ECUADORIAN AMAZON REGION LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy

(CPLS-COMDEKS)

COUNTRY: ECUADOR

Sacha Causai Foundation

Tena, February 2014

Original document in Spanish created by Sacha Causai Foundation

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Executive Summary

This COMDEKS *Ecuadorian Amazon Region Landscape Strategy* document is part of the process of the Fifth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme (SGP), which has been operating at a national level for more than a year. The SGP is part of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which was established under the mandate of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. During the past 18 years, it has worked in four operational phases supporting more than 234 initiatives through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

The Fifth Operational Phase (OP5), initiated in 2012, is committed to the design and construction of "Biocorridors for Good Living", going beyond the concept of isolated community interventions and proposing the conservation of biodiversity, the reduction of habitat fragmentation and the improvement of ecological connectivity, through setting up sustainable productive landscapes and through associativity generated by community actions and initiatives. These take place in four ecosystems of global, national and local importance: Paramo, Dry Forest, Mangrove and Amazonian Tropical Rainforest.

The Community Development and Knowledge Management Project for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS) was recognized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in decision X/32, as a potentially useful tool for understanding and supporting natural environments for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being, and thus contributes to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as reflected in its vision: "towards realizing societies in harmony with nature".

On February 12th 2013, SGP Ecuador was invited to participate in the implementation of this initiative through its Fifth Operational Phase. COMDEKS, similar to SGP, supports community projects, in line with strategic direction and objectives of SGP in OP5. With SGP as the mechanism to support community organizations in the Ecuadorian Amazon, COMDEKS will contribute to the fulfilment of its objective: to increase the resilience of socio-ecological productive landscapes.

In this context, the National Steering Committee of the SGP (SGP-NSC) resolved that Sacha Causai Foundation - as the Amazon Regional Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation Team EQUIPATE - should be the entity that provides technical assistance to COMDEKS process in Ecuador, as it is the organization that has been implementing the OP5 since June 2012. OP5 progress reflects a year of experiences and shared learnings with regional actors; COMDEKS project is incorporated into this process from the second half of 2013.

The Ecuadorian Amazon Region Landscape Strategy describes the state of the landscape, the opportunities for intervention, the community projects and the monitoring and evaluation system. The aim is that COMDEKS projects generate important lessons about best community practices in order to maintain, rebuild and revitalize landscapes. In turn, findings will make a valuable contribution to support knowledge exchange and learning with and among communities, politicians and other stakeholders.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROJECT FOR THE SOTOMAYA INITIATIVE (COMDEKS)[1]

Country: **ECUADOR**

1. PRIORITY AREA

Landscape Location

COMDEKS projects are implemented in the geographic area of north and center Amazon Region, as indicated in the map presented by the Sacha Causai Foundation[2]. The zone of interest is located next to the Napo River's watershed and its areas of influence, between the provinces of Napo (Tena, Archidona and Carlos Julio Arosemena Tola cantons), Orellana (Loreto canton) and Pastaza (Mera, Pastaza, Santa Clara and Arajuno cantons).

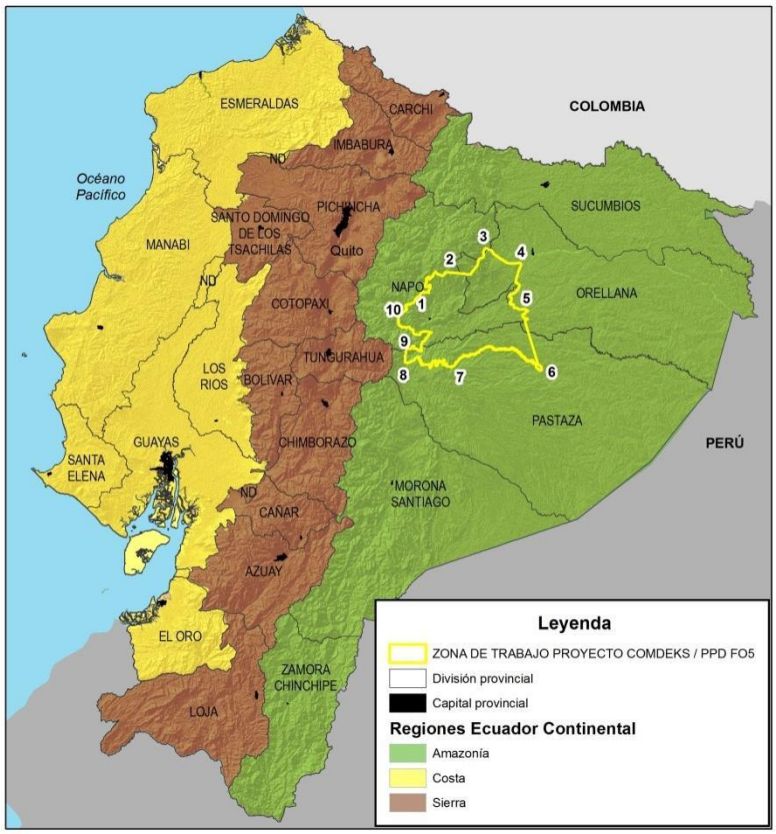


Figure1. Landscape location map COMDEKS–Ecuador
Source: Sacha Causai Foundation - COMDEKS – SGP OP5

Its boundaries are: to the north-west, to the head of the river Hollín Grande (1), to the south, to the Sumaco Napo Galeras National Park (2). From this point it extends eastwards, following the southern boundary of the Sumaco Napo Galeras National Park as far as the river Chacayaku (3). Then it turns north-east to the Payamino River, on the eastern boundary of the Sumaco Napo Galeras National Park (4).

[1] This document was produced by the Sacha Causai Foundation team consisting of: Humberto Lennon, Susana Albán Bedón and Pool Segarra.

[2] Since its inception in 1993, Sacha Causai Foundation has developed extensive experience working with indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon Region. It has experience in participatory research, design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development and conservation projects with the participation of indigenous peoples and nationalities. Its mission is to contribute to the construction and promotion of participatory concepts and processes with the inclusion of a focus on gender, generation and multiculturalism for the Good Living of the peoples and cultures of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region.

Subsequently, it travels south-east until the intersection with Napo River, near the population centre of Puerto Colón (5). Then, it heads south-east along the provincial boundary between Napo and Orellana, to the settlement of Curaray (6). From Curaray, it follows up the river of the same name to its head (7). From this point it travels westward to arrive at the river Yurugyaku, to the left of the Llanganates National Park (8). From here, it continues north-west, to the south of Llanganates National Park, to reach the town of San Juan de Piatúa (9). From this settlement it travels north-west to arrive at the southern corner of the Antisana reserve in Jondachi sector (10).

Landscape selection and socio-ecological importance

The landscape selected for the COMDEKS project is the area in which other OP5 projects with support of SGP/UNDP/GEF are being implemented; projects which aim to build Biocorridors for Good Living. This zone was selected by the SGP because is an area with relevant ecosystems belonging to indigenous and rural communities engaged in productive activities and which are under pressure from large-scale extraction activities. In this phase, the SGP seeks to consolidate, replicate and scale-up the work undertaken by the indigenous and rural community organizations in previous phases.

During the planning phase of the SGP OP5, in the period from June 2012 to May 2013, three biocorridors were identified in the Amazon Region through participatory methods by a Regional Working Group (RWG) and a Biocorridor Working Group (BWG). The biocorridors identified are shown on the map below, and are:

1. **Kamanwi "emblematic bird of the zone"**
2. **Yaku Samay "the power of the water"**
3. **Akllak Sacha "the chosen forest"**

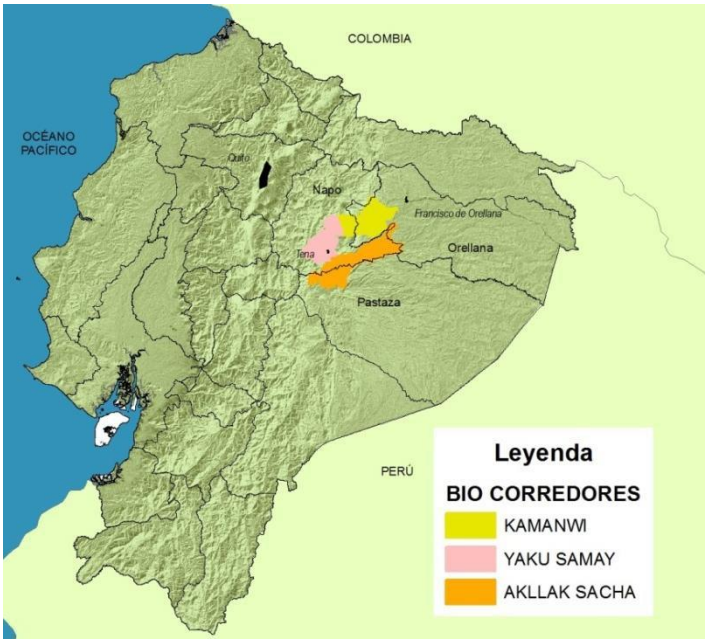


Figure 2: Map of the location of biocorridors SGP-Ecuador OP5
Source: Sacha Causai Foundation-SGP Ecuador OP5

The priority area for the implementation of eight partnership projects funded by the SGP is located within three biocorridors[3], and the five projects shortlisted to be funded by COMDEKS are located in the Yaku Samay and Akllak Sacha (Sacha Causai Foundation 2013) biocorridors.

A factor in the ecological uniqueness of the selected landscape comes from the fact that the Napo River Canyon, one of the tributaries of the great Amazon known as the "Pleistocene refuge did not freeze during the ice age. It is located on the western slope of the Andes, south of the equator, within the territory that belongs to Ecuador. Ecuador is a country which has a small portion of the Amazon, but that portion is, without doubt, one of the richest in biodiversity. This is because the living organisms, confined to climatic refuges, entered a rapid process of competition and specialization. The result is a huge variety of species of plants, animals, bacteria and other micro organisms that make diversity the mainstay of life in the Amazon.

The Amazon region plays a critical role in regulating the climate as it retains large amounts of organic carbon and contributes to the regulation of one of the most important freshwater systems on the planet: the Amazon basin.

One of the most important elements of this landscape is the adaptation of human groups to live in an environment that has defined their cultural traits and skills, which come from the ability to understand, appreciate and respect their land. This has generated forms of ownership and management that have not only contributed to conserve the forest, but have also generated a great deal of knowledge about the potential of its diversity; this being the key to the survival of these human groups.

SGP OP5 National Strategy and COMDEKS Ecuadorian Amazon Region Landscape Strategy

During its first year of execution, SGP OP5 has shared experiences and learning with regional actors; the COMDEKS project will be part of this knowledge management process after the second half of 2013.

Based on the participative process in which many local actors contributed to build the Kamanwi, Yaku Samay and Akllak Sacha Biocorridors, the COMDEKS project proposal is linked to the guiding approaches and operational strategies of the SGP in OP5. Thus, the COMDEKS mission, approaches and objectives are aligned with the measures, as seen in the following table:

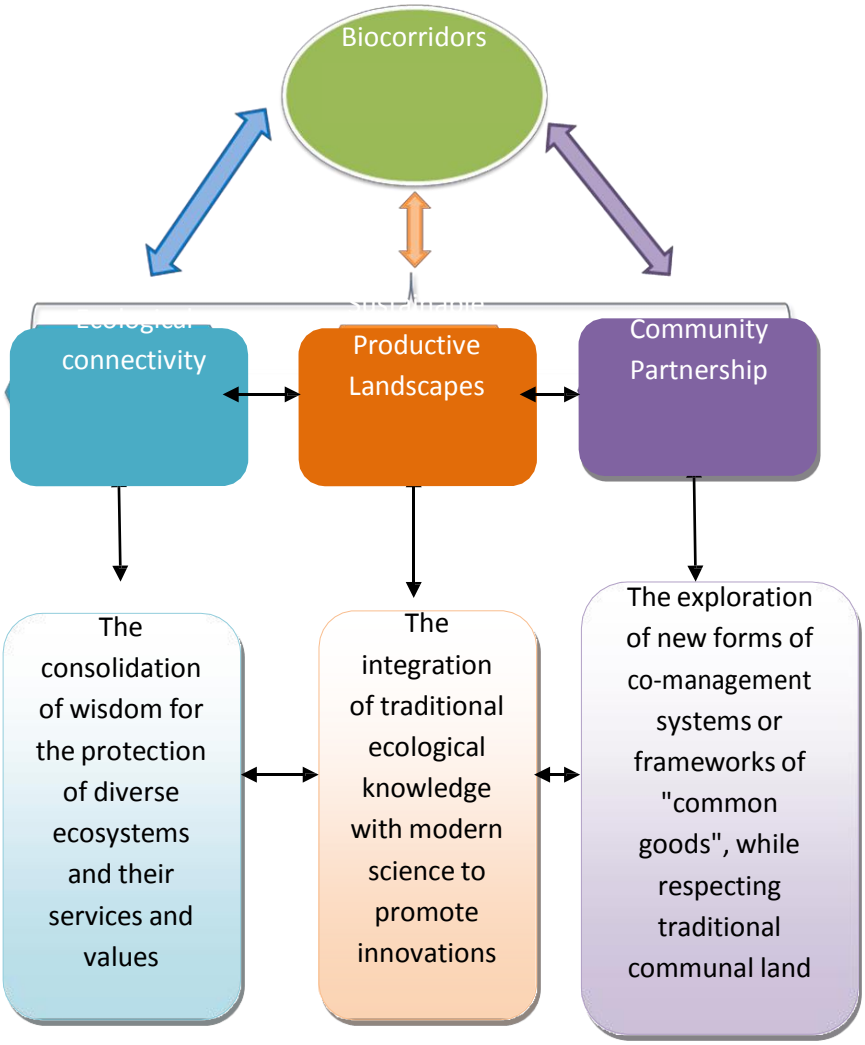
REFERENCE FRAMEWORK[4]: "BIOCORRIDORS FOR GOOD LIVING"	
COMDEKS	**SGP - OPERATIONAL PHASE - OP5**
Mission: "Societies in harmony with nature"	**Mission:** "Construction of Biocorridors for Good Living" Biocorridors: Kamanwi, Yaku Samay and Akllak Sacha
Project Objective: To develop proper management of biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods with local communities to maintain, rebuild and revitalize the socio-ecological productive landscapes (SEPLs).	**Project Objective**: To conserve fragile and globally important biodiversity, contribute to Ecuador's conservation objectives and improve welfare of communities.

[3] Importantly, the Amazon province of Napo has initial experience of creating a biocorridor, the Quijos Valley Corridor which is led by the Autonomous Decentralized Government of Napo Province. Territorially it is located in the Quijos Valley: Papallacta, Cuyuja, Baeza, Cosanga and Jondachi.

[4] Taken from: *Propuesta técnica Fundación Sacha Causai* , julio 2013 (Sacha Causai Foundation Technical Proposal, July 2013), Tena, Ecuador

Approaches: 1. Consolidation of wisdom for the protection of diverse ecosystems and their services and values; 2. Integration of traditional ecological knowledge with modern science to promote innovation; 3. Exploration of new forms of co-management systems or frameworks of "common goods", while respecting traditional communal land tenure.	**Approaches:** 1. Ecological connectivity 2. Sustainable productive landscapes 3. Partnership
Strategies: • Use of resources within the capacity and resilience of the environment; • Cyclic use of natural resources; • Recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures; • Management of natural resources by different participants and collaborators; • Contributions to the local socio-economies.	**Operational Strategies**: • Equal Opportunities • Innovative Projects • Best practices and lessons learned • Training • Ability to replicate and scale • Networking
Components: 1. Community Development through small donations using UNDP delivery mechanisms, including the Small Grants Programme (SGP) of the GEF and other schemes (including three components of SGP OP5) 2. Knowledge Management for skill building, replication and improvement	**Components:** 1. Ecological connectivity 2. Sustainable productive landscapes 3. Partnership

Conceptual linkage map: SGP OP5/COMDEKS[5]



The COMDEKS approaches are inter-related, as are those of SGP-OP5; we consider that the diagram above shows the linkages at a more operational level, ensuring that COMDEKS and SGP act in a common conceptual and operational platform.

[1] PRODOC COMDEKS 2012. Biocorridor Action Proposals 2013-Sacha Causai Foundation-SGP-OP5.)

2. SITUATION ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Socio-environmental problems

The selected area is a zone rich in biodiversity, environmental services, traditional methods for suitable resource management and ancestral knowledge of biodiversity. However, it is also an area that has lost nearly 20% of its natural vegetation cover in the past fifty years. The main trigger has been the increase in resource extraction industries, particularly oil and mining, without taking into account the external impact of these industries.

From the time when the first infrastructure was put in place for the access of oil industry, colonization boundaries were consolidated and they remain in place today. The agricultural boundary line; the extraction of renewable natural resources such as timber, hunting and fishing; the introduction of more established towns; and especially the Amazonian people's vision of the opportunity to own land, have all resulted in a fragmented landscape.

Further threats come from livestock and agriculture, activities that have not taken into account the ecosystems' fragility. When people think of the Amazon they see a fertile land, due to its huge number of forests. However, what is not generally known is that the forest is sustained by its own decomposition, so that all crop and livestock farming is detrimental in the short term. This creates a vicious circle where unsuitable practices, such as the decrease in crop rotation, the conversion from intercropping to monocultures, or farming on fragile soils, deplete the nutrients which originally arose from the decomposition of the forest's organic matter. This makes the soil increasingly less fertile and results in a continual search for more areas to cultivate. In turn, this causes accelerated deforestation as communities seek other sources of income through unsustainable extraction of forest products.

This area also has gold deposits that have promoted legal and illegal mining that threaten to increase the impact on, and fragmentation of, ecosystems and the pollution of water resources.

These impacts disrupt the passing on of knowledge, because the destruction of the ecosystems directly affects the rural communities which develop their sustainable livelihoods based on the management of these natural resources. In consequence, ecological cycles are disrupted, and in turn this changes the cultural dynamics of knowledge transmission to new generations.

It is in this scenario where the search for alternative proposals could help improve socio-ecological productive landscapes and their resilience, as well as the revitalization of ancestral wisdom and good agricultural production practices adapted to the current situation. During several decades, particularly in settlements on the high slopes of the Napo River, human groups in search of new territories, both settlers and indigenous peoples, have introduced their own ways of taking ownership of the lands and have gradually determined suitable agricultural practices adapted to their environment.

Socio-economic context

The biocorridors of the OP5 and the COMDEKS project area is 44,251 ha, and home to approximately 23,360 men and 20,891 women.

Table 1. Population of the Yaku Samay and Akllak Sacha biocorridors

Sex	Biocorridors		
	Yaku Samay	**Akllak Sacha**	**Total**
Men	10,122	13,238	**23,360**
Women	8,878	12,013	**20,891**
Total	**19,000**	**25,251**	**44,251**

Source: Ecuador National Institute of Statistics (INEC) 2011.
Prepared by the Sacha Causai Foundation - EQUIPATE, Amazon[6]

There are 85 communities in the Yaku Samay biocorridor, mainly Kichwa, spread through the rural parishes of Archidona, Tena and Arosemena Tola cantons. In turn, these communities are organized into a second level federations: Kijus Association of Kichwa Communities "ACOKI"; Cotundo Union of Kichwa communities, "UNCOKIC"; and the Kichwa organizations of Loreto "OKIL" which include “CONAKINO”, “FAOICIN”, and “FOCIN”. Meanwhile in Arosemena Tola canton there are seven communities: Morete Cocha, Puní Kotona, Tzahuata, Bajo Ila, Flor Del Bosque, Misi Urku and Santa Mónica.

In the Akllak Sacha biocorridor; in Santa Clara there are 26 communities, of which 18 are in Santa Clara and 6 in San Jose. There are 7 communities in Arajuno: Koangos, Atacapi, 10 de Julio, 20 de Marzo, Arajuno, Chico Méndez and Chilly Urco. Communities, mostly indigenous, are organized and represented by a second and third level of organizations.

The context of the landscapes in which COMDEKS will act is characterized by indigenous rural communities with high rates of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination.

Regarding food security, the populations organize their production activities based on a differentiated use of space called the chakra, a space which is mainly the domain of indigenous women, where strategies of exchange, sales and subsistence are established. In the chakras, which are family workspaces, short-cycle crops such as corn, peanuts, naranjilla, yucca and rice are grown together. Perennial crops such as coffee, cocoa and bananas are grown in terraces from 440-1250 meters above sea level. These are the most important crops because they generate income for growers, these varieties are grown in all seasons and there are seasonal harvests which are sold on the local market. The banana and yucca are also used for family consumption and maize is used to raise poultry.

[2] *Fundación Sacha Causai. 2013. “¡Preparado el camino! Una experiencia de construcción de biocorredores para el buen vivir en la amazonia ecuatoriana”. “Sistematización de la Fase de Planificación 5ª FO PPD/PNUD/FMAM. Tena, Ecuador”.* (Sacha Causai Foundation. 2013. Preparing the Way! An experience of constructing Biocorridors for Good Living in the Ecuadorian Amazon; Systematization of the Planning Phase OP5 SGP/UNDP/GEF Tena, Ecuador)

Productive use of territory and dominant economic activities

According to local stakeholder's findings, stated in Biocorridors Working Groups meetings, local policy that supports productive sector in the cantons is unclear. Most of the rural population lives from income obtained from activities related to agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing. According to the 2010 Census, the predominant activities are:

Agriculture

In the Kamanwi and Yaku Samay biocorridors, there are three profitable crops. The first is the naranjilla, mostly the Palora and hybrid varieties, which is cultivated in over 1,058 hectares, equivalent to 41.56% of the cultivated land, occupying surfaces of 1.5 hectares per plantation and with an average yield of 148,120 sacks. Then we have coffee with 958 hectares, equivalent to 37.60%, occupying areas of 2.1 hectares per plantation and with an average yield of 11,496 metric quintals[7] per hectare. The third cash crop is cocoa with cultivation land reaching 532 hectares, equivalent to 20.88% of cultivated land surfaces and occupying 1.2 hectares per plantation.

In the Akllak Sacha biocorridor, agricultural production takes place in family chakras where traditional cultivation methods are practiced: banana, yucca, naranjilla, papaya, pineapple, chinese potatoes, beans, peanuts and recently cocoa farming promoted by provincial and local institutions. According to Arosemena Tola's Territory Development Plan, surveys indicates that 80% of the production is destined to domestic consumption and 20% for sale market; although growers have difficulty carrying products to the market due the lack of transportation.

The mestizo population exists on a smaller scale in this biocorridor; amongst their economic activities are agriculture, farming, logging and local services such as grocery stores, restaurants and urban businesses.

Sustainable forest production

The Ministry of the Environment, through the "Socio Bosque[8]" Project, has implemented a forest protection programme in the community of Santa Rita, located in the Yaku Samay biocorridor. Through this program, the Ministry of the Environment (MAE) enters into conservation agreements with landholders, in which monetary compensation is given in exchange for protection of the forest cover. Participants in the program are asked to submit a proposal outlying how conservation payments will be spent, encouraging investment and strategic spending. The purpose of the project is to create a system linking incomes with environmental services, creating an alternative to unsustainable exploitation of forest resources for survival

Commercialization of wayusa

This production is currently underway in 68 communities of the canton, but there is not yet any information on production volumes. Wayusa is highly demanded for its properties as a medicinal and aromatic plant, it usually adapts itself to the lower area of the canton. It can also be grown under the chakra and organic systems, generating ecological and profitable alternatives.

[3] 1 metric quintal = 100kg

[4] "Socio Bosque", is a program from the Ministry of the Environment of Ecuador.

Production of fine aroma[9] cocoa and its added value

This production is aimed at obtaining the added value of cocoa used for chocolate. For this, technological processes are used which do not involve major investment. These activities are carried out for commercial purposes which complement incomes to cover basic household needs in some communities.

In Akllak Sacha biocorridor, the Autonomous Decentralized Municipal Government - Santa Clara (GAD) – intents to plant about 200 hectares of fine aroma cocoa, in agricultural areas of Santa Clara, San Jorge and San Francisco de Punín, Arajuno, Santa Cecilia de Villano and San José de Curaray.

In Arosemena Tola, 14 of 21 existing settlements canton have established cocoa plantations, making this one of the crops which cover the largest area in the canton in association with other crops, mainly yucca, plantain, maize and chonta. These are mostly grown under the chakra system and so the estimated areas for production of other products mostly correspond to this cultivation system.

Land Tenure

Among the features of the selected landscape, land tenure in indigenous communities still remains as communal property. This ensures that important conservation areas are not fragmented in indigenous territories due to the cultural practice of preserving sacred sites and protecting lands for future generations.

This is the scenario in which SGP and COMDEKS will intervene, strengthening the initiatives of the organizations and communities through small grants to projects that address socio-environmental and socio-economic problems.

[9] Fine aroma cocoa (also “fine” or “flavor” cocoa) is a cocoa variety cultivated in Ecuador which differs from traditional cocoa in its scent and flavor.

3. LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The COMDEKS[10] landscape approach responds particularly to changing dynamics established by communities living in the territories and ecosystems. Therefore, the COMDEKS landscape strategy aims to develop sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities with local communities to maintain, rebuild, and revitalize the socio-ecological production landscapes, in accordance with the following five precepts of the Satoyama Initiative:

- Resource use within the carrying capacity and resilience of the environment;
- Cyclic use of natural resources;
- Recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures;
- Natural resource management by various participating cooperating entities;
- Contribution to local socio-economies.

The Sacha Causai Foundation technical team's initial assessment of the selected landscape in the Amazon territory confirmed that one of the processes contributing to biodiversity is linked with the geophysical dynamics of the area. Situated between the Andes Mountains and the Amazon plain, this area is subject to continuous modification of natural landscapes, resulting in distinct geomorphic units which are well differentiated. This has generated a diversity of habitats, enabling specialization of, and differentiation between, different lands, making them potential sites for the generation of new forms of biodiversity. In this context, it can be suggested that as well as the potential vegetation models of Ecuador, this diversity of habitats gives the possibility of defining potential areas rich in diversity that differ from each other but share a similar evolutionary history.

The map shown in Figure 3 illustrates zones (quadrants) of 25 square kilometers, which show the number of habitats that a given area contains. The greater the variety of habitats, the greater is the possibility of supporting different groups of species which have developed in particular habitats.

The same map indicates the current landscape status; useful for setting goals and expecting results.

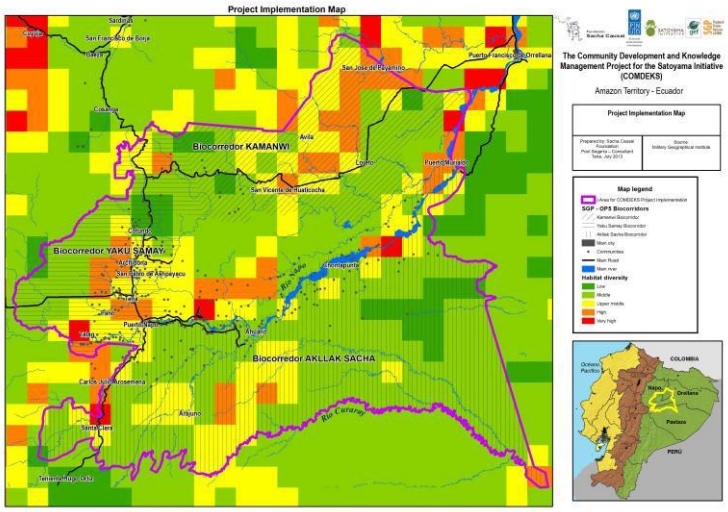


Figure 3. Working area, COMDEKS Ecuador project.
Source: Sacha Causai Foundation technical team-COMDEKS-SGP OP5

With this map, the communities concerned were able to witness the threats in their territory and appreciate the opportunities to improve the resilience of the landscape, as well as production systems and strategies to be implemented through the execution of community projects financed by COMDEKS.

[10] *COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy template and guideline, Annex VIII*

Parallel to the map's representation of the diversity of habitats in the selected landscape, during consultation with the communities, the conservation status of the territory was analyzed by applying the tool "*Indicators of resilience in socio-ecological productive landscapes"*. Table 2 shows the results:

Table 2 Results. Indicators of resilience: socio-ecological productive landscapes. Amazon

Partnership projects	**Protection of ecosystems and preservation of biodiversity** ***Rating 4***	**Agricultural biodiversity** ***Rating 2***	**Knowledge, learning and innovation** ***Rating 8***	**Social equality and infrastructure** ***Rating 6***
Sinchi Warmikuna	4.25/4	4.5/2	4/8	3/6
Pashimbi	3.25/4	2.5/2	3.25/8	3.33/6
Jatun Anzu	4.5/4	4.5/2	3.625/8	2.6/6
Tsatsayaku	4/4	4/2	3.125/8	3.83/6
AMA-AMKACE	3.75/4	3.5/2	3.63/8	3/6

Source: Created by the Sacha Causai Foundation, 2013

The ratings for biodiversity protection indicators, agricultural biodiversity, knowledge and social equality correspond to the perception of the women and men in the preselected communities. Each indicator has a rating. For instance, the biodiversity conservation indicator has a rating out of a total of 4 points. Looking at Table 2, we see that the communities' perception indicates that their landscape is in a good status. It is important to consider that the perception that people have about their landscapes can be relative. However, because they have worked on the map of diverse habitats (Figure 3), their perceptions are not so far removed from reality, validating the relevance of combining local and modern knowledge. Therefore, in the process of monitoring the status of landscape through the Monitoring and Technical Support System (SIMONAA), two types of knowledge are combined.

As the long-term objective of the COMDEKS Landscape Strategy is to improve the resilience of socio-ecological productive landscape, the main results aligned with the SGP OP5 are now presented. Among other things, these must show that:

• Implementation of agroforestry systems supports the generation of interconnected spaces between the remaining vegetation, which could help the exchange of living organisms belonging to ecosystems and generate genetic exchange that contributes to the resilience of the ecosystems and ensures food production for the local populations.

• Agricultural production practices incorporate ancestral knowledge recognized as a key resource in the preservation of processes for rebuilding the ecological functions of the COMDEKS landscape, as well as incorporating alternatives that strengthen food practices.

• Possible uses of land in zones which are vulnerable to erosion and degradation are reconsidered, as well as adopting sustainable agricultural and livestock management practices, adapted to the unique conditions of the area of interest.

• People in the area of interest recognize the role of the incorporation of ancestral and innovative knowledge in order to improve the living conditions of communities and recognize the value of biodiversity as a strategic component through which to satisfy daily needs, both material and spiritual.

• Mechanisms are implemented for transferring knowledge among different groups that constitute a community. The potential of these are recognize to manage territorial development.

• Land, water and biodiversity are managed according to traditional strategies and concepts of sustainability, and incorporated into customary practices that support preservation of knowledge and autonomy over the management of their territories, and provide elements for consideration in the planning of their resources within the framework of Local Development Plans.

• The leadership and social structures in the project areas are strengthened and recognize human, economic and identity needs.

Results and national indicators of the COMDEKS Project are given below:

Table 3 Results and Indicators: Community projects

COMDEKS Components/Outcomes	**Results**	**Impact indicators aligned with GEF/SGP OP5**
Greater ecological connectivity and improved biodiversity through reforestation activities and protection of watersheds	1. The landscape connectivity has been improved	1. Number of communities with agro-ecological farms
	2. The recovery capacity of the agroforestry systems has been increased	2.1 Number of plants planted by species
		2.2 Number of forest species recovered
	3. Watersheds have been protected and restored	3.1 Kilometers of riverbank re-forested
		3.2 Number of water sources protected
Improved local livelihoods through the development of sustainable tourism activities and artisan craft industry	1. Capacities for sustainable community-led tourism	1. Number of community tourism companies operating
	2. Local capacities to use non timber forest products	2. Number of rural women producing artisan crafts
	3. Local capacities for bird-watching tourism have been developed	3. Number of communities which offer bird-watching tourism services
Sustainable agricultural practices implemented to enhance productivity through crop diversification, value-added production strategies, and promotion of native fish farming	1. The production systems have been diversified	1. Number of chakras with agro-ecological improvements
	2. Local capacities have been developed to improve cocoa value chain	2. Number of quintals of cocoa in the value chain
	3. Capacities have been developed for the management of fish farming of native species.	3. Number of families with fish farming of local species.
Strengthened institutional capacity and participatory decision making through the promotion of community working groups and conservation agreements at the landscape level	1. Community based management of agreements to conserve and develop socio-ecological productive landscapes.	1. Number of Biocorridor Working Groups and Regional Working Groups achieved.
	2. Community conservation agreements signed.	2. Certified regulations for community organization.
	3. Proposals for incentives for environmental services have been developed in significant areas for conservation in the territories	3. Number of community incentive proposals developed

Source: Created by the Sacha Causai Foundation technical team

4. TYPES OF COMMUNITY PROJECT

Community projects' selection criteria funded by COMDEKS

Community projects financed by COMDEKS were selected based on the following criteria:

- Located in relevant ecosystems which are under pressure from large-scale production activities.
- Environmentally-friendly community initiatives with potential for replication and up-scaling.
- Based on the experience and geographical location of former SGP projects implemented in previous phases.
- Located within the biocorridors which will be constructed with the participation of social and political partners.
- Located in buffer zones of protected areas.
- Located in other important areas for conservation, outside the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP), such as community forests and those forest protected by the local authorities with competencies in biodiversity conservation.
- To demonstrate potential partnership with other communities to have greater impact on the recovery of resilience and ecological connectivity, and the strengthening of sustainable livelihoods

The map below shows the historical relationship between the communities which have lived in these ecosystems for hundreds of years:

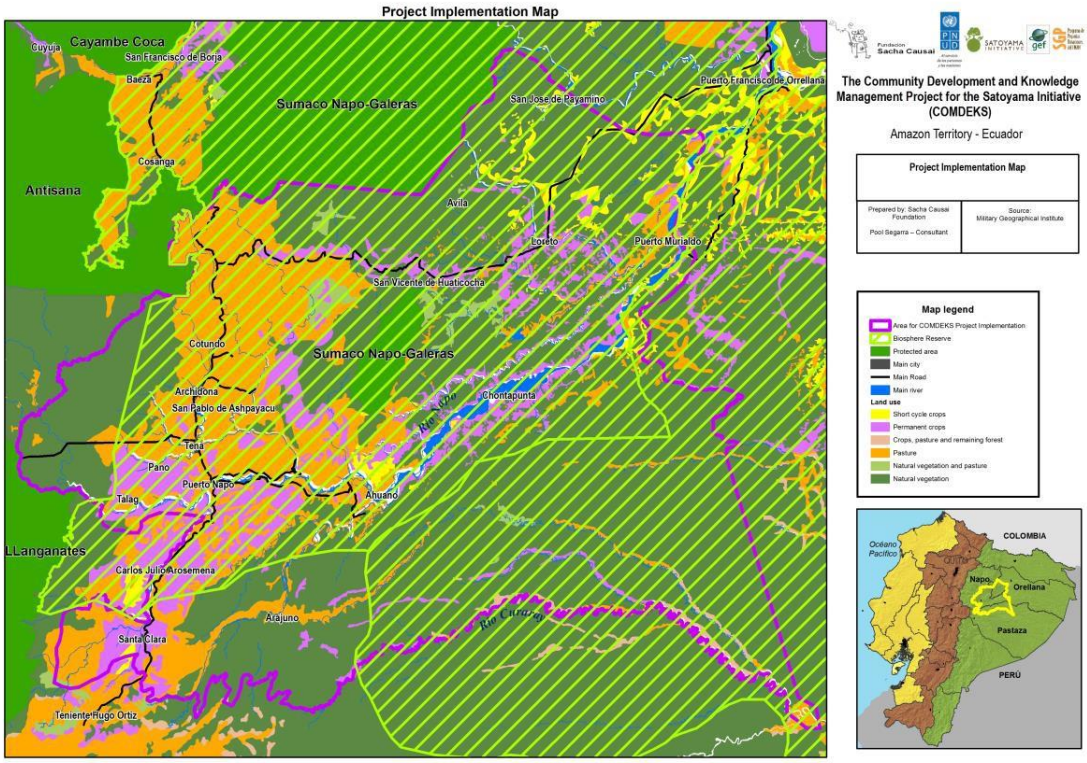


Figure 4. COMDEKS Project implementing area in Ecuador. Source: Sacha Causai Foundation technical team-COMDEKS-SGP OP5

Large areas of palms, morete palms and other useful plants which feed these communities are grouped in clumps in the middle of the jungle. Many of these correspond to former human settlements. The itinerant use of, and exploitation by, human groups in different territories have generated planted food reserves. This is an ancient practice to return to territories, when the capacity of the jungle to renew itself on formerly occupied sites has regenerated a natural landscape with a greater concentration of plants vital to the survival of these groups. This ancient practice is an example which should be replicated to enhance the resilience of socio-ecological productive landscapes.

This map also shows how the landscape selected for the COMDEKS project represents ecological connections between protected areas and buffer zones; for instance between Sumaco Napo Galeras National Park, Llanganates National Park, the Antisana Ecological Reserve and also important areas of the Sumaco Biosphere Reserve.

The area contains a complex system of natural waterways such as estuaries, creeks, streams and permanent rivers, whose waters mainly drain to the Amazon sub-basin of the Napo River. The headwaters of the rivers Jatun Yaku, Tena, Pano and Misahaullí are in the area, together with their branches between the Antisana Ecological Reserve and the Llanganates National Park, providing pure water suitable for human consumption to the settlements of Archidona, Cotundo, Tena, Puerto Napo, Misahaullí and Talag, among others. This is why the Autonomous Decentralized Governments (GADs) are working on strategies to protect the remaining vegetation. Also COMDEKS area of interest covers the area of the *Bosque Protector* (protective forest) of the basins of the Rivers Colonso, Tena, Shiti and Inchillaqui (Colonso Forest).

Most of these Autonomous Decentralized Governments (GADs) recognizes the historical ownership of the communities in these forests, who base their survival on the use of resources of this ecosystem. An example is seen in the Colonso Forest, where it is promoted that sustainable intervention in the buffer zone on behalf of the communities must consider community participation. This strategy will allow them to establish reciprocal relationships with communities, based on the development of joint proposals between communities and the GAD to generate incentives to communities for the care of the forest and the water. Thus, the GAD secures water for the city of Tena, and the communities improve their quality of life.

Types of projects financed by COMDEKS

Five proposed projects have been identified during the consultation process to be funded with COMDEKS resources, and which align with the goal to improve the resilience of the landscape by strengthening initiatives which are innovative from a socio-ecological perspective. These projects will participate in the SGP OP5 strategy at technical and political levels represented in the territory and will operate in the same way as the Biocorridor Working Groups and Regional Working Groups. A brief description of the projects is given in the following table:

Table 4 Description of the Community Projects Financed by COMDEKS

Biocorridor	Partnership Projects	Socio-ecological Production Characteristics	
		Ecological Connectivity: located in buffer zones, in SNAP protected areas and in zones of importance for conservation	**Sustainable livelihoods**
YAKU SAMAY	*"Sinchi Warmikun"* (Brave women)	Colonso Protective Forest Rivers: Colonso, Tena, Shiti and Inchillaqui	Agriculture in the Kichwa chakra system Cocoa production Artisan crafts using non-timber materials from the forest Value added to the production of fine aroma cocoa and wayusa Fishing farming of native fish Local gastronomy
	"Bosques, agua y Comunidades" (Forests, water and Communities)	Colonso Protective Forest Rivers: Pashimbi, Tena, Colonso and Inchillaqui	Sustainable tourism Agriculture in the Kichwa chakra system Fishing farming of native fish Local gastronomy
AKLLAK SACHA	"*Tsatsayaku cacao"* (Tsatsayaku Cocoa)	South east boundary of the Llanganates National Park River Kulluaurku	Value added to the production of fine aroma cocoa Agroforestry production of cinnamon and wayusa Agriculture in the Kichwa chakra system
	"*Jatun Anzu*" (The Great Anzu River)	South east boundary of the Llanganates National Park Rivers: Anzu, Piatúa and Chonta Yaku	Agriculture in the Kichwa chakra system Value added to the production of chakra products Sustainable tourism Fishing farming of native fish
	Conservation, management and sustainable production in the communities of Arajuno and Curaray	43% of the territory is part of the Yasuní Biosphere reserve Rivers: Arajuno and Curaray	Agriculture in the Kichwa chakra system Increase production of fine aroma cocoa Artisan crafts using non-timber materials from the forest Fishing farming of native fish

Source: Created by the Sacha Causai Foundation technical team

These five COMDEKS projects specifically contribute to the protection of key ecosystem functions (water, habitat, soils, etc.). Biodiversity conservation in local livelihoods, agricultural production, and institutional structure.

Table 5 Project Estimated Population

	Percentages	**Population**
Men	49,87 **%**	978
Women	50,13%	983
Total		**2.061**

In the framework of the SGP Operational Phase 5 - COMDEKS, Working Groups of the biocorridors (Yaku Samay, Akllak Sacha,), Territorial Working Group (TWG), Land Development Bureau and Environmental Governance Forum, will be instances for COMDEKS projects participation to have significant impact on the institutional structure in correspondence with the slogan of the Satoyama Initiative.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Participatory methods for initial evaluation of the landscape

Prior to the community consultation, the SGP and the National Steering Committee selected Sacha Causai Foundation as the entity responsible for preparing COMDEKS Landscape Strategy, the community consultation, community project development support, and project tracking and monitoring.

The process of community consultation followed these steps:

- Visits to community leaders in the three biocorridors to inform them about the COMDEKS Project within the framework of SGP OP5.
- Field trips to pre-selected landscapes.
- Meetings with local authorities to engage their participation.
- Workshops for participatory formulation of projects: technical staff of Tena and Arosemena Tola, GADS, Sacha Causai Foundation and communities.
- Community consultation based on the COMDEKS questionnaire and indicators of resilience of socio-ecological productive landscapes. Based on working group methodology, landscape status and knowledge of older and young men and women about biodiversity management were analyzed. In plenary sessions, the groups presented the results of the indicators.
- When needed, a Kichwa facilitator and translator assisted in the community consultation.
- Letters request from local authorities committed to support community projects.
- Community projects where presented to SGP National Steering Committee for review and approval.

Community consultation was the first input to work on community projects proposals and this Amazon Region Landscape Strategy document.

Participation of local actors in the process of achieving landscape results

Local actors, particularly from GADs, participated in the development of community projects, because the contents of these projects are aligned with their land-use plans.

The advocacy of the stakeholders is reflected in the Environmental and Social Agreement of the Amazon Territory (ASOCIATE), generated in the Regional Working Group (RWG). In this forum - which involves three provinces of the Amazon and where there are biocorridors under construction - priorities, policies, environmental and productive projects of the land-use plans are combined with the interests of the organizations and communities, through community projects.

Biocorridor Working Groups provide forums for direct dialogue between social stakeholders, such as community organizations, and technical staff of GAD and other public sector bodies. Here environmental issues, sustainable production, local policies and other topics of interest to the biocorridor stakeholders are addressed. Moreover, this forum provides an opportunity to identify new community proposals aimed at improving the landscape resilience.

Monitoring and evaluation of COMDEKS and SGP projects portfolio

As indicated in Table 4, there are five community projects of interest to the COMDEKS Project. These projects are complementary in their goals with the eight SGP OP5 community projects, as they share a significant part of the territory, which was previously prioritized by the SGP. The map below shows the portfolio of projects (13) that will receive technical support from the Sacha Causai Foundation.

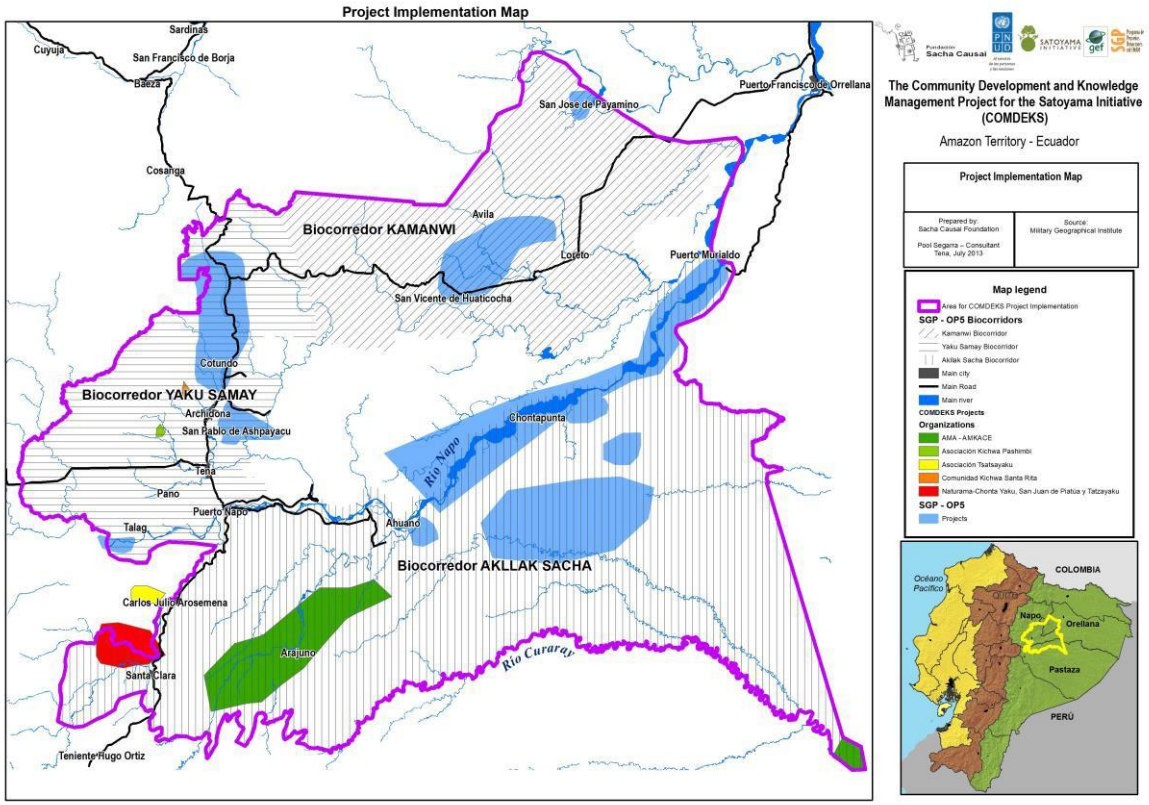


Figure 5 Implementation area COMDEKS-Ecuador Project. Source: Sacha Causai Foundation technical team-COMDEKS-SGP OP5

The monitoring and evaluation system to be applied to 13 projects will be based on the Monitoring and Technical Support System, known as SIMONAA. The tool to measure the resilience of socio-ecological productive landscapes will be added to this system. The following diagram describes the steps to be followed:

Table 5 Steps in the SIMONA methodology

<table>
<tr>
<td>SIMONAA
Monitoring and Support System
Workshops
Project visits
Application Modules
Reports
Training
Systematization of experiences</td>
<td>WORKSHOPS
Inception: at the start of projects
Experience exchange: one year from project implementation
Closing: at the end of Projects</td>
<td>Inception workshop
Communicate structure and goals of the SGP and COMDEKS.
Socialize partnership projects
Review role and functions of EQUIPATE, responsibilities of project partners and implementers
Learn financial administrative processes
Support networks to define a joint training plan</td>
<td>Experience exchange workshop
To share advances in partnership projects
To evaluate the participative territorial process (RWG, BWG)
To analyze advances in the SGP Networks work
To define adjustments and corrections to the joint work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Workshop
Make known project results obtained and their sustainability strategies.
Present the systematization of projects
Define how RWG and BWG will continue
Establish strategy to maintain support of SGP networks</td>
<td>VISITS
First:
Inform about SGP OP5
The role of EQUIPATE: number of visits, reports, recommendations.
Share the project document, logical framework and annual plan.
Present and validate the Training Plan. Initiate the process of systematization: Systematization plan</td>
<td>Second, third and fourth visits:
Field visit
Compliance with logical framework and annual plan.
Implementation of monitoring modules
Advances in partnership
Advances in the development of emblematic products
Advances in the process of systematization
Advances in the generation and strengthening of alliances</td>
<td>APPLICATION OF SGP MODULES AND COMDEKS MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS
Identification of partnership projects
Community perception
Annual plan
SGP programme indicators
COMDEKS indicators of landscape resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING
Framed by:
Orientation approaches: ecological connectivity, socio-ecological productive landscapes and partnership
Operational strategies
Training plan and strengthening of capacities and networks
Local Training: communities, associations, in the framework of the BWG and/or RWG.</td>
<td>REPORTS
Workshops
Visits
Reports RWG-BWG
Technical assistance and training
Audiovisual documentation
Annual and final COMDEKS reports</td>
<td>SYSTEMATIZATION
Document presented by the organization
Best practices
Local knowledge</td>
<td>DIFFUSION
Reproduction and dissemination of the experiences through different virtual media</td>
</tr>
</table>

Source: Created by Sacha Causai Foundation technical team, adapted from the document: “Memoria del Taller de Arranque PPD FO5, Junio 2013” (Report of the SGP OP5 Inception Workshop, June 2013)

6. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEMATIZATION PLAN

The plan for knowledge management and systematization of experiences is based on instruments previously validated by the SGP. SIMONAA stands out among the main instruments, together with the methodology for systematizing the experiences of the community projects. These are described below.

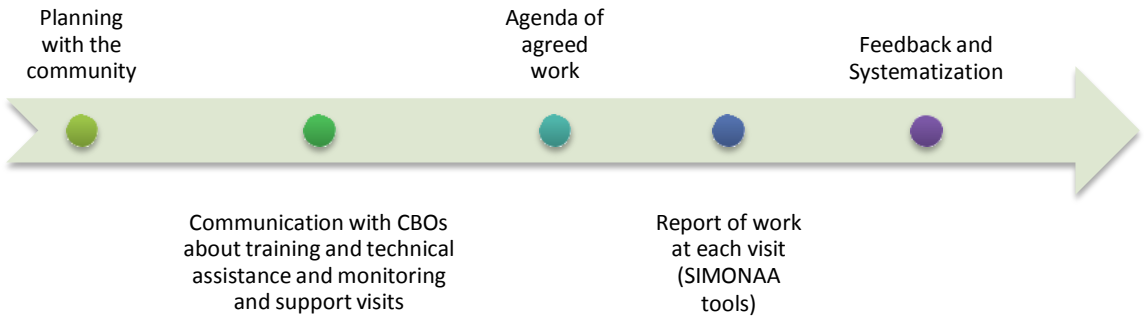
The Monitoring and Technical Assistance System - SIMONAA[11] - enables the practical application of the conceptual proposal and programme policies in Ecuador. It is a participatory system combining monitoring, evaluation, technical assistance support. It is a tool which allows users to exchange views, make recommendations, establish consensus and, where necessary, adjust objectives, activities and outputs in the implementation phase of the project according to the strategies of each territory and depending on SGP and COMDEKS approaches. The diagram below shows the characteristics of SIMONAA.

The process for the application of SIMONAA during the execution of community projects, as described in Table 5, is:

- 3 Workshops: inception, exchange of experience and closing.
- 4 Visits to projects.
- SIMONAA modules or SGP and COMDEKS.
- Monitoring reports.
- Technical Assistance and Training.
- Systematization of experiences.

[11] SGP/UNDP/GEF. Monitoring and Technical Assistance System. 2013

The following diagram summarizes its field application:



Systematization

In the current OP5, it is planned that the community projects will systematize their most relevant experiences. The projects to be financed by COMDEKS will join this process of systematization and dissemination of best practices. The systematization process to be applied by the Sacha Causai Foundation will be an ongoing process allowing the generation of local knowledge and the dissemination of best practice. The steps to be followed are described below:

- Gather information related to knowledge of biodiversity management from communities through workshops, interviews, focus groups: by gender and generation.
- Sort information.
- Interpreting the information.
- Highlight lessons learned and best practices.
- Disseminate through various virtual and print media. For this, communities will have communication tools.

Regional Working Groups (RWGs) and Biocorridor Working Groups (BWGs) are forums in which the information that comes out of the process of systematization will be shared and validated.

To take forward the process of management of local knowledge, participatory tools are available, such as G*uidelines*[12] *for the incorporation of gender in community projects*, as well as for the systematization. With its application, the development of a methodological consensus process is promoted. In this process, roles and functions are assumed in a differentiated manner, with the aim of processing the information generated in the projects so that it can be systematized and later disseminated.

[12] The message of this publication *Guidelines for the incorporation of gender in community environmental projects* is "to reaffirm that both women and men have great responsibility for their contributions to the development of communities and peoples. They must therefore have the same access to training and opportunities to analyze and decide on their environment and act to change it "(OFIS-SGP 2008:7). Meanwhile, the SGP guide on systematization of experiences facilitates a participatory process of critical reflection of the learnings and lessons which occurred during the execution

of the community projects, by women and men in the communities.

The SGP OP5 will use the information coming from the community projects to share with national organizations with which it interacts - such as the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries, International Cooperation, and others. This will be a direct source for the territory information with its socio-cultural specification that will enable these political actors to develop national and local policies that lead to improve the resilience of socio-ecological productive landscapes.

For SGP OP5 and COMDEKS, the knowledge generated by community projects will provide a solid baseline which will be useful for future interventions, so that these meet the new challenges arising in the territory and are proposed through established processes and by community organizations.

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