Living with the forest

Peru’s dense tropical forests are home to exceptional biodiversity, where thousands of plant and animal species make their homes. But jaguars and orchids are far from the only inhabitants; many Peruvians live in or near the forests. These rural communities can be vital in efforts to protect the natural forest environment. It was therefore an important step when the Asociacion para la Investigacion y Desarrollo Integral (Aider) organization started to help these communities to organize themselves in terms of forest management.

Proud protectors

‘The communities working with Aider proudly safeguard the forest through sustainable forest management. Protecting their forests is a source of pride: they wake each morning with a sense of purpose, knowing that their way of life protects the forest and all the animals and plants that live in it. It is important for these people to leave the forest in pristine condition for the next generation. Their children are brought into the forest and taught how to respect and care for it, in the hope that this verdant ‘classroom’ will inspire them to feel equally proud about keeping the forest safe.

The forest creates jobs

In return for their care, the forest provides the communities with their livelihood year after year. They are usually poor, but by increasing the value of their forest products, living standards are continually being raised. FSC certification for their timber not only increases its value, but also means it stands out in the market, making it easier to sell. For example, some communities are building workshops where they can do some preliminary processing of the wood before selling it.
To increase the incomes obtained from their forest even further, some communities combine forestry with other businesses, such as beekeeping, sustainable agroforestry and growing fruits and other produce among the trees. This efficient but gentle use of the forest helps create even more jobs. This in turn means that people are more inclined to stay in their community instead of moving to Peru’s cities to look for jobs – a journey which carries a serious risk of ending up in the slums. The increased income has also improved both housing conditions and infrastructure in the communities.

The benefits of FSC certification and good forest management

Being FSC certified has not only increased the value of forest products, but has also given the communities a new way to preserve it.

FACTS

Certificate Holder
Un asociación para la investigación y desarrollo integral - AIDER

Certificate code
SCS-FM/COC-004384

Size of certified area
29,989 hectares

Tree species
Manilkara bidentata
Coumarouma odorata
Callycophyllum spruceanum
Aspidosperma subincaenum
Carianana domestica
Cedrelinga cataeniformes
Ocotea sp
Simaroubas amara

Volumes obtained per year:
• Sawn timber 1500 m³
• Logs 2500 m³

FSC-certified products sold per year:
• Sawn timber 1500 m³ (local and national buyers)
Land is a precious resource and it can be tempting for outsiders to encroach on the forest. The communities feel that they can use their FSC-certified status as a tool in such conflicts and to help protect the forest from outsiders.

The communities are passionate about taking care of their forests. To ensure that they have the resources they need to act on this, they have received help from the FSC Smallholder Fund. This made it possible for them to buy safety equipment and other forestry equipment, and train community leaders in organizational management, so that they can continue to run their forests efficiently and in harmony with nature.