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# Together for Conservation



## Summary:

*An increase in wildlife trafficking, illegal logging, and timber trade, illegal, unregulated, and undeclared fishing, and illegal mining is posing a great threat to biodiversity and severely impacting the well-being of indigenous peoples and local communities in the Amazon Basin.*

## About the project:

Together for Conservation, an 18,2 million program that will take place over five years (October 2021 – May 2026) supported by USAID, seeks to strengthen the capacities of civil society actors, organizations and their regional networks to lead biodiversity conservation and environmental crime prevention efforts in the Amazon region, **particularly in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil**. The program aims to connect the experiences of Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), private companies, media, journalist networks and other civil society organizations to develop **innovative and effective solutions to transnational conservation crimes**.

Together for Conservation will focus on strengthening regional and transboundary collaboration through networks, the efforts developed by Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), private companies, media, journalists' networks and other civil society organizations by enhancing their expansion or replication. Led by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), a consortium of organizations will implement Together for Conservation, including Internews, IPAM, Pronaturaleza, Rare and COIAB [Confederation of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon].

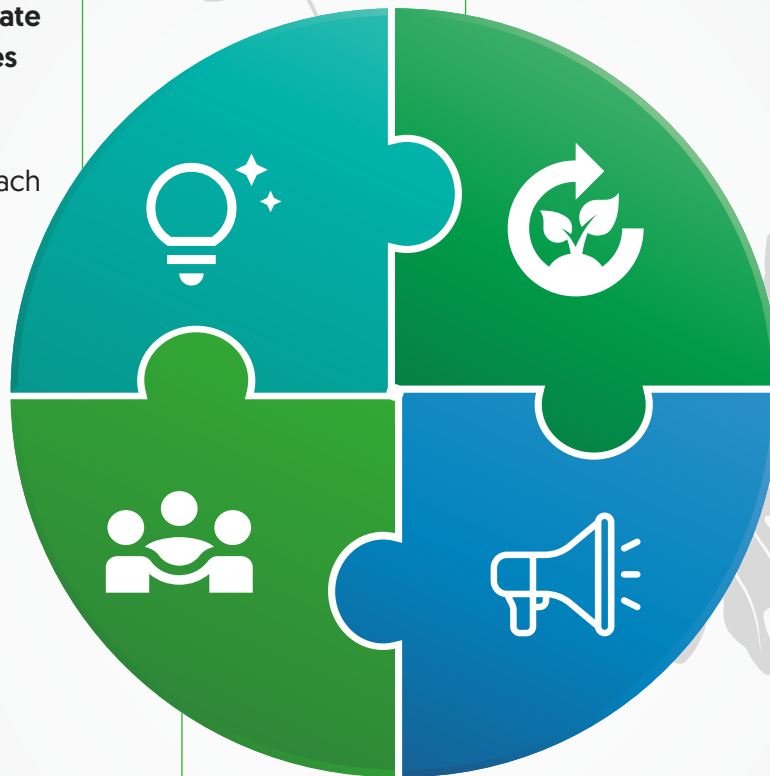
# The project has four Strategic Approaches (SA):

## [SA 1]

Strengthen regional networks and collaborative communities, to **accelerate cross-learning processes and the adoption of solutions and best practices**, expanding reach and impact.

## [SA 2]

**Foster private stakeholders and IPLC engagement in legal and sustainable economic activities** to facilitate sustainable and gender-sensitive value chains<sup>1</sup> to reduce potential conditions that facilitate the supply, transport and demand for illegal or unsustainable goods and services in the Amazon.



## [SA 3]

**Strengthen IPLC organizations' capacities to manage and defend their territories.**

## [SA 4]

**Strengthen media outlets, journalist networks, IPLC organizations and other CSOs** to foster active civic engagement and expand and increase their effectiveness in promoting, demanding, and overseeing government and private sector efforts concerning transparency and conservation crimes.

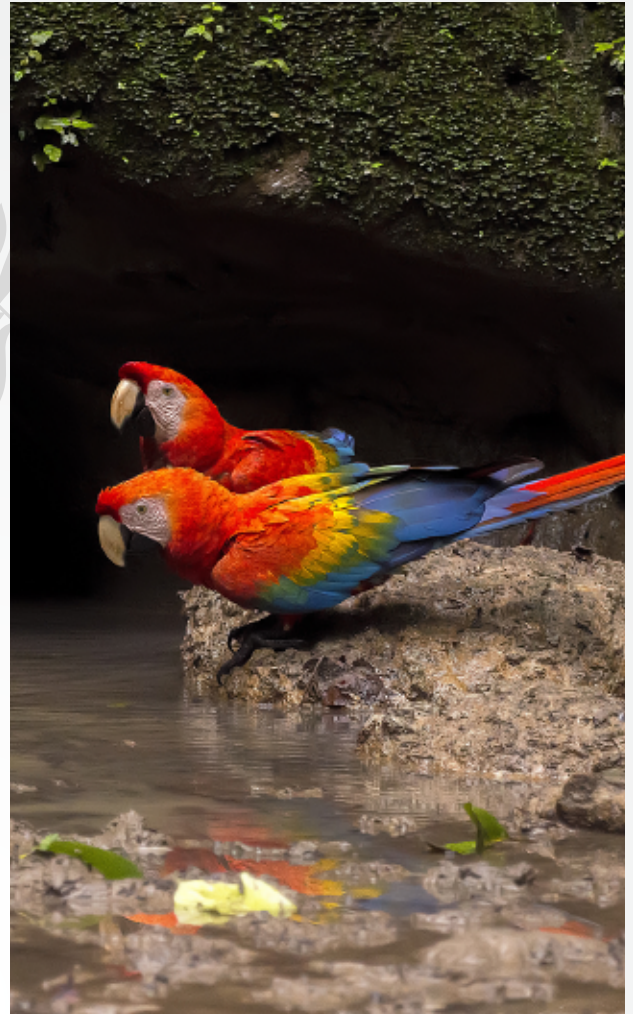
<sup>1</sup> A value chain is the chain streaming from a producer (in the case of Indigenous and local communities in the Amazon, this often involves collecting, fishing, hunting, logging, and alluvial mining) a buyer (which in the cases of value chains in the Amazon, could involve the people transporting goods to a store or market), and a consumer (the end beneficiary in this case could be someone in the city that eats Amazon fish). From a sustainability point of view, these value chains have to be sustainable for the ecosystem as well as for the Indigenous and local community involved. Sustainability involves that these chains comply with environmental, social and legal standards and national law/regulation. To facilitate sustainability in the whole value chain, working with all stakeholders involved is key. Gender-sensitive value chains specifically account for gender equity throughout the process and actively incorporate women, adolescents and girls.



**Internews will implement Strategic Approach 4 based on collaborative work between the South America team of the Americas Program Unit and the Earth Journalism Network (EJN), incorporating lessons learned and experience working with civil society organizations, media outlets, journalists, Indigenous peoples and local communities in the region.**

To strategically support the work of the organizations in the Together for Conservation consortium, Internews will develop Information Ecosystem Assessments (IEAs) in the geographies prioritized for the program's intervention, incorporating **an unprecedented information and communication approach** in conservation practice to confront and diminish conservation crimes. With these tools, the consortium organizations and other allied actors will obtain a detailed analysis of the information ecosystems, which will help them to strengthen their activity approach.

Furthermore, Internews will also develop Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCAs) to strengthen the management capacity of selected organizations in the Together for Conservation focus geographies. As a result, the IEAs and OCAs will support the program's central objective: **to increase the capacity of civil society organizations, Indigenous peoples and local communities** to influence and raise awareness to avoid conservation crimes in the Amazon.



In addition to analyzing the information ecosystems and strengthening **organizational capacity, Internews will promote quantity and quality coverage of conservation crimes and the possible solutions through Together for Conservation** and will seek to expand the scope of investigative reporting through media grants and journalistic reports with EJN's support. We will also boost the capacities of IPLCs and civil society organizations to report and disseminate information about the issue, particularly in the program's focus countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil.





**Capacity-building initiatives will support the media, investigative journalists and Indigenous peoples and local communities** to defend their territories and act in favor of the region's biodiversity conservation, an increasing priority. Transnational conservation crimes, such as illegal logging, species trafficking, illegal fishing and illegal mining, take place in an environment where impunity prevails, increasing the region's inhabitants' distrust in the "system."

Associated with the culture of impunity for conservation crimes, corruption among government officials and private interest groups that seek to maintain the status quo are also common. Compounding the erosion of governance, degrading biodiversity negatively impacts the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples and local communities. Leaders of Indigenous peoples, local communities seeking protection of their territories, civil society organizations working for biodiversity conservation, and media and journalists reporting on these crimes are increasingly facing threats to their physical and digital security. Through Together for Conservation, Internews will provide tools and training to these actors so that they can report and **disseminate information to counter conservation crimes more safely and effectively.**



**Partners:** USAID, Earth Journalism Network, WSC

**Contact:**

Sigrid Vasconez Davidsson | [svasconez@internews.org](mailto:svasconez@internews.org)

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