



Updated March 2024

PHOTO CREDIT: JOEL HEIM - WWF ECUADOR

# ECUADOR ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY FACT SHEET

## OVERVIEW

Ecuador - home to the Amazon rainforest, Andean páramos, cloud forests, and the Galápagos Islands - is among the top ten megadiverse countries in the world. This biodiversity supports an equally impressive cultural diversity, and natural resources form the backbone of the country's sustainable development. USAID partners with the government and people of Ecuador to protect the country's natural heritage and mitigate the effects of climate change.

## PRIORITIES

### **USAID combats illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing**

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing decimates important fisheries, impacts exports, and destroys the livelihoods of men and women working in the small-scale fishing sector.

USAID works with the Government of Ecuador, the private sector, and local communities to combat IUU fishing through several means. We provide training to all fisheries inspectors on new rules designed to increase sea product traceability and help justice and enforcement agencies to develop skills to detect,

investigate, and prosecute IUU fishing. USAID also assists INTERPOL in providing training to government agencies on combating illegal fishing and other conservation crimes.

USAID programming includes *Por la Pesca*, designed to reduce IUU fishing among artisanal fishers in Ecuador and Peru, and *Habla Tiburón*, which aims to reduce IUU fishing of sharks and rays in Ecuadorian waters, including the Galápagos Islands, where domestic and international fishing practices have decimated the populations of these key species.

## **USAID helps conserve lands and species**

USAID works closely with the Ecuadorian government and communities to conserve the country's unique ecosystems and plant and animal species by improving natural resources management, reducing ocean plastic pollution, creating sustainable livelihoods and stronger value chains, and managing wildfires.

USAID's public-private partnerships leverage industry knowledge to promote the production of goods derived from the Amazon that do not cause deforestation. USAID programs *Sustainable Environment and Livelihoods for a Vital Amazon (SELVA)* and *Sustainable Activities for Conservation of a Healthy Amazon (SACHA)* address critical issues and gaps in conserving important landscapes and achieving reductions in net carbon emissions from agriculture, forestry, and other land uses in Ecuador.

Through a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, USAID trains local fire departments and state park rangers to ensure wildland fire prevention and control. USAID works with NASA to design initiatives to map and measure carbon stored in critical high altitude peatlands. USAID is also supporting the creation and strengthening of the Environmental Unit in the country's Office of the Attorney General to combat conservation crimes. This work leads to improved policy and planning decisions and decreased greenhouse gas emissions.

## **USAID engages local communities and policymakers to combat conservation crimes**

USAID works regionally through the *Conservando Juntos* project to create the conditions necessary to eliminate conservation crimes, such as wildlife trafficking, illegal mining, and timber harvesting. Our program with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Proyecto ECOS*, works with policymakers and other high-level stakeholders in Ecuador and across South America to support law enforcement, justice, and environmental authorities to respond to and prevent environmental crimes. At the local level, USAID engages with Indigenous organizations and communities to help combat wildlife crimes and strengthen protections for valuable habitats, while also developing more robust and sustainable livelihood strategies.

## **USAID strengthens Indigenous groups to help protect the environment**

Through the *SELVA* and *SACHA* programs, USAID works with Indigenous organizations and local communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon to strengthen governance systems, reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and improve overall well-being. USAID is implementing early detection and response mechanisms that allow Indigenous communities to address illegal activities and threats to their forests and is supporting Indigenous peoples and local communities to restore degraded forests. USAID provides leadership training to improve the participation of Indigenous communities in natural resource decision-making, management of protected areas, and expanding conservation agreements.

USAID is also working to strengthen Indigenous peoples' organizations, promote new value chains based on bioeconomy, engage the private sector, and improve local production systems such as agroforestry. This is contributing to carbon sequestration through the conservation of protected areas, enhanced resource monitoring, and improved forest management in Indigenous territories.

## USAID promotes the adoption of sustainable energy technologies

USAID supports the fight against climate change by promoting greater use of clean energy. A key component of USAID's work is improving the sustainability of the power grid in Ecuador by supporting competitive procurements to scale up renewable energy, improving energy planning and grid management, and increasing energy efficiency. USAID also works closely with the private sector to increase electricity access for rural and Indigenous communities, as well as to increase the use of clean power in the critically important shrimp sector. In addition, the agency is working to help shift public transport in Quito to clean, electric buses, and to improve access to transportation services for persons with disabilities.

## ANTICIPATED RESULTS WITHIN 3-5 YEARS

- USAID is working to conserve **4.4 million hectares of Amazon rainforest**, 3.5 million of which is Indigenous territory, through sustainable land use and the detection and prevention of illegal activities.
- USAID is helping **6,000 people benefit from improved livelihoods** and increased household incomes as a result of enhanced eco-businesses and other sustainable economic opportunities.
- With USAID support, **785 Indigenous and community leaders**, including women, youth and people with disabilities, will be trained on governance, land monitoring, and strategies to improve the protection of their territories and natural resources.
- USAID is working to prevent **five million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions** by reducing deforestation and forest degradation through the sustainable management of Indigenous territories in the Amazon region.
- USAID is supporting the transition of **5,000 hectares of agricultural land** to improved, low emissions agricultural practices.
- USAID will mobilize up to **\$900 million for clean energy** and reduce or avoid approximately **20 million tons of carbon dioxide**, the equivalent to the annual emissions of approximately **4.5 million cars**. USAID is doing this by supporting new renewable energy generation, supporting the introduction of electric buses, and displacing diesel generation used by shrimp farmers.
- USAID is contributing to the **integrated management of around 42,340 metric tons of solid waste per year**, including 4,657 MT/year of rigid plastic, preventing it from entering the environment.
- USAID is working to **improve the livelihoods of more than 2,000 fisherfolk** in the Galapagos and Manabi through public-private partnerships and market-based instruments.