



AMAZON
SACRED
HEADWATERS

THE AMAZON SACRED HEADWATERS ALLIANCE

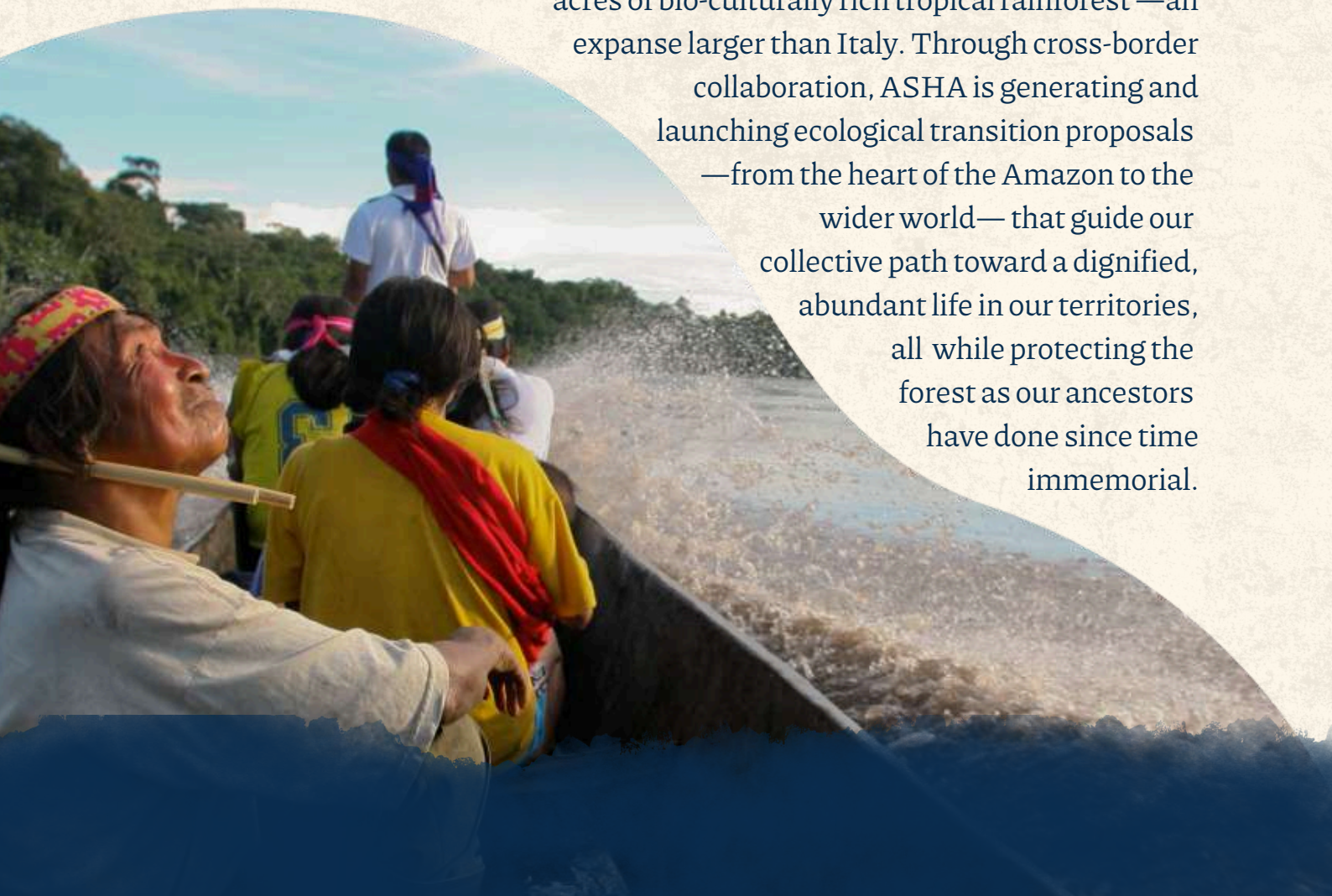
AN INDIGENOUS-LED ALLIANCE
WORKING TO PERMANENTLY
PROTECT THE AMAZON SACRED
HEADWATERS BIOREGION

ABOUT THE AMAZON SACRED HEADWATERS ALLIANCE

In 2017, the Indigenous peoples across the Napo, Pastaza, and Marañón River Basins of Ecuador and Peru came together to form the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance (ASHA). Born out of a shared understanding that we belong to an interconnected living network of rivers and rainforests, our Alliance embodies our collective kinship with this bioculturally significant ecosystem.

Today, our Alliance stands among the world's largest Indigenous-led forest protection efforts, representing 30 nations who inhabit a bioregion within the headwaters of the Amazon River. Honoring our shared responsibility, we unite our struggles and forge deep partnerships to amplify our impact in defense of our territories and our rights.

We share a bold vision: to permanently protect 86 million acres of bio-culturally rich tropical rainforest—an expanse larger than Italy. Through cross-border collaboration, ASHA is generating and launching ecological transition proposals—from the heart of the Amazon to the wider world—that guide our collective path toward a dignified, abundant life in our territories, all while protecting the forest as our ancestors have done since time immemorial.





THE AMAZON RAINFOREST AT TIPPING POINT

Each minute, an area of Amazon rainforest the size of five football fields disappears—pushing the world's largest tropical forest closer to ecological collapse. The Amazon Basin—home to over 500 Indigenous nations and unparalleled biodiversity—is now approaching a critical tipping point of no return.

Amazon drives atmospheric rivers that deliver rainfall across continents, sequesters carbon, and shapes weather patterns from local to planetary scales. Scientists warn that rampant deforestation is already disrupting the Amazon's water cycle. If we do not protect and restore at least 80 percent of its forest cover, the basin risks catastrophic dieback within decades.

Amazon destruction is fueled by an extractive economic model that pushes industrial agriculture, mining, oil drilling, logging, road-building, and hydroelectric dams into ancient primary forests. Countless species—many not yet catalogued—stand to vanish, and whole Indigenous cultures could face extinction if deforestation continues.

Meanwhile, Indigenous defenders—women and men—are criminalized, attacked, and even killed for standing up to protect their collective territories and rights. Their courage under fire underscores both the urgency and the stakes of this fight.

In the face of these brutal realities, we—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—stand together. United in purpose, we are stronger in our fight to secure the present and future of our peoples, the Amazon, and all of humanity.





“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 of our 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,
ASHA Co-founder and Advisor**

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 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. Coordinator of Development and Defense of Indigenous Peoples of the San Martín Region (CODEPISAM)
27. Pachamama Alliance
28. Rainforest Foundation-US



ASHA's General Assembly of 28 member organizations meets annually. In 2023, the Assembly elected an 11-member Board of Directors to serve a 3-year term. The Board of Directors holds virtual monthly meetings to provide direction to the technical staff and ensure that timely operational decisions are made. The board includes three permanent seats for AIDSEP, CONFENIAE and COICA; four seats for the Indigenous co-founders; two rotating seats for 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. Alliance President: Uyunkar Domingo Peas Nampichkai (Achuar)
2. Alliance Vice President: Wrayz Perez (Wampis)
3. Jorge Perez (AIDSEP)
4. Lolita Piaguaje (Siekopai)
5. Jamner Manihuari (COICA)
6. José Esach (CONFENIAE)
7. Elaine Shajian Shawit (CORPI)
8. Olivia Bisa (GTA Chapra)
9. Luis Canelos (PAKKIRU)
10. Belén Páez (Fundación Pachamama)
11. Kim Chaix (Rainforest Foundation US)

ASHA is a legally registered and operating Ecuador-based nonprofit organization established in 2023 by a ministerial resolution. For U.S. funders who wish to make grants through a U.S. 501 (c)3 tax-exempt organization, The Pachamama Alliance serves as ASHA's U.S. fiscal sponsor. In the UK, tax-exempt donations to ASHA can be made through the charity EarthPercent.



A BIOREGIONAL PLAN FOR THE PERMANENT PROTECTION OF THE SACRED HEADWATERS

Our Alliance undertook 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, with solution pathways inspired by Indigenous stewardship visions and practices and rooted in principles of ‘Buen Vivir’ (collective wellbeing). The Bioregional Plan 2030, outlines five objectives: advancing Indigenous rights and territorial governance, halting deforestation, stopping extractive industries, ensuring communities’ wellbeing, and conserving and restoring forests.

The plan calls for systemic solutions such as legalization of indigenous lands, direct funding to Indigenous peoples, debt forgiveness, wellbeing indicators and commitments to phase out fossil fuels. ASHA calls on governments, international organizations, donors, philanthropists, the business sector, the media, and activists to join us now. Together, we can defend life for present and future generations.





**IMPLEMENTING
OUR
BIOREGIONAL
PLAN 2030**



LIVING SCHOOL OF THE AMAZON - EVA

The Living School of the Amazon (Escuela Viva de la Amazonía-EVA) is an Indigenous-led, bioregional leadership program launched in March 2023. A joint program of the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance (ASHA) and the Confederation of Indigenous Organizations of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), the school has so far trained 70 emerging leaders (18-30 years old).

EVA's mission is to safeguard the Amazon by training and empowering Indigenous youth in their political representation and organizing skills rooted in their ancestral cosmovision. By integrating traditional knowledge with practical leadership training, and modern technologies, EVA is cultivating a generation of skilled and culturally rooted leaders prepared to protect and defend their territories.

EVA has completed two full cohorts, achieving an 85% completion rate with high satisfaction ratings among students. As it scales to its third and largest cohort of 51 youth (including 12 from Peru), EVA is positioned to expand its impact across borders, institutionalize intercultural education, and prepare a cadre of well-trained Indigenous youth leaders by 2030.





REFORESTING EDIBLE FORESTS PILOT PROJECT

ASHA in collaboration with ReforestAction and Fundación Pachamama, launched the "Reforesting Edible Forests" pilot project. This initiative focuses on restoring degraded ecosystems while providing communities with greater food sovereignty as well as supporting regenerative livelihoods.

The project has successfully planted over 170,000 trees and plants of 117 different Amazonian species across 1,000 hectares, with contributions from community nurseries. It has established partnerships with 50 communities from 8 Indigenous nations. Additionally, approximately 20% of the species planted are endangered or vulnerable, significantly contributing to biodiversity restoration and ecosystem resilience.

Currently ASHA is developing plans to scale the program to restore and regenerate some 10,000 hectares of degraded lands.



JAGUAR BIOCULTURAL STRATEGY

ASHA's "Jaguar Tokens" pilot—led by the Achuar community of Sharamentsa in Ecuador in partnership with Fundación Pachamama, Regen Network, Stoknes Futures and ASHA—demonstrates an innovative financing approach that supports communities to protect their forests. Faced with illegal logging and a proposed road through their territory, Sharamentsa established a community fund backed by Biocultural Stewardship Units, or “Jaguar tokens,” that are tied to ecosystem health indicators such as jaguar sightings.

Combining state-of-the-art forest monitoring with camera traps, drones and satellite imagery, the community generates a dashboard of data. These results underpin the issuance of “Jaguar Units” on an open blockchain registry, generating revenue to support the implementation of the community's life plan. As transparent, verifiable stewardship credits, Jaguar Units directly fund conservation actions while reinforcing ancestral ties to the land and strengthening Indigenous territorial governance.

Proceeds from the Jaguar Tokens pilot are being invested in food security, healthcare, education, forest monitoring, restoration efforts, and cultural preservation. Having proven effective in Sharamentsa, this model is now expanding to three adjacent communities also resisting the proposed road—and will include ten more communities in the next phase. This initiative has the potential to scale across ASHA's entire 35 million-hectare bioregion.



THE AMAZON SACRED HEADWATERS FUND: A BIOREGIONAL GRANT-MAKING FACILITY

In 2025, ASHA launched a participatory process to create the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Fund—a bioregional grant-making vehicle and revolving loan facility. To fund the bioregional plan and address the scale of the threats facing this bioregion, we must mobilize resources at least ten times our current funding level.

Building on ASHA's established network and shared vision, the Fund's governance structure is now taking shape. It will live within our Ecuadorian nonprofit with its own account. It will be governed by an Investment Committee composed of Indigenous ASHA Members, ASHA Staff, and select external members charged with approving grants and loans, implementing a project portfolio sourcing process, and setting strategic priorities. Their decisions will be informed by an Advisory Committee of Indigenous elders, thematic experts, and allied funders, ensuring every investment aligns with our bioregional goals.

With this robust Measurement Learning & Evaluation program to guide its impact, the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Fund will channel sustained, transparent resources to the critical efforts to protect rainforest and defend Indigenous rights well into the coming decades.



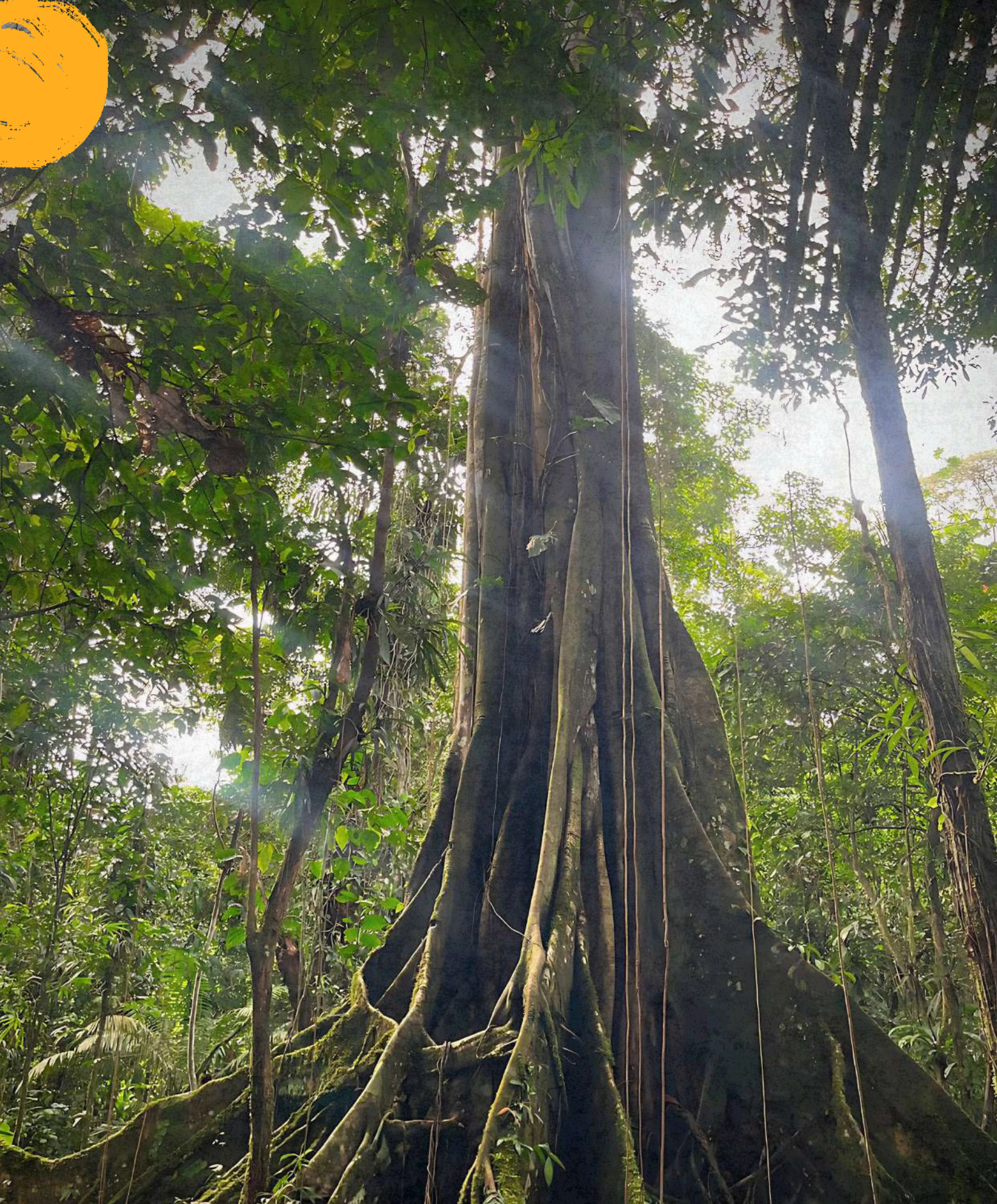
ASHA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

At our 2024 General Assembly, the Alliance adopted the following strategic priorities:

1. **Secure Our Territories & Rights:** Ensure the full exercise of Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination by strengthening our organizational, technical, and political capacities to legalize, govern and defend our territories and our rights.
2. **Advance Indigenous Wellbeing:** Support indigenous economies and livelihood by funding and implementing programs for food sovereignty, forest conservation and restoration, health services, renewable energy, women's empowerment and youth leadership.
3. **Grow Strategic Alliances & Collective Advocacy:** Deepen our strategic alliances regionally and globally to coordinate collective actions to halt extractive industries, defend Indigenous Peoples' rights and the rights of Nature.
4. **Strengthen Governance, Capacity and Learning:** Strengthen the Alliance's coordinating capacity, governance and our financial sustainability while Instituting a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system to track our progress towards our strategic objectives.
5. **Mobilize Resources at Scale:** Establish the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Bioregional Fund—a bioregional grant-making vehicle and revolving loan fund designed to mobilize and channel resources necessary for the full implementation of the Bioregional Plan 2030.



Learn more about our work



AMAZON
SACRED
HEADWATERS



<https://sacredheadwaters.org/>



amazonheadwater



@AmazonHeadwater