or other legal figures framed in the current legislation. To accomplish this a "core group" will be formed for the creation of the corridors and, through a systematic and formal process of social dialogue, the foundations of participation will be laid for the construction of a more robust long-term governance structure that responds to the requirements and needs of the stakeholders within the corridor.

Activities:

- ? Conduct an analysis of the different multi-level governance models that have been implemented in Ecuador, with emphasis on those developed in the Amazon region, lessons learned, and recommendations for the creation of an inter-institutional Participatory Management Group with equity and intercultural approach within each landscape.
  - ? Development of rules and regulations for the operation of the Participatory Management Group and other administrative instruments for its institutionalization.
  - ? Coordinate and implement meetings and workshops with equity and intercultural approach to build agreements and monitor the design process, objectives, management, and governance of the corridors in the landscapes of interest to the project.
  - ? Development of operating agreements for the Participatory Management Groups of the corridors, including the activities, responsibilities, and co-financing established under product 1.2.1.
-

Implementation Mechanism: Directed by the PMU with the support of specific consultancies to implement the analysis of multi-level governance models, the participatory development and validation of rules, regulations, and other administrative instruments.

Related projects and programs: PROAmazonia, Program Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage / Bio-economy (GIZ); Payment for Results to Ecuador for the Reduction of Deforestation 2014 (UNDP); and SCTEA.

**Output: 3.1.3. Capacity development program for relevant public entities and local actors involved in the planning, management, and monitoring of landscapes, connectivity corridors, and conservation areas, with a gender and intercultural approach.**

As a result of the project socialization and feedback process, the MAAE and project development team identified a knowledge gap regarding connectivity corridors, ILM and monitoring mechanisms. The management of biodiversity and ecosystems at a landscape level requires knowledge of the fundamentals and basic concepts, as well as the standard, technical, and administrative instruments that connect sectoral and inter-sectoral policies with the abilities, functions, and responsibilities of the GADs, STEA and other actors (ex. the PIA, zonal planning agendas). This integrated view of public management is essential so that the effort to create and manage connectivity corridors exceeds just an analytical or technical exercise and instead provides effective management and land use of the territory. With this objective, this product aims to strengthen the capacities of actors in key public and private entities who will make up the Management Committees of the corridors and participate in managing created corridors.

Activities:

- Evaluation of gaps regarding the capacities of the technical and operational staff of the MAAE, MAG, GADs, SCTEA, and other social actors that make up the platforms, for the management of corridors and sustainable landscapes.
- Implementation of training sessions for the key stakeholders with equity and intercultural approach involved in aspects related to the most significant aspects of the landscape approach such as landscape management, corridors, conservation areas, governance mechanisms, policies and regulations, and land use planning and regulation.
- Multilevel technical assistance in the implementation of technical instruments, regulations and public policies related to landscape management and connectivity corridors.

Implementation Mechanism: Consultancy under PMU leadership.

Related projects and programs: PROAmazonia, Program Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Heritage / Bio economy (GIZ); Payment for Results to Ecuador for Reduction of Deforestation 2014 (UNDP); and SCTEA.

**COMPONENT 4: MONITORING AND EVALUATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, AND REGIONAL COORDINATION.**

**Outcome 4.1 Project monitoring and evaluation data contributes to efficient decision making and adaptive project management.**

The project seeks to promote a process of monitoring and evaluation, generating information that not only serves to monitor the project but also generates data for relevant decision makers in each landscape, including MAAE, MAG, SCTEA and local governments. This outcome will provide tools for adaptive project management for effective and efficient implementation.

**Output 4.1.1 Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan informs the project's adaptive management.**

This product will be designed and implemented by the PMU, based off the Results Framework, with information from the executing partners of the project. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan contains periodic reports to monitor the progress of the project, as well as to identify areas where adaptive management is required.

Activities:

- Submit timely 6-month project progress reports (PPR), annual PPR, basic management indicators, and co-financing data.
- Develop annual work plan with measurable targets at the end of each project year, approved by the PSC and WWF GEF and reported against in each annual PPR
- Collect data and record the achievements against the targets in the Results Framework (yearly, mid-term, project close) and include in each annual PPR
- Launch a call for the hiring of independent consultants to implement midterm and final evaluations of the project.
- Based on the results of the midterm evaluation implemented by independent consultants, incorporate recommendations into the revised project plans.
- Conduct evaluations of all the training activities of Components 2 and 3, using ex post training questionnaires for the participants, to evaluate the impact, inform about the adaptive management of the project, as well as about the lessons learned from the project interventions.
- As part of the activities leading up to the annual PPR, organize annual adaptive management workshops to evaluate the Project Results and analyze whether adjustments to the project strategy are required.

Implementation Mechanism: led by PMU, with the hiring of consultants to carry out midterm and final evaluations of the project.

**Outcome 4.2 Strengthening of national and regional coordination and knowledge management.**

The project will foster collaboration at the national level, and with the ASL II program at the regional level, based on regular meetings, a continuous flow of information and feedback, as well as the publication and dissemination of communication material to socialize the achievements and lessons

learned from the project. This will be done through two products focused on fostering spaces for dialogue, exchange and communication.

#### **Output 4.2.1. Effective coordination at the national level and with the ASL program.**

This output seeks to ensure effective communication and coordination at the national and regional levels with the other ASL projects, allowing an exchange of experiences and knowledge, especially of lessons learned and best practices on key issues.

##### Activities:

- Provide financial and logistical support through travel grants to representatives of the PMU, the national government, and the beneficiaries to participate in the annual meetings coordinated by the ASL.
- Manage travel grants so that representatives of the national and local government, as well as other strategic actors, are able to participate in at least three regional workshops in the project lifetime, field visits, or events, organized by the ASL Program, in order to exchange experiences.
- Participate in face-to-face and virtual ASL meetings.
- Periodically disseminate the information that has been developed under output 4.2.2, as well as the information shared by the ASL at the regional level.

#### **4.2.2. Knowledge management and communication products developed and disseminated.**

This output seeks to ensure the management of knowledge of the actions carried out in Components 1, 2, and 3 of the project, with adequate and coordinated communication in order to disseminate the Results, achievements, and lessons learned. In turn, this will allow replicating and scaling-up impact of the project.

##### Activities:

- Develop a communication strategy, considering the problems, public, products and plan (4P methodology), including the use of logos and other relevant topics for effective communication.
- Establish a repository for the developed products.
- Identify and develop products that systematize information, allow the dissemination of achievements and lessons learned, relevant project knowledge products (for example, best practices manual, brochures, videos / tutorials, among others). These will be shared by identifying the most suitable media, and will include for example:
  - Component 1: Documentation of the corridor creation process; publications of the Five-Year Administration Plans, Annual Operation Plans, management plans; corridor monitoring methodology, among others.
  - Component 2: Case studies on successful experiences in BAP and / or bioeconomy initiative initiatives; training material for ECAs; promotional and marketing material for bioeconomy initiatives.



- Component 3: Informative documentation on the Participatory Management Group and governance of each corridor; information material regarding the inclusion of landscape management and connectivity corridors.

- Disseminate the products through different media identified for each audience.
- Organize and participate in relevant events, workshops and platforms to disseminate the Results.

Implementation mechanism: PMU generates the information, and the publications are developed through consultancies with PMU leadership.

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[1] Based on the spatial distribution of the remaining ecosystems, metrics related to the function, composition and structure of the ecosystems will be used as a proxy to determine the ecological integrity at the landscape scale. Also, information related to provision of ecosystem services (ie. carbon, biodiversity richness, water availability) will be integrated in the analysis.

[2] Vald?s, D.,S., Villamar?n, F., S?enz G., M. y Mena V., P. 2019. Conceptual Framework of the National Biodiversity Monitoring System in Ecuador - SINMBio. Quito: Ministry of the Environment / INABIO / Ikiam Consortium - EcoCiencia

[3] ECAs are implemented in the field and do not require traditional classrooms or infrastructure for ?classrooms?.

[4] Lombard, A. T., R. M. Cowling, J. H. J. Vlok, and C. Fabricius. 2010. Designing conservation corridors in production landscapes: assessment methods, implementation issues, and lessons learned. *Ecology and Society* 15(3): 7. [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss3/art7/>

[4][https://www.openspaceauthority.org/system/documents/Making%20habitat%20connectivity%20a%20reality\\_2018.pdf](https://www.openspaceauthority.org/system/documents/Making%20habitat%20connectivity%20a%20reality_2018.pdf)

[5] Keeley ATH, Basson G, Cameron DR, Heller NE, Huber PR, Schloss CA, Thorne JH, Merenlender AM. Making habitat connectivity a reality. *Conserv Biol.* 2018 Dec;32(6):1221-1232. doi: 10.1111/cobi.13158. Epub 2018 Sep 13. PMID: 29920775.

4) alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies;

The project is aligned with the following GEF 7 Focal Area strategies:

**Mainstream biodiversity across sectors and landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors (BD 1-1).** The project intends to improve ecological connectivity and biodiversity conservation in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon. To achieve this objective, the project will bring together multiple stakeholders in coordination platforms, and will create enabling conditions to mainstream biological connectivity aspects in the existing territorial planning processes in the two project landscapes. Besides, the project will work with the agriculture sector in both landscapes, promoting the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation approaches in farming practices. The project will also work on strengthening bioeconomy initiatives, which will result in better managed forest areas in the two project landscapes.

Through Component 2, the project will **Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing for land uses and increase resilience on the broader landscape (LD 1-4)**, by strengthening forest

friendly bioeconomy initiatives that can be sustainable livelihood alternatives to local communities in the project landscapes.

**Promoting effective coordination for sustainable forest management (SFM IP).** The project is aligned to the ASL Program's Theory of Change of the ASL Program, which is founded on the logic that the ecological resilience of the Amazon biogeographical region can be maintained if:

- (a) PAs' size, management and financing are increased so that a representative area of the Amazon is effectively conserved under various regimes (PAs, indigenous lands, Ramsar sites, etc.).

In the case of the Ecuador Child Project, through its Component 1, the project seeks to improve the ecological connectivity of two priority landscapes, the Putumayo ? Aguarico and the Palora-Pastaza, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, through the establishment of two new connectivity corridors (PAs) and associated management mechanisms, to ensure the long-term biodiversity conservation of its ecosystems. The project seeks to increase a coverage of 50,000 ha of protected amazon forests in the two project landscapes.

- (b) management of productive landscapes between PAs is improved, in particular that agriculture, forest and degraded lands and fresh water systems are adequately managed, with zero illegal deforestation tolerance, and increased productivity and adoption of land sparing approaches.

In the case of the Ecuador child project, through its Component 2, the project will seek to reduce threats to ecological connectivity in the landscapes, by promoting SLM practices in key productive areas of the new connectivity corridors. The project will also strengthen sustainable bioeconomy initiatives, to promote alternative sustainable livelihood options compatible with the conservation objectives of the corridors and financially profitable for local communities in the two new connectivity corridors.

- (c) governance and incentives for protected and productive landscapes are enhanced through adoption of national policies and strategies which support sustainable development and aim to minimize deforestation and loss of ecosystem services.

In the case of the Ecuador Child Project, the project seeks to establish the enabling conditions for effective and participatory corridor management through three strategies: 1. Development of standards, public policy, technical or administrative instruments that contribute to the connectivity and integrated management of sustainable landscapes; 2. Strengthening key stakeholders' capacities for corridor management; and, 3. Establishment of inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and

multi-level governance platforms for the participatory identification and management of the corridors.

(d) key technical and institutional stakeholder capacity and regional cooperation are strengthened. A collaborative approach that combines these four elements with national and regional action can constitute the foundation of a truly integrated landscape management approach in the region.

In this regard, the Ecuador child project will promote spaces for dialogue and knowledge exchanges at the national level, to leverage successful strategies and lessons learned from other initiatives. The project will participate in the regional coordination and knowledge management spaces facilitated by the ASL Program.

5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

Building off a baseline of sectoral-focused and site-specific interventions on connectivity corridors, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agricultural production, and bioeconomy initiatives, the GEF funds incremental value will be to:

- a. Establish a connectivity corridor in each intervention landscape as a conservation area, following the provisions of the recently issued Ministerial Agreement 019 on May 22, 2020, of the MAAE. This outcome is of strategic importance for the conservation of the Ecuadorian Amazon region, especially for the maintenance and recovery of biological connectivity among the natural areas that are part of the SNAP, BVP, PSB, and of the collective territories of indigenous peoples.
- b. Promote bioeconomy initiatives and sustainable agricultural production practices in strategic locations of the two project landscapes, to decrease fragmentation and threats to the connectivity corridors, and ensure their long-term functionality.
- c. Create multi-level coordination and governance mechanisms for the territorial management of the connectivity corridors; strengthen technical capacities of the main public entities involved in territorial management as well as leaders of indigenous peoples; and incorporate ecological connectivity aspects in the existing territorial planning processes in the two project landscapes, and the different levels of government.

Table 6: Summary of Incremental Value and Global Environmental Benefits

Component	Baseline (?business as usual?) Scenario	Alternative Scenario (with GEF project)	Global Environmental Benefits
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<p>Component 1: Establishment of two connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes.</p>	<p>Under the business-as-usual scenario, PAs, and other conservation areas, in the two project landscapes, will continue to be managed on an approach centered on ?site management? with the support of the PASNAP, the socio bosque project and others, and outside of this conservation islands, the amazon forests will continue to suffer degradation and fragmentation processes.</p> <p>The country has recently approved the ecological connectivity model through the Ministerial Agreement No. MAE-2020-019, but under a business-as-usual scenario, the implementation of this model, in the two project landscapes, faces several institutional, technical, and financial shortcomings.</p>	<p>The GEF project aims at improving the ecological connectivity of the two priority landscapes, Putumayo ? Aguarico and Palora-Pastaza, by establishing two connectivity corridors. The project will provide technical assistance to support the implementation of the Ministerial Agreement No. MAE-2020-19, creating technical capacities, and applying the approved connectivity model in two priority landscapes. The project will support development of technical analysis to select the best connectivity corridor routes in the two project landscapes, based on geospatial, social economic, cultural, ecological, and political criteria. The project will also create multisectoral participatory governance platforms and management instruments for the two new corridors to ensure the interinstitutional coordination and integration of connectivity objectives across the territorial governance of the landscapes.</p>	<p>Increase area of terrestrial PAs ? connectivity corridors-created.</p> <p>HCV amazon forests protected.</p>
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<p>Component 2: Implementation of sustainable productive activities in the two connectivity corridors.</p>	<p>Under the current business-as-usual scenario, in the project landscapes, the expansion of agricultural frontier and the unsustainable agricultural practices will continue to create deforestation, habitat loss and habitat fragmentation of amazon forests. There are several initiatives from government and partners to promote SLM in the productive sector of the amazon region (ATPA), but these initiatives have not been able yet to solve barriers such as of lack of technical capacity in SLM agricultural production practices in the project landscapes.</p> <p>Support to alternative sustainable livelihoods, based on the sustainable use of forest resources ? bioeconomy initiatives, is still very limited in the two project landscapes (BMZ Bioeconomy program, CI, WWF Ecuador projects), and not specifically oriented to support biological connectivity in the landscapes.</p>	<p>The GEF project seeks to decrease threats to connectivity in the two proposed corridors, by promoting sustainable agriculture production practices in key areas of the corridors, based on connectivity ? threats assessments. The project will deliver trainings and operational support to selected producers to implement land-use planning and SLM practices at a farm level.</p> <p>In the connectivity corridors, the project will also promote alternative bioeconomy initiatives to reduce pressure on native forests and incentivize alternative forest friendly income generating initiatives.</p>	<p>Reduced threats to biological connectivity in the two project landscapes.</p> <p>Amazon landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems.</p> <p>Amazon landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity.</p>
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Component 3: Enabling conditions for ecological connectivity.	The recent approval of the Ministerial Agreement No. MAE-2020-019 sets the foundations for the ecological connectivity model in Ecuador. Despite this important achievement, there are still challenges that will difficult the correct implementation of the model. There are insufficient technical capacities across the different levels of government, for the effective implementation of the model, especially with regards to the coordination of relevant stakeholders with territorial management competences. In the two project landscapes there are insufficient resources and capacities for integrating biological connectivity objectives in the regional territorial planning instruments and in the local land use planning instruments (SCTEA PIA, local PDOTs and PUGS).	The project seeks to establish enabling conditions to overcome challenges identified in the baseline. The project will fill gaps in existing policies, technical and administrative instruments to implement and mainstream connectivity corridors in the two landscapes; The project will also create inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and multi-level governance platforms for the participatory identification and management of the corridors. Increased alignment of territorial planning processes, increase technical capacities, and improved coordination of key local and national stakeholders will enable the sustainable and efficient management of the connectivity corridors.	Increase area of terrestrial PAs ? connectivity corridors-created.  HCV amazon forests protected.
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6) global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF);

The project will contribute to the following Global Environmental Benefits:

The project will contribute to improved protection of globally significant forest of the Amazon Biome in the key landscapes of Putamayo-Aguarico and Palora-Pastaza. The management of the landscape with a connectivity approach will protect forest and the habitat of associated species of global importance, such as the tapir and the jaguar that rely on connected forest habitat because they are large range species.

•**Terrestrial PAs created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use;**

The project will support the creation of one connectivity corridor in each of the project landscapes (one corridor in the Putumayo ? Aguarico with an estimated area of 15,000 ha, and a second corridor in the Palora-Pastaza landscape, with an estimated area of 35,000 ha). Through Component 1, the project will undertake the processes needed to declare these 50,000 ha under protected status, based on the newly established COA and recently approved Ministerial Agreements.



●**Area of landscapes under improved practices** (hectares; excluding PAs);

Indicator 4.1: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity: 118,000ha. This indicator captures the landscape area being managed to benefit biodiversity, but which is not certified. 18,000 has correspond to forest areas that will be sustainably managed by the bioeconomy initiatives as a result of project support. In addition, the project will work to mainstream and prioritize conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in each of the connectivity corridors, within local government PDOTs. The project will work to update the PDOTs to include connectivity corridors in their objectives, strategies, and priority investments that will result in an improved management of, at least, additional 100,000 has.

Indicator 4.3: Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems. In the two target landscapes, the project will implement actions related to sustainable production practices in a total of 2,000 ha.

The 120,000 ha reported under this Core Indicator 4 will be located in or around (in the buffer zones) the two new connectivity corridors to be officially designated under Component 1. The Core Indicator targets have been estimated based on a preliminary GIS analysis of potential connectivity corridors options in the two project landscapes (See Annex 2 of Project Document) and taking into account existing productive areas and existing baseline of complementary bioeconomy initiatives.

**Greenhouse gas emission mitigated;** Indicator 6.1: Carbon sequestered, or emissions avoided in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector. The calculation of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions according to the official Ecuadorian methodology for the 4 years of project duration is 212,644 tonCO<sub>2</sub>. This amount considers the two landscapes of intervention and the deforestation rate for the country between 2014-2016.

The connectivity corridors to be established in the two landscapes will together add up to at least 50,000 hectares, the conservation of which will help prevent the emission of approximately 212,644 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> eq.

The targets identified here will be delivered in the same area; by the end of the project 50,000 ha of forest will be designated as corridors (if there is stakeholder and IP support) for Indicator 1, and this same area will be counted under Indicator 4 on area under improved management outside of PAs, as it will be delivered before the area is designated as protected area (corridor). Likewise, avoided GHG emissions are estimated for this same area.

7) innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up. ?

### *Innovativeness*

The project is the first one in Ecuador that will implement the newly approved connectivity model (Ministerial Agreement 2020 ? 019) by creating two connectivity corridors through a science based, inclusive, and participatory model for biodiversity conservation in the two key project landscapes. Through the connectivity corridors, the project will demonstrate how to implement an integrated landscape management approach in a diverse mosaic, integrating conservation with sustainable production areas to decrease threats to native vegetation and its ecosystem services.

In addition, with the more traditional agricultural products, this project will not only promote agrobiodiversity and best agricultural practices, but it will also directly link those practices with conservation agreements to ensure conservation and production benefits. Through the connectivity corridors, the project will integrate innovative governance strategies for diversified and inclusive conservation platforms: a) multi-stakeholder and inter-institutional platforms where agreements are generated at various levels for land management, conservation priorities, production practices and use of natural resources, using a sustainable landscapes approach focused on biodiversity conservation; b) inter-institutional coordination in and between the MAAE, MAG, SCTEA and local governments, as well as with local stakeholders; and c) participatory approaches that implement FPIC to safeguard indigenous peoples' rights, demonstrating how social participation will be strengthened in a newly established conservation mechanism.

### *Sustainability*

The project will design and implement a connectivity model that will go beyond the life of the project, strengthening capacities at the national level to implement the newly developed public policy instrument (Ministerial Agreement 019) related to connectivity conservation mechanisms in Ecuador outside of traditional PAs. By integrating diverse stakeholders in the design and management of the connectivity corridors, including but not exclusively the MAAE, this project seeks empowerment of diverse local stakeholders to sustain the corridors beyond the project lifetime. Embedding the corridor approach in local level planning will contribute to the long-term protection of the landscapes, after project close. Furthermore, the active participation of key stakeholders in planning, decision-making, and workshops to strengthen their capacities for sustainable production and to understand the benefits of biodiversity will ensure acceptance of the corridor-wide land-use strategies and management plans. By increasing knowledge on best agricultural practices and bioeconomy initiatives, the project seeks to ensure that communities and local stakeholders will commit to conserving existing forests, understanding the importance of these vital ecosystems to thrive. Financial sustainability is a key element of Component 1 in this project, aiming at ensuring the long-term implementation of the connectivity corridors. Innovative financial mechanisms will be developed with support from key stakeholders and decision makers, including the following: leverage co-financing of sustainable production programs and mainstreaming conservation initiatives; harnessing conservation financing

mechanisms; seeking sustainable landscape partnerships for connectivity corridor management; among other.

### *Potential for Scaling up*

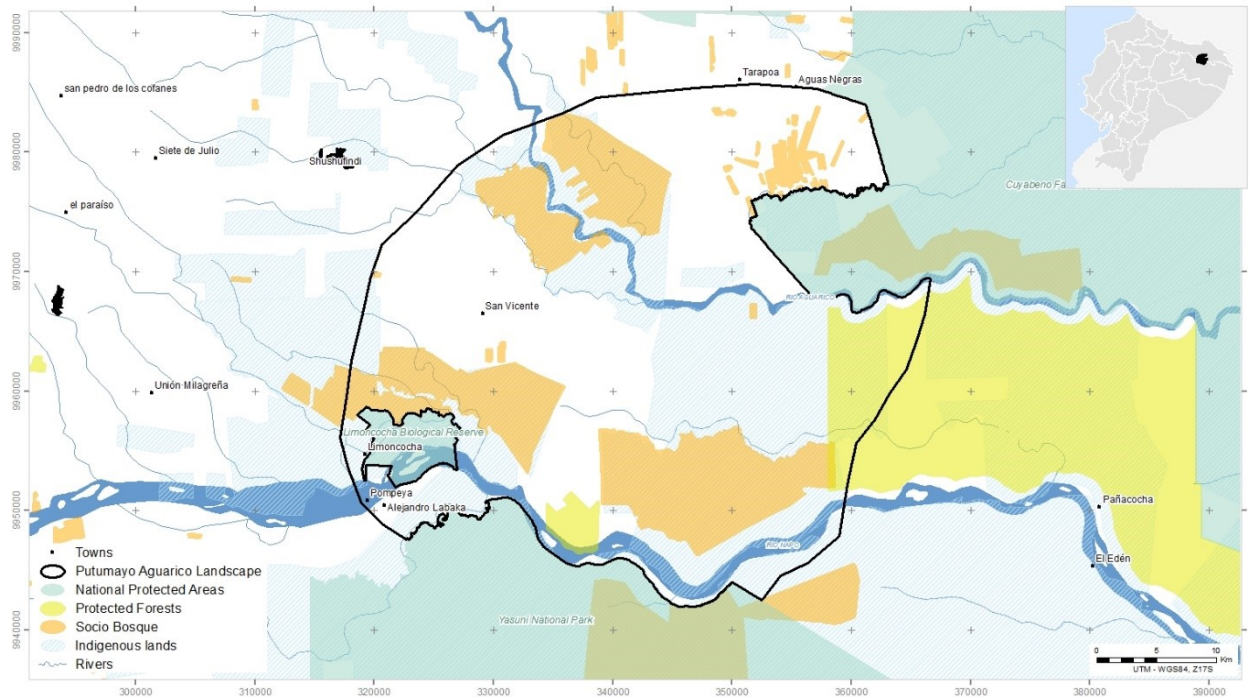
This project will implement the two first connectivity corridors that will follow the guidance from the recently approve Ministerial Agreement, using an integrated landscape approach in the two key Amazonian landscapes. The experiences and lessons gained with the project can be adapted and scaled up to other regions in Ecuador with cultural and biological diversity, especially where connectivity and biodiversity-friendly landscapes are needed for ecological processes and wildlife with large ranges or dispersal needs. This project will also provide MAAE and SCTEA with tools to better integrate programs and public policies and it will directly contribute to the sustainability goals of Ecuador as well as national amazon priorities. Additionally, by linking field-level interventions with national-level policy dialogue and capacity building at local and national level, this project will build the necessary building blocks that can be used for scaling up, including the following:

- ? Capacity building on connectivity corridors and landscape approaches to key government and non-government stakeholders.
- ? The development and implementation of guidelines and training packages on best agricultural practices linked to biodiversity conservation.
- ? The design, implementation and documentation of multi-stakeholder and inter-sectoral platforms for conservation management.

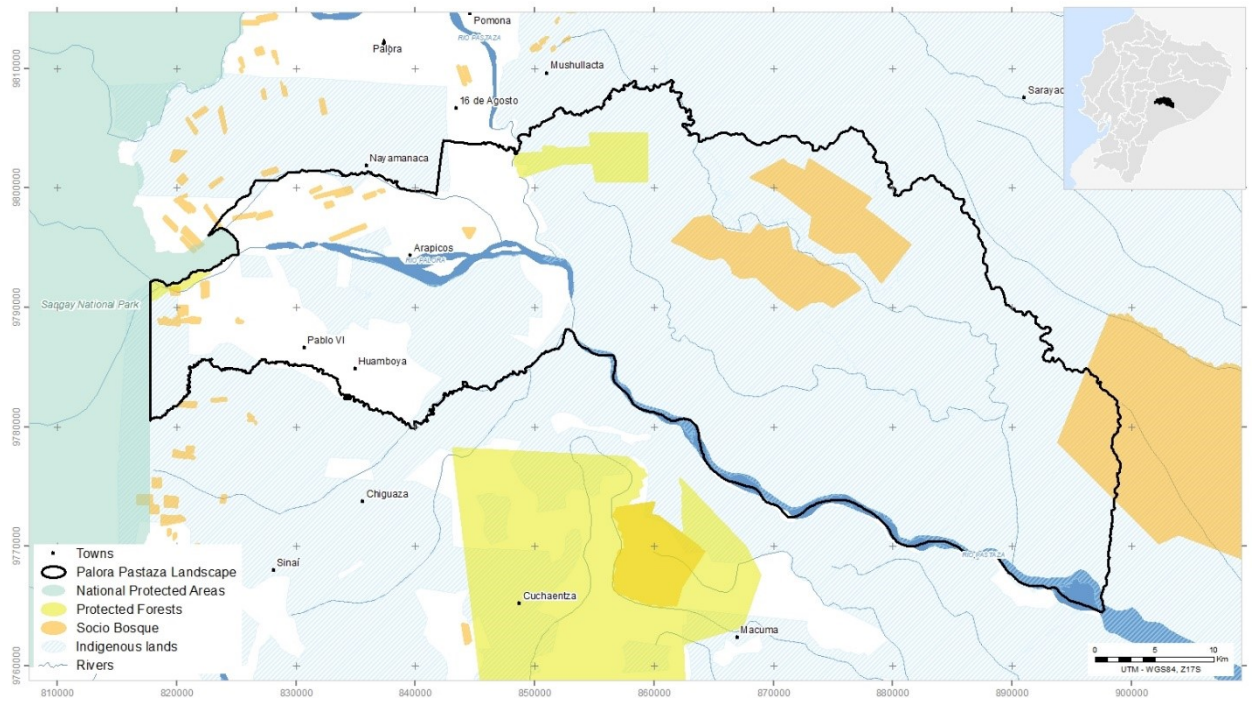
### **1b. Project Map and Coordinates**

**Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.**

Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape:



Palora-Pastaza Landscape:



### 1c. Child Project?

**If this is a child project under a program, describe how the components contribute to the overall program impact.**

The project is aligned to the ASL Program's Theory of Change of the ASL Program, which is founded on the logic that the ecological resilience of the Amazon biogeographical region can be maintained if:

1. PAs? size, management and financing are increased so that a representative area of the Amazon is effectively conserved under various regimes (PAs, indigenous lands, Ramsar sites, etc.).

In the case of the Ecuador Child Project, throughout its Component 1, the project seeks to improve the ecological connectivity of two priority landscapes, the Putumayo ? Aguarico and the Palora-Pastaza, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, through the establishment of two new connectivity corridors (PAs) and associated management mechanisms, to ensure the long-term biodiversity conservation of its ecosystems. The project seeks to increase a coverage of 50,000 ha of protected amazon forests in the two project landscapes.

2. management of productive landscapes between PAs is improved, in particular that agriculture, forest and degraded lands and fresh water systems are adequately managed, with zero illegal deforestation tolerance, and increased productivity and adoption of land sparing approaches.

In the case of the Ecuador child project, through its Component 2, the project will seek to reduce threats to ecological connectivity in the landscapes, by promoting SLM practices in key productive areas of the new connectivity corridors. The project will also strengthen sustainable bioeconomy initiatives, to promote alternative sustainable livelihood options compatible with the conservation objectives of the corridors and financially profitable for local communities in the two new connectivity corridors.

3. governance and incentives for protected and productive landscapes are enhanced through adoption of national policies and strategies which support sustainable development and aim to minimize deforestation and loss of ecosystem services.

In the case of the Ecuador Child Project, the project seeks to establish the enabling conditions for effective and participatory corridor management through three strategies: 1. Development of standards, public policy, technical or administrative instruments that contribute to the connectivity and integrated management of sustainable landscapes; 2. Strengthening key stakeholders? capacities for corridor management; and, 3. Establishment of inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, and multi-level governance platforms for the participatory identification and management of the corridors.

4. key technical and institutional stakeholder capacity and regional cooperation are strengthened. A collaborative approach that combines these four elements with national and regional action can constitute the foundation of a truly integrated landscape management approach in the region.

In this regard, the Ecuador child project will promote spaces for dialogue and knowledge exchanges at the national level, to leverage successful strategies and lessons learned from other initiatives. The project will participate in the regional coordination and knowledge management spaces facilitated by the ASL Program.

## **2. Stakeholders**

**Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:**

**Civil Society Organizations** Yes

**Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities** Yes

**Private Sector Entities** Yes

**If none of the above, please explain why:**

*Stakeholder Engagement during project preparation*

At the start of the ProDoc development phase, an assessment of the project stakeholders and a strategy to engage them during the project development phase was developed.

The project kickoff workshop was held in Quito, on July 26th, 2019, with participants representing sectoral national administration (MAAE, STEA, FIAS, SENAGUA, MAG) national and international civil society organizations (WWF, CI, HIVOS, WCS, FIAS) international development agencies (GIZ), universities, and representatives of indigenous peoples (COICA). Feedback gathered from the workshop allowed the project team to do the following: (i) refine and adjust the Stakeholder Analysis, (ii) complement the preliminary list of baseline projects, and (iii) gather information to improve the project conceptual model and situation analysis. This kickoff workshop also allowed the project team to engage with key stakeholders and identify strategic bilateral meetings to gather additional information and get feedback for the development of the ProDoc.

In November 2019, a first round of stakeholder consultations was organized in both project landscapes. Staff from CI-Ecuador, WWF-Ecuador, and MAAE, with support from consultants, conducted workshops with local governments (provincial and municipality) and sectoral national government representatives, in Lago Agrio, Sucumbos, Coca, Orellana; Puyo, Pastaza; and Macas, Morona Santiago. Representatives from indigenous organizations of the two landscapes (NAE, FICSH, FENASH, FCUNAE, FEPCESH-S, AMWAE, FEPNASHO) and representatives from environmental directorates of the local governments were interviewed in separate meetings in each of these cities. The main outcomes of those workshops and interviews were as follows: (a) informed and generated awareness among stakeholders about the project, (ii) presented, discussed, and validated the project situation analysis with local stakeholders, (ii) collected input on the intervention strategies, (iii) compiled socioeconomic data for the gender analysis and for the safeguards assessments, (iv) identified project baseline and potential partnerships at the landscape level. Through these field visits and engagement, all stakeholder showed their general support of the project. Likewise, the team collected recommendations to improve and refine the story line and project strategy to address local needs and

priorities, as well as consider specificities of each landscape. Finally, the team interviewed GADs to learn about their progress in terms of local policies related to corridors, production issues, and territorial planning to identify opportunities, gaps, and needs to better align the project.

In March 2020, the COVID pandemic hit Ecuador, restricting travel, prohibiting meetings and gatherings, and impeding the implementation of planned in-person stakeholder engagement processes. Given the circumstances and limitations, the project team adjusted the engagement strategy and shifted to bilateral virtual meetings, virtual workshops, interviews via phone, and e-mail interactions. While virtual meetings worked effectively with local governments, NGOs, and government organizations (like MAAE, SCTEA, and MAG), in some cases, the project team was unable to secure the participation of some local producer and indigenous organization representatives, because of their limited access to quality internet services. To overcome these challenges, during the first six months of the project execution, the project team with its field staff, will dedicate time and efforts to implementing additional in-person meetings with appropriate biosecurity measures, to ascertain their feedback and comments regarding the project.

Despite the limitations presented during the COVID pandemic, between the end of 2019 and early 2021, an in-depth process of stakeholder consultation was conducted at the national and local levels, (see detail of all workshops and interviews conducted during PPG phase and results obtained, in Annex 7). During 2020 and early 2021, the team organized a series of virtual meetings and workshops with national institutions for the participatory design of the project, including the MAG through the ATPA, SCTEA, MAAE, universities (Ikiam and UEA), and key environmental NGOs (NCI, WCS, FUNDACIÓN ALIADOS, UICN, Fundación Pachamama, Fundación ECOCIENCIA, FEEP) (see detail in Annex 7). The results of these virtual meetings allowed the project development team to: (i) build a deeper understanding of the project and foment empowerment by relevant stakeholders; (ii) ensure project alignment with national and local priorities and policy frameworks; (iii) gather relevant technical inputs to the project design process; (iv) promote discussions on the project framework and risks, and a means to debate best strategies for intervention; and (v) identify and develop potential partnerships, including aspects related to co-financing.

In January and February 2021, a final round of stakeholder consultations in the project landscapes was organized to share and discuss the second draft of project document, which incorporated inputs from previous consultations. With this purpose, several workshops were organized with representatives of indigenous organizations, producers' organizations, and GADs. As a result of those consultations, the project development team was able to validate the project strategy with the stakeholders, who were able to discuss and provide feedback on the project activities, its implementation arrangements, and the timeline and next steps towards the implementation of the project.

Finally, in February 25<sup>th</sup>, the project team organized a virtual (due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions) project validation workshop, with participation of stakeholders from the MAAE, MAG, SCTEA, and GADs. The workshop, convened and spearheaded by the MAAE, presented the overall project information, project activities, implementation arrangements, stakeholder consultation process



and how the feedback and comments from the stakeholders were incorporated into the final ProDoc prior to its submission.

**Please provide the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent assessment.**

In addition, provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement

The project will comply with WWF's Standard on Stakeholder Engagement and with the project-specific Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP ? see Annex 7). To be successful, the project will be required to consider the views and perspectives of and to effectively engage with a variety of stakeholders ranging from grassroots organizations and producers, indigenous peoples, NGOs, and the different levels of government (local and national) involved in three key thematic areas: environment conservation, land use planning, and sustainable production.

The strategy for stakeholder engagement during project implementation is detailed in the project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 7). The plan may be updated at the start of project implementation, based on the results of the ESMF. The plan will be implemented in an adaptive manner, in accordance with official guidance in regards to social distancing.

The PMU will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the plan, and that the timetable for engagement is aligned with the project work plan and M&E process. It will also be responsible for monitoring and reporting on stakeholder engagement through the project progress reports. Costs associated with stakeholder engagement have been allocated in the project budget as shown in Annex 8 of Project Document.

The table below summarizes the engagement approach for the main groups of stakeholders who will play a key role in project implementation.

Stakeholder Group	Primary method for consultation and engagement	Means
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Stakeholder Group	Primary method for consultation and engagement	Means
<p>1 Central Government (MAAE, MAG, STCTA)</p>	<p>At the national level representatives of the organizations in this group will be members of the PSC and Project Technical Committee, the highest decision-making bodies of the project.</p> <p>At the landscape level, they will also participate in the landscape advisory groups, with a technical advisory role to provide guidance for the effective implementation of the project. They will participate directly on the project implementation and will be beneficiaries of project actions, especially under component 3.</p> <p>Representatives of these institutions will also participate in the governance platforms to be created for each of the connectivity corridors.</p> <p>At all levels they will be key targets of project communications and KM products to promote replication and scaling up of lessons learned. Representatives of this organizations will potentially participate in the ASL II Program KM activities.</p>	<p>Inception workshop. Annual PSC meetings. Annual project reflection meetings. PPRs and Project Implementation Reports (PIR). Workplans and budgets. Technical reports. Face to face and virtual meetings. ASL II Regional events to exchange knowledge. Communication and knowledge management products. Technical reports/project pamphlets. Consultations, trainings, and workshops. Connectivity corridors platforms meetings.</p>

Stakeholder Group	Primary method for consultation and engagement	Means
<p>2 Decentralized Autonomous Governments (GADs)</p>	<p>Representatives of the local governments will participate in the project landscape advisory groups, with a technical advisory role to provide guidance for the effective implementation of the project. They will participate directly on the project implementation and will be beneficiaries of project actions, especially under component 3.</p> <p>Representatives of the GADs will also participate in the governance platforms to be created for each of the connectivity corridors.</p> <p>At all levels they will be key targets of project communications and KM products to promote replication and scaling up of lessons learned. Representatives of this organizations could potentially participate in the ASL II Program KM activities.</p>	<p>Inception workshop.  Annual PSC meetings.  Annual project reflection meetings.  PPRs and PIRs.  Workplans and budgets.  Technical reports.  Face to face and virtual meetings.  ASL II Regional events to exchange knowledge.  Communication and knowledge management products.  Technical reports/project pamphlets.  Consultations, trainings, and workshops.  Connectivity corridors platforms meetings.</p>

Stakeholder Group	Primary method for consultation and engagement	Means
<p>3 Civil society, Indigenous organizations (FONAKISE, SIEKOPAI, NAE, FICSH, ONWO, NOAIKE, AMWAE), and producers? organizations.</p>	<p>As detailed in Stakeholder Engagement Plan in Appendix 7, IP and local communities will be key stakeholders of the project during the implementation phase. Representatives of this key group will be members of the project landscape advisory groups.</p> <p>Specifically, with indigenous populations, additional consultations will be undertaken at the start of the project and throughout its implementation, with an FPIC approach, to ensure consent on key activities of the project, as defined in the safeguards ESMF and other project safeguards mitigation plans. Participatory approaches and specific activities have been integrated throughout the work plan. Participatory monitoring systems will also be included during project implementation to promote collective assessments of project impacts and build ownership of its actions.</p> <p>Representatives of this organizations could potentially participate in the ASL II Program KM activities.</p>	<p>Annual project reflection meetings. PPRs and PIRs. Workplans and budgets. Technical reports. Face to face and virtual meetings. ASL II Regional events to exchange knowledge. Communication and knowledge management products. Focus groups. Exchange visits. Trainings and operations support on SLM and bioeconomy initiatives. Technical reports/project pamphlets. Consultations, trainings, and workshops. Communication strategy to target IPLCs. Connectivity corridors platforms meetings.</p>
<p>4 International and national NGOs (Fundaci?n Ecociencia, Fundaci?n Pachamama, Fundaci?n Futuro Latinoamericano, HIVOS, WCS, NCI, Fundaci?n Aliados) and International development partners.</p>	<p>International and national NGOs and International Development organizations will be key project partners.</p> <p>Representatives of these organizations with presence in the landscape will participate in the connectivity corridors governance platforms.</p> <p>At all levels, they will be key targets of project communications and KM products to promote replication and scaling up of lessons learned.</p> <p>With those organizations with projects identified in the baseline or in section 1.6 of the prodoc, the PMU will establish direct coordination to ensure synergies between projects, as defined in the prodoc.</p>	<p>Events to exchange knowledge and experiences on connectivity corridors. Communication and knowledge management products. Technical reports/project pamphlets. Email, phone, virtual and face-to-face meetings (as relevant). Connectivity corridors platforms meetings.</p>

Stakeholder Group	Primary method for consultation and engagement	Means
5 Academia and national research institutions	<p>Representatives of academia and national research institutions with presence in the landscape will participate in the workshops and meetings for the review, discussion and validation of analyses carried out in each landscape for the connectivity corridors proposals.</p> <p>Academia and organizations such as IKIAM and INABIO will participate in the ecological monitoring of the connectivity corridors.</p> <p>They will also be members of the connectivity corridors governance platforms.</p>	<p>Events to exchange knowledge and experiences on connectivity corridors.</p> <p>Punctual email, phone, and face-to-face meetings.</p> <p>Participation in project consultation processes.</p> <p>Technical reports/project pamphlets.</p> <p>Communication and knowledge management products.</p>

#### *Engagement of Indigenous peoples and local communities.*

This project aims to involve and empower indigenous peoples, rights holders and local communities, including women and youth. Therefore, and in compliance with WWF-US Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework, including the Standard on Access Restriction and Voluntary Resettlement and the Standard on Indigenous Peoples, there will be constant processes of outreach, socialization, consultation, and feedback on the project implementation. The project will also work to promote continuous and open dialogues, including gender and intergenerationally whenever possible, to ensure that IPLCs' views are considered and ensure their participation.

To improve coordination and collaboration, the project will build relationships and work with indigenous organizations and traditional leaders. It will also implement effective communication channels based on local preferences, building on efforts initiated during the project design process. Where necessary, the project will work proactively to identify indigenous peoples and women's associations to be included in project actions. To do this effectively, the project has included in the PMU a full-time staff person specialized in gender and safeguards, with experience working with indigenous peoples.

The gender and safeguards specialist will work closely with the MAAE, as well as in coordination with the technical experts in communication, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure that these considerations are mainstreamed throughout the project. The specialist will also focus on addressing the needs and specificities of women in grassroots, producer, and indigenous organizations.

In addition, the project's communication and knowledge management strategy will design communication, awareness raising, and knowledge management campaigns taking into account different demographic groups, and will apply methods/materials specifically designed to target different groups of indigenous peoples and local communities (i.e. women, men, youth, interculturality). This strategy will be simultaneously used to ensure that the needs, perspectives, and concerns of these groups regarding various aspects of corridor management and biodiversity conservation are better understood and made known to the public.

To further promote meaningful participation, the project will identify barriers to stakeholder participation in project actions and seek to address them directly, including ensuring that their knowledge is considered in strategic planning, that they have equal access and opportunities, that training, or skills development strategies are inclusive and gender-sensitive, and that benefit-sharing mechanisms are equitable. Finally, as in the consultation process during project preparation, separate meetings and sessions will be used with these target groups, as deemed effective, to ensure that they remain informed and able to participate meaningfully in the project.

**Select what role civil society will play in the project:**

**Consulted only;**

**Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes**

**Co-financier;**

**Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; Yes**

**Executor or co-executor; Yes**

**Other (Please explain)**

### **3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Provide the gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assesment.**

In compliance with WWF's Gender Policy, the ASL Ecuador Child Project implemented a detailed gender analysis and developed a gender action plan during the PPG stage. The objective of the gender analysis was to identify the gender gap between men and women within the context of the project. The results of the assessment are documented in the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan (see Annex 6).

The Gender Analysis was prepared based on the following information: a) desk review of relevant information including WWF Gender Policy, references regarding indigenous people and gender issues,

and legal framework regarding women's rights and national policies; and b) focus groups and interviews with indigenous peoples to gather information. In addition, the team conducted interviews with producers in the area to gain a deeper understanding of the gender dynamics and identify possibilities of becoming involved in the project. The complete Gender Review report and Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan is presented in Annex 6.

### *Summary of conclusions of the Gender Analysis*

In the Ecuadorian Amazon, gender inequality has structural causes rooted in society and the economy. While in recent decades there have been significant changes to reduce the gender gap, daily practices that reproduce this inequality, especially in rural areas, continue to exist. The following is a summary of the conclusions of the gender diagnosis in the Ecuadorian Amazon carried out in 2020:

- ? Ecuadorian legislation has advanced in recognizing the structural problems of gender inequity by creating a framework that guarantees women's rights, as well as links gender and climate change. Despite this progress, it is still necessary for this legislation to have more tangible actions applicable to women's daily lives.
- ? Gender violence continues to exist in the rural Amazon, is reproduced within families, and is often accepted as 'normal'. Considering this context, the project will implement awareness-raising strategies to avoid deepening the causes of violence in especially related to income-generation activities.
- ? There continues to be a large gap in relation to education and capacity building for participation in productive initiatives, biodiversity conservation and project benefits. The limitations of many young women, especially indigenous women, to finish high school and continue on to university are evident and perpetuate gender inequalities. However, within the non-indigenous rural population, there is broader access to education closer to home, as well as economic resources, and family support to finish school.
- ? There is a division of labor by gender that reinforces inequalities between women and men. Reproductive work continues to be exclusively the responsibility of women and, frequently, the time spent on these tasks is not considered work. Although this division of labor has flexible spaces where women can participate (for example, product marketing which allows for managing and controlling part of the family's money), in general, they have less access to financial resources and work possibilities outside the communities.
- ? Women also have less participation in decision-making spaces within their families and their communities. In this sense, empowerment in decision-making and access to activities that represent economic income like those obtained by men is a necessary condition to reduce the gender gap.
- ? In terms of the link with the landscape, women and men identify and perceive the need to work on biodiversity conservation, as this also has implications for agricultural, livestock and handicraft activities. Women are also in charge of care activities and tasks that are highly affected by excessive rainfall, crop losses, reduction of local food, as well as diseases caused by abrupt climate changes. Men, on the other hand, who are linked more to the productive

sphere, mention that the impacts related to the reduction of sowing possibilities or exploitation of resources are related to productive difficulties, lack of work and economic complications.

#### *Summary of recommendations for gender mainstreaming of the Gender Action Plan*

Based on the Gender Analysis, the Gender Action Plan incorporates key activities and strategies to not only gather gender-disaggregated data for reporting, but also show women as subjects and agents of change, with high potential and knowledge to maximize biodiversity conservation and sustainable production impacts. Among the key recommendations, are the following:

##### ? **Component 1:**

- o Gather baseline information regarding knowledge on conservation, sustainable production and land use, differentiated by gender to harness men and women's knowledge more effectively for project implementation and highlight and value women's knowledge and contributions.
- o Identify and include differentiated needs from men and women in relation to the participatory management plans for the connectivity corridors.
- o Implement awareness processes with local government field staff to show women's potential in contributing to territorial development.
- o Identify and implement affirmative actions to address the needs of women, youth and indigenous peoples to more effectively participate in connectivity corridor decision-making processes and in reducing gaps between men and women regarding conservation and production.
- o Include gender mainstreaming in all planning and management plans developed in the framework of this project.

##### ? **Component 2:**

- o Gather information that includes women's specific needs for training regarding sustainable production systems and include these needs in the ECAs.
- o Identify bioeconomy initiatives led by men and women to ensure that women-led initiatives are supported by the project.
- o Implement training with field staff to ensure that trainers gather gender-disaggregated information, socialize knowledge differentiated by women and men, in relation to production systems.

##### ? **Component 3:**

- o Implement affirmative action strategies to ensure the effective participation of women in planning, management, and monitoring platforms for connectivity corridors.

? **Component 4:**

- o Design gender-sensitive indicators and report gender disaggregated data.
- o Gather and showcase stories where women are key stakeholders in biodiversity conservation and sustainable production.

These activities seek to strengthen women's knowledge and empowerment of their rights regarding conservation, sustainable production, and participatory platforms of connectivity corridors. These activities will enable women to gain access to decision-making spaces and have the knowledge to contribute to and strengthen them. Finally, the project will implement capacity-building activities so that project technicians can understand gender dynamics and address them appropriately without widening the gaps between women and men.

*Roles and Responsibilities*

Taking into account the particularities of the project, it has been established the need to incorporate within the team a professional specialized in gender and safeguards who will be in charge of the particularities of the project implementation, as well as the relationship with the partners and the link with the key actors.

*Financial Arrangements*

In order to appropriately cater for the implementation of above-mentioned measures, project budget has been allocated for the following:

? Costs for a part time gender specialist (consultant or staff) to work with the PMU and LCUs for the full 5 years of the project period; and

? Budget for travel costs, training workshops and meetings for gender specific consultations.

**Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?**

Yes

**Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes**

**Improving women's participation and decision making Yes**

**Generating socio-economic benefits or services or women Yes**

**Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?**

Yes



#### 4. Private sector engagement

##### **Elaborate on the private sector's engagement in the project, if any.**

Private sector will be directly linked in Component 1, as key stakeholders in the financial sustainability strategies for the connectivity corridors to be created. The project team will work with the private sector to identify key entry points and contributions of the private sector to the financial sustainability of the connectivity corridors through their contributions to conservation initiatives and/or sustainable production actions. In addition, the private sector will have a key role in Component 2 when linking bioeconomy initiatives and sustainable agriculture products as buyers and contribute information to help improve the quality of the products for their commercialization. Finally, the private sector will be engaged in participating and implementing capacity-building activities to improve the quality of the products developed by the selected producers.

#### 5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

##### **Elaborate on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.(table format acceptable):**

Table 7 presents an overview of the identified risks that may impact the ability of the project to achieve its objective. Each risk has been rated as high (H), moderate (M), or low (L) based on (1) its probability of occurrence and (2) its potential impact on the success of the project. Measures to mitigate these risks have been integrated into project design and indicated in the table below. Given the importance of current risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, a separate analysis of risks and opportunities related to this global health crisis has also been included in Table 8 and Table 9. Lastly, a climate risk assessment has been conducted for the project and the results are presented in Table 10.

Table 7: Project risks and proposed mitigation measures

RISKS	RATING	MITIGATION MEASURE
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RISKS	RATING	MITIGATION MEASURE
Relevant national and local government institutions, with competences over project landscapes, have inadequate capacity or resources for supporting connectivity corridors, SLM and bioeconomy practices.	M	<p>Capacity building activities to relevant stakeholders have been included in each of the project Components. Moreover, a dedicated Component on learning and sharing of experiences, at the national level, and with other ASL countries, has been included in Component 4.</p> <p>The project will strengthen capacities and collaboration with local governmental entities to establish cooperation mechanisms for connectivity corridors within their jurisdictions. The project will also establish work plans with NGOs and civil society organizations, to develop and implement project activities and harness current experience and investments to provide medium and long-term sustainability for the actions.</p> <p>The project will strengthen the collaboration and link with existing initiatives in the landscapes, like ATPA, PSB, PROAmazon<sup>a</sup>, to create synergies in creating institutional capacities at all levels and complement existing productive initiatives. The project will also strengthen capacities and emphasize role of GADs and indigenous and local communities in the implementation and monitoring of project activities.</p>
Lack of political will and commitment from institutional stakeholders for their effective participation in the different activities of the project, especially in the governance platforms of the connectivity corridors.	L	<p>MoEW is the Lead Executing Agency of the project, and will chair the Project Steering Committee. It will also be represented in the Technical Committee and the Landscape Advisory Groups. The key public and private stakeholders at the national and local levels, will be represented in these advisory and decision-making bodies of the project (as described in Section 2.3. Institutional Arrangements) to ensure dialogue at political, managerial and technical levels as well as coherence in planning and implementation of Project interventions.</p> <p>Early on, during project execution, the project will establish collaboration agreements with governmental organizations at various levels to implement coordination platforms and involve various stakeholders to ensure more empowerment and sustainability over time. Through these participatory platforms, the project will ensure involvement of key landscape public and private sector and articulation with priority actions and investments in landscapes and corridors.</p>

RISKS	RATING	MITIGATION MEASURE
Insufficient interest from landowners and communities to adopt sustainable land management practices and activities to strengthen bioeconomy initiatives.	M	The project will focus, during the first year, on providing outreach to local producers in each landscape through workshops, meetings, visits, and promotional material, to gauge their interest and work towards participating in the Program. Dialogue mechanisms will contribute to raise awareness on the need for sustainable interventions in the landscapes. Incentives will contribute to adoption of best practices. Gender and inter-cultural mainstreaming in training and technical assistance programs will also help raise awareness in a more inclusive way and gauge interest from a broader variety of landscape stakeholders. Strengthening of value chains and improved market access for sustainable bioeconomy products will help encourage producers through improving their incomes.
Lack of national or international demand for sustainable amazon products promoted by the bioeconomy initiatives strengthened by the project.	M	Selection of bioeconomy initiatives to be supported by the project will be based on preliminary feasibility assessments, that will include aspects as international and national potential markets. Systematization of available information on the demand for non-timber forest products, will allow the identification of potential markets for bioeconomy initiatives, including a specific analysis in each landscape. Based on those analysis, the bioeconomy initiatives to be supported by the project, will be selected, considering their potential linkages to internal and external markets. The support that the project will provide to the initiatives will be very focused on increasing business and marketing skills. The project will provide technical assistance to identify responsible markets and strategies for the bioeconomy initiatives to be able to access these markets.

RISKS	RATING	MITIGATION MEASURE
Target groups, including indigenous peoples, women and youth are not adequately represented, able to participate or equitably benefit from project activities.	M	Indigenous peoples in the two project landscapes have been consulted and have provided their initial agreement to the project strategy. During the PPG consultation activities were undertaken in the two project landscapes presenting the Project proposed interventions and receiving inputs from local stakeholders (see stakeholder engagement section). During the project execution, an FPIC process will continue to ensure free, prior and informed consent to the project activities. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan during project execution will ensure that the project stakeholders are adequately engaged and fully participate and benefit from project activities. The Project mainstreams gender and inter-cultural approaches to encourage participation of indigenous peoples, women and youths and includes specific activities to ensure that this vulnerable groups can participate and benefit from project activities in an equitable manner.

Table 8: COVID 19 Risk analysis

Risk category	Potential Risk	Mitigations and Plans
Availability of technical expertise and capacity and changes in timelines	<p>Ecuador has introduced and generalized containment and physical distancing measures, as well as implemented restrictions on population movement due to the COVID-19 pandemic (such as travel and meeting restrictions) which are likely to remain during project implementation and can limit travel, field activities and on-the-ground data collection.</p> <p>Project start-up period may be delayed beyond the usual time frame due to COVID-19 impacts and the use of remote technologies for consultation, decision making, and reviews.</p>	<p>The project annual work plan will be built with this in mind, for example, prioritizing local experts and consultants in each landscape, over international experts. Local consultants and local partners will be engaged for the implementation of project activities, and technology will be used to connect virtually, when face to face meetings and workshops are not an option.</p> <p>The PMU will discuss a strategy for project start-up that is effective, timely, and in accordance with the policies and restrictions of COVID-19. Timelines may need to be flexible to allow for quality and compliance.</p>
Stakeholder engagement process	<p>Travel and meeting restrictions limited face to face consultation at the sub-national and community levels during PRODOC development, which is likely to be the case in project implementation.</p>	<p>Local-level consultations, workshops, meetings will only be undertaken if they comply with national to local government guidelines and WWF guidelines, and follow COVID-19 safe protocols.</p> <p>Given the particularities that currently exist due to the pandemic, the use of virtual technologies and methodologies for remote stakeholder consultations will be available, reflecting each area's specificities and actor's particularities, to ensure that if face to face meetings are not possible, the project can advance implementation effectively with the use of remote meetings, as much as possible.</p>

Risk category	Potential Risk	Mitigations and Plans
Enabling Conditions	It is anticipated that the Ecuadorian government will prioritize COVID-19 containment or recovery, and this may delay government and other partners' participation and inputs in the project.	The economic, social, environmental, and cultural conditions of the pandemic, COVID 19, and the associated assumptions, will be monitored by the project, for an early identification of related risks, and to adjust the project intervention accordingly, with mitigation measures that ensure achievement of desired impact. During the start-up of the project, the Project Steering Committee will discuss and monitor measures to ensure government and project partner ownership and timely participation. The landscape advisory groups will be platforms that will allow coordination between different government sectors around activities of the project and will allow for an early identification of risks and associated mitigation measures.
Financing	Changes in baseline and potential co-financing sources due to changes in government/project partner priorities, reduced funding availability, or due to delays until implementation.	Most of the co-financing identified for this project is relatively stable, but this will be monitored and additional co-financing will be sought where possible, if needed.
Impacts on project strategy	COVID-19 may impact access to markets for small-scale producers if travel restrictions remain in place in the implementation phase, which would affect the project strategy to increase market linkage.	The project will undertake a supply chain mapping exercise to see if and where COVID-19 risks are and identify specific mitigations based on that.
Future risk of similar crises	It is not anticipated that this project will have adverse impacts that might contribute to future pandemics; for example, there will be no focus on increasing the human-wildlife interface or any actions that cause degradation.	This will be closely reviewed in the ESSF screening (when sites are selected) and safeguards analysis and documentation.

Table 9: COVID-19 Opportunity Analysis

Opportunity Category	Potential	Project Plans
Can the project do more to protect and restore natural systems and their ecological functionality?	The project objective is to promote ecosystem biological connectivity in two key landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon, increasing the area of natural ecosystems protected, and limiting forest fragmentation and degradation.	The project will focus on two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon, that have significant Global Environmental values under threat. To preserve the environmental services of the landscapes and ensure the protection of their biological connectivity processes and biodiversity, the project will create two 'connectivity corridors', following the national regulations. The project will work with stakeholder platforms, in a participatory process, to ensure involvement of key landscape public and private sector. Through these participatory platforms, the project will ensure that the corridor's planning and management instrument is articulated with priority actions and investments in landscapes and corridors.
Can the project include a focus on production landscapes and land-use practices within them to decrease the risk of human/nature conflicts?	Yes. The project will Increase, in both landscapes, the areas under sustainable land management practices in productive systems.	Component 2 seeks to decrease threats to connectivity in the two proposed corridors, by promoting sustainable agriculture production practices in key areas of the corridors, based on the assessments done in Component 1. In those key productive areas, the project will promote land-use planning at a farm level and SLM practices. In the connectivity corridors, the project will also promote alternative bioeconomy initiatives to reduce pressure on native forests and incentivize alternative forest friendly income generating initiatives. The project will provide technical and financial assistance in the formulation and implementation of business plans that allow producers to access opportunities in the respective value chains.

Opportunity Category	Potential	Project Plans
Can the project innovate in climate change mitigation and engaging with the private sector?	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions can be mitigated.</p> <p>The project has a specific focus on working with private sector (IPs and small agriculture producers) in both landscapes.</p>	According to the official Ecuadorian methodology for the 4-year duration of the project, the calculation of GHG emissions is 212,644 tons of CO <sub>2</sub> avoided, and 50,000 ha under different conservation and sustainable use mechanisms 212,644 tons of CO <sub>2</sub> eq avoided.

Table 10: Climate Risk Analysis

Putumayo ? Aguarico and Palora ? Pastaza Landscapes	Climate Risk	Climate Impact	How is the project addressing this risk?
Increasing Temperatures	Between the years 1960 and 2010 mean temperatures in Ecuador have increased as well as spatial and seasonal precipitation variations. A trend toward rising temperatures was identified based on data from 14 weather stations located in different geographical regions of Ecuador.[1] 30 years from today the mean temperature across Ecuador will be 1°C -3°C warmer than the mean temperature today.[2]	The increasing temperatures in the Ecuadorian Amazon Forest have affected some plants' and animals' life cycles, which could contribute to biodiversity loss. For example, now it is more common to find the chytridiomycosis pathological fungus in toads, which fatally affects them. The indigenous communities observe that the seasons for harvesting and hunting have changed, which has affected their dietary customs.	<p>By increasing the coverage of PAs and the biological connectivity of the landscapes, the project will increase resilience of the landscapes forest ecosystems and local populations to climate change impacts by maintaining healthy ecosystems.</p> <p>The project further promotes new bioeconomy initiatives compatible with the conservation of the Amazon forest, ensuring viable and environmentally sustainable livelihood alternatives for the communities in the project's landscapes.</p>



Putumayo ? Aguarico and Palora ? Pastaza Landscapes	Climate Risk	Climate Impact	How is the project addressing this risk?
Flooding	Flooding is the most common climate event in Ecuador and is exacerbated by fluctuations in precipitation patterns. Serious, long-term flooding occurs in the Aguarico region particularly around the Napo river. Data has demonstrated that flooding is expected to increase, predicting that by 2050 precipitation will increase by 3%, causing more flood events in the area. <a href="#">[3]</a>	Increased precipitation is expected to lead to an annual increase of 90.35mm of rainwater by 2040 which will lead to more flood events. Floods are responsible for most of the landslides that occur in Ecuador. Flooding events and landslides lead to severe socioeconomic and environmental impacts by damaging infrastructure and agricultural assets. Some communities located in the low amazon basin have lost their agriculture (caffe, cacao) products due to flooding.	<p>The project will improve the management of agricultural production areas through the implementation of sustainable land management practices in key productive areas of the landscapes, that will increase resilience of agriculture systems to negative impacts of climate change.</p> <p>The project will create governance platforms that will facilitate the internal coordination of local communities and local governments. This coordination mechanism could facilitate an effective response to climate change negative impacts.</p> <p>The project will promote sustainable livelihood options for the corridor communities via the strengthening of bioeconomy initiatives, that are compatible with the biodiversity conservation of the corridors and that will improve the adaptive capacity of the local population.</p>

Putumayo ? Aguarico and Palora ? Pastaza Landscapes	Climate Risk	Climate Impact	How is the project addressing this risk?
Landslides	Landslides are the second most frequent climate disaster in Ecuador. The mountainous regions in central Ecuador are at a low to medium risk of landslides, with part of the Pastaza province being affected.[4] The more Northern Aguarico region is less susceptible to landslides, with a moderate to low risk.	96% of the urban population of Ecuador live within the coastal and mountainous regions of the country.[5] Some regions in the Amazon forest are more susceptible to landslides which can result in lives lost and infrastructure damages that impact the economy.	<p>Landslides in the project landscapes have, primarily, occurred next to deforested areas. By tackling threats to deforestation in the project landscapes, and increasing coverage of protected forested areas, the project will be contributing to increased resilience to this potential climate impact.</p> <p>The project will create governance platforms that will facilitate the internal coordination of local communities and local governments. This coordination mechanism could facilitate an effective response to climate change negative impacts.</p>

[1] Republic of Ecuador, 2019. First Contribution Determined at The National Level For The Paris Agreement Under The United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change.

[2] Harris et al., 2014: Updated high-resolution grids of monthly climatic observations ? CRU TS3.10: The Climatic Research Unit (CRU) Time Series (TS) Version 3.10 Dataset, Int. J. Climatology, 34(3), 623-642, doi: 10.1002/joc3711; updated from previous version of CRU TS3.xx (most recent use in CCKP: TS3.24).

[3] Harris et al. 2014.

[4] UNEP's Global Risk Data Platform, Columbia University Center for Hazards and Risk Research (CHRR), and Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) and Instituto Nacional de Meteorolog?a e Hidrolog?a ? INAMHI.

[5] Ministry of Environment. 2000.

## 6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

**Describe the institutional arrangement for project implementation. Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.**

## General Project Management Structure

As the Lead Executing Agency, the Ministry of Environment and Water of Ecuador (MAAE) selected Conservation International-Ecuador (CI-Ecuador) as the Co-Executing Agency, based on an established partnership and work in biodiversity conservation, multi-stakeholder initiatives for the management of natural resources, and expertise and trajectory of working in the Amazon region in Ecuador. The following section describes the institutional actors that will be involved to ensure the success of the project.

### WWF-GEF Agency

WWF-US, through its WWF GEF Agency will: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives and Results Framework, and providing other assistance upon request of the Executing Agency; (ii) liaise between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (iv) approve work-plans and budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds and ensure proper use of GEF funds; (v) organize the final evaluation and review project audits; and (vi) certify project operational and financial completion; and (vii) arbitrate and ensure resolution of any conflicts during implementation that cannot be resolved in first instance by the EA.

### Lead Executing Agency

The MAAE, is the Project Lead Executing Agency. It will host the Project Management Unit (PMU) team and will be responsible for the strategic guidance, operational direction, and overall project supervision, ensuring its alignment with national policies, priorities, and regulations. Specifically, the Undersecretary for Natural Heritage (SPN) will provide technical assistance and guidance on its expertise and competencies, including conservation area and connectivity corridors, general management of PAs, biodiversity monitoring, and environmental legislation. It will also ensure that the project is aligned with relevant strategies and policies of the MAAE and has the active participation of the Direction of Protected Areas and Other Conservation Forms and the Direction of Forests. The Lead Executing Agency coordinates directly with the Implementing GEF Agency and is part of the decision-making platforms of the project.

The MAAE will assign a **National Project Director**. The NPD is responsible for the guidance and advisory to the project to align it with the government policies and priorities. This position is responsible for coordination within the MAAE divisions and with the provincial governments when needed.

### Co-Executing Agency

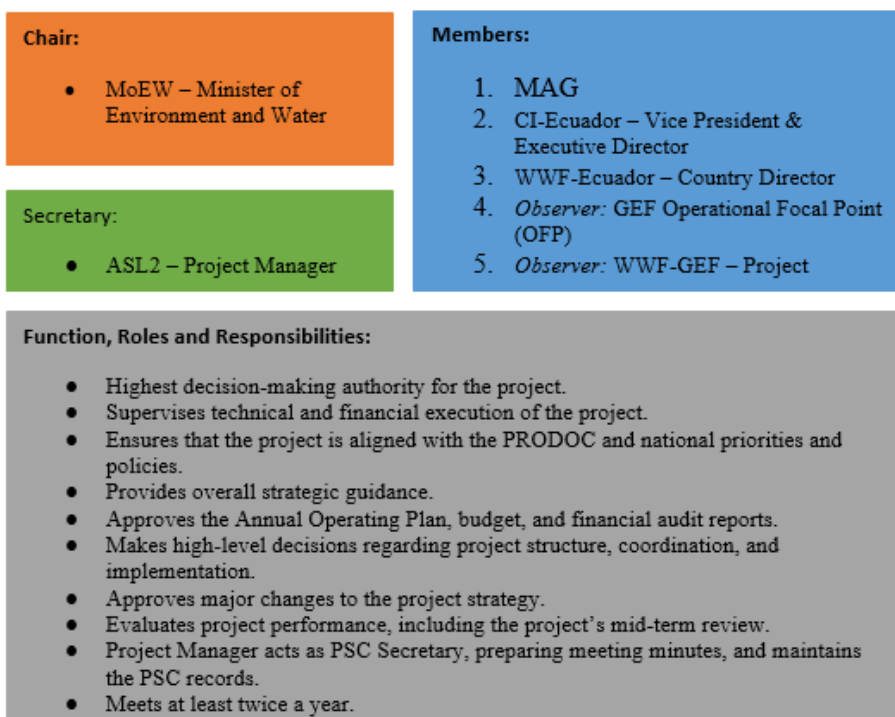
At the request of the MAAE, as Co-Executing Agency, CI-Ecuador will be responsible for the administration and execution of GEF funds channeled through WWF-GEF, including the recruitment of personnel and consultancies and procurement of equipment of the PMU, management of third-party contracts, provision of technical expertise and technical advice, and direct execution of the project outputs under their responsibility. CI-Ecuador be responsible for preparing financial reports and provide relevant information for external audits and present reports according to GEF standards, to WWF-GEF. CI-Ecuador will also provide specific scientific and technical assistance on topics such as biodiversity conservation and

monitoring, governance, partnerships, and management of relationships with key actors at national and state level. CI-Ecuador will also ensure that participatory processes are implemented through effective stakeholder engagement in both landscapes and will carry out its work in close coordination with the Lead Executing Agency.

## **Decision-making platforms:**

### **i. Project Steering Committee**

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be the highest decision-making authority for the project, responsible for supervising and monitoring the technical and financial execution of the project, including the fulfilment of project objectives, activities, and goals, for approving annual work plan and budget and project reports, and financial audit reports, among others. It will be responsible for strategic guidance and approving potential major changes needed in project planning or execution in line with adaptive management of project implementation, ensuring alignment with the ProDoc and national priorities and policies. It makes high-level decisions regarding program structure, coordination, and implementation. The PSC will meet at least twice a year and will be chaired by the Minister of Environment and Water or his/her delegate, and will have the participation of the ASL Project Manager (Secretary), the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), the GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) (Observer), CI-Ecuador, WWF Ecuador and WWF GEF (Observer). As the Secretary of the PSC, the Project Manager prepares meeting minutes and maintains PSC records.



## **ii. Project Technical Committee**

The Project Technical Committee (PTC) will have an advisory role in the project and will ensure coordination of project activities in both landscapes. It will be led by the Undersecretary of Natural Heritage through the National Project Director and in close coordination with the PMU project manager. The PTC will also include a representative from the Undersecretary of Climate Change of the MoEW, SCTEA, the Landscape Coordinator and Biodiversity Conservation Technician from each of the landscapes as well as CI-Ecuador and WWF-Ecuador's technical advisors. As observers on a rotational basis, one representative from the Palora-Pastaza Landscape Advisory Committee and one representative from the Putumayo ? Aguarico Landscape Advisory Committee will participate. The PTC is in charge with facilitating effective execution and coordination of the project and advises the PSC on: i) alignment with the ProDoc; ii) prompt implementation of activities; and iii) achievement of the targets, outputs and outcomes. It ensures effective and efficient use of the financial resources according to the approved Annual Budget and Annual Operating Plan; and provides technical clearance to the draft Annual Operating Plan and budget and other planning tools of the project, in coordination with WWF-GEF (technical clearance) and prior to the submission to the PSC for final approval. The PTC also approves the Annual Procurement Plan before submitting to WWF-GEF for final approval, prepares recommendations for the PSC to improve project performance or revisions, as necessary; ensures effective coordination among project partners and alignment between landscapes; reviews ToRs for consultants prior to sending to PSC for approval. The PTC meets twice a year and prior to PSC meetings.

**Chair:**

- MoEW – National Project

**Secretary:**

- ASL2 – Project Manager

**Members:**

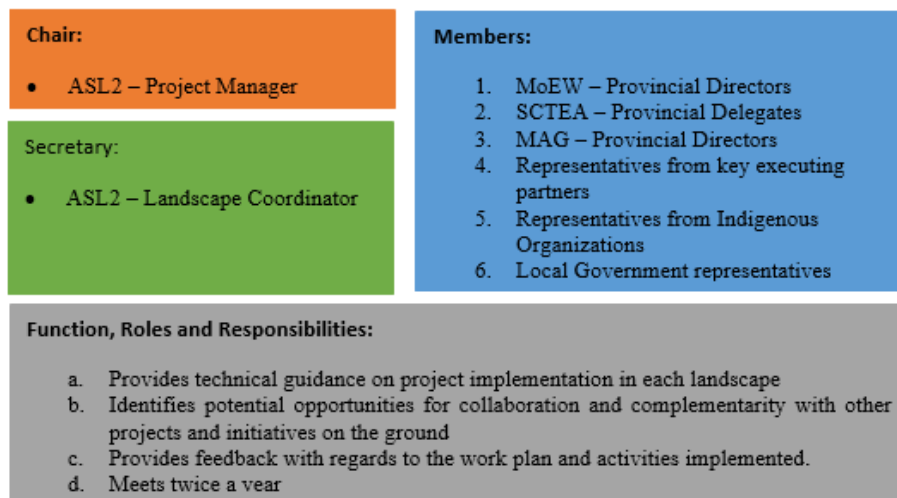
1. MoEW – Delegate of the Undersecretary of Climate Change
2. SCTEA
3. MAG
4. ASL2 – Palora-Pastaza Landscape Coordinator
5. ASL2 – Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape Coordinator
6. CI-Ecuador – Technical Advisor
7. WWF-Ecuador – Technical Advisor
8. Observer: Palora-Pastaza Landscape Advisory Committee Representative
9. Observer: Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape Advisory Committee Representative

**Function, Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Facilitates effective execution and coordination of the project.
- Advises the PSC on: i) alignment with the PRODOC; ii) prompt implementation of activities; and iii) achievement of the targets, outputs, and outcomes.
- Ensures effective and efficient use of the financial resources according to the approved Annual Budget and Workplan.
- Provides technical clearance to the draft Annual Operating Plan, budget and other key planning tools, in coordination with WWF-GEF (technical clearance) and prior to the submission to the PSC (for final approval).
- Approves the Annual Procurement Plan before submitting to WWF-GEF for final approval.
- Prepares recommendations for the PSC to improve project performance or revisions, as necessary.
- Ensures effective coordination among project partners and alignment between landscapes.
- Reviews implementation progress including the proposed workplan and budget, ToRs for consultants and project prior to sending to PSC for approval.

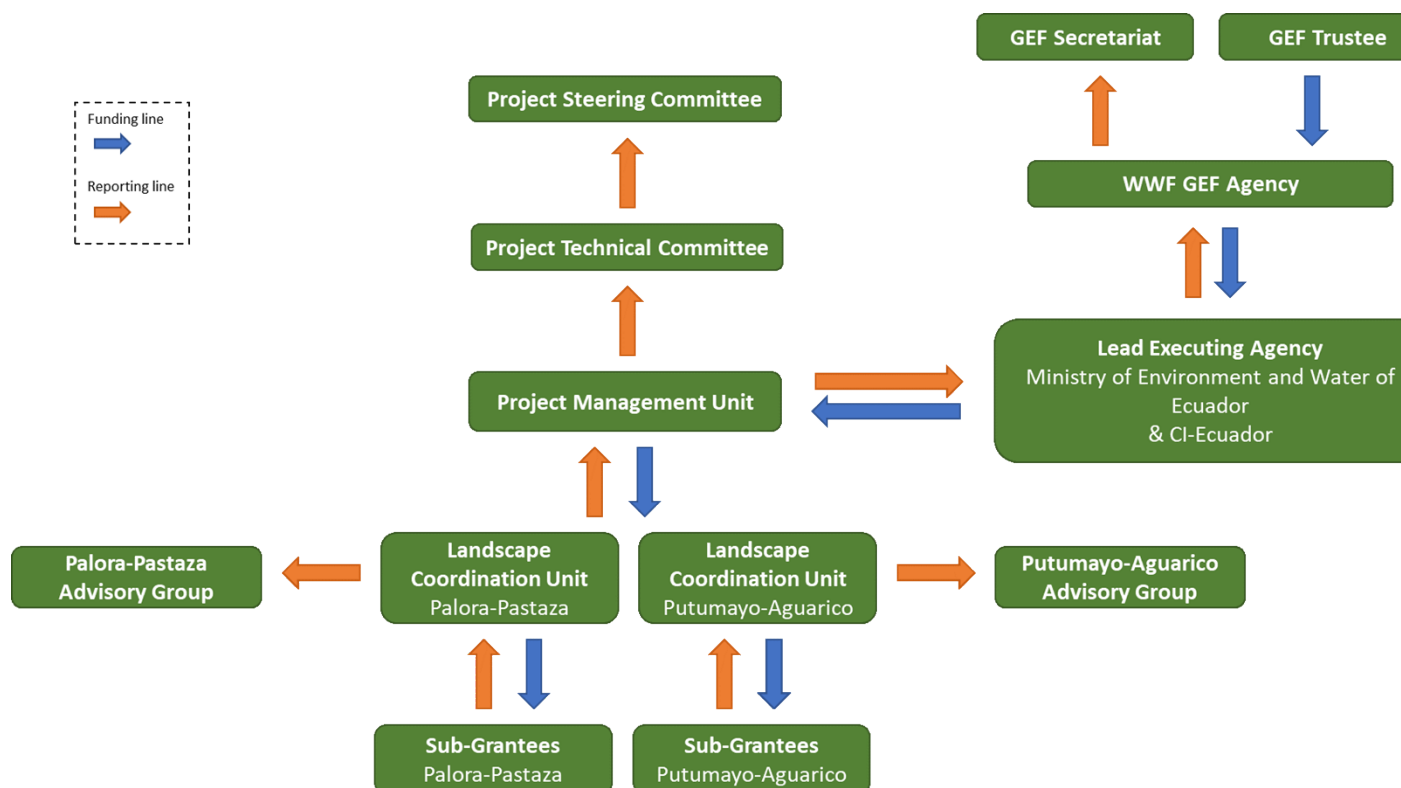
### iii. Landscape Advisory Groups

Each landscape will have a Landscape Advisory Group (LAG) with a technical advisory role as guidance for the effective implementation of the project on the ground. The LAG will include the Provincial Directors of the MAAE, Provincial Directors of the MAG, provincial delegates of the SCTEA, representatives from key executing partners, representatives from indigenous organizations and representatives from local governments in each landscape. They will meet at least twice a year to provide feedback with regards to the work plan and activities implemented. One delegate of each LAG will participate as observers in the PTC to ensure effective implementation and to provide input for the technical and financial technical clearance.



The following diagram illustrates the institutional arrangements of the project, including the PSC, PTC and LAG.

**Diagram of the institutional arrangements of the Project:**



**Project Management Unit**

The PMU will be based in Puyo (Pastaza) in the southern Landscape to facilitate coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders. Both the MAAE and the SCTEA have offices in Puyo. It has been considered that having the PMU based in the Amazon region will be more strategic for the project. The project PMU will be recruited by the Co-Executing Agency with the support of a Selection Committee composed by one delegate from MoEW, CI-Ecuador and WWF-GEF Agency. The PMU will be responsible for operational planning, implementing and monitoring day-to-day project activities and preparation of technical and administrative reports, follow-up on activities and products of consultants and oversee grant-management. It will be in charge of keeping the strategic oversight of the project, ensure proper coordination between the two project landscapes, perform quality and compliance management, M&E and reporting, and liaise with the MAAE and WWF-GEF Implementing Agency. The structure and reporting line of the PMU is presented in figure 10 below.

The Project will include the following full-time positions: Project Manager, Safeguards and Gender Specialist, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Knowledge Management and Communications Specialist, Governance and Land-Use Planning Technician, Sustainable Production Technician and one Financial and Administrative Assistant per landscape. (See, in the table 5 below, a description of the Project staff responsibilities).

#### **Landscape Coordination Units (Palora-Pastaza and Putumayo-Aguarico Landscapes)**

The project will have two Landscape Coordination Units, one in the Putumayo-Aguarico (supported with co-funding from WWF Ecuador) and one in the Palora-Pastaza landscape. The Landscape Coordination Units will have the responsibility of implementing the project activities, in close coordination with the provincial governments and baseline projects, local partners and other project stakeholders. The Landscape Coordination Units will work directly with the PMU core staff and will include a Landscape Coordinator and Biodiversity Conservation Technician and a Financial and Administrative Assistant.

#### **National Project Director**

The National Project Director (NPD) is a current staff member of the Undersecretary of Natural Heritage of the MAAE which is designated as the Director for the Project within the MAAE as part of their responsibilities. The NPD is responsible for the guidance and advisory to the project to align it with the government policies and priorities. This position is responsible for coordination within the MAAE divisions and with the provincial governments when needed.

Table 5. Project staff to be recruited through a competitive process

Position	Scope of Work	Field Office
1. ASL2 Project Manager	PMU	Palora-Pastaza Field Office
2. Safeguards and Gender Specialist	PMU	Palora-Pastaza Field Office



3. Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	PMU	Palora-Pastaza Field Office
4. Knowledge Management and Communications Specialist	PMU	Palora-Pastaza Field Office
5. Governance and Land-Use Planning Technician	PMU	Putumayo-Aguarico Field Office
6. Sustainable Production Technician	PMU	Putumayo-Aguarico Field Office
7. Landscape Coordinator and Biodiversity Conservation Technician	Palora-Pastaza Landscape	Palora-Pastaza Field Office
8. Financial and Administrative Assistant	Palora-Pastaza Landscape	Palora-Pastaza Field Office
9. Financial and Administrative Assistant	Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape	Putumayo-Aguarico Field Office

The following project staff will be part of the PMU entirely funded by co-finance:

Position	Co-finance	Scope of Work	Field Office
1. Landscape Coordinator and Biodiversity Conservation Technician	WWF-Ecuador	Putumayo-Aguarico Landscape	Putumayo-Aguarico Field Office

Below is the brief responsibility matrix.

Position Title	Summary of Responsibilities
Staff at Project Management Unit, Puyo	

ASL2 Project Manager	Responsible for the successful execution of the project; communication and collaboration within the MAAE divisions and with local governments, SCTEA and executing partners as needed; and will receive direct guidance from the Project Steering Committee and Project Technical Committee. He/She supervises and provides guidance to Landscape Coordinators and ensures alignment between landscape interventions and will be responsible of achieving the overall project objective. His/her tasks will include ensuring the integrated landscape management approach and the design of the financial mechanisms, develop the key partnerships with government and private sector partners. The director will also visualize the project not only in the medium term but also in the long term as a mechanism that integrates the multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation at a landscape scale, and coordinates and articulates investments with local participation and in general will lead the model of biodiversity conservation with a landscape approach.
Safeguards and Gender Specialist	<p>Ensures that safeguards and gender are mainstreamed throughout project implementation. Works in close coordination with Project Manager and technical staff to identify entry points to including a gender and safeguards lens in developing workplan and consultancies, as well as during field implementation and monitoring and budget execution. Ensures safeguard and gender recommendations are in full compliance. Implements capacity-building workshops with essential project personnel and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Conducts mid-term safeguards and gender evaluations and proposes adjustments to ensure the effective implementation of the safeguards and gender action plans. Provides gender and safeguard related technical support to field staff and key partners in both landscapes.</p>
Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	Provides support to project team in tracking project results and indicators by using project result framework. Ensures database generation, authentication, and management. Provides technical support to project manager and project Technical specialist in maintaining the WWF program standards (PPMS) and contribute to adaptive management practices. Plays a key role in developing annual workplan and updating activities considering the field issues.
Knowledge Management and Communications Specialist	Responsible for developing communication materials for overall project and landscape activities. Contributes to the development of content for public outreach activities. Supports landscape staff in preparing landscape reports for central PMU. Oversees the implementation of Component 4, in coordination with the Project Manager and with guidance from the Project Steering Committee. Works in close coordination with the Project Manager, technical specialists, and field staff to identify success stories and lessons learned and provides technical backstopping in report publication as well as donor reporting.
Governance and Land-Use Planning Technician	Provides technical assistance and ensures that activities related to Component 3 are executed effectively, working with local partners in biodiversity conservation, land-use planning, and participatory processes. With guidance from each landscape coordinator, technically leads the establishment and continuity of the interinstitutional and intersectoral governance platforms in both landscapes and, in collaboration with the Biodiversity Conservation and Landscape Technician, identifies capacity-building needs regarding planning and management of the landscapes, connectivity corridors and conservation areas.

Sustainable Production Technician	Promotes the adoption of best practices with regards to best agricultural practices, collects social, productive, and environmental information as needed. Provides technical and logistical support to the Landscape Coordinator in capacity building activities (workshops and trainings) related to sustainable production practices. Works closely with the Governance and Land-Use Planning Technician and Biodiversity Conservation and Landscape Technician to ensure that the integrated landscape approach is implemented.
Staff at Landscape Coordination Units	
Landscape Coordinator and Biodiversity Conservation Technician (2)	Leads, coordinates, and supervises the effective implementation of all Components in each landscape. Ensures the effective implementation of activities and budget in each landscape. Provides technical supervision of sub-grants to local partners and of external consultancies. Maintains integrated landscape vision and coordination with the PMU. Supervises execution of day-to-day activities in the landscape. Prepares landscape M&E reports for PM/M&E in central PMU. Manages logistics (landscape workshops and trainings) in close coordination with the Financial and Administrative Assistant in each landscape. Cultivates and strengthens local alliances to implement the project with local governments and other key partners in each landscape and coordinates meetings with Landscape Advisory groups. Leads the effective implementation of Component 1 in each landscape.
Financial and Administrative Assistant (2)	Assists field Financial Manager manage overall budget and financial management of the field office and provides support for submission of budget and financial reports, while ensuring compliance to all legal requirements. Supports day-to-day operations in the respective field offices, including all administrative and human resources role.

In addition, the project will include the participation of the following CI-Ecuador and WWF-Ecuador staff in the project:

Position Title	Organization	Summary of Responsibilities
Vice President and Executive Director	CI-Ecuador	Provides strategic and political guidance for project implementation. Participates in the PSC and represents CI-Ecuador in strategic ASL meetings and events.
Technical Director	CI-Ecuador	Provides technical and strategic input for project development, with special emphasis on Components 1 and 3, and participates in key meetings and events.

Operations Director	CI-Ecuador	Ensures effective and efficient use of project funds. Leads development of operations manual for project and oversees its successful implementation. Oversees budget execution and prepares financial reports, in coordination with Project Manager. Supports the implementation of successful project audits and ensures the incorporation of adjustments/recommendations.
Amazon Program Director	CI-Ecuador	Responsible for contractual and technical oversight of Project Manager and for mobilizing/coordinating local government partners and indigenous groups. Provides guidance and technical assistance to landscape coordinators.
Procurement Coordinator	CI-Ecuador	Ensures that procurement plan is implemented according to policy and timeline. Manages sub-grants to local partners and contracts for consultancies.
Spatial Analysis Manager	CI-Ecuador	Provides guidance and supervises spatial analysis for corridor development. Supervises spatial analysis consultancies and grants for the selection of corridors in the landscapes. Participates in land use planning processes with local governments.
Country Office Director	WWF-Ecuador	Provides strategic and political guidance for project implementation. Participates in the Project Steering Committee in representation of WWF-Ecuador.
Conservation Director	WWF-Ecuador	Provides technical and strategic inputs for project development, with special emphasis on Component 2, and Putumayo Landscape. Participates in the Project Technical Committee and key meetings and events.

Below is the Project Organizational Chart to illustrate the project structure and its link to the Project Steering Committee and Project Technical Committee.

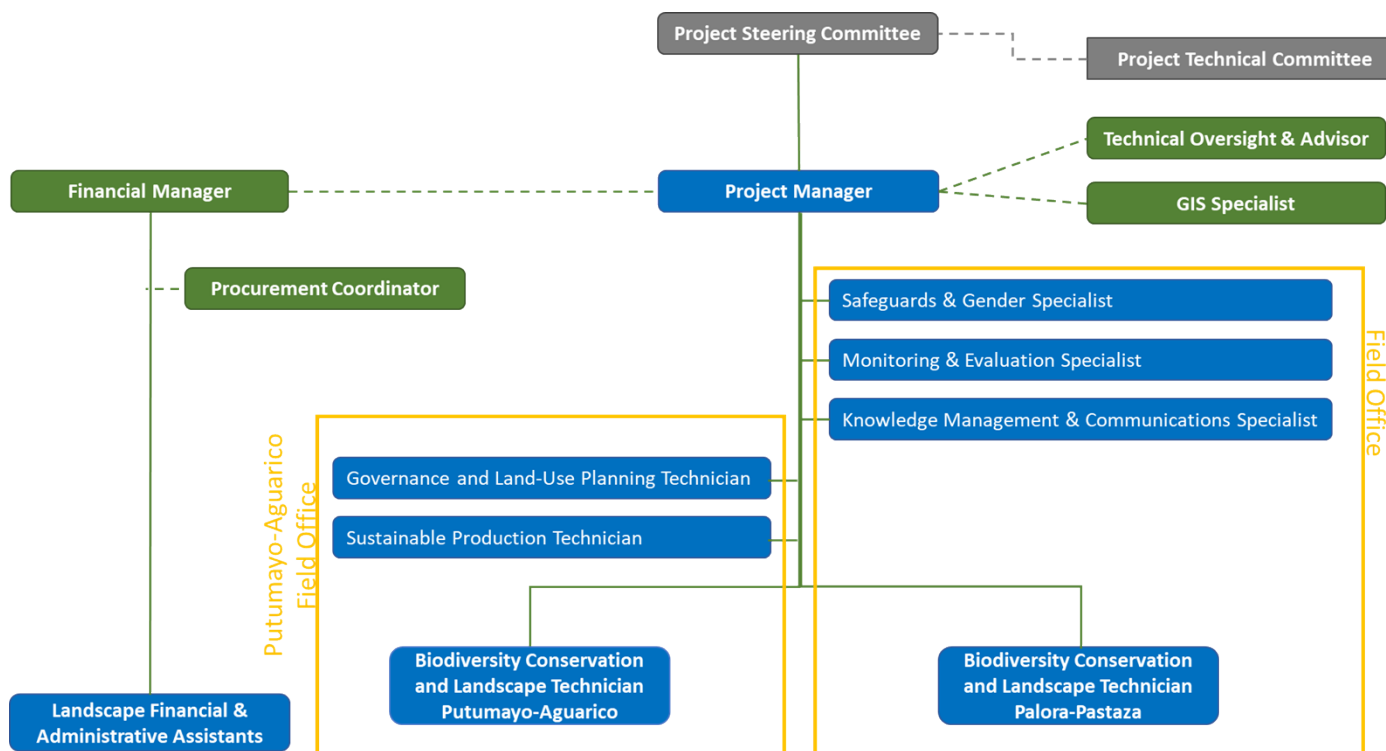


Figure 10. Project Organizational Chart

## 7. Consistency with National Priorities

Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions from below:

NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc.

The proposed project, *Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of two priority landscapes in the Ecuadorian Amazon Region* is consistent with the provisions of the current political and regulatory instruments, including, among others: *the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008)*; *the national objectives*, general strategies and priorities established in *the National Plan for Good Living 2009 - 2013*; in various sectoral policies and agendas; and in various presidential decrees, without excluding the international political context around climate change, where the UNFCCC[1] and its subsidiary bodies are the most important referent.

Ecuador has taken essential steps towards forest conservation and the reduction of greenhouse emissions, establishing critical goals and objectives regarding the environmental problem in concrete instruments such as *the National Development Plan 2017-2021*[2], *the Territorial Strategy National*[3], *the National Strategy for Climate Change*, and *the REDD + Action Plan*. The project is fully aligned to these instruments, the national priorities for biodiversity and forests, and contributes directly towards Ecuador's implementation of international conventions, especially *the Convention on Biological Diversity*[4] (CBD).

The project will contribute towards *the National Development Plan 2017-2021* and its Goal 1: guarantee a dignified life with equal opportunities for all people; Goal 3: Guarantee the rights of nature for current and

future generations and Goal 5: Boost productivity and competitiveness for sustainable economic growth in a redistributive and supportive way; through improving biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic activities. In this context, the project will organize its intervention in the landscapes of Putumayo - Aguarico (north) and Palora - Pastaza (south) of the Ecuadorian Amazon using six strategies: territorial management, multilevel governance, production chain, technical support and training, associativity and institutional strengthening.

The project is consistent with *The National Territorial Strategy* and its objectives to enhance the territories' capacities, articulate interventions to national goals, and define concrete guidelines for decentralized and decentralized public action. This means harmonious coordination between national and sub-national planning through multilevel governance; and effective, participatory, and permanent mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability.

The proposed project and Component 2: Developing sustainable economic activities for the productive management of landscapes will contribute to *The National Strategy for Climate Change* and its commitment to reducing vulnerability and GHG emissions. This national strategy aims to strengthen the capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to face climate change impacts and create favorable conditions for the adoption of measures that reduce GHG emissions and increase carbon sinks in strategic sectors.

The project will contribute towards the REDD+ Action Plan and its work promoting climate change mitigation actions that point to the convergence of the country's environmental and development agendas, with a territorial focus. This action plan is part of the National Strategy on Climate Change, which guides the implementation of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the country, create favorable conditions to adopt them in priority mitigation sectors, and promote carbon capture and storage.

The present project will support the strengthening of three pillars of the CBD, namely conservation, sustainable utilization, and benefit-sharing through national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Ecuador's principal policy to conserve its biodiversity has been establishing the PANE[5]. This project supports this strategy through the improvement and protection of corridors and the conservation of biodiversity.

The proposed project will support the implementation of priority actions linked to the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans[6]<sup>6</sup> to meet the Aichi Targets. Among the Aichi Targets, this proposed project will contribute to the progress of the following: Aichi Target 5, loss of natural habitat, including forests; Aichi Target 7 concerning sustainable management of agriculture and forests to ensure the conservation of biodiversity; and Aichi Target 14 related to maintaining ecosystem services to contribute to livelihoods.

The project is based on the priorities of *The Organic Law for Integrated Planning of the Special Territorial Circumscription (2018)*[7]<sup>7</sup> and directly supports the implementation of this strategy. This project is aligned with the objective of the Ecuadorian Government of promoting a new legal and institutional framework that seeks to develop a new development model for the CTEA, prioritizing biodiversity conservation and natural resource management as strategic sectors and establishing collective rights so that local populations primarily indigenous peoples, can benefit from the environment. Also, the project is aligned with *The National Environmental Policy of Ecuador*[8]<sup>8</sup> and its main objective to determine the economic value of strategic renewable resources (air, water, soil, and biodiversity) to prior low impact productive activities and accurate, sustainable mechanisms. The project will help address urgent conservation priorities, improve ecological connectivity, biodiversity conservation, and forest friendly production activities.

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Other national-level priorities and policies this project will work in parallel with and build upon include the following: The National Biodiversity Policy and Strategy: 2015-2030<sup>[9]</sup> which includes themes that are interconnected with the objectives of the proposed project, including strengthening the SNAP, sustainable agriculture, and the rehabilitation of degrading areas. It also identifies connectivity corridors as opportunities to meet Ecuador's target of reducing terrestrial habitat loss by 15 percent. The project is also aligned with The Forest Partnership Program<sup>[10]</sup>, focuses on ensuring the protection of the forest, and their economic, ecological, and cultural values; the reduction of deforestation rates; and the improvement of the living conditions.

Ecuador has also directly aligned each Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) with the objectives, policies, and National Development Plan goals. The proposed project follows these objectives and aims to strengthen national planning exercises, monitoring, and evaluating two natural PAs. The Ecuador Government sees in the 2030 agenda an opportunity to generate synergies between various actors for genuinely sustainable development at the economic, social, and environmental levels.

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[1] <https://unfccc.int>

[2] <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-nacional-de-desarrollo-2017-2021-toda-una-vida-de-ecuador>

[3] <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/marcos-regulatorios/estrategia-territorial-nacional-de-ecuador>

[4] <https://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=ec>

[5] <https://www.ambiente.gob.ec/proyecto-pane/>

[6] <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/>

[7] <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC183778/>

[8] The National Environmental Policy Approved in December 2009, the national environmental policy of Ecuador is based on three main areas: institutional management of environmental issues, consideration of the physical limits of ecosystems and social participation.

[9] <https://plataformacelac.org/politica/531>

[10] <https://www.ambiente.gob.ec/programa-socio-bosque/>

## 8. Knowledge Management

**Elaborate the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, including a budget, key deliverables and a timeline, and explain how it will contribute to the project's overall impact.**

Utilizing available knowledge to apply best practices and lessons learned is important during both project design and implementation to achieving greater, more efficient, and sustainable conservation results. Sharing this information is then useful to other projects and initiatives to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and impact among the conservation community. Knowledge exchange is tracked and budgeted in Component 4 of the Results Framework.

Prior to finalizing the project design, existing lessons and best practices were gathered and incorporated into the project design. Please reference Section 3.7 to review the lessons and understand how they were utilized.

During project implementation and before the end of each project year, knowledge produced by or available to the Project will be consolidated from project stakeholders and exchanged with other relevant projects, programs, initiatives, research institutions, academia, etc. by the project management unit (PMU). This collected knowledge will be analyzed alongside project monitoring and evaluation data at the annual Adaptive Management meeting. It is at this meeting that the theory of change will be reviewed, and modifications to the annual work plan and budget will be drafted. Making adjustments based on what works and what does not work should improve project results.

Lessons learned and best practices from the Project will be captured from field staff and reports, and from stakeholders at the annual Adaptive Management meeting. External evaluations will also provide lessons and recommendations. These available lessons and best practices will then be documented in the semi-annual project progress reports (PPR) (with best practices annexed to the report).

As part of the PMU, a full time knowledge management and communication specialist will be hired for developing communication materials and coordinating knowledge management activities for overall project activities. The specialist will contribute to the development of content for public outreach activities, will oversee the implementation of Component 4, and will work in close coordination with the Project Manager, technical specialists, and field staff to identify success stories and lessons learned and provide technical backstopping in report publication.

Under Component 4, the following specific knowledge management and communication activities have been planned:

1. Develop a communication strategy, considering the problems, public, products and plan (4P methodology), including the use of logos and other relevant topics for effective communication.
2. Establish a repository for the developed products.
3. Identify and develop products that systematize information, allow the dissemination of achievements and lessons learned, relevant project knowledge products (for example, best practices manual, brochures, videos / tutorials, among others). These will be shared by identifying the most suitable media, and will include for example:
  1. Component 1: Documentation of the corridor creation process; publications of the Five-Year Administration Plans, Annual Operation Plans, management plans; corridor monitoring methodology, among others.



2. Component 2: Case studies on successful experiences in BAP and / or bioeconomy initiative initiatives; training material for ECAs; promotional and marketing material for bioeconomy initiatives.
3. Component 3: Informative documentation on the Participatory Management Group and governance of each corridor; information material regarding the inclusion of landscape management and connectivity corridors.
4. Disseminate the products through different media identified for each audience.
5. Organize and participate in relevant events, workshops and platforms to disseminate the Results.

All knowledge and communication products produced by the Project will be shared on a project-specific website. This will allow a wider audience to gain knowledge from the Project. In addition, the knowledge manager and communications specialist will share these documents with stakeholders more directly through e-mail, direct presentation in workshops and meetings, etc.

The Project has budgeted travel to key workshops, such as those organized in the context of the ASL Technical Assistance Coordination Project, to share best practices and lessons learned from the Project and to learn from practitioners in the same field in the other ASL Child Projects.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **Describe the budgeted M and E plan**

The Project will be monitored through the Results Framework (see Annex 5). The Results Framework includes 1-2 indicators per Outcome. The baseline has been completed for each indicator along with feasible targets. A methodology for measuring indicator targets is provided. Indicator targets are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART), and disaggregated by sex where applicable. Relevant Core indicators have been included to provide a portfolio level understanding of progress towards the GEF Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs).

Component 4 focuses on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Knowledge Management, and Regional Coordination. The project Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for ensuring the monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating and facilitating essential monitoring and evaluation activities, such as the independent external evaluations at the midterm and end of the project. An M&E Officer will be recruited as part of the PMU (see TOR in Annex xx) and will be responsible for gathering M&E data for the annual results framework tracking, and providing suggestions to the PMU Project Manager to improve the results, efficiency and management of the project.

The following table presents a summary of project reports:

M&E/ Reporting Document	How the document will be used	Timeframe	Responsible
Inception Report	? Summarize decisions made during inception workshop, including changes to project design, budget, Results Framework, etc.	Within three months of inception workshop	PMU Project Manager and M&E Officer
Quarterly Field Report [optional]	? Inform PMU PM on progress, challenges and needs of activities in field.	Every three months	Field team
Quarterly Financial Reports	? Assess financial progress and management.	Every three months	PMU F&A officer
WWF Project Progress Report (PPR) with RF and workplan tracking.	? Inform management decisions and drafting of annual workplan and budget; ? Share lessons internally and externally; ? Report to the PSC and GEF Agency on the project progress.	Every six months	PMU Project Manager and M&E Officer
Mid-term Project Evaluation Report	? External formative evaluation of the project; ? Recommendations for adaptive management for the second half of the project period; ? Inform PSC, GEF and other stakeholders of project performance to date.	Midterm	External expert or organization
Terminal Project Evaluation Report	? External summative evaluation of the overall project; ? Recommendations for GEF and those designing related projects.	Before project completion	External expert or organization

Independent formal evaluations have been budgeted by the project and will adhere to WWF and GEF guidelines and policies. The Midterm Evaluation will be conducted within six months of the midpoint of the project and the Terminal Evaluation will be completed before the official close of the project. The evaluations provide an opportunity for adaptive management as well as sharing of lessons and best practices for this and future projects. The Operational Focal Point will be briefed and debriefed before and after the evaluation(s) and will have an opportunity to comment on the draft and final report.

An annual reflection workshop has been budgeted for the PMU and project partners to review project progress and challenges to date, taking into account results framework tracking, work plan tracking, stakeholder feedback and quarterly field reports to review project strategies, risks and the theory of change

(ToC). The results of this workshop will inform project decision making (i.e., refining the ToC, informing PPRs and AWP&Bs).

## **10. Benefits**

**Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)?**

The project will generate socio-economic benefits by maintaining and enhancing the resource base on which local communities in the two project landscapes rely for their livelihoods. By developing actions that lead to the conservation of biodiversity, the project will benefit the inhabitants of the prioritized landscapes by preserving ecosystem services, such as fresh water, a healthy environment, medicines, and food production (Component 1). As well-being of indigenous local communities in the two project landscapes largely depends upon natural ecosystems, indigenous populations in both landscapes (approximate 40% of the total population in the Putumayo-Aguarico landscape and 70% in the Palora-Pastaza landscape) will benefit from the conservation of their remaining forests, in line with their Life Plans and other land-use planning tools. Through an inclusive approach, the strategy of this project will benefit vulnerable groups, in particular indigenous peoples, women, and youth, strengthening their participation in formal decision-making platforms for connectivity corridor management (Component 3).

The project will strengthen existing bioeconomy initiatives, in the two project landscapes, that have the potential to succeed in local, national, and international markets, with the goal of strengthening and improving aspects of value addition and commercialization, resulting in inclusive socio-economic benefits for the involved communities. The project will support producers to strengthen market-driven value chains for bioeconomy initiatives, linked to biodiversity conservation, contributing to increasing their incomes as they follow a value chain approach with a market orientation. Existing bioeconomy initiatives in both landscapes, that could be supported are related to the sustainable harvest, process, and commercialization of sweet water fish like paiche (*arapaima gigas*) and cachama (*piaractus brachypomus*); citronella; guayusa (*ilex guayusa*); ungurahua (*oenocarpus bataua*); turmeric, ishpingo (amazon cinnamon); morete (*mauritia flexuosa*); sacha inchi (amazon peanut); and community nature-based tourism. Increasing the profitability of sustainable production systems at the family level, will reduce direct pressures (ex. deforestation, land use change and illegal hunting) upon the native forest within the corridors.

## **11. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks**

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

## Overall Project/Program Risk Classification\*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

### Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Elaborate on the types and risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and impacts (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and any measures undertaken as well as planned management measures to address these risks during implementation.

In compliance with WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), as detailed in WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguard Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP), the Ecuador ASL Child Project was screened according to the Standard on Environmental and Social Risk Management. The Project was categorized as a Category "B" project, given that it is essentially a conservation initiative expected to generate significant positive and durable social, economic, and environmental benefits. Any adverse environmental and social impacts are site specific and can be mitigated.

Since the exact location and nature of potential investments have not yet been determined, an Environmental and Social Management Framework (including an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework [IPPF] and a Process Framework [PF]) is being prepared to conform to WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Framework. The ESMF will be disclosed by the Implementing Entity in country in a format and language accessible to stakeholders and on the WWF safeguards website (<https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/safeguards-resources>) for 45 days before WWF GEF Agency approval.

The proposed project triggered the following standards:

Standard on Natural Habitat: Overall, activities of the project will produce significant conservation benefits and any potential adverse environmental impacts on human populations or environmentally important areas are expected to be very limited. While there shall be no conversion or degradation of natural habitats, this Standard has been triggered as a precaution since there will be site-specific activities relating to productive landscapes under Component 2.

Standard on Involuntary Resettlement: There will be no land acquisition or involuntary resettlement of individuals and/or families under the proposed project. While the proposed project will not cause displacement of people from their homes, the Standard is triggered because designating connectivity corridors may restrict or prohibit the extraction of resources in certain areas of the corridors, thereby restricting access to resources required for the subsistence and cultural maintenance of the affected

populations. A Process Framework will be prepared as part of the ESMF to conform to WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Framework.

**Standard on Indigenous People:** This Standard is triggered because indigenous people are found in both project landscapes. The indigenous communities of the Putumayo - Aguarico Landscape include Shuar, Kichwa, Waorani, Secoya, and Siona indigenous nationalities. The indigenous communities of the Palora ? Pastaza Landscape include Shuar, Achuar and Kichwa nationalities. As the specific activities and locations of said activities are not yet defined, an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework will be prepared as part of the ESMF to conform to WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Framework.

**Standard on Pest Management:** The activities are not expected to trigger the Standard on Pest Management. While the project might support native plant nurseries (under Component 2), it will not support the procurement or use of pesticides or other agricultural chemicals or lead to the increased use of such chemicals. The ESMF will include guidance to this effect.

**Standard on Cultural Resources:** This Standard is not triggered as the project is highly unlikely to have an impact on cultural resources.

**Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security:** This Standard is not triggered as the project is highly unlikely to have an impact on community health, safety, and security.

#### **Supporting Documents**

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Module	Submitted
ESS Screen_Ecuador ASL 10259	CEO Endorsement ESS	

**ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK** (either copy and paste here the framework from the Agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found).

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	Y R 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
GEF Core Indicators										

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Objective Indicator 1: Terrestrial PAs newly created.</b>  <b>(Hectares)</b>  <b>(GEF Core Indicator 1.1)</b>	<p>Non-cumulative . This indicator refers to the area (ha) newly placed under legal protection status as a result of project support, and management to achieve that status. Area proposed for the new Connectivity Corridors in both landscapes is 50,000 ha.</p> <p>Stepwise progression to submission of proposal captured under Outcome 1.1.</p> <p>Indicator targets will be reported disaggregated per landscape.</p>	<p>Verify designation of PA creation by the Government of Ecuador.</p> <p>Administrative records/documentation of the creation of PAs or declaration of the corridors.</p> <p>Maps of the corridors that are created.</p>	PMU LC[1]	0	-	-	-	-	50,000	<p>Assumptions: The MAAE and local governments prioritize and have the political will to create conservation corridors in each landscape ; civil society organizations, local communities and property owners participate and support, and indigenous peoples consent, to conservation corridors designation.</p> <p>In the case of non-consent to corridors, this indicator will be revised</p>

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Objective Indicator 2: Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity.</b>  <b>(GEF Core Indicator 4.1)</b>	<p>Non-cumulative . This indicator captures the landscape area being managed to benefit biodiversity, but which is not certified.</p> <p>This corresponds to forest areas that are sustainably being explored by the bioeconomy initiatives as a result of project support and to forest areas that are going to have an improved management as a result of updated</p>	<p>GIS files will be provided to show extent of land under improved management, including areas that have mainstreamed connectivity corridors in their PDOTs.</p> <p>Qualitative descriptions of the benefit provided to biodiversity through a change in forest management.</p>	PMU (Sustainable Production Technician and Governance and Land-Use Planning Technician)	0	-	-	25,000	50,000	118,000	<p>Assumptions:</p> <p>Local governments are willing to mainstream connectivity corridors, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity in their PDOTs and their respective budgets.</p> <p>Target communities are interested participating in the project activities in receiving support to improve forest management and strengthen their bioeconomy initiatives .</p> <p>Some bioeconomy initiatives in the landscapes could be ready to receive support</p>



Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Objective Indicator 3:</b>  <b>Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems. (Hectares)</b>  <b>(GEF Core Indicator 4.3)</b>	<p>Cumulative. This indicator captures the area in production and whose soil, air, and water are managed in a sustainable manner, benefitting the proposed connectivity corridors. In the two landscapes, in or next to the connectivity corridors, the project will implement sustainable production practices in a total of 2,000 ha. of existing agriculture and livestock production systems to benefit the connectivity corridors.</p> <p>SLM practices are those that ensure the maintenance of environmental functions, connectivity</p>	Using the geographic information generated in component 1, and field reports, map farms / production units where the sustainable practices are implemented.	PMU LC	0	-	-	-	-	2,000	<p>Assumptions:</p> <p>Target producers are interested in receiving support to improve their production practices.</p>

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	Y R 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Objective Indicator 4: Carbon sequestered, or emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector.</b>  <b>(GEF Core Indicator 6.1)</b>	<p>Cumulative. The calculation of GHG emissions according to the official Ecuadorian methodology for the 5 years of project duration is 212,644 tonCO2. This amount considers the two landscapes and the deforestation rate for the country between 2014-2016</p> <p>Emissions reduced from avoided deforestation and degradation by implementing conservation activities, best agricultural practices outside of native areas and bioeconomy initiatives.</p> <p>Indicator targets will</p>	Estimate of reduced emissions from avoided deforestation or degradation, by establishing new conservation areas and implementing best agricultural practices and bioeconomy initiatives with investment from the project.	PMU and MAAE.	0	0	60,000	110,000	160,000	212,644	<p>Assumptions:</p> <p>The MAAE and local governments have the political will and there is a commitment to create conservation corridors. Civil society organizations, local landowners and indigenous communities are interested and support the connectivity corridor designation.</p>

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Objective Indicator 5:</b>  <b>Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.</b>  <b>(GEF Core Indicator 11)</b>	Cumulative: Direct beneficiaries include people and communities within the connectivity corridors who depend on their ecosystem services provided; government personnel who will benefit from project-supported trainings; government agency staff who will be empowered with capacity building and data; local producers in the productive landscape who will have access to trainings and support to implement best practices, and sustainable production and communities leading bioeconomy initiatives	The total number of direct beneficiaries will be tracked during project implementation through mid-term and end of project reporting. Mid-term targets will be defined by the PMU when preparing detailed annual workplans.	PMU: PM, M&E Specialist and Landscape coordinators.	Baseline will start at zero, with increases reported upon completion of project activities.	-	-	TBD	-	4,000 (at least , 40% are women )	

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
COMPONENT 1: Establishment of two connectivity corridors in the two project landscapes.										

[illegible]

[illegible]

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	Y R 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Outcome 2.2.a</b> <b>Indicator:</b> <b>Number of beneficiaries (indigenous peoples and local communities ? members) with increased monetary income from bioeconomy initiatives supported by the project.</b>	<p>Cumulative. Indicator measures number of beneficiaries with increased income (of at least 10%), from bioeconomy initiatives supported by the project.</p> <p>Indicator targets will be reported disaggregated per gender and landscape.</p>	Baseline survey at the start of the project and follow up survey years 3-6 for self-reporting on income increase.	Sustainable Production Technician	0	0	0	450	1,000	1,500	<p>Note: These beneficiaries will overlap with total number of direct beneficiaries under Core Indicator 11. Assumes strengthening of bioeconomy initiatives will lead to increase in income generation opportunities. There is a risk that it is hard to get quantitative information on the benefits participants see from the project, or those benefits mostly accrue after the project ends and are hard to predict.</p>

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	Y R 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Outcome 2.2.b Indicator: # of Bio-bioeconomy initiatives that have strengthened their technical, financial, and/or commercial capacities, attributed to the project.</b>	Cumulative. This indicator refers to the Bioeconomy initiatives that receive support from the project to improve any technical, financial of commercial aspect. According to MAAE Ministerial Agreement 034 "Guidelines for the promotion of bioeconomy initiatives", these are entrepreneurship that, through the sustainable use of native biodiversity and its valuation, implement a strategy for the conservation of natural heritage to promote a sustainable economy - bioeconomy initiatives. See section 1.4 of	From project reports and field verification, identify the bioeconomy initiatives that have received support from the project to overcome assessed limitations and weaknesses.	Sustainable Production Technician	0			4		10	



Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
COMPONENT 3: Enabling conditions for ecological connectivity.										

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Outcome 3.1 - Indicator 3.1.a:</b>  <b>Number of legal instruments, public policies, regulations, or technical guidelines developed to support the creation and management of the two new connectivity corridors.</b>	<p>Non cumulative . During the implementation of the project, the PMU - with support from consultancies and local stakeholders in each landscape- will identify gaps in legal, administrative, and technical instruments of the connectivity corridor framework , and will provide assistance for the development or strengthening of instruments such as:</p> <p>1. Amendments to local government land use and development plans (PDOT) and plans for the sustainable land use and management (PUGS)</p>	<p>Administrative records/official documentation of Ministerial agreements, provincial and municipal ordinances, local government resolutions, and amendments to PDOTs, PUGs.</p>	<p>PMU reports with information from landscape coordinators,</p> <p>MAAE, and GADs.</p>	<p>See foot note [2]</p>	-	2	3	3	2	<p>Assumptions:</p> <p>There is political will to establish new legal instruments, public policies, regulations, or technical guidelines to strengthen the implementation of connectivity corridors or make amendments to local government land use plans.</p> <p>Throughout the project implementation and with information gathered from Component 1, the PMU will determine exactly which instruments need to be developed taking into considera</p>

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Outcome 3.1 - Indicator 3.1.b</b>  <b>Percentage of staff from public institutions with responsibilities on the two new connectivity corridors (MAAE, GADs, STCTEA) that have participated in project supported training on connectivity corridors and ILM related subjects.</b>	<p>% staff</p> <p>Cumulative</p> <p>The indicator measures the percentage of staff from MAAE, MAG, GADs and the STCTEA with responsibilities on the designation and management of connectivity corridors that have participated in project supported training and technical assistance on connectivity corridors management.</p> <p>The capacity gaps assessment of key staff from MAAE, MAG, GADs, SCTEA during the first year of project execution will determined</p>	Project reports from training activities.	PMU	See footnote[3]	-	25	50	75	100	

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
COMPONENT 4: Monitoring, and evaluation, knowledge management and regional coordination.										
<b>Outcome 4.1</b> <b>Indicator:</b> <b>Percentage of M&amp;E plan implemented/completed (implemented = reports produced against the M&amp;E plan, including annual reflection exercise, project progress reports, quarterly financial reports, midterm evaluation, and terminal evaluation).</b>	ASL Program requires M&E reports for all projects.	Verify that all required M&E reports are submitted to ASL program.	PMU	0	100% (7) 2 PPR; 4 QFR; 1 RE	100% (7) 2 PPR; 4 QFR; 1 RE	100% (8) 2 PPR; 4 QFR; 1 MTE	100% (7) 2 PPR; 4 QFR; 1 RE	100% (8) 1 PPR; 4 QFR; 1 RE; 1 TE.	PPR: Project Progress Report  QFR: Quarterly Financial Report  RE: Reflection Exercise  MTE: Mid Term Evaluation  TE: Terminal Evaluation

Indicator / unit	Definition	Method	Who	Baseline	YR 1	YR 2	YR3	YR4	YR5	Notes/ Assumptions
<b>Outcome 4.2</b> <b>Indicator: # of learning briefs and /or best practice white papers completed and disseminated</b>	<p>Best practices related to financial mechanisms for PAs, integrated land use and PA creation and management effectiveness documented transparently and disseminated widely with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Target: Annually produced best practices and lessons learned products are shared and uploaded to program website once /year and widely promoted to relevant partners.</p>	<p>M&amp;E reports, other documentation on project progress and lessons learned, and annual reflection exercises form basis for knowledge sharing and regional cooperation. PMU will engage a consultant to compile synthesis each year.</p> <p>Relevant stakeholders will include members of other Child Projects in the larger ASL program.</p>	PMU	0 lessons learned syntheses available online	1	1	1	1	1	

[1] PMU LC (Project Management Unit Landscape Coordinators)

[2] Organic Environmental Code and its regulation; Organic Law for Territorial Planning, Use and Land Management; Organic Code of Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization; Organic Code of Public Planning and Finance and its regulation; Ministerial Agreement 105 (MAE-2013); Technical Guidelines for the design, establishment and management of connectivity corridors for conservation; Provincial PDOTs:

Pastaza, Sucumbios and Orellana; Municipal PDOTs Shushufindi, Cuyabeno, Francisco de Orellana, Joya de los Sachas, Palora, Huamboya, Pablo 6to, Taisha and Pastaza.

[3] Definiciones contempladas en los instrumentos normativos y de política pública existentes: COA, RCOA (Reglamento del Código Orgánico del Ambiente) LOOTUGS, COOTAD, LOPICTEA, COPFP, RCOPFP, Acuerdo Ministerial 105 de 2013 del Ministerio del Ambiente, Propuesta de norma técnica para el diseño, establecimiento y gestión de corredores de conectividad con fines de conservación en el país (en elaboración).

## **ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).**

<b>GEFSEC COMMENTS - JUNE 2019</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<b>Responses from the ASL II Ecuador Project Team</b>
Comments were received from the GEFSEC on april 10th (included in the GEF Review Sheet <a href="https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/web-documents/10198_IP_Amazon_ReviewSheet.pdf">https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/web-documents/10198_IP_Amazon_ReviewSheet.pdf</a> ). Further comments were submitted on April 29. The team adjusted the comments in the PDF and clearance for inclusion at the June 2019 work program was granted.	
<b>GEFSEC Pending Comments</b>	
By the time of CEO endorsement, please ensure that the baseline projects, as well as the amount of the baseline investments, are elaborated fully for each child project.	Noted. Baseline projects with information of the baseline investments have been included in the baseline section.
By the time of CEO endorsement, and as the child projects are analyzed, please refine and expand the incremental reasoning with the additional information that will be made available through the project design process.	The incremental reasoning and project's impact in terms of global environmental benefits has been further addressed in the project document, in section 3.1 Incremental Cost. Reasoning and Global Environmental Benefits, in page 93 and in section 5 of the CEO Endorsement Request.

By the time of CEO endorsement please ensure that each of the child project's geo-reference is clearly presented both for targeted protected areas and productive landscapes.	Please refer to Annex E of the GEF CEO Endorsement Request, including the map and georeferences of the intervention areas.
By the time of CEO endorsement, please ensure that each child project takes into consideration the approved Policy on Stakeholder Engagement as well as the corresponding Guidelines.	The ASL II Ecuador Child Project was prepared in line with GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement and WWF's Standard on Stakeholder Engagement . The Stakeholder Engagement Plan was prepared, consulted on and its final version will be publicly disclosed as part of the safeguards instruments.
By the time of CEO endorsement, please ensure that the role of the private sector is fully articulated with regards to the forestry value chains referenced in the PFD.	Please refer to part II.4 of the GEF CEO Endorsement Request for further details of role of the private sector in the project strategy.
By the time of CEO endorsement, please ensure that each child project elaborates a risk management strategy.	The risk management strategy elaborated for the project is described in section II.5 of the ASL Ecuador CEO Endorsement Request and in the Section 3.4 of the project document.

STAP COMMENTS - MAY 28, 2019	
Comments	



<p><b>STAP Overall Assessment - MINOR</b> STAP welcomes this project proposal from the World Bank for the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes (ASL) II Impact Program. In the long term, the program envisions a "landscape mosaic of well-managed protected areas and indigenous territories, with sustainable use in the surrounding landscapes (to) conserve biodiversity and assure the required connectivity for key ecosystems and species to adapt to climate change" (p. 60). This is a realistic and well-conceived objective, and the components of this program should make a strong contribution to achieving this. But in some respects, the program description is rather unclear and confusingly written at times. It is not clear how the proposed interventions will effectively address the root causes behind environmental degradation in this region (particularly incentives for illegal deforestation). Much of the language in the theory of change is general and vague, encompassing a very broad array of possible interventions (e.g. "governance and incentives for protected and productive landscapes are enhanced through adoption of national policies and strategies which support sustainable development and aim to minimize deforestation and loss of ecosystem services"), making it difficult to discern a sharp conceptual analysis. The adoption of the "land sparing" approach is not adequately justified, given that the benefits of this approach accrue only when tied to robust governance mechanisms that ensure that intensification does indeed avert further deforestation. A number of innovations are identified in the PFD, including policy, institutional, business model, technological and financing innovations. In some cases, only the need for innovation is identified, e.g. with respect to forest product trade and re beliefs/awareness changing. STAP is pleased to see that the ASL will make use of recently-developed planning tools such as the Spatial Planning for Protected Areas in Response to Climate Change (SPARC) to take into consideration future projected changes due to climate change. The underlying assumption is that by</p>	<p>The design of the ASL II Ecuador child project has taken into account the aspects raised here. Please see detailed responses to the issues raised in this summary section in the sections below.</p>
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<b>Part I: Project Information</b>	
<b>Project Components</b>	
<b>A brief description of the planned activities. Do these support the project's objectives?</b> * The logical linkage between the activities and how these target the root causes/threats is not clearly articulated.	The project description follows the ASL Program's ToC, and its activities have been designed to address the priority environmental threats and barriers in the project landscapes. A theory of change has been developed to ensure logical linkages between project activities, its intermediate and final outcomes and the objective of the project. See high level theory of change of the project in Section 2.1 of project document, and detailed results chains of each of the project components in project document Annex 3.
<b>Outputs</b>	
<b>Is the sum of the outputs likely to contribute to the outcomes?</b> Specific outputs are not listed for each of the Outcomes; however, examples are given for each Component such as surveys, risk assessments, legal protocols, innovative technologies, technical extension services, etc. These are meant to be indicative and so it's not possible to know if, combined, they will contribute to the stated outcomes as it will likely be very country and site specific.	The GEF CEO Endorsement Request summarizes the outputs and the outcomes of the ASL II Ecuador child project and a detailed description of the Components, Outcomes, Outputs and project activities can be found in Section 2.2 of the Project Document. Additionally, the theory of change of Section 2.1 of the project document presents how the different activities, and outputs of the project contribute to the intermediate and final results, and how those contribute to the intended project objective.
<b>Part II: Project justification</b>	
<b>1. Project description.</b>	
<b>1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)</b>	
<b>Is the problem statement well-defined?</b> There are some issues here.	Please see specific responses below.
*weak land tenure for indigenous people/local communities is mentioned once as a root cause, but then this is never returned to, even in discussions of the expanding agricultural frontier, deforestation and IWT, despite the fact that land grabbing of indigenous land is part of this phenomenon, and the strong evidence indigenous-titled lands more effectively resist deforestation. * More broadly, the discussion on peoples of the Amazon, the extent of their occupation (including in lands subject to forestry), and how they use and rely on forest resources, is very minimal.	Land grabbing hasn't been raised by local and indigenous communities, or by any other stakeholder, during project consultations, as an existing threat in the project landscapes. The project team will continue to monitor this issue during project execution, and through safeguards screenings, FPIP process and other consultations, will set up mechanisms to implement mitigation measures in case this risk is raised during project execution.

<p>*In the explanatory paragraphs (1-17) also, the issue of wild animal overexploitation (including wildmeat) should presumably be addressed - it is a primary cause of biodiversity loss in the Amazon, quite distinct from deforestation. It is a subset of overexploitation but quite distinct from timber harvesting. This should also be raised as an issue linked to extractives expansion and accompanying infrastructure - roads are generally associated with enabling and expanding wildmeat hunting.</p>	<p>Overexploitation of wild animals hasn't been prioritized by landscape experts and stakeholders during the PPG consultations. Although illegal hunting occurs in the project landscapes, the priority selected threats to ecological connectivity in the project landscapes are related to the productive sector. However, the project will indirectly tackle the issue of overexploitation of wild animals, by working with local communities on strengthening sustainable alternative livelihood options and by increasing the coverage of protected area in the landscapes.</p>
<p><b>Are the barriers and threats well described, and substantiated by data and references?</b> Barriers: This (p 40 onward) is not setting out barriers to change/transformation so much as articulating how the program will address drivers, and mainly proximate drivers. Barriers are what makes it hard to do this.</p>	<p>The barriers were refined in the project description for each child project. See section 1.2 and 1.3 of the ASL II Ecuador Project Documents and section 1.a of the CEO Endorsement Request.</p>
<p><b>2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects</b></p>	
<p><b>Is the baseline identified clearly?</b> *para 50 suggests countries' efforts have dramatically slowed the rate of deforestation, and yet earlier information presented in the PFD makes clear that deforestation has been going steeply up in recent years (see Fig 1)? (And Imazon has just announced deforestation is 20% up on last year). So if these efforts are not working, it would be good to be clear on why these are not working if this project is to learn relevant lessons and have a high likelihood of success.</p>	<p>Since submission of the PFD, the context of deforestation in each country has changed and this is acknowledged by each project as relevant.</p>
<p>*the info in this section doesn't tell us much about what the actual expected trajectories of deforestation etc are in these countries</p>	<p>The ASL II Ecuador project has a clear target of GHG emission reductions, based on avoided deforestation. The calculation of GHG emissions according to the official Ecuadorian methodology for the 4 years of project duration is 212,644 tonCO<sub>2</sub>. This amount considers the two landscapes of intervention and the deforestation rate for the country between 2014-2016. The connectivity corridors to be established in the two landscapes will together add up to at least 50,000 hectares, the conservation of which will help prevent the emission of approximately 212,644 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> eq.</p>

<p><b>Are the lessons learned from similar or related past GEF and non-GEF interventions described:</b></p> <p>*The program is building on experiences from ASL1, and indicates in certain cases it has learned lessons from these e.g. in component 1, on financing of protected areas. It also sets out a number of general lessons learned "how" to implement the program e.g. building trust, using a common language. However, given the experience from ASL1 and from other work, it would be good to have more explicit lessons learned reflected here about the "how" i.e. activities. What has been learned in previous projects about what works, and what doesn't? How has this shaped the components of the program? Or given ASL2 largely continues and expands ASL 1, did everything work well and as planned to deliver reduced deforestation etc? If so, can this be said explicitly.</p>	<p>The annual report (available from <a href="http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/407141582652061822/64857-ASL-Progress-Report-2018-19-FEB11.pdf">http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/407141582652061822/64857-ASL-Progress-Report-2018-19-FEB11.pdf</a>) includes a chapter on emerging lessons from ASL, which were used for shaping the ASL2 child projects. Additionally, the ASL II Ecuador Child Project design considered several key lessons learned from GEF and non-GEF projects and programs related to integrated landscape management, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, bioeconomy promotion and biological corridors in Ecuador. During project preparation, an extensive review of projects documents was done, and lessons learnt from those experiences were integrated into project design. See summary of lessons learnt in Section 3.7 of Project Document.</p>
<p><b>3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project</b></p>	

**What is the theory of change?**

There is no clear description of how the proposed actions will tackle and change root causes. Much of the language in the TOC is rather general and vague, encompassing a very broad array of possible interventions (e.g. "governance and incentives for protected and productive landscapes are enhanced through adoption of national policies and strategies which support sustainable development and aim to minimize deforestation and loss of ecosystem services"), making it hard to discern a sharp conceptual analysis. The Theory of Change only partly addresses root causes in a convincing way. In some activities it seems to address proximate drivers rather than tackling underlying root causes.

\*It would be helpful to include a diagram for the problem statement, showing how root causes lead to drivers, and then a different diagram for the TOC. Currently these are rather confusingly combined into one.

The ASL II Ecuador child project was designed to tackle threats and drivers, and barriers prioritized by the country during the PPG, as was advised by STAP. The project description follows the ASL Program's ToC, and its activities have been designed to address the priority environmental threats and barriers in the two project landscapes. A theory of change has been developed to ensure logical linkages between project activities, its intermediate and final outcomes and the objective of the project, in response to priority threats identified. See high level theory of change of the project in Section 2.1 of project document, and detailed results chains of each of the project components in project document Annex 3, and project strategy description in

<p>*One element which is clearly needed in the region but which seems to fall between component 1 and component 2 is support for sustainable forest enterprises and sustainable use within PAs, many of which are indigenous territories (in which people depend on use of the forest). Where does this fit in?</p>	<p>Under Component 2. In the connectivity corridor the project will create, the project will strengthen bioeconomy initiatives. The Project will focus on supporting bioeconomy initiatives that are underway and that have the potential to succeed in local, national, and international markets, with the goal of strengthening and improving aspects of value addition and commercialization. Existing bioeconomy initiatives in both landscapes, that could be supported are related to the sustainable harvest, process, and commercialization of sweet water fish like paiche (<i>arapaima gigas</i>) and cachama (<i>piaractus brachipomus</i>); citronella; guayusa (<i>ilex guayusa</i>); ungurahua (<i>oenocarpus bataua</i>); turmeric, ishpingo (amazon cinnamon); morete (<i>mauritia flexuosa</i>); sacha inchi (amazon peanut); and community nature-based tourism. This outcome is based on the assumption that increasing the profitability of sustainable production systems at the family level, will reduce direct pressures (ex. deforestation, land use change and illegal hunting) upon the native forest within the corridors. For this, previous experiences of the PPD, WWF, and other organizations in the Amazon region, will be taken as a reference, and coordination with projects that are currently implementing similar activities (PROAmazonia, FFF, PSB, ATPA, AIRR, GIZ) (See section 1.5 Baseline) will bring the previous lessons learnt to the two project landscapes.</p>
<p><b>7) innovative, sustainability and potential for scaling-up</b></p>	

<p><b>Is there a clearly-articulated vision of how the innovation will be scaled-up, for example, over time, across geographies, among institutional actors?</b> *There is a vision of how these innovations will scale in various ways, although more explicit consideration of forms of scaling and the barriers likely to be encountered in each would be welcome.</p>	<p>The project is the first one in Ecuador that will implement the newly approved connectivity model (Ministerial Agreement 2020 ? 019) by creating two connectivity corridors through a science based, inclusive, and participatory model for biodiversity conservation in the two key project landscapes. Through the connectivity corridors, the project will demonstrate how to implement an integrated landscape management approach in a diverse mosaic, integrating conservation with sustainable production areas to decrease threats to native vegetation and its ecosystem services. Through the connectivity corridors, the project will integrate innovative governance strategies for diversified and inclusive conservation platforms: a) multi-stakeholder and inter-institutional platforms where agreements are generated at various levels for land management, conservation priorities, production practices and use of natural resources, using a sustainable landscapes approach focused on biodiversity conservation; b) inter-institutional coordination in and between the MAAE, MAG, SCTEA and local governments, as well as with local stakeholders; and c) participatory approaches that implement FPIC to safeguard indigenous peoples' rights, demonstrating how social participation will be strengthened in a newly established conservation mechanism. By linking field-level interventions with national-level policy dialogue and capacity building at local and national level, this project will build the necessary building blocks that can be used for scaling up, including the following: (i) Capacity building on connectivity corridors and landscape approaches to key government and non-government stakeholders; (ii) The development and implementation of guidelines and training packages on best agricultural practices linked to biodiversity conservation; (iii) The design, implementation and documentation of multi-stakeholder and inter-sectoral platforms for conservation management.</p>
<p><b>2. Stakeholders.</b> Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase: Indigenous people and local communities; Civil society organizations; Private sector entities. If none of the above, please explain why. In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.</p>	

<p><b>Have all the key relevant stakeholders been identified to cover the complexity of the problem, and project implementation barriers?</b> The project describes the roles of various stakeholders throughout the PFD and states that participant countries will be conducting consultations with key stakeholders for their areas, including indigenous people, local communities, NGOs, private sector, etc. Therefore it is likely (but should be confirmed) that this information will be developed more fully during PPG stage and before the actual projects are initiated.</p>	<p>A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been prepared by ASL II Ecuador child project and is included in the package.</p>
<p><b>What are the stakeholders? roles, and how will their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, and to lessons learned and knowledge?</b> See above</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p><b>3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.</b> Please briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis). Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes/no/ tbd. If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality: access to and control over resources; participation and decision-making; and/or economic benefits or services. Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes/no /tbd</p>	
<p><b>Have gender differentiated risks and opportunities been identified, and were preliminary response measures described that would address these differences?</b> Each country project will develop gender sensitive strategies during project preparation.</p>	<p>A Gender Action Plan has been prepared, based on an analysis of risks and opportunities, and will be implemented as part of the project. Please see summary and link to full document in GEF Endorsement Request.</p>
<p><b>6. Coordination.</b> Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other related initiatives</p>	



<p><b>Is there adequate recognition of previous projects and the learning derived from them?</b> There is little evidence presented here that the project is learning from experience in what types of intervention work in practice to combat deforestation etc (not just "how").</p>	<p>The annual report (available from <a href="http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/407141582652061822/64857-ASL-Progress-Report-2018-19-FEB11.pdf">http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/407141582652061822/64857-ASL-Progress-Report-2018-19-FEB11.pdf</a>) includes a chapter on emerging lessons from ASL, which were used for shaping the ASL2 child projects.</p>
<p><b>Have specific lessons learned from previous projects been cited?</b> There are some 'lessons learned' discussed throughout the PFD which are interesting, such as the importance of ex-ante land occupation planning processes (para 42.) and para 110 lists several lessons learned from implementaiton of ASL 1 and other projects in the region; however, as mentioned previously these are mainly related to the overall process of developing a large-scale program.</p>	<p>Please see earlier answer regarding lessons learned.</p>
<p><b>USA COMMENTS - JULY 3, 2019</b></p>	
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	
<p>Risk assessment. It will be important that the child projects more fulsomely assess and incorporate risk (including a monitoring and tracking component) from infrastructure planned as part of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA) plan, including the planned trans-amazon railway.</p>	<p>The ASL II Ecuador Child Project will monitor infrastrucutre risks in the context of the governance multisectoral platforms for the two proposed connectivity corridors the project is proposing.</p>
<p><b>NORWAY - DENMARK COMMENTS - MAY 18, 2019</b></p>	
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	
<p><b>General</b></p>	

<p>The Program Framework Document (PFD) for Phase II of the program suggests adding four additional countries; Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana and Suriname. We would like more background and analysis regarding this decision, as well as more information about the GEF's and the different agencies' collaboration with stakeholders and governments in the different countries.</p>	<p>WWF has a long trajectory working in the Ecuadorian Amazon in projects related to territorial planning, governance strengthening, environmental conservation and natural resource management, effectiveness of protected area management and, with indigenous and rural communities, supporting the development of production systems, community tourism ventures, ecological monitoring and citizen science etc.</p>
<p>As the space for donor follow-up and seeking additional information is limited, we recommend that country focal points invite donors for an information session in the specific capitals describing the experiences from phase 1 and presenting the new activities under phase 2.</p>	<p>The team of the ASL II Ecuador Child Project would be willing and available to organize an event with GEF donors to present the child project, and have the opportunity to clarify and answer any pending questions the donor may have.</p>
GEF Sec comment	WWF GEF Response
<p><b>Part I ? Project Information</b></p>	
<p><i>Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?</i></p>	
<p>3/15/2021</p> <p>Please provide the two co-financing letters, from the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture.</p> <p>Only when the cofinancing package is complete with this part of the proposal be evaluated.</p> <p>Please also discuss how these large sums of money were calculated to be "in-kind" and recurrent expenditures.</p> <p>Please also discuss the implications on achieving the project objectives caused by the lack of any cash cofinancing other than the grant from CI.</p>	<p>3/31/2021</p> <p>The co-finance letter from the Ministry of Environment and updated co-finance letters from WWF and SCTEA (to show grant and in kind) have been uploaded in the portal.</p> <p>The co-financing figures have been updated, the investment mobilized total figure has been increased, from USD1M to USD23M, and an explanation of how these co-financing figures have been calculated is included in the Project Document, pages 126 and 127.</p> <p>In brief, the project now shows a total co-financing of USD45,061,551, from which USD22,061,551 is in kind / recurrent expenditures and USD23,000,000 is in grants / investment mobilized.</p>
<p><i>Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?</i></p>	

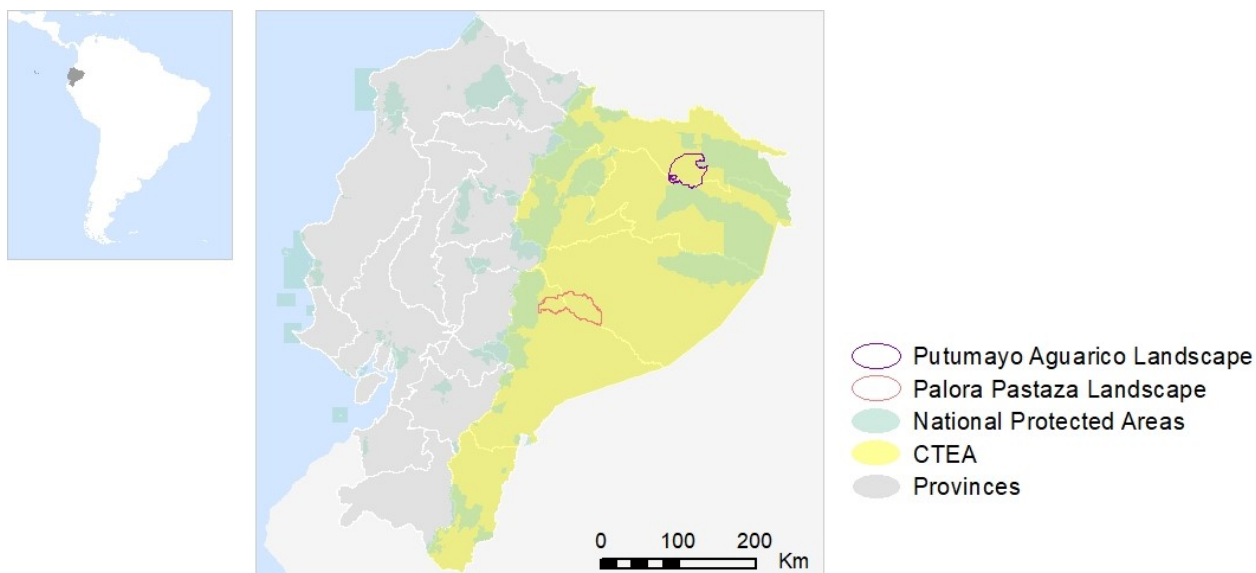
<p>3/15/2021</p> <p>Yes, but as noted above on the section on cofinance we are concerned about the impact of the lack of leverage of additional cash resources to the achievement of the objectives. Please clarify. Also please clarify if this is also due to the limited impact in terms of hectares under improved management as measured by the core indicators.</p>	<p>3/31/2021</p> <p>See comment above. Co-financing figures have been updated and the investment mobilized has been substantially increased, as the team was able to identify that much of the previously identified in kind is actually grant financing.</p>
<p><b><i>Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?</i></b></p>	
<p>3/15/2021</p> <p>Please provide a METT score for the protected areas and the names of the protected areas.</p> <p>Please explain why such a large overall investment is having such a small impact when measured in hectares. This does not seem to be a very good return on investment.</p>	<p>3/31/2021</p> <p>The project is not going to directly work on improving the management of existing protected areas, it is going to work on creating two new protected areas (two new connectivity corridors) and ensuring the management tools, the governance system and skills are in place for the future management of those new PAs. At the end of the project, when (and if, depending on FPIC process) the two new PAs have been formally designated, the project could calculate the baseline METT of these two new protected areas.</p> <p>We have reviewed the Core Indicators and increased the target of Core Indicator 4.1. Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity from 18,000 ha to 118,000 ha. Please see description of how the targets of the Core Indicators have been calculated in page 130 and 131 of the Project Document and in the Results Framework on page 160.</p> <p>This target has been increased by 100,000 ha. The reasoning for this is that the project is going to be working with local governments in both project landscapes, to update local Land Use Plans, for those plans to mainstream and prioritize the conservation and sustainable use of the two connectivity corridors to be created. The project will influence those LUPs, to include in their objectives and priority investments, the conservation and management of the two new corridors. Those land use plans will be approved during the lifetime of the project, and therefore we can claim that we will be improving landscape management to improve biodiversity in an additional area of 100,000 ha.</p> <p>The total target for Core Indicator 4.1 = 118,000ha.</p>

**ANNEX C: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG).**  
**(Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status**  
**in the table below:**

PPG Grant Approved at PIF:			
<i>Project Preparation Activities Implemented</i>	<i>GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)</i>		
	<i>Budgeted Amount</i>	<i>Amount Spent Todate</i>	<i>Amount Committed</i>
Salaries	126,591	71,509	55,082
Consultants	43,060	3 2,180	10,880
Translations	1,307	157	1,150
Safeguards	11,000	0	11,000
Travel and Workshops	8,178	3,870	4,309
Office running costs	9,864	5,821	4,043
<b>Total</b>	200,000	113,537	86,463

**ANNEX D: Project Map(s) and Coordinates**

**Please attach the geographical location of the project area, if possible.**



Map of the Ecuadorian Special Amazonian Territorial Circumscription, and the two project landscapes

## ANNEX E: Project Budget Table

### Please attach a project budget table.

Please refer to the Project Budget excel file in the Roadmap section, and to section 2.8 of the Project Document.

#### ANNEX F: Termsheet

Instructions. Please submit an finalized termsheet in this section. The NGI Program Call for Proposals provided a template in Annex A of the Call for Proposals that can be used by the Agency. Agencies can use their own termsheets but must add sections on Currency Risk, Co-financing Ratio and Financial Additionality as defined in the template provided in Annex A of the Call for proposals. Termsheets submitted at CEO endorsement stage should include final terms and conditions of the financing.

#### ANNEX G: Reflows

Instructions. Please submit a reflows table as provided in Annex B of the NGI Program Call for Proposals and the Trustee excel sheet for reflows (as provided by the Secretariat or the Trustee) in the Document Section of the CEO endorsement. The Agencies is required to quantify any expected financial return/gains/interests earned on non-grant instruments that will be transferred to the GEF Trust Fund as noted in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. Partner Agencies will be required to comply with the reflows procedures established in their respective Financial Procedures Agreement with the GEF Trustee. Agencies are welcomed to provide assumptions that explain expected financial reflow schedules.

#### ANNEX H: Agency Capacity to generate reflows

Instructions. The GEF Agency submitting the CEO endorsement request is required to respond to any questions raised as part of the PIF review process that required clarifications on the Agency Capacity to manage reflows. This Annex seeks to demonstrate Agencies' capacity and eligibility to administer NGI resources as established in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017 (Annex 5).