

Medio Pulmayo Algodón / Fotos - Diego Pérez

OUR FUTURE FORESTS: VITAL RESERVES IN THE AMAZON

PROGRESS OVERVIEW

March, 2026

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

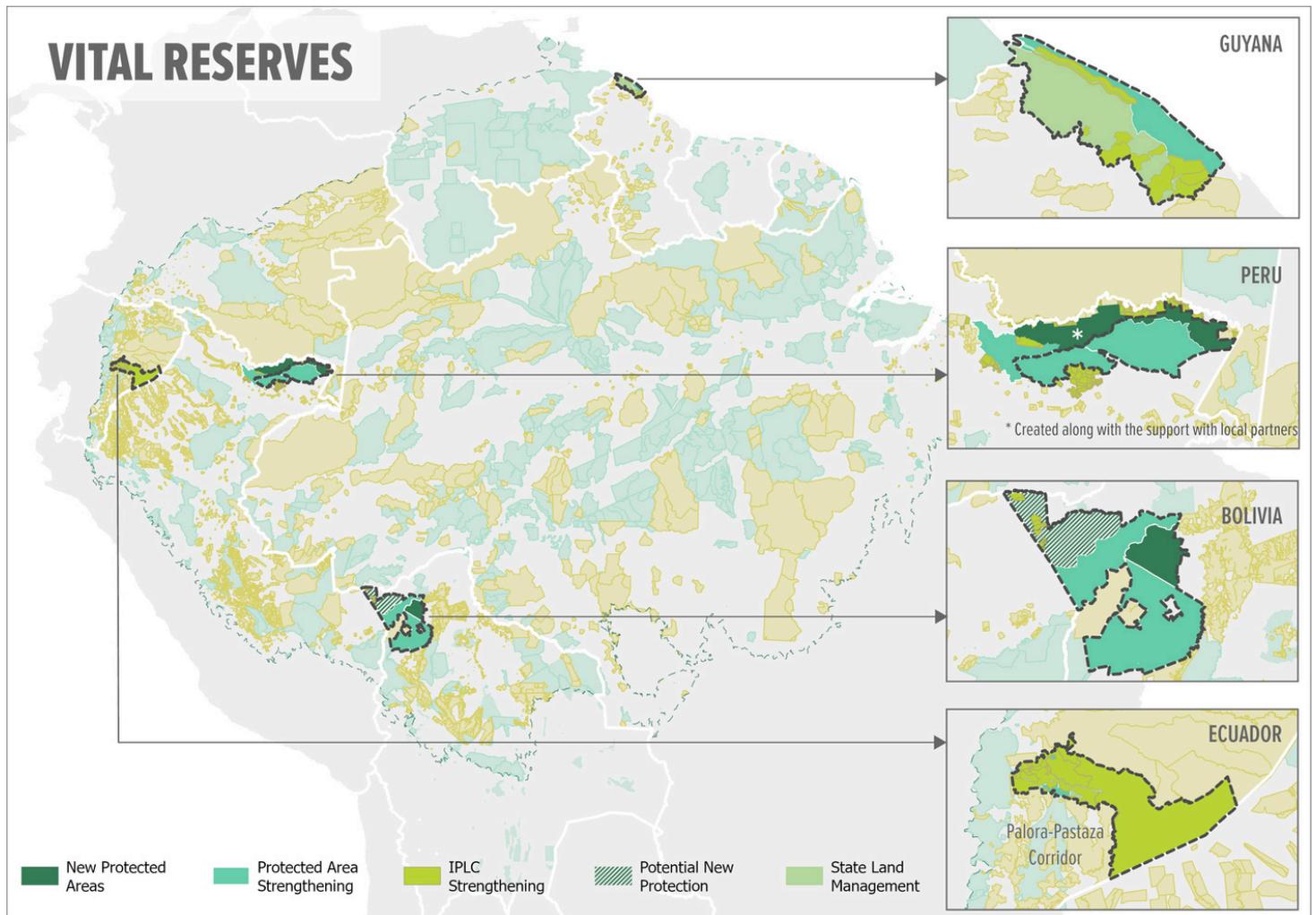


OUR
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Overview

Our Future Forests – Vital Reserves has supported the conservation and improved management of **more than 7 million hectares across the Amazon**, working alongside Indigenous peoples and governments to strengthen territorial governance, establish new conservation areas, and enhance long-term financial sustainability of the landscapes. These Vital Reserves¹ encompass areas exceptionally rich in irrecoverable carbon, carbon that, if released, cannot be restored by 2050 and irreplaceable biodiversity, while also reflecting a mosaic of management schemes, including protected areas, Indigenous territories, and community-managed lands.

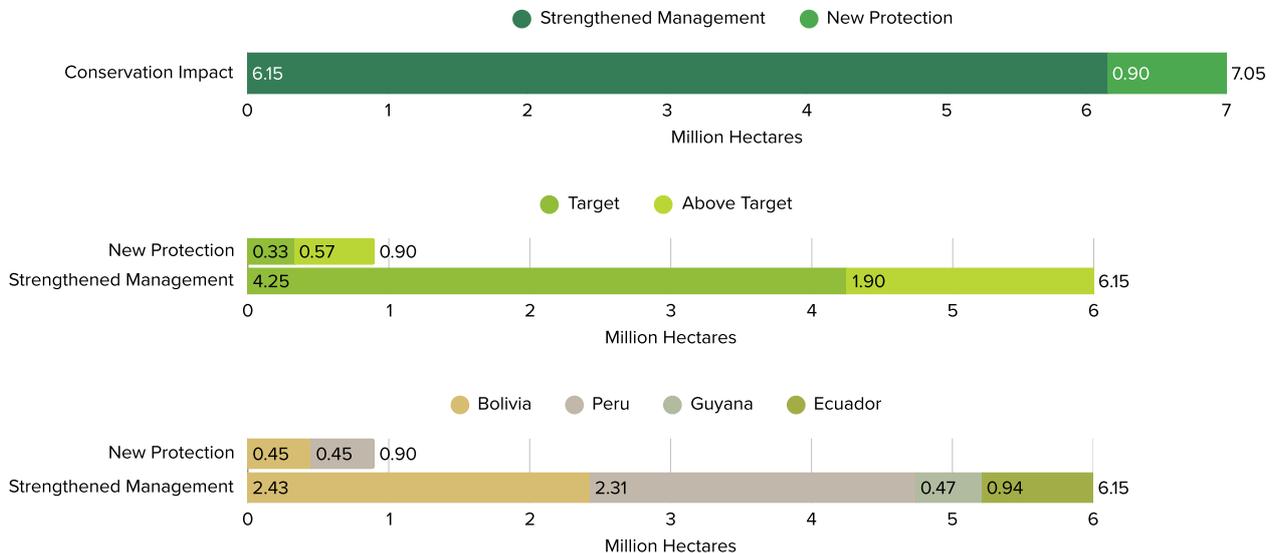
Beyond fostering strategic partnerships, the program has supported governments, Indigenous peoples, and local communities to manage territories, co-design governance arrangements, and advance financial mechanisms that contribute to durable conservation outcomes. This multi-actor approach strengthens coordination across institutions and territories, creating conditions for inclusive governance and long-term conservation at scale.



1. Vital Reserves are areas that hold over 25 metric tons of irrecoverable carbon per hectare and belong to the top 20% of habitats most critical for biodiversity places where conserving them is essential to avoid climate catastrophe and species extinctions.

Cumulative progress to date (2022-2025)

We have exceeded the initial 4.6-million-hectare target, with conservation efforts currently supporting conservation of 7 million hectares across the Amazon, directly engaging more than 6,945 people in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Peru.



Progress breakdown (2025)

In Bolivia, Governance was strengthened in the Gran Manupare and Bajo Madidi Protected Areas through the consolidation of Management Committees. Activities also included support for sustainable livestock practices and Conservation Agreements that improved community access to water systems while reinforcing territorial conservation commitments.

In Ecuador, the Palora–Pastaza Connectivity Corridor (316,321 ha) was officially declared, securing a key Amazonian landscape connecting protected areas and Indigenous territories across Morona Santiago and Pastaza provinces. It maintains ecological connectivity, safeguards water security and irrecoverable carbon, and contributes to Ecuador's 30x30 commitment. Following the declaration, governance processes were initiated through a multi-stakeholder promotion group and a territorial monitoring system, complemented by bioeconomy initiatives in sustainable tourism, handicrafts, and non-timber forest products. Additionally, 622,194 ha of Achuar territory adjacent to the corridor have been preserved, increasing the total area of the Vital Reserve by more than 500%.

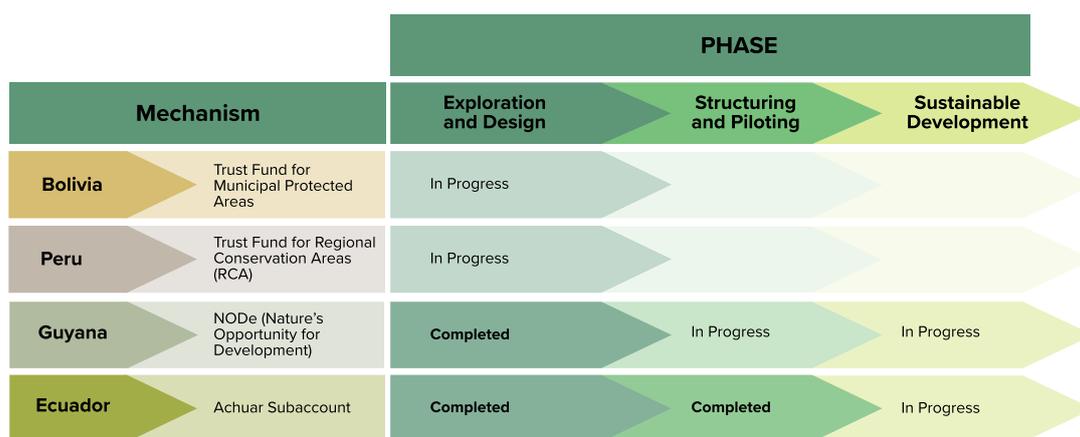
In Guyana, management efforts focused on reinforcing governance of the Shell Beach Protected Area, supporting territorial monitoring in Mabaruma and Moruca, developing five Village Sustainability Plans, establishing the first Indigenous NGO (INGO) in the Moruca region, and piloting a community-based monitoring system with four communities.

In Peru, the Lower Putumayo Communal Reserve (160,604 ha) and the Medio Putumayo Regional Conservation Area (289,594 ha) were officially created, protecting biodiverse forests, rivers, wetlands, and floodplains within the Putumayo–Amazonas biocultural corridor. Their establishment strengthens ecological connectivity, secures irrecoverable carbon, and supports Indigenous co-management.

Separately, efforts advanced in the Ampiyacu–Apayacu Regional Conservation Area through territorial monitoring and bioeconomy initiatives including sustainable fisheries, chambira fiber, rosewood essential oil, and honey production. These activities were implemented across 620,690 ha in collaboration with Indigenous federations FECONA, FEPYRA, FECOIBAP, and FECONAFROPU, as well as communities from Maijuna Kichwa and the Bobona community.

Financial Mechanisms Strengthened or Under Development

The following mechanisms illustrate how countries in the Amazon are advancing toward sustainable long term finance solutions for protected areas and Indigenous territories. The progress table highlights each mechanism’s development stage, while the descriptions below provide additional context on their scope and partnerships.



Description

- **Bolivia:** Endowment fund with the Foundation for the Conservation of Chiquitano Forest (FCBC), starting in Bajo Madidi, expandable to other municipal areas. In parallel, a potential debt conversion is being explored for 2026.
- **Peru:** The design of a Regional Conservation Area (RCA) Fund was initiated in collaboration with multiple organizations (NCI, IBC, WCS, CEDIA, Loreto Government and Indigenous Federations).
- **Guyana:** Community-led Mechanism, known as Nature’s Opportunity for Developmentt (NODE), for financial and technical assistance to Indigenous People and Local Communities (IP&LCs) (Rupununi and Northwest Region).
- **Ecuador:** Currently supports the capitalization of the Achuar Subaccount and the Achuar Nationality by strengthening governance, monitoring and training.

Adaptation

The Vital Reserves project developed climate change adaptation assessments and plans in five key Amazon regions: Southern Landscape (Alto Beni and Bajo Madidi) in Bolivia, the Ampiyacu River Basin (four communities) in Peru, the Uyuimi community in Palora-Pastaza, Ecuador, and the Northwest Region of Guyana. These pilots were co-designed with communities managing these areas, drawing on site-specific climate vulnerability assessments and identifying tailored adaptation measures. Communities in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador are now implementing these prioritized measures to strengthen climate resilience, reduce climate risks, and support sustainable livelihoods. In Guyana, adaptation implementation continues through a national process guided by village plans, with technical support from Conservation International.

Knowledge Sharing

Throughout 2025, the Vital Reserves project strengthened its role as a regional platform for knowledge exchange, convening diverse stakeholders to share practical experiences and advance collective learning on conservation finance, territorial governance, and Indigenous participation in the Amazon. Through a series of targeted webinars and high-level exchanges, the project connected technical analysis with on-the-ground implementation, reinforcing the importance of context-specific solutions and cross-country collaboration to scale sustainable financial mechanisms.

Key knowledge-sharing moments included regional and internal webinars on conservation finance, conservation corridors, and debt-for-nature swaps, as well as participation in international policy spaces including COP30, UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, UNFCCC Intersessional Negotiation (SB62), and CBD Intersessional Negotiation (SBSTTA27). Engagement amid these events also supported advocacy for the prioritization of high-biodiversity and irrecoverable carbon ecosystems and for stronger coordination across the Rio Conventions with the aim of advancing more integrated climate, biodiversity, and people-centered action at the national level.

These exchanges brought together governments, Indigenous leaders, NGOs, donors, financial institutions, and conservation practitioners, highlighting how long-term financial mechanisms, inclusive governance, and institutional readiness, anchored in emerging scientific evidence on irrecoverable carbon, are critical to translating global climate and biodiversity commitments into tangible outcomes in the Amazon.

Key outcomes included:

- Strengthened regional dialogue on sustainable conservation finance and scaling strategies
- Increased visibility of Indigenous leadership and participation in financial mechanisms and governance.
- Shared lessons on large-scale connectivity corridors as integrated ecological, social, and governance frameworks.
- Enhanced understanding of debt-for-nature swaps as integrated tools linking public finance, biodiversity conservation, and community well-being
- Reinforced collaboration among conservation organizations, governments, donors, and financial actors across the Amazon basin.

Safeguards

Conservation International developed tailored safeguard plans for four project sites, including a Gender Action Plan, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism, all fully integrated into the project's framework. These measures ensure inclusive participation, institutional engagement, and grievance resolution. Key outcomes include 53% female participation, support to 22 local land management institutions, and four institutionalized grievance mechanisms across all participating countries.