



An NCS Lighthouse

Nii Kaniti

Project/Programme Type	Nii Kaniti is a REDD+ project that generates carbon credits through avoided deforestation. Its credits are verified by Verra and to the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard to the gold level for both biodiversity and climate change adaptation.
Description	The project helps seven indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon to develop sustainable economies and protect their ancestral lands, managed in partnership with Ecosphere+ and AIDER. The project focuses on protecting rainforest and avoiding deforestation on community land through scaling up sustainable community forest management. It integrates conservation activities that put a value on indigenous-led development, with the project responsible for establishing one of the first indigenous FSC certified timber programmes in the world and the first FSC programme in Peru. Nii Kaniti truly places indigenous people at the heart of decision-making to decide how climate finance will be used to deliver the most transformative outcomes for their families and within a landscape they've called home for generations.
Location	The project is located along the Ucayali River in Eastern Peru.
Scale	The project conserves more than 127,000 hectares of critically threatened old growth Amazon rainforest.
Number of Credits Issued to Date	2,500,000
Project Proponents	Ecosphere+ and Asociacion para la Investigacion y Desarrollo Integral (AIDER)



Impacts

Impact To-Date

So far, the project has reduced global carbon dioxide emissions by 2.5 million tons through avoided deforestation of critically threatened Amazon rainforest. It has sold more than \$4 million in carbon credits; conserving vital habitat for 5 threatened species, including the jaguar and blue-headed macaw; and communities have used the revenues to create or support 18 local enterprises in areas such as low-impact and FSC certified logging, cacao agroforestry, sustainable extraction of non-timber forest products, such as shiringa rubber, and handcrafts. The project has also promoted job creation for women, with 32 women in management roles in productive organisations and committees.

Projected Longer-Term Impact

The project hopes to replicate its model for community forest management in indigenous communities throughout the Peruvian Amazon.



REDD+ Helps an Amazon Community Rediscover Indigenous Traditions

Diana Mori Gonzalez learned very little about the plants of the Amazon when she was a child. Traditional medicine had fallen out of practice in many of Peru's indigenous Shipibo Conibo and Cacataibo communities after the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 1950s. The rainforest near the Ucayali River—which Diana's ancestors relied on not only for medicinal herbs but also food, water and building materials—was disappearing from illegal logging, mining and poaching. Farmers migrated to the region from the Andes and practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, felling more trees every year. As the forest shrank, so did the communities' connection to their history. "We started to lose those teachings that had been passed from generation to generation," Diana says.

The Peruvian non-profit AIDER began working in 2000 to protect the rainforest around the Ucayali River. "Managing forest and conserving biodiversity must help improve the quality of life of local people who depend on those ecosystems," Jaime Guillermo Nalvarte Armas, AIDER's executive director, says. AIDER sought to strengthen local governance, enhance land tenure security, and improve livelihoods in forest communities. But it was generally hard to reach these communities through the traditional donor-funded model. Many villages lacked electricity and were so remote that they could only be reached by boat. Grants came in irregularly and usually with strings. Often local people living near the forest had little say in how the money should be spent.

When the market for carbon credits started to develop, Armas saw an opportunity to create a stable stream of income for the people living along the Ucayali River. They could protect rainforest to generate carbon credits and use the revenue to build infrastructure and create jobs. The new project was called Nii Kaniti from the native words for "forest" and "development," and since 2018 has sold more than \$4 million in carbon credits. The seven indigenous communities of Nii Kaniti protect more than 120,000 hectares of Amazon rainforest—an area whose clearing would have released more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.



Jaime Guillermo
Nalvarte Armas
Executive Director
AIDER

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"The final expenditure of the revenue from carbon credits is decided by the communities through their own governance structures," Armas says. Every community spends some of the revenue from each credit on patrols, reforestation and other necessary forest protections. The rest is used to improve health care and education; expand water and electricity infrastructure; and support



5 threatened species protected including jaguar, blue-headed macaw and tapir



7 indigenous communities supported

2.5 million tonnes CO₂e avoided to date



18 sustainable enterprises created or supported

Follow the progress





businesses and artisans like Diana, who makes jewelry and tapestries. Nii Kaniti has boosted the incomes of more than 350 men and women working on 18 local projects. Farmers are learning to grow cacao and native species without clearing forest. Other community members are harvesting commodities like timber and rubber without causing damage to the Amazon.

The sustainable use of forest resources requires the people of Nii Kaniti to survey the biodiversity of the communal forests periodically. This process has reacquainted the communities with the plant and animal species that were so important to their traditions. "The project has helped the communities to value the forest and all its species, not just the ones that can be sold for a quick buck," Diana says. They've counted more than 50 mammals and 100 birds, including threatened species like the jaguar, blue-headed macaw and tapir. They've also found more than 160 types of plant, many of which have medicinal properties.

"We almost lost the tradition because we had forgotten how to recognize the plants," Diana says. The rediscovery of this knowledge has yielded real benefits to the Nii Kaniti communities. Travel to and from the region was restricted during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic—and, with it, local people's access to hospitals in larger towns. Traditional medicine with plants from the forest became an important health-care resource during this challenging time.



Jaime Guillermo
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AIDER

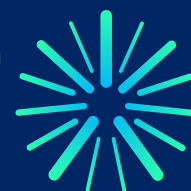
Indigenous people are crucial for fighting climate change because they're preserving forests.



Diana Mori Gonzalez
indigenous leader of
the Shipibo-Conibo
ethnic group

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Diana has taken a leading role in community outreach for Nii Kaniti, helping to make sure her neighbors realize and have access to resources and opportunities. She will meet many new people in the years ahead, as AIDER is aiming to expand carbon finance from seven to 23 communities. "Indigenous people are crucial for fighting climate change because they're preserving forests," Armas says—and indigenous communities manage more than 20 percent of Peru's forests. He hopes the approach of Nii Kaniti will be a model for putting indigenous communities in control of conservation: "In five or ten years, they should be self-sustaining and able to manage their lands and forests themselves."



Natural
Climate
Solutions
Alliance

About the NCS Alliance

The NCS Alliance (NCSA) conveys the voice of businesses, NGOs and solution providers on the need to mobilize a high integrity demand for high quality Natural Climate Solutions (NCS). The Alliance focuses on identifying opportunities and barriers to investment in the NCS voluntary carbon market and serves as a forum for knowledge sharing and technical capacity building to ensure natural climate solutions reach their full potential in abating climate change, while also tackling nature loss and socio-economic issues. To build trust in high quality NCS, the NCSA has established the NCS Lighthouse programme.

For more information visit www.naturalclimatesolutionsalliance.org and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).



About NCS Lighthouse Programme

The NCS Lighthouse Programme shines a light on projects and programmes that can be used as examples of good practice for supply and are a beacon in the path to developing trust in NCS for people, nature and climate. The NCS Lighthouses help elevate the successful human, environmental, and climate stories behind these initiatives.

The NCS Lighthouses, selected based on screening criteria developed by an NCSA Taskforce comprising NGOs, businesses and solution providers, have demonstrated alignment to the NCSA's quality principles for NCS credits, as presented within 'Natural Climate Solutions for Corporates'.

The NCS Lighthouse Programme is made possible with generous funding support from the We Mean Business Coalition.

Disclaimer

Inclusion of an NCS project or programme in the NCS Lighthouse Programme does not imply a recommendation to purchase, trade or retire credits associated with the Lighthouse.

The NCS Alliance and its members take no responsibility for the purchase, trade or retirement of credits from these projects and programmes. Instead, it recommends that individuals, companies and other organisations procuring credits as part of their climate strategies conduct their own independent due diligence to validate the quality and environmental integrity of their purchases.

The NCS Alliance secretariat in no way benefits financially or by other means from the selection.

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