

RONAP

PERU



Recolectores Orgánicos de la Nuez Amazónica Del Perú (RONAP) is a small cooperative of wild Brazil nut harvesters (castañeros) from the Madre de Dios region of Peru, an area that has suffered tremendous environmental degradation due to mining. RONAP sells peeled Brazil nuts and nut oil grown by 26 farmers and picked by 30 castañeros.

The Brazil nut harvest season is from February to May, while peeling is done from March to November. RONAP contracts with a local organization of 70 women for all peeling; RONAP’s volume represents about 1/3 of their annual work. In 2020, RONAP exported 16,000 kgs of brazil nuts, filling 6 containers. Each container represents 20 days of work from the 70 women.

Impact Background

The Amazon rainforest is a critical part of the earth’s ecosystem, absorbing 20% of the world’s carbon and home to 10% of the world’s known insect species, and 40,000 plant species. However, destruction of the Amazon Rainforest is accelerating, with recent statistics estimating that it is being deforested at a rate of 3 football fields per minute and with 15–17% of the forest already lost. In Peru, where some 780,000 km² of the forest exist, illegal gold

IMPACT OVERVIEW

Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and improvement of income of small Brazil nut harvesters of Peru.

No. of castañeros	30
No. of farmers	26
No. of women peelers	70

COMMUNITY



Country
Peru

Municipalities
Puerto Maldonado

Indigenous communities
Castañeros of the Amazon

mining has caused significant devastation, particularly in the Madre de Dios region. The destructive practice arose from the allure of economic gains from recent increase in gold prices, and the lack of governance in the area. Government officials estimate that as many as 40,000 illegal miners have occupied the region, clearing trees, digging pits and infusing the ground with mercury, threatening the health of the Amazon and the people who live there.

Madre de Dios is characterized by having an ethnic and cultural diversity personified in indigenous communities who have inhabited these lands for about 3,000 years and who belong to seven linguistic groups: Yine, Matsigenka, Amahuaca, Harakbut, Ese Ejas, Shipibo, y Kichwa Runa.

In February 2019, the Peruvian Government declared a state of emergency in Madre de Dios. They are also implementing conservation initiatives to protect the Amazon and prevent more land from falling victim to further destructive activities. To achieve this the government is encouraging forest-based economic activities that don't deplete natural resources. The government now grants local families or associations a piece of public forests to be used for specific purposes – called a concession – such as harvesting nuts and berries, or for ecotourism; concessionaires are required by law to report on illicit activities in their concessions.

The Brazil Nut concessions are effective ways to reduce deforestation and provide reliable income for people living in the forest. The Brazil nut is one of the world's most widely consumed non-timber forest products. It is also one of a relatively small number of globally traded commodities that is helping to save threatened forests. Harvested from the fruit-fall of giant trees, Brazil nut extraction involves little more than collection of pods ('cocos') from the forest floor. Unlike other well-known nuts like almonds or cashews, Brazil nut cannot be grown in plantations; harvesting can only be sustained in closed canopy Amazonian rainforest.

At present, more than 1,000 individuals in Madre de Dios hold Brazil nut concessions granted by the government. Meanwhile, hundreds of members of indigenous groups (called "native communities" in Peru) harvest Brazil nuts from communally owned forests. The scale of the industry in the Madre de Dios economy is significant. In 2014, a total of 4,300 metric tons of shelled Brazil nuts were exported from the region, corresponding to nearly USD 31 million in sales. Approximately 15,000 people, or almost 12.5% of the population of the Madre de Dios region, are directly employed in the Brazil nut industry. For most people involved, activity around Brazil nut accounts for more than half of family income. Significantly, nearly a third of the concession holders are women, and women also make up a disproportionate share of the labor force in the processing industry.

In a region with one of the highest deforestation rates in the world, the conservation of biodiversity-rich natural forest through harvest and sale of a natural product deserves our support.



Impact Delivery

RONAP provides comprehensive support to its members. After conversations with management, Roman, our indigenous advisors, confirmed that our loan would be additive to the local community.

<i>Forest management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides drone and geographic information systems technology for members to effectively monitor and stop deforestation
<i>Technical assistance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides training and technical assistance to obtain organic certification and certification of small producers
<i>Administrative support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal control and financial administration International marketing and trade
<i>Health support</i>	Provides comprehensive psychological care, specifically the restoration of dignity and well-being of castañeros.

