

Case Study 8 Private conservation networks in Peru

Christel Scheske and **Bruno Monteferrri**, Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental

PPAs in Peru receive relatively little support from the government and there is currently no national-level organisation or association for all PPAs in the country. As a result, in several regions across Peru, networks have been formed, usually with the help of an NGO such as the Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA) or Amazónicos por la Amazonía (AMPA) that bring together the PPAs into a network. Despite the lack of an official national PPA network, NGO-led initiatives link PPAs at the national level. Over the past decade, many insights have been gathered regarding the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of these PPA networks which are discussed here and reflected in the principles and best practices in Part B, Section 8.

Overview

The framework for PPAs was established in Peru between the late 1990s and early 2000s. It allows for a series of legal mechanisms, through which citizens can make officially-recognised conservation commitments for a piece of land, including: private conservation areas, which are established on privately or community-owned land, conservation or ecotourism concessions on public land and conservation agreements.

There are currently five PPA networks in Peru (see Table 5). Private conservation initiatives are possible through several different legal tools and in many cases the networks incorporate examples of several or all of these. As a result, member needs can differ vastly: in Amazonas, for instance, some PPAs are owned by urban entrepreneurs who know how to effectively finance conservation through ecotourism, while others are huge areas managed by rural communities whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and livestock, who conserve forests to maintain their water supplies. While in the former case, the PPA manager(s) tend to be the same person over many years, in the case of communities, PPA managers depend on democratically-elected councils that change every few years, thus leading to a lack of management continuity both internally and towards the network. These two groups have different world views, priorities and needs. However, the heterogeneity of members in PPA networks also lends a diversity and representativeness to the network that allows for dialogue and learning between very different conservation stakeholders.

Networks have improved PPA effectiveness in a number of ways. For example, the Amazonas network received two small grants in 2017 and 2018, which for the first time provided them with autonomous funds to implement activities that they had prioritised, such as training in ecotourism service provision. The Amazonas network is also creating tourist circuits including several member PPAs, which are then



Pedro Gamboa, head of the Peruvian National Protected Area Service, thanks members of RED AMA, the Amazonas PPA network, for their work in private conservation © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA

jointly promoted. In San Martín, a sub-group of the network members have created a cooperative to allow for sales of non-timber forest products from their PPAs. In several cases (e.g. private conservation areas Millpuj La Heredad and Bosque Berlin in Amazonas), the combination of public visibility and participation in a PPA network motivated the managers to re-engage with conservation with renewed vigour, create new projects, act as local leaders and expand their efforts.

Challenges

Although there is a myriad of best-practice guides for conservation (as noted in Part B, Section 2), very few managers of PPAs in Peru make use of them; language barriers and the research/implementation gap are well-known problems in conservation science (Knight et al., 2008). PPA networks allow for knowledge-sharing between PPAs (Best Practice 2.5.2) and also make it easier for NGOs and other actors to provide capacity-building by targeting the entire group of members (Best Practice 8.2.1). For instance, SPDA has provided the Amazonas network with a series of workshops on legal tools for combating threats to their respective PPAs and AMPA trained members of the San Martín network in project design and management. In Amazonas, SPDA hired a coordinator that worked directly for the regional network. In Loreto, SPDA and AMPA have provided support such as financing for regular meetings and office space to support the regional network. Similarly, although Peruvian PPA networks struggle for funds and have limited access to national or international grants and scholarship programmes, the San Martín, Amazonas and Madre de Dios networks have been able to secure funds for small projects, thanks to the larger NGOs supporting project design and grant-writing.

Overall, despite the many challenges, networks have proven their ability to provide important spaces for dialogue and

Table 5: Snapshot of PPA networks in Peru (as of June 2018)

	Amazonas	Madre de Dios	San Martín	Loreto	Ucayali
Network name	Red de Conservación Voluntaria de Amazonas (RED AMA)	Red de Conservación de la Biodiversidad de Madre de Dios	Red de Conservación Voluntaria y Comunal de San Martín	Red Amazónica de Conservación Loreto (RACOL)	Asociación de Concesionarios Conservacionistas de la Biodiversidad BioRed Ucayali
Number of PPA members	14	16	34	23	13
Total number of ha protected	125,316.96	6,543	700,000	5,431.7	110,125.73
Types of PPA represented	Private conservation areas	Private conservation areas, ecotourism concessions, conservation concessions	Private conservation areas and conservation concessions	Private conservation areas and conservation concessions	Conservation concessions, ecotourism concessions
Currently active	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Formally constituted	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Has own budget	Yes	No	No	No	No
Website/Online presence	Social networks	None	Social networks	Social networks	Social networks

collaboration, while acting as local advocates for conservation towards regional authorities and other interest groups. For example, PPA members often complain about the slowness or lack of action of authorities in response to environmental crimes, such as illegal logging, that affect the PPAs. Experiences in San Martín, Amazonas and Loreto have shown that authorities react faster when they are pressured to act by PPA networks. Strengthening these networks and helping ensure their long-term independence and sustainability should be a priority for both government and NGOs working in conservation.



Owner of PPA Bahuaja which is located adjacent to the Reserva Nacional Tambopata and the river Tambopata, generating a landscape corridor for Amazonian biodiversity © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA

Summary

- Networks can act as a powerful motivator for PPA managers by making them feel recognised and providing a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded people (Best Practice 8.1.2).
- PPA networks provide platforms for pro-environmental political action. In Peru, many regional environmental authorities are plagued by corruption, inefficiency and lack of resources, and as a result, environmental crimes are committed openly and with impunity (Best Practice 8.1.1).
- PPA networks allow for important knowledge-sharing platforms (Best Practice 8.2.1).
- Networks provide opportunities for joint projects and funding if the networks become formally constituted as non-profits or similar organisations (Best Practice 8.2.1).
- Networks provide platforms for joint business approaches (Best Practice 8.4.1).
- The involvement of larger NGOs is often an important element for the functioning of the networks (Best Practice 2.5.4).

Special thanks to: José Vargas, Martín Vasquez, Fernando Arévalo and Karina Pinasco for contributions to this case study.