

CASE STUDY 12

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PERU

Organization: Confederación De Nacionalidades Amazónicas Del Perú (CONAP)
Region: Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

In the Santa Rosita de Apua Native Community in Ucayali, Indigenous Peoples manage crop-lands and forests through agricultural practices deeply embedded in cultural and ecological relationships. The community produces *bellaco hartón* bananas, combining ancestral knowledge with modern strategies. Their cultivation is organized around three interdependent spaces—the forest, water, and farm—which provide food and resources across seasonal cycles and maintain ecological balance. Lowland agriculture (*bajiales*), an ancestral practice, leverages fertile soils deposited by annual flooding to sustain crops and livelihoods.

The territory faces multiple pressures. Climate change disrupts seasonal cycles and water availability, requiring adjustments to traditional agricultural methods to maintain food security. Land tenure insecurity is exacerbated by overlapping forest concessions. In 2022, the State granted Aserradero Nueva Requena S.A.C. a forest compensation area of over 8,100 hectares, 7,367 hectares of which overlap with the communal territory. This overlap prevents full exercise of territorial rights, exposes the community to deforestation and illegal logging, and threatens natural resources essential to their economy and culture. Tree cover loss in the territory has contributed to net carbon emissions, highlighting the ecological risks of unresolved tenure conflicts.

Communities rely on traditional ecological knowledge to navigate these challenges. Agroforestry practices incorporate soil selection, crop rotation, organic fertilization, and staggered harvesting aligned with seasonal cycles and rainfall. The interdependence of forest, water, and farm spaces dictates careful management, ensuring that none are overexploited when conditions are unfavourable. Knowledge of hunting, fishing, farming, and medicinal plants continues to inform sustainable land custodianship.

Legal and organizational strategies support these practices. Although the community is titled, registration in public registries is pending due to overlaps with Permanent Production Forests (BPP). CONAP's "Titling and Governance for the Conservation of the Territory" project seeks to resolve these gaps, strengthen the Indigenous economy, and enhance territorial monitoring and surveillance. In 2024, a banana producers' committee was established with 16 participating families to coordinate production, transport, and marketing, including the shared use of a boat to access urban markets. Income is reinvested in productive activities while maintaining forest conservation practices. Territorial surveillance by local custodians protects areas near two protected zones, deterring illegal entry and safeguarding biodiversity.

These integrated approaches reinforce sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation, and climate adaptation, while strengthening collective governance and Indigenous territorial rights. By combining ancestral knowledge, legal strategies, and community-led economic initiatives, the Santa Rosita de Apua community works to reverse tree cover loss, mitigate carbon emissions, and ensure the long-term resilience of their territory.

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