

EVIO KUIÑAJI ESE'EJA CUANA: SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT WITH THE INFIERNO

Empowering and uniting the Infierno indigenous community

The Evio Kuiñaje Ese'Eja, or Infierno, project works to protect 7,750 hectares of threatened forest in the Peruvian Amazon through engagement with the local indigenous community of Infierno. The project works to safeguard Infierno indigenous culture and protect the forest and its biodiversity through the promotion of activities that reduce pressures on the environment and conserve native values. With native communities the second largest managers of forest land in Peru, the Infierno project is an important model of environmentally and economically sustainable forest management with indigenous communities. The project is part of the Ecosphere+ portfolio and is implemented in partnership with AIDER, a local Peruvian NGO.



Project areas and its threats

The Infierno project area forms part of the Tambopata District of Madre de Dios, an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot. The landscape is threatened by illegal mining, logging, 'slash and burn' agriculture, and infrastructure development.

Deforestation and forest degradation in the community lands of the project are particularly a result of land invasions for 'slash and burn' agriculture and land grabbing, illegal use of forest resources such as timber and low-productivity agriculture and single crop farming. Illegal mining also

poses a significant threat to this landscape with small-scale miners using highly polluting technology and chemicals.

Mitigating climate change

The Infierno project works to address threats of deforestation and forest degradation by promoting sustainable economic activities within the Infierno territory, such as improved forest governance and agroforestry. The project also supports a strong programme of control and surveillance to monitor and report illegal logging or land invasions, and has established conservation agreements to further protect the forest ecosystem.

These project activities are mobilising the Infierno community and creating a productive barrier against encroaching threats to their natural land and its resources. The avoided deforestation as a result of the Infierno project reduces global emissions by more than 1.1 million tonnes CO₂ by 2021 - approximately equivalent to taking over 237,000 cars off the road for one year.

Measurable impacts

We track impact areas across all of our projects. Here are the impacts for the Infierno project:



CLIMATE:

1.1 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions avoided by 2021.



ECOSYSTEMS:

7,750 hectares of threatened forest in the Peruvian Amazon protected.



SPECIES:

Hundreds of unique species protected, including those of high conservation value and endangered species, such as the Black Caiman, Giant Otter and Harpy Eagle.



LIVELIHOODS:

Empowering and uniting the Infierno indigenous community.



INCLUSIVITY:

Women being recognised as community leaders, positions previously considered exclusively for men.



SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE:

Sustainable businesses and commodities supported, such as agroforestry with cacao, implementation of responsible fish farming, handicrafts and ecotourism.

Protecting biodiversity

The Infierno project protects critical habitat for hundreds of unique species, including those of high conservation value (HCV) and endangered species, such as the Black Caiman, Giant Otter and Harpy Eagle. HCV species are defined as those with biological, ecological, social or cultural value that is considered outstandingly significant or critically important at a national, regional or global level. Community control and monitoring of the project site helps to promote the long-term conservation of these important species.

One of the well-known inhabitants of the Infierno project area is the Giant River Otter – the largest otter on earth and classified as endangered by the IUCN. Threatened by habitat loss and water pollution, the Giant River Otter has found a home within the project area as a result of activities that reduce pollution and deforestation along the river.

Working with communities

Engagement with the Infierno indigenous community forms the foundation of the project's work. Project activities are working to strengthen the capacity of a community that is redefining its relationship with the forest and its resources, giving priority to economic and environmental sustainability.



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The Infierno indigenous community consists of distinct ethnic populations.

Participation of women in project activities is deemed as highly important, and the project is slowly overcoming complex cultural characteristics of the Ese'Eja community to recognise women as community leaders, positions previously considered exclusively for men. The project has also had an important impact on improving access to electricity and clean water for the community, and is working to further expand water pipes throughout the Infierno territory.

Cultural dynamics

The Infierno community has a rich history and is ethnically heterogenous. Today, the community is made up of Ese'Eja natives, settlers from the jungle and mountains of Peru, and mestizos, who, from a perspective of social inclusion and multiculturalism, united in a community despite their differences under the codes of Ese'Eja ancestry.

The project has a strong community plan that aims to strengthen community ties and Ese'Eja solidarity among all families. Project activities focus on promoting participation across the entire community, which is highly important to implementing project activities and is a key element in the sustainable development of an area with shared resources. For the Infierno, conservation is bringing people together and overcoming divisive and harmful outside pressures on the environment and community.

Sustainable economic development

Sustainable economic activities are gradually overcoming negative social pressures on the Infierno community – chiefly a lack of community cohesion, mounting population growth and limited access to resources, especially land. The growth of alternative



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The project area is an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot.



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Informal gold mining in the region is highly polluting, and driving deforestation in forest adjacent to the rivers.

livelihoods is generating income for the Infierno people, strengthening forest governance and changing community attitudes towards resource use, which is critical to long-term resilience.

The project works collaboratively with the Infierno community to promote environmentally friendly revenue



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The project protects 7,750 hectares of threatened Peruvian Amazon.

streams, such as agroforestry with cacao, through providing training and technical support along with low interest loan agreements to encourage new community economic ventures. Key economic activities also include the implementation of responsible fish farming, handicrafts and ecotourism.

ECOTOURISM

The Infierno project zone includes a concession of land that is used for ecotourism, and the project has supported the establishment of two ecotourism lodges. These sites are proving the value of eco-businesses and generating employment, while improving education on the importance of forest and biodiversity conservation.

Project implementing partner

The Asociacion para la Investigacion y Desarrollo Integral (AIDER) is our partner on the ground, a Peruvian NGO focused on environmental conservation and sustainable development.



Nested credits

Carbon credits generated by the Infierno project are formally acknowledged by the Peruvian Ministry of Environment (MINAM) and are accounted for in the country's national registry through a 'nested' approach. Nesting this project within Peru's REDD+ programme means that the retired carbon credits, even internationally transacted ones, are not double counted. Avoiding double counting is essential to achieving a 1.5°C warming scenario and ensures the credibility of corporate climate action claims.

External standards

The Infierno project is validated by the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS project ID 1218) and the Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Standard (CCB) to the gold level for both biodiversity and for climate change adaptation.



Sustainable Development Goals



The Infierno project advances many Sustainable Development Goals.