1. Project summary
The project worked closely with indigenous communities to create working models for REDD in Peru’s highlands by piloting portfolios of REDD-related activities, including reforestation, sustainable agriculture and forest fire reduction, together with testing mechanisms for community benefit distribution. Additionally, the project contributed to the policy and science needed to implement REDD in the Cusco region within Peru’s nested approach.

2. Project information:
Support period: June 2010 – December 2013 (preceded by a 1 year grant of NOK 3 million from June 2009 – June 2010)

Support amount: NOK 11.7 million; Expenditures to date: NOK 9.9 million

Target group: Indigenous and traditional rural communities in the Peruvian highlands and regional and local government authorities.

Local partners: The Amazon Conservation Association’s implementation partner is the Asociación para la Conservación de la Cuenca Amazónica (ACCA), our sister organization in Peru. ACCA currently protects more than half a million hectares of pristine Amazonian rainforest, operates the two largest research stations in Peru, and helps local communities sustainably manage their natural resources.

Matching funds: UNESCO: $50,000 for agroforestry; WWF Education for Nature: $7,000 for fire prevention education; Mitsubishi Foundation: $20,000 for ecotourism employment opportunity development; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: $5,000 for communications; Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation, Forest Trends, SPDA & IPAM: $50,000 for REDD workshop.

Project goals: Lower transaction costs for small-to-mid-size REDD projects; increase indigenous and traditional highland participation in REDD and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) systems; integrate REDD compatible activities into a diversified portfolio for rural livelihoods; improve knowledge and accounting practices for terrestrial carbon emissions; and, improve adoption of REDD by integrating it into existing environmental policy.

3. Justification of project
Fire in Peru’s southeastern Andes is emitting large quantities of carbon, degrading ecosystem function, eliminating irreplaceable biodiversity, and threatening human livelihoods. Preserving forests across this elevational gradient is especially important as species are expected to need to migrate upslope as they are impacted by climate change.

Achieving conservation outcomes across this biologically and culturally diverse, but impoverished region, requires a multi-faceted approach that includes strengthening local-level forest users and managers and developing improved agricultural models. REDD+ holds great potential as a tool to shift economic incentives towards conserving standing forests within this landscape. However, practical experiences developing governance and policy frameworks based on sound baseline models are needed to ensure that REDD+ is scientifically rigorous, socially just, and ecologically sustainable in this region.
4. Results

The project has achieved direct conservation and community outcomes as well as the creation of forest governance mechanisms in Peru’s Cusco region. This has resulted in protection of biodiversity rich Andean forests, carbon sequestration, and contributed to improved community livelihoods, while achieving the broader goal of developing REDD models with great potential for replication. The main results and outcomes are described below, organized by the project’s major outcome categories. We consider that understanding impacts will require analysis beyond the timeframe of the project.

Outcome 1: Create a REDD Prototype based on fire control in the Eastern Andes

- Improved understanding of fire dynamics in Andean highlands and quantified carbon emissions from fire in region through field research with specialist from Oxford University. Filling this information gap was essential to develop a REDD prototype for this region where deforestation is driven by human-caused fires.
- Improved understanding of tree-line dynamics focused on seedling response to climactic conditions and from exposure to cattle at the transition from mountain forests to Andean grasslands through field research conducted by ACCA staff.
- Fire hotspots in region tracked through satellite imagery analysis for project region and disseminated through public bulletins.
- Over 150 people in rural communities, including 55 women, have been trained in forest fire prevention and control. Three community fire brigades have been trained and equipped. Park guards from Manu National Park were also trained and equipped, helping the Park fulfill an unfunded component within its management plan. A community fire brigade was successfully extinguished a blaze in the community of Jajahuana that threatened to destroy a planting of over 6,000 tree seedlings.

Outcome 2: Construct, test and disseminate new REDD models for replication

- Creation of regional deforestation, emissions and opportunity cost models for the region of Cusco in accordance with the Voluntary Certification Standard requirements. To be finalized in October 2013, these will effectively lower barriers to entry for small and medium size REDD+ projects that would not be financially viable if each one were required to have funds and expertise to develop models for each project. Together with the creation of the Cusco REDD+ Roundtable this makes the Cusco region one of the most REDD ready in Peru.
- Successful pilot of equitable and transparent community-level benefit distribution mechanism for Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) in three highlands indigenous communities. Communities were empowered to manage financial and natural resources and implemented community conservation activities. They also spent funds on community identified livelihoods priorities, including purchasing small livestock and other goods for promoting livelihoods, improving community education and other ends. Model will be published so that it – together with lessons learned – can be replicated in other communities.
- Assisted municipal and district government to create and begin to operate natural resources management offices identified as priority in the project’s analysis of REDD governance structures for the region. Local level implementation mechanisms are often overlooked in REDD and municipalities now play a critical role within Peru’s increasingly decentralized natural resource management structure, with considerable influence on forest management, including creating strategies for forest fire control and land use zoning. This result goes well beyond planned project outcomes.
- “Carbon cowboys” seeking to profit from involving communities in REDD projects are a risk to ensuring that communities benefit appropriately from REDD and Peru’s indigenous federations have spoken out against such practices. The project developed a model legal framework for community-scale REDD projects validated with communities, government authorities, and the private sector to serve as a reference and guide for communities wishing to evaluate potential REDD projects.

Outcome 3: Build Indigenous Capacity for REDD-related land management

- Conservation of over 19,000 ha of threatened montane forest ecosystems through community led creation of Private Conservation Areas on indigenous communal lands. Conservation
areas were declared through a Ministry of Environment decree in 2012. Community members received training and support to manage forest lands for conservation.

- Development of 6 community forest management plans together with capacity building
- 5 community tree nurseries produced over 208,000 tree seedlings. Over 245 community members, many of these women, maintained nurseries and assisted in tree planting. With this participating the project was able to greatly exceed the original target of 85,000 trees.
- 21 hectares planted in agroforestry parcels and over 267 ha reforested on communal lands, including in degraded areas around water sources. This is expected to result in the sequestration of approximately 90,408 MT CO₂ over 16 years.
- More than 65 persons in communities participating in the project were surveyed in 2013 and over 83% said that agroforestry parcels provided by the project served to reduce fire in their communities. 80% of the community members either wished to expand the agroforestry parcels installed by the project or wished to join the agroforestry program.

Outcome 4: Reduce Poverty through REDD Enterprise Development

- The project developed agricultural model that addresses deforestation drivers and is compatible with REDD. Created association with 40 members to grow tarwi bean – a native lupine with high nutritional values and a strong regional market. This bean can be grown organically and improves soil allowing farmers to reduce constant expansion of agricultural areas seeking better soils. Farm model also integrated fencing of cattle and use of organic fertilizers. Annual harvest of 20-25 tons of tarwi by the association.
- Built capacity and created employment opportunities for residents of highlands communities in ecotourism and provided scholarships to study tourism to women.

Outcome 5: Create Consensus Building Process on indigenous participation in REDD

- Creation and leadership of the Cusco regional REDD+ and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) Roundtable. This public-private working group is the regional level entity required to develop REDD+ policy and implementation within Peru’s nested approach.
- Regional scale REDD workshop for policy and decision makers with over 60 participants.
- Communities and local leaders trained in issues of climate change and REDD, as well as participating in meetings on REDD and PES.

5. Learning experiences

We are currently evaluating the results of participant surveys to better evaluate project results and identify learning from the implementation process. The results will be combined with information from field research or evaluation and, where possible, spatial analysis to assess project outcomes. Through the end of 2013 we will seek to systematize and publish results, especially in areas where we expect models can be replicated throughout the Andes or more generally.

The project worked closely with scientists working in the region to ensure that project models were science-based, generating key learning for models developed by the project as well as lessons learned on implementation. Whenever possible, the project team sought validation of project products and processes either from regional decision-makers, such as the REDD Regional Roundtable in Cusco, or communities. For example, communities’ focal groups evaluated drafts of communications materials to improve comprehension and relevance of materials. Likewise, the Roundtable validated the methodology and process of the deforestation, emissions and opportunity cost models so that they will be adopted by the regional government following project completion.
Community fire brigade

Community members tend seedlings in tree nursery