GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
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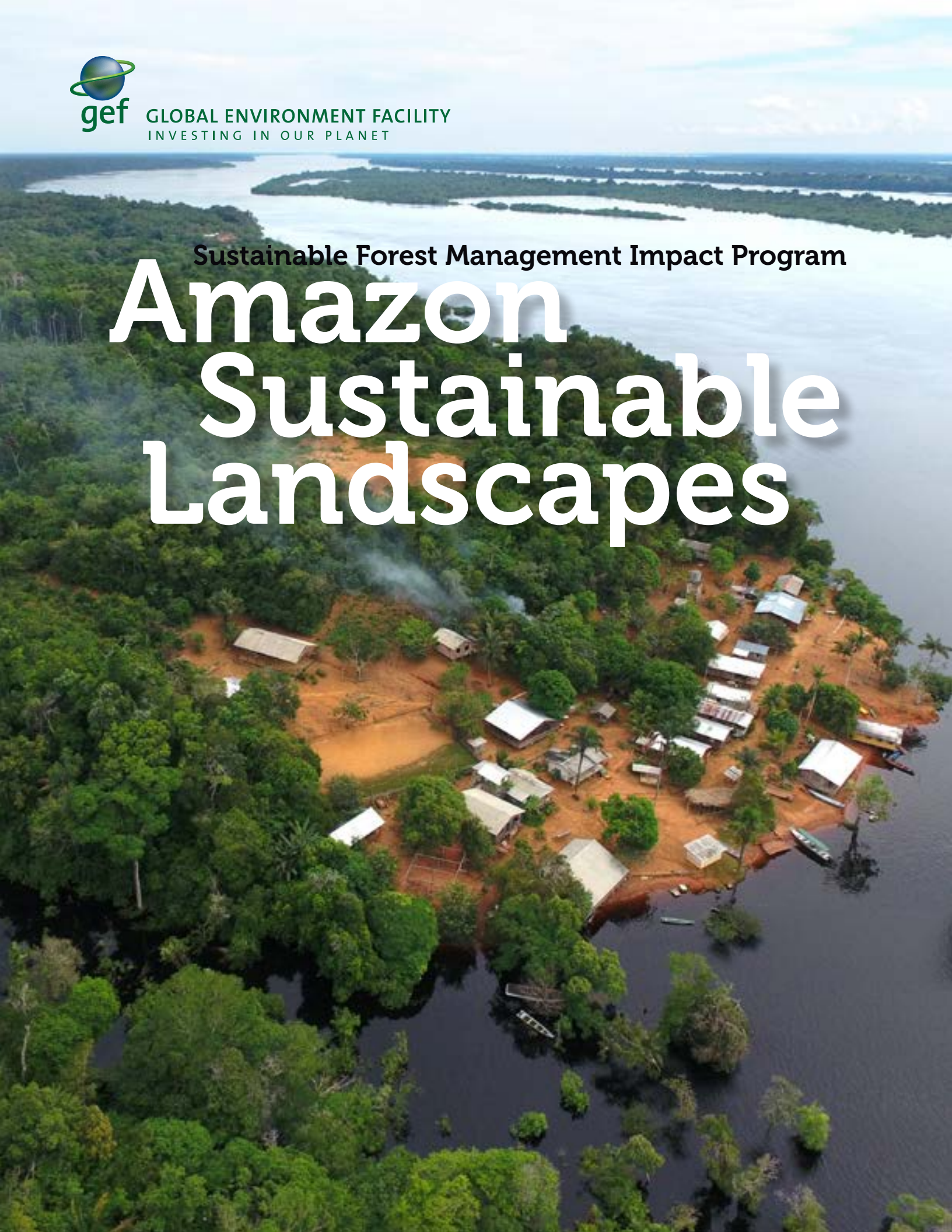
Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program

Amazon Sustainable Landscapes



Program Rationale

South America is home to several sensitive biomes, most notably the Amazon, where balancing economic development with conservation remains an ongoing challenge. The Amazon biome is defined as the area covered predominantly by dense moist tropical forest, with less extensive areas of savannas, floodplain forests, grasslands, swamps, bamboos, and palm forests. The biome encompasses 6.70 million km^2, including 610 protected areas, as well as 2,344 indigenous territories that cover 45% of the basin. More than 40% of the rainforest remaining on Earth is found in the Amazon and it is home to at least 10% of the world's known species. The Amazon River is the largest river basin in the world and accounts for 15-16% of the world's total river discharge into the oceans. The Amazon River contains the largest number of freshwater fish species in the world. The Amazon forest and river ecosystem is one of largest natural areas that still has the potential to remain sustainably conserved and managed.

Given that 90-140 billion metric tons of carbon are stored in the forests of the Amazon, there is considerable potential to influence global climate if it is not properly protected or managed. Land conversion and deforestation in the Amazon release up to 0.5 billion metric tons of carbon per year. Continued deforestation is likely to speed up forest loss, and if current destructive trends continue, more than 50% of forests within the Amazon could be destroyed in the next two decades.

There are several interrelated factors constituting the drivers and root causes of the deforestation and degradation of the Amazon biome. These are related to export markets, transport and energy infrastructure development, social inequality, and poverty. All these are linked to shortcomings of the policy frameworks and weak governance to establish and enforce legislation for nature conservation, as well as lack of appropriate land use planning.

GEF involvement in the Amazon began focusing on building institutional capacity and financial sustainability to help individual countries manage national systems of protected areas. As this capacity became established, GEF's investment strategy branched out to support sustainable management of production landscapes outside of the formal protected area estate. We concluded that in order to ensure ecosystem connectivity and socio-ecological resilience in the Amazon, it was necessary to manage landscapes in more integrated ways where protected areas and production areas were part of a land use mosaic that supported sustainable economic development and ecosystem integrity at the same time. This focus has not been strictly terrestrial in nature but has also included the management of shared transboundary freshwater ecosystems.

The first phase of the GEF Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program (ASL-1) is currently under implementation and is the culmination of this evolution towards integrated programming as expressed in a clear theory of change that the ASL Program and each of its projects is built upon. This theory of change posits that if: (a) an adequate area of the Amazon is conserved under various regimes (protected areas and indigenous lands); (b) agriculture, degraded, and forest lands are managed sustainably, restored, and with zero illegal deforestation tolerance; (c) national policies and strategies support sustainable development that minimizes deforestation and loss of ecosystem services; and (d) capacity of and regional cooperation between key players is improved, then the protection of biodiversity and the integrity and resilience of the Amazon biome can be achieved.

Program Overview

A second phase of the Amazon Sustainable Landscape Program (ASL-2) will build upon ASL-1, and strengthen integrated landscape management and conservation of ecosystems in the Amazon region. The program will facilitate a transition from a business-as-usual scenario characterized by forest conversion into low productivity cattle ranching and other unsustainable land uses to sustainably managed forest and freshwater landscapes over the long-term. The ultimate outcome of this process would be to maintain and restore the ecological resilience of the Amazon biogeographical region. A landscape mosaic made up of well-managed protected areas

and indigenous territories, with sustainable use in the surrounding landscapes, will conserve biodiversity and assure the required connectivity for key ecosystems and species to adapt to climate change. Adding more value for sustainable timber and non-timber (including aquatic) production chains and strengthening ecosystem services will improve the livelihoods of local communities and indigenous populations, conserve key ecosystem services for local, national, and global societies by reducing global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance adaptation for extreme climate change events, and help maintain regional rainfall patterns.

The program supports national projects in each of the participating countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname. It will also include a regional coordination and knowledge platform project building on the platform created under ASL-1.

Program Approach

The ASL-2 Impact Program will be implemented through four main components:

- Integrated protected landscapes;
- Integrated productive landscapes;
- Policies/incentives for protected and productive landscapes; and
- Capacity building and regional cooperation.

ASL-2 will build upon ASL-1, and aims to: (a) strengthen and expand the initiatives launched under ASL-1 in the original three countries and launch them in the four new countries to increase the area under effective conservation, reduce deforestation, promote sustainable use and restoration of native vegetation and ensure the conservation of species, habitats, ecosystem services and cultural values; (b) expand the range of thematic issues tackled from a predominantly terrestrial perspective to include the management of freshwater ecosystems and aquatic resources including strategic watersheds; and (c) advance the regional dimensions of the program, enhancing the ongoing multi-country collaboration around knowledge exchange and learning and complementing it with concrete efforts to identify and jointly manage issues of shared concern on the ground.

The GEF selected the World Bank to lead and oversee the design of this new phase.

Program Delivery Framework

The ASL-1 Program comprises four national projects — one each in Brazil and Colombia and two in Peru — and a national coordinating project. The program has been under implementation for more than one year.

The ASL-2 Impact Program includes four additional countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Suriname). Each country project follows four main program directions adjusted to country-level circumstances, focusing on different geographic priorities. Projects will engage different stakeholders including national/subnational governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and civil society.

Country-level Engagement

Bolivia: The project aims to improve the management capacities and sustainable financing of the Bolivian Amazon protected areas (national and subnational) and the sustainable management of natural resources in the ecosystems that the protected areas represent, thus providing a boost to existing integrated landscape management and conservation practices. The project will do so both through direct interventions in protected areas and outside them, and through systemic enhancement of planning, governance, and capacity of stakeholders in sustainable forest management. The project targets six national protected areas including Reserva de Vido Silvestre Bruno Racua.

Brazil: The proposed project aims to maintain ecological resilience of the Brazilian Amazon through: promoting consolidation and improvement of the protected area including Ramsar sites; integrating Landscape Management to contribute to climate change and reducing carbon emissions from deforestation; improving policies for protected and productive landscapes; capacity building; and regional cooperation. The proposed project strengthens achievements of ASL-1 and explores new areas of thematic cooperation.

Colombia: The project will contribute to the Amazon's resilience and connectivity by: increasing the area of protected landscapes effectively conserved, managed, and financed; increasing areas of ecosystems restored; and strengthening local economies and productive value chains that disincentivize deforestation and improve wellbeing. Policies, incentive structures, multisectoral strategies, and land use planning as well as capacity building, knowledge exchange, and national/regional collaboration will enable these achievements.

Ecuador: The project intends to improve ecological connectivity, biodiversity conservation, and forest friendly productive value chains through an integrated landscape management approach that aims to deliver sustainable land management and improved local livelihoods, and conservation of globally significant biodiversity. It recognizes the need to bring together multiple stakeholders, who collaborate on integrating policy and practice for different land use objectives, ensuring sustainable land use with benefits for local populations, and biological corridors between protected areas.

The project landscapes have been selected based on their ecological functions as biological corridors and on their proximity to existing deforestation fronts. The project will include two significant landscapes — Putumayo-Aguarico landscape and Palora-Pastaza landscape.

Guyana: The project will employ an integrated landscape approach in the state forests of central Guyana by supporting designation of a new protected area, improving environment management of an adjacent productive landscape, and connecting these to existing protected areas. The project will create a contiguous area of managed forests — the country's first sustainably managed corridor of integrated protected and productive landscapes. The project area lies in the eastern half of central Guyana and is part of an area of conservation interest. It shares boundaries with the North Rupununi Wetlands, Iwokrama Forest Reserve, and Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA), and links with Brazil (west) and the Central Suriname Nature Reserve (east).

Peru: By working in landscape mosaics, where ecosystems are still healthy, but under threat, the project will reverse current trends of degradation and deforestation and will prevent further loss of biodiversity, ecosystem services, and GHG emissions. This will be achieved through coordinated government policies, sustainable and interconnected management of protected and production areas (through a river basin approach), and the development of value chains that correspond to the natural supply availability and cultural features of the Amazon. Target areas include two watershed landscapes dominated by primary forests and wetlands: (1) the Tigre River basin in the province of Loreto, Loreto region and the Marañón tributaries and; (2) the Alto Ucayali River basin (Tambo, Perené, and Inuya sub-basins), in the adjacent provinces of Satipo, Junín region, and Atalaya, Ucayali region — dominated by primary forests and wetlands.

Suriname: The project adopts an integrated approach that includes work both within and outside protected areas, recognizing both their role as critical repositories of biodiversity and carbon storage, at the same time as the fact that they are not enough, and that sectoral based mainstreaming and land use planning are critical. This approach is focused on tackling the systemic drivers of land use change and providing incentives for sustainable production and conservation and is expected to bring about global environmental benefits in a country that still houses vast quantities of forest biodiversity. The proposed target productive landscapes for project interventions are: (1) the Samaaka/Matawai landscape; and (2) the Coeroeni/Paroe landscape. The four protected areas targeted by the project are: the Central Suriname Nature Reserve (CSNR): the Sipaliwini Nature Reserve; Brownsberg Nature Park, and the Brinckheuvel Nature Reserve.

Regional-level Engagement

The first and second phase of the ASL have the unique feature that each country carries out actions on the ground nationally, and in addition, through a regional coordination project, receives significant technical assistance and capacity building in themes relevant to their project interventions. By promoting strategic knowledge exchanges and innovations, and increasing partnerships with other regional actors, the coordination project will accelerate the stakeholders' learning, resulting in improved implementation and desired transformational changes. Promoting coordination in key strategic actions will generate outcomes with greater impact than if countries were working in isolation. The scale of the challenges requires a large-scale intervention which will be better addressed with a harmonized collaborative approach through a regional knowledge and collaboration platform.

Expected Results

ASL-1 aims to improve management effectiveness of 66 million hectares of protected areas; facilitate the creation of 4.3 million hectares of new protected areas; promote sustainable production practices in 11 million hectares; restore 35,000 hectares of forests; and support actions to help mitigate 164 $MtCO_2e$ of emissions.

Preliminary estimates of ASL-2 indicate that the second phase will improve the management of 31.7 million hectares of protected areas for conservation and sustainable use; restore 18,600 hectares of land (forest and natural grass); improve the management of 16.4 million hectares of productive landscapes; and mitigate 29.9 million tCO_2e emissions. These estimates will be refined during each national project preparation.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided close to **$20 billion** in grants and mobilized an additional **$107 billion** in co-financing for more than **4,700 projects** in **170 countries**. Through its Small Grants Programme, the GEF has provided support to nearly 24,000 civil society and community initiatives in 128 countries.

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