



EVALUATION SUMMARY

COUNTRY : BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, GUYANA, PERU



Our Future Forests: Vital Reserves in the Amazon

Evaluator : Tero / Salva Terra

Evaluation date : november 2025, mid-term review

KEY FFEM SUPPORT DATA

Amount financed by the FFEM: €2.5 million

Project approval date: 20 June 2023

Duration: 2023 - 2027

Project name: Our Future Forests: Vital Reserves in the Amazon

Project number: CZZ3431

Background

Vital reserves are ecosystems that harbour irreplaceable carbon stocks and exceptional biodiversity, the preservation of which is essential to achieving climate and conservation targets. The Amazon alone is home to 23 per cent of the world's irrecoverable carbon, as well as more than 350 indigenous peoples. It faces growing pressures linked to deforestation, land-use change and climate change. The conservation of areas with high forest cover and low deforestation (HFLD), which are essential for biodiversity, the communities whose survival depends on them, and the mitigation of climate change, remains underfunded. Against this backdrop, the project aims to trial innovative funding mechanisms that reconcile ecosystem protection with support for indigenous peoples and local communities.

Participants and operating methods

The project is led by Conservation International (CI), which oversees regional coordination through a dedicated management unit. Its implementation involves CI's national offices, public authorities, indigenous peoples' organisations, NGOs and local

institutions, with strategic oversight provided by a committee comprising, amongst others, the FFEM, the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MEF) and the AFD.

OBJECTIVES

To contribute to the preservation of the Amazon rainforest and to improving the well-being of local communities through the sustainable creation, protection, management and funding of a new generation of protected areas ('vital reserves'), in line with Conservation International's regional strategy.

Specific objectives:

The aim is (i) to create the scientific, political, financial and institutional conditions conducive to the sustainable management of vital reserves, and then (ii) to develop, protect and manage four pilot sites in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana and Peru, whilst strengthening their governance, securing their long-term funding and supporting the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities.

TESTED INNOVATION

The project is testing sustainable funding mechanisms for vital HFLD reserves, which are excluded from carbon markets due to a lack of additionality. A financial innovation lab identifies, designs, supports and funds the initial stages of these projects in order to assess their feasibility, replicability and potential for wider-scale roll-out.



Amazone @Conservation Internationale



EVALUATION RESULTS

Relevance

The project is highly relevant in terms of the needs of the regions and its partnership-based approach. Despite the risk that strengthening the protection of vital reserves may restrict certain traditional practices, the assessment highlights the strong involvement of indigenous peoples in the design and implementation of the project. Conservation International maintains strong partnerships with their representative federations in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, fostering a relationship of trust, ownership of the initiatives and their adaptation to local circumstances.

Coherence

The project forms part of a broader strategy for French cooperation in the Amazon, benefiting from additional investment from the MEF and the FFEM. Whilst this strategic coherence is evident, the evaluation notes that operational coordination with several AFD projects in the region remains limited. This significantly reduces the potential for synergies, with the exception of a few local collaborations.

Effectiveness

The project has strengthened the governance, technical and financial capacities of indigenous organisations, whilst advancing the development of innovative financing mechanisms. It has also mobilised significant co-funding. However, the results remain mixed: some of the supported economic sectors are still poorly suited to local circumstances, and several financial mechanisms still cover only part of the targeted territories.

ADDED VALUE OF THE FFEM

The FFEM has acted as a catalyst by supporting the testing of funding solutions tailored to vital reserves, capacity-building for local stakeholders and the development of innovative pilot schemes, of which the NOD1 scheme in Guyana appears to be the most promising initiative.

The project is trialling innovative funding mechanisms to protect 4.7 million hectares of vital reserves, which, due to their low rates of deforestation, are excluded from traditional carbon markets.

Efficiency

The project benefits from significant financial leverage thanks to Conservation International's fundraising capabilities, despite the fact that synergies with AFD projects remain limited.

Impact

The project helps to strengthen territorial governance and consultation between local authorities and indigenous organisations, promoting the adoption of conservation strategies, such as the Palora-Pastaza connectivity corridor in Ecuador. However, its leverage in securing additional funding and its influence on national public policy remain, at this stage, limited.

Viability / Sustainability

The sustainability of the project depends on building the capacity of indigenous organisations, consolidating partnerships with local authorities and developing sustainable funding mechanisms. However, their coverage remains limited and their ability to secure funding for all territories remains uncertain. Furthermore, whilst Conservation International is actively engaged in advocacy at the international level, the evaluation highlights the need to strengthen its influence on public policy and national funding mechanisms in order to secure the project's achievements in the long term.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite encouraging results in terms of governance, stakeholder engagement and financial innovation, the evaluation highlights several areas for improvement.

- Strengthen coordination with AFD Group projects to develop synergies;
- Consolidate, diversify and combine financing mechanisms to cover all territories (trust funds, payments for environmental services, private financing and the NOD mechanism);
- Improve monitoring, evaluation and reporting through a shared spatial monitoring system;
- Strengthen local roots by providing greater support for existing local economic sectors for the benefit of communities;
- Carry out an in-depth field assessment to better document the project's impacts and best practices.

Find out more about the project by scanning the QR code



¹ « Nature as an Opportunity for Development »