



PROFILE
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Initiating forest climate demonstration activities

Forest & Climate Initiative

Maintaining the Amazon's forests for people and the planet

Madre de Dios, Peru

The Madre de Dios River, which flows from the Andes Mountains in Peru, is a headwater tributary of the Amazon River. The area in the southern Peruvian Amazon through which it flows, named the Madre de Dios Region, spans 8.5 million hectares of intact, low-lying rainforest. Home to the world's greatest concentration of bird species, as well as healthy populations of jaguar, tapir and other large Amazonian mammals, this region is among the most biodiverse in the Amazon. The forests in Madre de Dios also support the region's people, including indigenous communities living in voluntary isolation.

Forests under pressure

Over half of Peru, some 70 million hectares, is covered by forest, making this the second-largest expanse of forests in the Amazon. Yet, nearly 50 per cent of the country's annual greenhouse gas emissions come from the destruction of these same forests¹. An expanding agricultural frontier, human migration, infrastructure and energy projects, gold mining and illegal logging – among other factors – all drive deforestation in Madre de Dios. The Inter-Oceanic Highway, which connects the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans through Peru and Brazil, will open up the Amazon to the Pacific Rim economy. Social and political issues, such as unclear land tenure, limited involvement of stakeholders in decision-making and the lack of planning, further contribute to forest loss. These rising threats all point to an urgent need for sustainable management of these forests.

REDD+ - A promising solution?

If we can find a way to halt forest loss in Peru, not only will a vital part of the Amazon's rainforests be conserved, but the carbon held in the plants and soil of these forests will remain sequestered – which is key to fighting climate change. Efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and to conserve, sustainably manage and enhance forest carbon stocks (referred to as REDD+) are underway in Peru. REDD+ is a scheme to compensate developing countries for maintaining and sustainably managing their forests.

¹ Ministry of the Environment (MINAM). 2010. Second National Communication of Peru to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.





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REDD+ - A promising solution?

WWF's Forest & Climate Initiative is working with governments, civil society and indigenous communities in Madre de Dios to pilot innovative technologies to measure and monitor the carbon in forests, improve governance and

promote policies that address the drivers of deforestation at the local and regional levels. The aim of these activities is to demonstrate how REDD+ could be used as a tool to advance sustainable development while conserving biodiversity and tackling climate change.

Our work in Madre de Dios

Among the biggest challenges for REDD+ is the feasibility and cost of measuring and monitoring the carbon stored in forests, and how it changes over time. WWF is developing a robust and transparent forest monitoring, reporting and verification system in Madre de Dios to accurately estimate potential emissions reductions from reducing deforestation and forest degradation. Building on existing carbon maps, this approach combines freely available satellite imagery with data from lasers used in aerial surveys to produce a high-resolution, large-scale map of the amount of carbon stored in the forests of Madre de Dios. This method allows the rate of deforestation in Madre de Dios to be demonstrated with 93 per cent accuracy while also identifying what's driving forest loss. Knowing both the amount of carbon in the region and the root causes of deforestation are essential to developing appropriate REDD+ mitigation activities.

WWF understands that increasing the technical capacity of civil society organizations and communities is crucial to communities being able to benefit from REDD+. Along with the regional government and a local university, we are developing the first certification course for REDD+ to train regional and local government officials, NGOs specialists and university graduates in tropical forest ecology and deforestation assessments.

The sub-national model developed in the Madre de Dios region will be among the first models of REDD+ at a significant spatial scale. Lessons learned from this project, including those on monitoring and civil society engagement, will be essential to informing the national REDD+ strategy for Peru and other countries pursuing similar strategies.

Making REDD+ work for people and nature

If we get it right, REDD+ could reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting biodiversity and supporting sustainable development that benefits forest-dwelling communities. WWF's Forest & Climate Initiative is initiating REDD+ demonstration activities in the world's key forest landscapes, including the Amazon, Borneo and Congo Basin, by working at scale with communities and

governments to test approaches for getting REDD+ right.

We are working to ensure that REDD+ delivers on its promise of maintaining forests for the benefit of people and nature.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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