

FOCUSING ON THE AMAZON

NEWSLETTER- AMAZON NETWORK OF GEOREFERENCED
SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION - RAISG

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Picture Ria Sopala - Pixabay

RAISG'S CHALLENGES

Over the past two decades, the studies carried out by RAISG show that the tipping point of the Amazon is not a future scenario, but a current one. We know that the protection of 80 % of the Amazon is not only possible and necessary, but also urgent, and we have highlighted the role of natural protected areas and indigenous territories in the dynamics of territorial transformation.

Over 15 years of experience, RAISG has accumulated knowledge and methodologies to understand the Amazon from a multidimensional perspective. Coordination with local communities and indigenous organizations in each country allows us to act at different scales (local, national, and regional). A comprehensive view of the Amazon – geographical, social and thematic – contributes to reflections on the management and governance of this space of sovereignty shared among several countries.

As a regional political and strategic actor capable of contributing to tackling these issues, our challenges are to strengthen the generation of reliable and locally generated information for use by different sectors of society, local as well as international; to develop strategic alliances and dialogues that contribute to action at different scales; and to contribute with strategies and public policies that guarantee the governance and sustainability of the Amazon in a comprehensive way.

WHAT IS RAISG?

The Amazon Network of Georeferenced Socio-Environmental Information is a consortium of civil society organizations from the Amazon countries who, with support from international partners, share a concern regarding the social and environmental sustainability of Amazonia.

www.raisg.org



RAISG



Gaia Amazonas





WEAVING NETWORKS TO CARE FOR THE AMAZON



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The socioenvironmental and geospatial information and analyzes that RAISG has generated for the past 15 years in the Amazon region – including monitoring threats, pressures, and land use change – are widely valued and used by researchers, international organizations, local governments and organizations, indigenous peoples, and civil society to strengthen Indigenous Territories, Natural Protected Areas, and the sustainability of the Amazon in general.

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In this context, socioenvironmental conflicts multiply, the territories of indigenous peoples are invaded, and their defenders are often physically annihilated.

The impact of multiple human pressures on the Amazon is evident through changes in weather patterns, droughts, floods, and rising temperatures. These events put strong pressure on the region's ecosystems and accelerate the savannization process of the Amazon biome, bringing it closer to a tipping point with possible planetary consequences.

Starting with this first edition of FOCUSING ON THE AMAZON, RAISG will publish a quarterly bulletin with the milestones of its recent work, as well as the operational and financial challenges that arise as the Network sets more ambitious goals. The Instituto del Bien Común (IBC) of Peru and the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA) of Brazil are responsible for the first edition of this newsletter.

RAISG INFORMATION STRENGTHENS TWO LAWSUITS RELATED TO THE AMAZON AND INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS IN COLOMBIA



Indigenous authorities from the **Macroterritorio de los Jaguares de Yuruparí** entered a plea for legal protection due to the impacts that illegal mining have caused on their rights and the Amazon. The information generated by RAISG is part of the evidence that is analyzed by the Colombian Constitutional Court, the authority that reviews the case. Interventions by partner organizations, such as the Amazon Alliance for the Reduction of the Impacts of Gold Mining, in Court were also fundamental.

A historic ruling declared the Amazon an entity subject of rights and set the goal of zero deforestation in the Colombian portion of the biome by 2030. In partnership with the Attorney General's Office, the Gaia Amazonas Foundation coordinated a team of experts to monitor the trial.

RAISG's evidence and reports made it possible to address the particularities of indigenous territories in the Colombian Amazon for the establishment of 54 indicators to measure the State's responses, which seek to strengthen territorial management models based on the knowledge of native populations. Furthermore, RAISG data were fundamental for the comparative analysis of the net loss of natural vegetation between the Amazon biome, the Colombian Amazon, and the states of Vaupés, Guainía, and Amazonas.

MAPBIOMAS 3.0 COLLECTION: AMAZON LOST 74.6 MILLION HECTARES OF NATURAL COVER IN 36 YEARS

In October 2021, RAISG presented the results of the Amazon MapBiomas survey, in a virtual event broadcast on YouTube. Research has shown that between 1985 and 2020 the loss of natural forests in the Amazon was equivalent to the entire territory of Chile. And, in the same period, there was a growth of 656 % in mining and 151 % in agriculture. RAISG generated the data using the MapBiomas Amazon platform, a mapping tool that helps monitor changes in land use throughout the Amazon, in addition to accompanying the pressures on forests and natural ecosystems. The 3.0 Collection covers more than three decades of Land Cover and Land Use history in the Amazon in annual maps from 1985 to 2020.

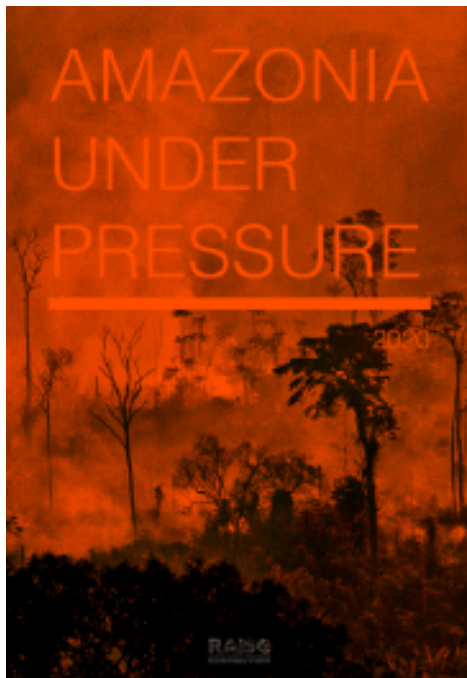
The maps reach a resolution of 30 meters and offer the possibility of displaying regional, national, and local perspectives. <https://amazonia.mapbiomas.org/>

According to the general coordinator of RAISG, Beto Ricardo, the 1985–2020 MapBiomas Amazon 3.0 Collection will make an important innovation. “Reconstructing the history of our Amazon, analyzing year to year changes in natural cover, identifying losses in cover as important as glaciers and forests in general, helps us build and propose more accurate conservation strategies,” said Ricardo.



AMAZON UNDER PRESSURE 2020

SOCIOENVIRONMENTAL ATLAS POINTS TO SETBACKS IN THE AMAZON



The atlas reveals that a third of the biome was affected by the expansion of agriculture, deforestation, illegal mining, oil exploration, and infrastructure projects.

In October 2021, RAISG published and distributed the atlas ***Amazon Under Pressure 2020***. In partnership with Revista Piauí, 20,000 printed copies were distributed in Brazil to subscribers of the periodical, which was celebrating 15 years of circulation.

The Instituto Sociambiental (ISA) led the partnership and published the material on the RAISG website for download. First published in 2012, the Atlas presented an update of pressures and threats to the forest in 23 maps, tables, and graphs. The main warning is that damage to the Amazon has increased at an accelerated pace with no prospect of reversal.

The atlas reveals that a third of the biome was affected by the expansion of agriculture, deforestation, illegal mining, oil exploration, and infrastructure projects. "With the distribution of ***Amazon Under Pressure 2020***, Piauí joins RAISG to provide better information about the biome and help society pressure government officials and decision makers in the search for a development model for the region that serves as a passport to a good future for Brazil and the planet", said André Petry, Piauí's editorial director.

The publication's distribution seeks to overcome fragmented views of the South American Amazon and provide a comprehensive view of pressures and threats for the entire region. Especially since it was published in 2021, right after the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, which emphasized the fragility of the region.

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PERU: ANALYSIS OF PRESSURES SUPPORTS EFFORTS FOR THE SAFETY OF AMAZON INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

The pressures on indigenous territories in the Peruvian Amazon that have intensified in recent years are related to situations of violence. The information and analyzes generated by IBC within the scope of the RAISG contribute to the understanding of this perverse dynamic and the search for solutions.

Between 2020 and 2021, twelve indigenous leaders were murdered while defending their territories from the expansion of illicit economies (illegal mining and logging, coca cultivation, land grabbing, and drug trafficking). We highlight the case of the Kakataibo community of Unipacuyacu (Selva Central), which has not been granted a land title after a long administrative process lasting 28 years while losing 70% of its territory to violent invaders during that time. The survival of the community is compromised.

The information generated by RAISG on deforestation and land use change contributed to the understanding of the transformations in the Peruvian Amazon while aiding the monitoring of pressures and threats on indigenous territories. This body of information and analysis supported IBC's communication and advocacy actions aimed at securing the territory. It was also at the base of a policy brief seeking to generate a multisectoral intervention aimed at securing the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and the safety of their leaders



CONSERVATION PRIORITIES IN THE AMAZON: RAISG SUPPORTS THE 80X25 INITIATIVE

Although the Amazon is home to the largest water reserves, the largest tropical forest on the planet, and enormous biodiversity, current efforts to protect it are clearly insufficient, which is why the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), at the request of the initiative Amazonia for Life: Protect 80 % by 2025 passed Motion 129 in September 2021, calling for the declaration of a global emergency to enable funding and immediate action plans.

The Amazon tipping point approaches: 15% has been converted to agricultural fields and fires have altered and degraded its ecosystems by a further 11 % according to RAISG. The resilience of the Amazon rainforest is decreasing: since 2000, three-quarters of the Amazon has shown a reduction in its ability to recover from droughts and fires. It is urgent to minimize changes in land use and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Since April 2021, RAISG has supported the efforts of the Amazonia 80x25 initiative to avoid the tipping point. Leading this initiative are the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), Stand Earth, and six other organizations committed to the goal of protecting 80 % of the Amazon by the year 2025.

RAISG's contributions to the Amazonia 80x25 framework demonstrate that the protection of 80 % of the Amazon is not only possible and necessary, but also urgent, proposing a new vision of Amazon conservation based on its capability and ecosystem representation to guide global, national, and local policies.

RAISG identifies priority areas for the conservation of 200 million hectares of unprotected forests in a good state of conservation, whose ecological capability - which promotes water security, food security, and climate resilience, in addition to biodiversity representativity - is highly vulnerable if protection efforts are not made.

The COP26 Climate Summit puts indigenous peoples at the center of this conversation, achieving the commitment of several countries to support them until 2025 in the fight against climate change. This is the beginning of a new and disruptive conservation movement led by indigenous peoples, where RAISG intends to continue providing technical-scientific evidence and information to avoid the tipping point in the Amazon.