

Policy Brief

Protected Areas: Contributions to the Sustainable Development of the Amazon Biome

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IAPA: Integration
of Amazon
Protected Areas

“Everything that is said about the Amazon is relevant, extensive, challenging and often unfathomable. In order to act on behalf of this region, it is essential to know its peculiarities and characteristics”.

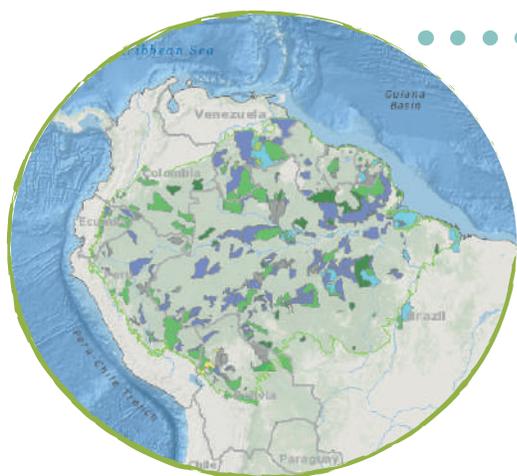
The Amazon, shared by eight countries and a territory (Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, French Guiana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela), with an approximate surface area of 6.8 million km², holds the largest extension of remaining tropical wet forest on earth and is recognized for its great biological diversity – 5 of the 9 countries with land in the Amazon are considered to be megadiverse according to the United Nations.

This biome also provides essential ecosystem services not only to the 33 million people who dwell in it, but also to more than seven billion people on the planet.

Reiterating that the Amazon Biome is a natural enclave whose preservation is a priority for the planet’s survival, this Policy Brief’s objective is to present the progress, challenges and policy recommendations resulting from implementing the **Integration of Amazon Biome Protected Areas Project**. It is aimed at the governments that make up the Amazon Biome and other actors in the framework of the Program of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) and REDPARQUES’ Amazon Vision.

1. ACTO (2014). Climate Change in the Amazon Region.

The Amazon in figures²



33 % of the Amazon Biome is protected under some form of conservation, represented by 1,033 protected areas³



- It covers **6 %** of the planet's surface and occupies **40 %** of Latin America and the Caribbean's territory
- **40 thousand** plant species have been identified in the Amazon Biome
- It contains approximately between **17 %** and **20 %** of the world's fresh water
- It houses more than **400 indigenous peoples**, whose territories cover almost **28 %** of the Amazon region
- It holds **10 %** of the world's carbon stocks

Signs of risk and threats

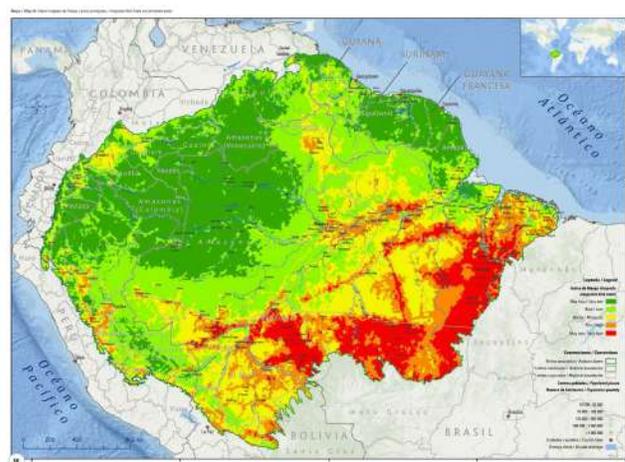
Fast changes can be observed in the Amazon Biome, which affect its capacity to stabilize and regulate climate change worldwide. Disputes over land for agricultural activities, mining and infrastructure projects, such as roads and hydroelectric dams, are among the factors that exert the greatest pressure on the entire region's forests, causing 17 % of the forest lost.

The alarming situation in the Colombian Amazon calls for special attention, where a loss of 412,000 hectares of forest was recorded in the last five years. **In 2017, the figure reached 140,000 hectares.**⁴

In accordance with the WWF⁵, **31 deforestation fronts** have been identified in the biome, which reduces the possibility of maintaining the ways of life on which its inhabitants depend. Moreover, between **21 % and 27 %** additional forest area is projected to be lost by 2030, which is equal to **85.4 million hectares of forest**, if collective and immediate actions are not taken⁶.

Climate change puts biodiversity and the environment's balance at risk. In accordance with the region's vulnerability analysis, the effects could be greater in the southeastern area of the biome in the states of Pará, Mato Grosso and Rôndonia

(Brazil). In Bolivia, El Beni and Pando provinces, to the east, show the greatest degree of climate change. The distribution differs by regions in Peru. However, the greatest changes are expected near the border with Brazil and Bolivia⁷.



Integrated Risk Index and protected areas⁷.

2. http://wwf.panda.org/es/que_hacemos/sitios_prioritarios/amazonia/la_amazonia_naturaleza/
3. Sofrony, C & Bueno, P. (2018). Avances en el cumplimiento de los Aspectos de la Meta 11 de Aichi en los países del bioma amazónico: Resultados finales y recomendaciones (Progress in fulfilling the Aichi 11 Target aspects in the Amazon biome's countries: final results and recommendations). IAPA Project – Amazon Vision. European Union, REPARQUES, WWF, FAO, IUCN, UN Environment Program. Bogotá, Colombia. 28 p.
4. Botero, R. 2018. Quien Governa en la Amazonía (Those who Govern the Amazon). Revista Semana. Ed. 1900. Colombia
5. Charity, S., Dudley, N., Oliveira, D. and S. Stolton (editors). 2016. Living Amazon Report 2016: A regional approach to conservation in the Amazon. WWF Living Amazon Initiative, Brasília and Quito.

Due to the above, it is necessary to highlight the value of protected areas as providers of important ecosystem services to productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism and forestry. They contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as to food, water and energy safety in the Amazon Biome's countries.

REDPARQUES' Amazon

Vision: Towards collaborative conservation

The seventh Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Program of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) in order to support complete, efficiently managed and ecologically representative regional and national systems of protected areas that collectively contribute to achieving the CBD's objectives and the goal of significantly reducing the current rhythm of biological diversity loss (SCBD, 2004).

The Amazon countries have led the "Vision for the Conservation of the Biological and Cultural Diversity of the Amazon Biome, Based on Ecosystems" through the Latin American Network of Technical Cooperation on National Parks, other Protected Areas and Wildlife (REDPARQUES) since 2008. Its main objective is to "contribute to strengthening the national systems of protected areas for their efficient management, good governance and successful biodiversity conservation results".

The Amazon Vision is implemented within the framework of the PoWPA (2010-2020), approved during the CBD's COP 10 meeting. International support, namely from the "Integration of Amazon Biome Protected Areas (IAPA) Project", financed by the European Union, and the Protected Areas: Natural Solutions to Climate Change (SNACC) Project, financed by the Ministry of the Environment of Germany, and the willingness of governments, have been fundamental in implementing said Action Plan, advancing on a shared regional vision towards integrating the biome's protected areas.

These two initiatives give an account of the importance of the International Community recognizing the global ecosystem services that the Amazon provides and incentivizing cooperation between the region's countries for its conservation. To do so, one of the leading actions is to strengthen and consolidate the Amazon Vision in the political and dialogue spaces in which decisions regarding the biome are taken.

Program of Work on Protected Areas for the Amazon Biome (2011 / 2017 PoWPA): A common agenda underway

The second regional report on the implementation of the PoWPA in the biome's countries (2011 – 2015) and the third of the kind (2016 – 2017) were prepared with the IAPA Project's support, in which an increasing trend in creating and strengthening protected areas is highlighted.

However, there are also voids when it comes to developing actions for conservation beyond the formally established protected areas, which is to say, regarding other efficient conservation measures, ecological representativity, regions preserved by indigenous peoples and local communities and the measure of success in the conservation of connected landscapes.

6. WWF. 2016. Las Amenazas de la Amazonía. <http://www.wwf.org.co/?uNewsID=311691>

7. Prüssmann J., Suárez C. y Chaves M. Atlas of Conservation opportunities in the Amazon biome under climate change considerations. Amazon Vision Initiative. Redparques, WWF, FAO, IUCN, UN Environment, 80 p., Cali (Colombia).

Within these reported periods, it is highlighted that 18 Latin American countries adopted a Declaration on protected areas as natural solutions to climate change during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) COP 21 meeting, and **Decision CDB / COP / XIII / 2** of 2016, which embraces REDPARQUES' declaration on **the contribution of protected areas towards human well-being and sustainable development**, adopted in COP 13.

Strengthening and managing protected areas

In the period between 2016—2017, 19 new protected areas were reported to have been created, with an increase in coverage of 142,311.48 km² with respect to the 2011 - 2015 progress report. For that reason, **33 %** of the Amazon Biome is reported to be preserved with **1,033 protected areas** as of 2017, showing a positive trend. Thirteen national connectivity and 12 transnational connectivity initiatives are reported today.

Now, beyond an increase in coverage, the Amazon Biome faces the need to integrate climate change criteria into the management and design of its protected areas, as well as the need to include them in the national adaptation strategies and policy instruments of land use and planning of the territory.

Today, REDPARQUES has the climate risk and vulnerability analysis for the Amazon Biome and its protected areas and the atlas of conservation opportunities under climate change considerations as tools for decision-making and planning. In addition, a portfolio of prioritized conservation topics has been developed using conservation planning tools based on principles of representation, irreplaceability, functionality, flexibility, vulnerability and connectivity.

Upon increasing understanding of the global role that the Amazon plays in providing



ecosystem services and, consequently, mitigating and adapting to climate change, all actors, including decision-makers on various levels, must recognize the importance of maintaining these ecosystem services and the urgent need to include conservation and sustainable use strategies in their policies to ensure their provision, with an outlook beyond the protected areas' borders.

Governance, participation, equity and shared benefits

The good governance and integrated management processes for protected areas, with an outlook beyond their borders, have been strengthened by means of various training spaces and a local governance, participation and conflict resolution capacity development program, as well as by establishing shared management agreements



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for landscape hydro-biological resources and identifying good governance practices that are under public and private actors' responsibility in the protected areas. All these processes had gender considerations and involved the participation of NGOs and the local focal points of the national systems of protected areas of the Amazon Biome.

The national systems of protected areas have been working on facilitating dialogue spaces with other productive and institutional sectors on a regional and subregional level. As a result, voluntary agreements that recognize the parties' contributions, as much for providing goods and services from the ecosystems as for the well-being of communities related to the protected areas were signed.

Furthermore, and in order to strengthen the technical capacities of the NSPA's⁸

professionals, the Amazon Vision has promoted work groups known as thematic groups. These have operated since 2008 as a space for exchanging experiences and technical work related to conservation opportunities and climate change, effective management, financial sustainability and governance of the protected areas in the biome.

Some regional limitations persist, even when there is significant progress, especially in distributing the benefits derived from using and harnessing biodiversity. The commitments of the biome's countries with respect to promoting equity are still scarce and show limited progress, but enhancing the participation of indigenous and local communities in decision-making is positive.

Due to the above, the countries must favor the development of highly participatory and equitable governance systems that include actors and interest groups while they visualize and share case studies, lessons learned and best practices to replicate them throughout the biome.

Enabling activities

Ensuring the financial sustainability of the protected area systems of the biome's countries implies implementing various financial and policy instruments that allow diversifying financing sources and therefore ensuring the biome's long-term ecological integrity. In accordance, some of the biome's countries report significant progress in structuring and implementing Project Finance for Permanence (PFP), as is the case in Peru and Colombia. Others, such as Brazil, update the tools that allow carrying out the financial gap analysis through the ARPA (Amazon Region Protected Areas Program).

In terms of the biome, the financing and financial sustainability strategy for the

8. National Systems of Protected Areas

Amazon Vision was prepared, which seeks to support conservation efforts with respect to the ecosystems in the biome's protected areas, improving their management practices and contributing to achieving the PoWPA objectives.

In order to facilitate costing and investment needs processes, the plan is structured in three topical groups based on which a project portfolio was prepared in the following lines: Conservation opportunities for adapting to climate change; strengthening the governance and sustainability of sub-regional landscapes; integrating the conservation of biodiversity in productive landscapes; protecting the biodiversity and livelihood of local communities; protected areas, good governance and efficient management; and recognizing and including other efficient conservation measures based on areas (OECM).



Additionally, and in order to attend to the CBD's call to report the progress of regional initiatives, the IAPA project summoned 30 networks, programs and projects that have been implemented in more than one country and whose lines of intervention are related to protected areas, sustainable landscapes, forests, governance, livelihood and knowledge management. On a regional level, these initiatives contribute to complying with several of the SDG's and Aichi Targets, and also other multilateral environmental agreements.



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Regulations, evaluation and oversight

In accordance with the progress report, the biome's countries show significant progress in adopting methods, standards, criteria and indicators for measuring the effective management, and evaluations have been advanced in more than 60% of the protected areas for 7 of the 8 countries in the biome.

Regionally, REDPARQUES now has a protocol that was built under the premise of a common language that allows analyzing how protected areas contribute to the conservation of the biome and what elements of their management must be improved to allow conservation at a regional scale. In addition, it is there to make visible the efforts of Amazon countries' governments with respect to fulfilling Aichi Target 11.

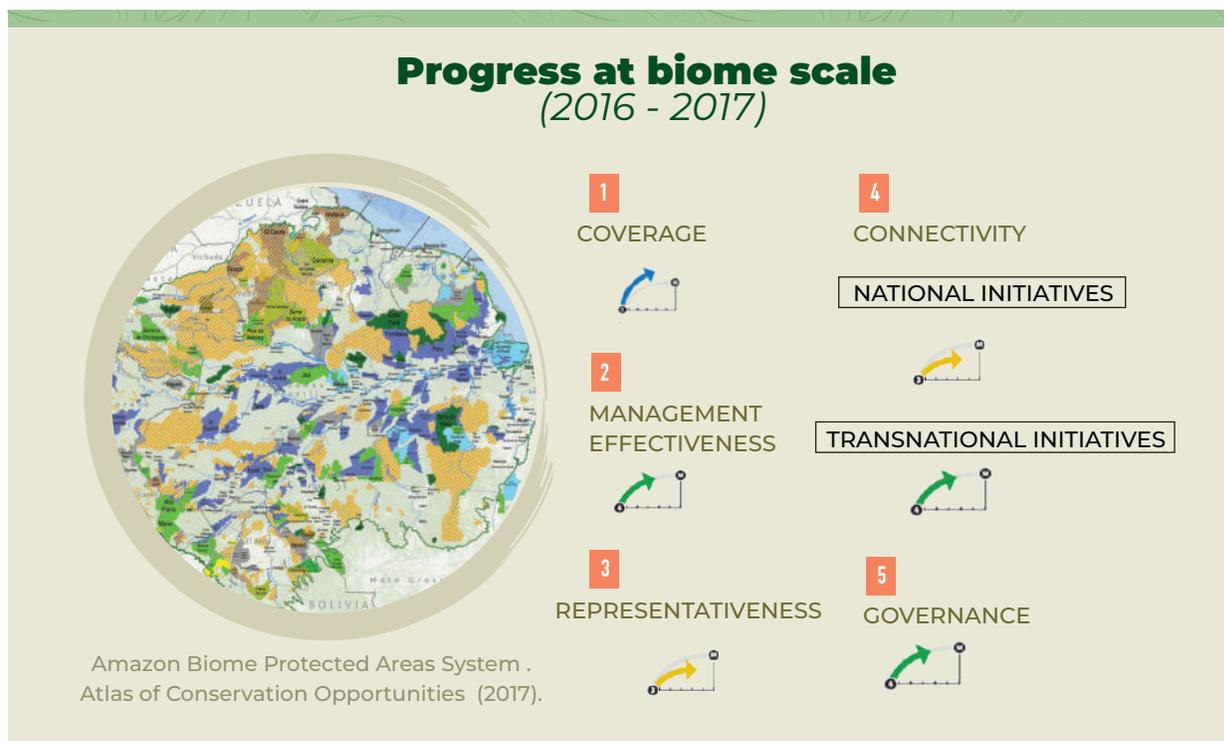
Amazon Vision
projects portfolio



IAPA: Integration of Amazon Protected Areas

Progress of Target 11 in the Biome

The progress of Aichi Target 11 in the Amazon Biome prepared with the IAPA Project and REDPARQUES' (2018) support reports a fulfillment that is greater even than total global fulfillment, especially with respect to coverage, effective management and instruments for equitable governance. However, mayor efforts are required from the countries in order to adequately represent ecosystems and connectivity in protected areas.



One of the short-term goals in the Amazon Biome is to increase ecological representativity in the protected area systems of Amazon countries, for which reason it is necessary to advance the conservation gap analyses and identify areas, ecosystems and habitats with low or nonexistent representativity in current forms of conservation. To do so, **consolidating and strengthening the biome's protected areas with an emphasis on the connectivity corridors and integrating landscapes from a regional and ecological perspective, focused on achieving complete representativity was proposed.**

With respect to other effective conservation measures based on areas (OECM), a priority for the biome is to make headway in identifying it in accordance with the guidelines provided by the CBD, as well as mechanisms for incorporating or recognizing these areas as effective conservation strategies.

Protected areas and productive sectors, a partnership for sustainable development

With the purpose of incorporating an intersectorial focus on biodiversity and business associated with protected areas, a series of regional and landscape intersectorial dialogues have been carried out and promoted by the IAPA Project, where lines of work for collaborating between sectors and protected areas have been defined.

On that same line, the tourism has been identified as a strategic sector that contributes to conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, at the same time contributing to achieving international objectives like the SDGs. To this end, work have been done within priority

intervention landscapes to develop an analysis of the tourism value chain in protected areas, as well as an economic valuation of the services of the ecosystems destined to tourism in protected areas. In addition, there was a regional dialogue with representatives from government, private and civil society sectors to obtain sustainable tourism guidelines and integrate them with the SDGs in the Amazon's protected areas.

Consolidating strategies in the region, such as promoting sustainable productive activities, will be reinforced by adopting good governance standards and developing mechanisms to guarantee the Amazon Vision's financial sustainability. It is also important to generate and exchange information along with encouraging the development of joint proposals that will play a key role in positioning a common agenda for the biome.



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Challenges and Recommendations

- Adopting, adjusting and applying socio-economic incentives that strengthen management, governance, effectiveness and financial sustainability for protected areas involves finding and implementing innovative forms that involve all actors (local governments, private sector, indigenous and local communities, civil society and social movements, as well as the new forms of social organization in accordance with each Amazon country's reality).
- The largest threat of the region's countries in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is eradicating poverty by promoting strategies that favor financial growth and address social needs, including education, health, social protection and job opportunities, all while mitigating and adapting the community and its productive systems to climate change with the least possible environmental impact. In this sense, the protected areas in the Amazon represent a catalyzing element in this agenda in strategic territories for conservation and sustainable development.
- Biodiversity has been recognized by the countries that share the Amazon and the international community as the region's main resource. In addition, we all face the challenge of improving its productive practices through sustainable forest management, recovering deteriorated areas, developing agro-environmental policies and strengthening the systems of natural protected areas. Said systems require an expansion of the ecosystems' representativity while their ecological connectivity is promoted through corridors or other conservation strategies to guarantee the environmental services provision. Their management must be integrated into rural development processes and become mechanisms that contribute by generating income for local communities.

Favoring local actions, as well as reaching regional and global commitments regarding the biome's conservation calls for addressing the following challenges under four catalyzing axes:



Intervention focus and relationship with other sectors

- Incorporating the landscape, biome and strengthening focus for the Amazon Vision in the national financial sustainability strategies, programs and projects is fundamental for consolidating regional technical cooperation and integration.
- It is necessary to establish coordination scenarios with productive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism in pursuit of favoring the biome's conservation and contributing to food, water and energy safety in the region and communities.
- Improving sustainable agricultural productivity in the Amazon demands substantial improvements in conservation and efficient harnessing of natural resources, valuing local knowledge and innovations.
- Maintaining progress in complying with the Aichi Targets and the actions established by the Amazon countries in the framework of the 2016 – 2020 PoWPA Strategic Plan will require implementing a set of actions, including legal, political and institutional actions that are coherent in the various government ministries and integrating biodiversity in the productive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism and forestry.



Recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities



- It is important for the State to recognize indigenous peoples' ethnic ownership beyond the countries' borders. This implies recognizing their right to free transit in the biome and to use and protect their demarcated territory in order to allow them to exercise their ancestral practices and guarantee their livelihood. This recognition must be extended to the importance and contribution of their wisdom and knowledge to protect biodiversity, enrich agrobiodiversity and food and nutritional safety.
- It must be recognized that there is an enormous rural, non-indigenous community that seeks better living conditions in the Amazon. These people find themselves in a situation of vulnerability and poverty and require specific public policies for their socioeconomic development and integration, which will additionally allow them to be relevant actors in the appropriate use and conservation of the Amazon.
- Clarifying and defining land ownership in the Amazon is a determining factor, favoring its regularization, which will allow overseeing the use of natural resources and encouraging sustainable practices. This must happen through the formal recognition of the territorial rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Cooperating in and strengthening the Amazon Vision



- Strengthening REDPARQUES' coordination space for informed decision-making on protected areas and their provision of ecosystem services by including and using climate information that prioritizes adaptation measures based on ecosystems and that encourage resilience in the communities that depend on them.
- Steering financing efforts for the protected areas in the biome towards a combination of existing financial instruments. The countries are urged to continue strengthening the national budget assignments and international cooperation as traditional income sources for financing conservation and management activities for the protected areas.
- Maintaining a common agenda among the countries where the various programs and projects developed in the biome are accounted for (locally, subnationally and regionally), financed by international cooperation and accessing cooperation funds jointly when possible.



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Strengthening capacities and research axes



- Promoting training and capacity strengthening programs that include the geographic information systems that are available on protected areas wherever possible in order to monitor the implementation of climate change adaptation measures and policies in the biome.
- Identifying the case studies that gather experiences and evaluate the role of other efficient biodiversity conservation measures, especially those that drive governance processes, such as the conservation agreements. These case studies must be compared and contrasted to formal protected area results, seeking for them to be complementary. The countries must also advance exercises that facilitate recognizing these other effective conservation measures in accordance with technical criteria agreed upon by the CBD and its incorporation into national regulations.
- Consolidating programs in which the contributions of the protected areas to maintaining the ecosystems' resilience are closely linked, ensuring connectivity in high ecological priority areas and strengthening the efficiency of corridors and ecological networks.

- Advance in evaluating the feasibility of building a Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) and a Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) in order to include the advantages that these two mechanisms offer in terms of the flexibility and coverage of the fundable activities, as well as the diversity in the sources of resources and financing mechanisms with great potential for contributing to the financial sustainability of the biome's protected area systems.
- It will be critical for the countries in the biome to adopt, update and apply the information in instruments, such as the Climate Risk and Vulnerability Analysis for the Amazon biome, the conservation opportunities Atlas and the Protocol for measuring management effectiveness for preparing policies and decisions that favor the Amazon's conservation at various scales.



Together for Protected Areas

The threats and challenges the Amazon faces today do not end here. However, we know that millions of actors are joining efforts to conserve one of the planet's most important biomes. Thanks to its inhabitant's daily work, the willingness of governments and the determined support of international cooperation, very many good practices surround the region and favor the permanence of its cultural traditions and natural heritage.

Even though investments aimed at the various programs in the Amazon biome's protected areas exceed one trillion dollars every year, the financial resources will not be enough without governments' commitment to act together from a regional perspective. In this context, the Redparques' Amazon Vision must strengthen its objective, facilitating the integration of knowledge, experiences, wills and actions, and incentivizing equitable participation and decision-making to preserve the irreplaceable wealth of the world's largest tropical forest: the Amazon.

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This publication is developed in the framework of the Integration of Amazon Biome Protected Areas (IAPA) project and is a contribution to strengthening Redparques' regional initiative, Amazon Vision.

The project is financed by the European Union, coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and implemented jointly between the WWF, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the UN Environment Program and Redparques.

Cite as:

Redparques - IAPA Project - Amazon Vision (2018). Protected Areas: Contributions to the Sustainable Development of the Amazon Biome. European Union, WWF, FAO, IUCN, UN Environment Program. Bogotá, Colombia. 12p.

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