

THE AMAZON SACRED HEADWATERS ALLIANCE

AN INDIGENOUS-LED ALLIANCE WORKING
TO PERMANENTLY PROTECT THE AMAZON
SACRED HEADWATERS BIOREGION



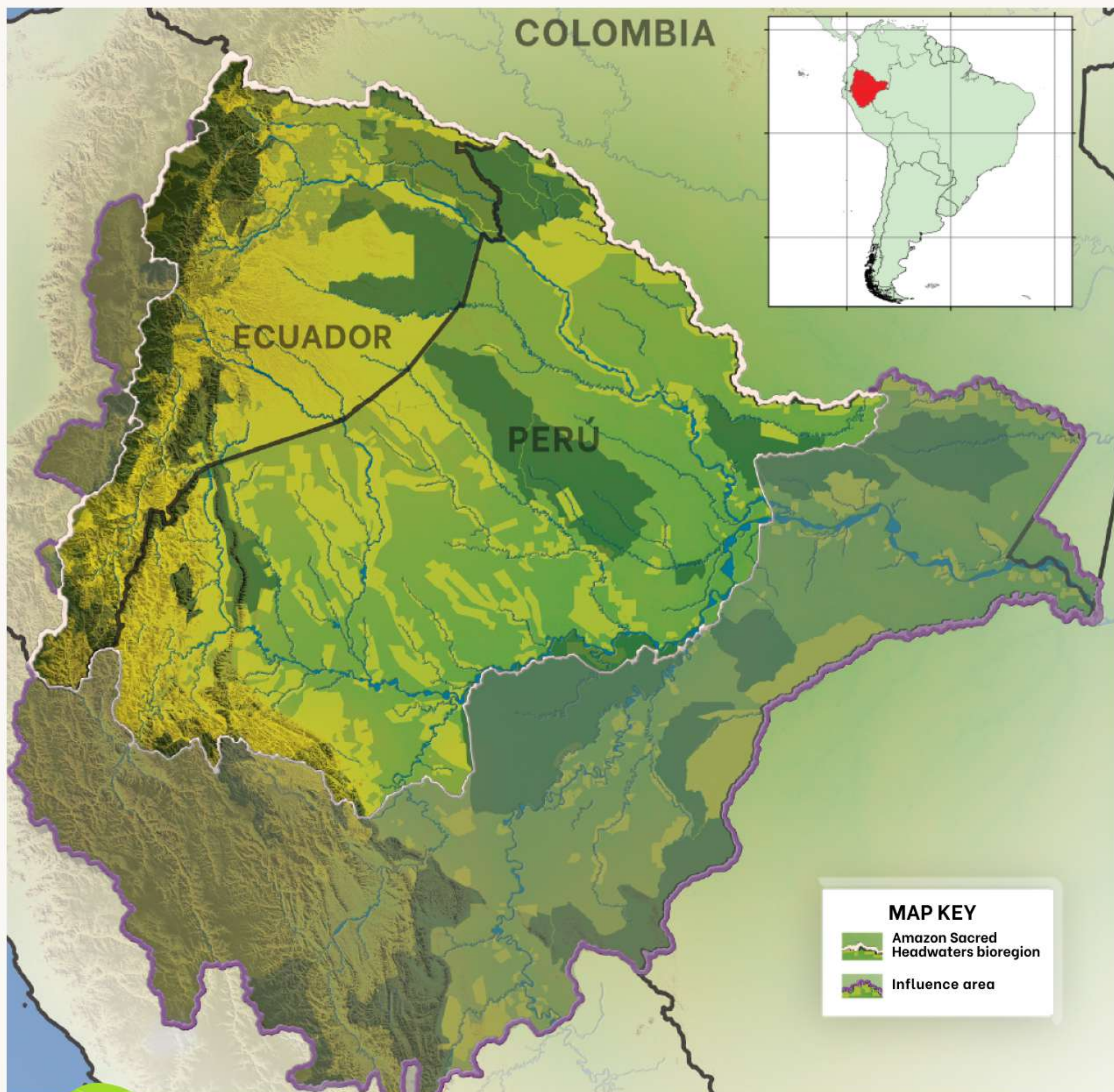
AMAZON
SACRED
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ABOUT THE AMAZON SACRED HEADWATERS ALLIANCE

In 2017, the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon Sacred Headwaters united to form the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance (ASHA). This alliance was created to safeguard our rainforest territories, driven by the understanding that we are all part of an interconnected web of rivers and forests. Recognizing our shared kinship, we believe that **by coming together, we can more effectively protect our lands and our rights.**

ASHA is emerging as one of the **world's largest Indigenous-led forest protection initiatives.** Comprising 30 Indigenous nations and peoples from Ecuador and Peru, we share a common vision to permanently protect **86 million acres of bio-culturally rich tropical rainforest—an area larger than Italy.** This region spans the headwaters of the Amazon River, including the Napo, Pastaza, and Marañón Basins.





THE AMAZON RAINFOREST AT TIPPING POINT

The Amazon Basin, the largest rainforest on Earth and home to over 500 Indigenous nations as well as unparalleled biodiversity, is **approaching a critical tipping point**. The ongoing loss of forests and biodiversity is driven by extractive activities under the guise of development, including mining, oil drilling, logging, and industrial agriculture.

The Amazon rainforest plays a crucial role in regulating global climate by driving atmospheric rivers essential for **rainfall distribution, sequestering carbon, and influencing local and global weather patterns**. Scientists warn that deforestation is destabilizing the Amazon's hydrological system, which could lead to a massive dieback of the forest within decades unless immediate action is taken to **protect and restore 80 percent** of its cover.







“Where Indigenous peoples live, there are forests, rivers, and abundance. Our relationship with our forests and rivers is not a relationship of 10 or 20 years—it is a relationship of more than 10,000 years. For thousands of years, we have preserved and defended nature through the strength of our cultures, worldview, and our respectful lifeway. Indigenous peoples do not talk about conserving nature; we talk about respecting nature because we see her as our family, we see her as the mother, we see her as our home.

We have begun to join together all the efforts, all the tools, the spirits of our ancestors, and the visions of our wise elders, so that together with the global community we can defend our mother. Calling on governments, Indigenous peoples, and citizens everywhere to come together to protect our greater home! We must do this so that the river continues to feed us and the rainforests continue to heal us, because the Amazon is life. Because our headwaters are sacred!”

**José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal,
Co-founder and Advisor of ASHA**

Excerpts from the Forward to the Bioregional Plan 2030



ALLIANCE'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



AMAZON SACRED HEADWATERS ALLIANCE MEMBERS

1. Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA)
2. The Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDESEP)
3. Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE)
4. Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE)
5. Achuar Nationality of Ecuador (NAE)
6. Kichwa Nationality of Pastaza, Ecuador (PAKKIRU)
7. Siekopai Nation of Ecuador (SIEKOPAI)
8. Shuar Arutam People (PSHA)
9. Indigenous Quijos Nation of Ecuador (NAOQUI)
10. Federation of the Achuar Nationality of Peru (FENAP)
11. Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation (GTANW)
12. Kukama Kukamiria Autonomous Territorial Government
13. Shiwilo Autonomous Territorial Government
14. Shawi Autonomous Territorial Government
15. Kandozi Autonomous Territorial Government
16. Awajun Autonomous Territorial Government (GTAA)
17. Autonomous Territorial Government of the Chapra Nation (GTANCH)
18. Autonomous Territorial Government of The Inka Nation
19. Regional Organization of the Indigenous Peoples from the East of Peru (ORPIO)
20. Regional Coordination of Indigenous Peoples (CORPI)
21. Secoya Indigenous Organization of Peru (OISPE)
22. Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Northern Peruvian Amazon (ORPIAN)
23. Binational Coordination of the Achuar Nationality of Ecuador and Peru (COBNAEP)
24. Sapara Binational Federation of Ecuador and Peru (FEBSEP)
25. Fundación Pachamama
26. The Pachamama Alliance
27. Rainforest Foundation-US
28. Coordinator of Development and Defense of Indigenous Peoples of the San Martín Region (CODEPISAM)

In June 2023, ASHA's General Assembly elected an **11-member Board of Directors for 3-year terms**, including a board President and Vice-President. The Board of Directors meets monthly to provide direction to the Secretariat and ensure timely operational decisions are made. The board includes four seats for the Indigenous co-founders of the newly constituted organization; **three permanent seats for AIDSEP, CONFENIAE and COICA**; **two rotating seats from local Indigenous organizations**; and **two rotating seats for NGO members of the Alliance**.

The following are the elected board of directors for the 2023-2026 period:

1. Founding member & Alliance President of the Board: Uyunkar Domingo Peas Nampichkai (Achuar)
2. Founding member & Alliance Vice President: Wrayz Perez (Wampis)
3. Founding member: Jorge Perez (AIDSEP)
4. Founding member: Lolita Piaguaje (Siekopai)
5. Jamner Manihuari (COICA)
6. José Esach (CONFENIAE)
7. Elaine Shajian Shawit (CORPI)
8. Olivia Bisa (GTA Chapra)
9. Saúl Calapucha (PAKKIRU)
10. Belén Páez (Fundación Pachamama)
11. Kim Chaix (Rainforest Foundation US)

The Pachamama Alliance, a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, will continue to act as ASHA's fiscal sponsor for U.S. funders who need to make grants through a U.S. organization. This arrangement will remain in place until ASHA obtains its own nonprofit status in the U.S.



A BIOREGIONAL PLAN FOR THE PERMANENT PROTECTION OF THE SACRED HEADWATERS

Our Alliance has undertaken a 3.5 year participatory process of building a shared long-term vision outlined in the **Bioregional Plan 2030**, a ‘living’ blueprint for a just ecologic and economic transition (an Amazon Green New Deal), with solution pathways inspired by Indigenous stewardship visions and practices and rooted in principles of ‘**Buen Vivir**’ (collective wellbeing).





**IMPLEMENTING OUR
BIOREGIONAL PLAN 2030**



LIVING SCHOOL OF THE AMAZON (EVA)

The Living School of the Amazon (EVA) nurtures Indigenous Amazonian youth leadership through a joint collaboration with partners ASHA, CONFENIAE, the Rhiza Collective, and Amawtay Wasi University. This initiative has created a regional leadership network and its leaders plan to expand into Peru, supporting a 30-year vision for Amazonian transformation.

In 2023, EVA **graduated its first cohort of 30 students, with contributions from 22 elders and 12 specialized teachers.** In 2024, enrollment grew by **37% to 41 students.** EVA now aims to gain official recognition as a higher education institution, expand its infrastructure, increase enrollment to over 80 students, and enhance its community 'escuelitas' (little schools) network. We are also in discussions with indigenous organizations in Northern Peru to replicate a similar youth leadership training program in the Peruvian Amazon.



REFORESTING EDIBLE FORESTS PILOT PROJECT

ASHA in collaboration with Reforest'Action and Fundación Pachamama, launched the “Reforesting Edible Forests” pilot project. This initiative focuses on restoring degraded ecosystems while providing sustainable economic alternatives to extractive industries.

The project has successfully **planted over 170,000 trees and plants of 105 different Amazonian species across 1,000 hectares**, with contributions from community nurseries. It has established partnerships with 47 communities from 8 Indigenous nations. Additionally, approximately 20% of the species planted are endangered or vulnerable, significantly contributing to biodiversity restoration and ecosystem resilience.



ASHA'S INNOVATIVE FINANCIAL MECHANISMS STRATEGY

ASHA's "Jaguar Tokens" pilot project carried by Fundación Pachamama, Regen Network, Stoknes Futures and other partners exemplifies innovative financing mechanisms that empower communities who are committed forest stewards. For instance, the Achuar community of Sharamensta's initiative to halt illegal logging has established a community fund supported by Biocultural Credit Units, or **"Jaguar tokens," linked to ecosystem health indicators like jaguar sightings.** The community is using these funds to implement its life plan in areas of food security, health and education and forest monitoring, restoration, and culture. Fundación Pachamama is working with local governments to structure a market for ecosystem service credits, while also helping **ASHA plan how to scale such financial instruments throughout the bioregion.**



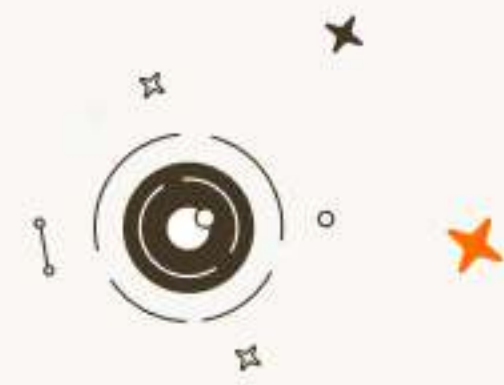


SCALING ASHA'S VISION AND FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

In 2025, ASHA plans to expand its financial mechanisms, **launching initiatives that unlock international funding and direct resources to protect and restore rainforests in Indigenous territories.** Implementation will target 2–3 critical hotspots under imminent threat from new mining, oil drilling, and roads, transforming these areas into regenerative economic zones. Proceeds from biocultural stewardship tokens will create community funds, supporting local well-being and ecological stewardship rooted in the Indigenous philosophy of “buen vivir.” These efforts will inform the expansion of financial mechanisms across the entire bioregion.



ASHA'S PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES



- 1. Amazon Sacred Headwaters Bioregional Grants Facility:** grants and technical assistance for forest monitoring territorial governance, communication, food security, bioeconomy livelihoods, health and education, eco-tourism, river and air transport.
- 2. Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Leadership:** Grow indigenous organizations and leadership, incorporate elders in designing solutions and teaching the next generation of leaders in The Living Amazon School (EVA),
- 3. Defending Territories:** Advocacy and legal campaigns to defend Indigenous collective rights and the rights of nature; to stop extractive industries, new roads, illegal mining and logging.
- 4. Reforestation, Restoration and Food Forests:** implement community nurseries, food forests and eco-restoration, conservation planning.
- 5. Indigenous Territories Legal Recognition:** (22 million acres) support indigenous land claims and autonomous territorial governance and stewardship.
- 6. Call for Systemic Solutions and Financing:** research and dialogue on debt relief, wellbeing indicators, funding biocultural stewardship, bioeconomy hubs, commitments to phase out fossil fuels.

EVALUATING AND REPORTING OUR IMPACT AND LEARNINGS



An adaptive **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning system** has been designed and being tested to carry out the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of our interventions and to measure our impact towards our bioregional plan and systems change goals. The Secretariat produces quarterly and annual reports to present our progress and challenges in relation to the priorities set by ASHA's General Assembly.





→ [SACREDHEADWATERS.ORG](https://sacredheadwaters.org)

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