



# WAWAZONIA

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY, RAINFOREST CONSERVATION,  
AND CARBON-OFFSET WITH THE INDIGENOUS SHUAR IN  
THE AMAZON



- 1** NO POVERTY
- 8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES
- 13** CLIMATE ACTION
- 15** LIFE ON LAND

REFORESTATION, RAINFOREST CONSERVATIONS,  
CARBON CAPTURE AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON

 SHBnature



# THE WAWAZONIA PROJECT



## BACKGROUND

The indigenous Shuar people of the Ecuadorian Amazon hold title to some of the earth's most biodiverse rainforests. Immense tracts of their traditional lands are still pristine rainforests where wildlife such as jaguars and pumas still roam the forest.

The COVID-19 pandemic in Ecuador and the Amazon has struck the Indigenous people hard. In addition to the health consequences, the fragile markets of the Indigenous peoples have collapsed due to the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, the ecotourism industry, which played a central role in many Amazonian villages, has collapsed, and the sales of traditional goods have been severely limited.

The limited economic opportunities put the Indigenous peoples desperate to raise funds for health, education and essential food items. In the Ecuadorian Amazon, this has left the Shuar with little to no economic activities, and there is an imminent danger that illegal logging or hunting could become the only means of making a living.

## PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Project Wawazonia aims to generate income among the villagers of the Shuar communities through investment in the sustainable production of native tree species such as balsa (called Wawa in Shuar) and other local timber species. In addition, the establishment and management of these new buffer plantations and balsa forests will provide employment and enable the Shuar to say no to pressure from illegal loggers.

Furthermore, by producing the balsa and tropical timbers in plantations on previous farmland, the demand for wood is concentrated on a lesser area than current practices, creating a buffer for the undisturbed primary forest, thus eliminating the need for cutting balsa and other timbers in the primary forest.

The project will also establish a Shuar led Climate Fund that will invest in sustainable economic activities in the villages, such as tourism, craft production, fish farming and the like.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- To establish 200 hectares (225.000 trees) of sustainable FSC certified plantation in three indigenous Shuar communities.
- To protect 1000 hectares (10.000.000 sq. m) of primary rainforest in the Shuar communities.
- Create jobs related to the production and management of plantations and conservation areas.
- Market and sell sustainable FSC certified balsa and timber from the plantations no later than five years after the establishment, combined with skills and general education about sustainable forest management.
- Carbon capture through plantation establishment and standing biomass in the primary rainforest. One hectare of forest plantation in the area captures 30 tons of carbon per hectare per year, which donating companies can purchase.
- Establish a Shuar led climate fund. The fund will receive DKK 1 per tree planted and 5 per cent of the profit from the sale of balsa wood. The fund will support sustainable development in the communities, such as ecotourism, women's group activities, craft production, the development and sale of traditional medicine, and much more.



Shuar man crossing the Pastaza River on a balsa raft

## About balsa

Balsa is one of the project's core species as it is fast-growing and used in the green transition in windmill blades. In the Shuar language, the balsa tree is named Wawa. It grows naturally in the rainforest of Ecuador.

In Spanish, balsa means raft. Balsa is a lightweight timber and floats effortlessly. Due to its lightness and strength, balsa is used for a wide range of products: wind turbines (blades), planes, ships, cars, pencils, model aircraft and fishing tackles.

- Scientific name: *Ochroma pyramidale*
- Density: 200 kg. per m<sup>3</sup>
- Height growth: 20-30 meters in 4 years
- Diameter growth: 25-35 cm after 4 years
- Volume growth: 150 m<sup>3</sup> per hectare per year (marketable quantity)

## The Shuar

The Shuar is an indigenous group living in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Until the 1960s, the Shuar were feared as one of the most warlike tribes in the Amazon Basin due to their tradition of making shrunken heads of their enemies.

Today the Shuar number around 100.000 people. They live in the rainforests of Ecuador, where they make a living from subsistence farming, hunting and fishing. The life of the Shuar is strongly connected to the rainforest as they consider life an integral part of nature. Dreams and omens are heavily relied upon to plan the activities in the communities. Supernatural beings, gods, and the position of the stars and the moon control the circle of life and wild and cultivated products.

The Shuar make a living from traditional farming, hunting, fishing, and collecting various fruits and insects in the forest. The Shuar women are knowledgeable farmers and use different sacred songs (anent) to benefit the cultivated plants. They grow crops such as plantain, cassava, sweet potato, taro, corn, squash, peanuts, sugar cane, bananas, pineapple, papaya and chonta palm.

It is usually the men that hunt, fish and clear forest for cultivation. The Shuar women then cultivate the land, cook, and take care of the children. A central part of the Shuar culture is chicha or nijamanch, a light cassava beer. The cassava beer is a central part of the diet, social life and a symbol of female productivity, and consumed with all meals.



# The rainforest of the Shuar

By supporting the project you can help protect around 1000 hectares of communally owned primary rainforests, untouched by human activities. This rainforest lies at the base of the Andean Foothills at an altitude varying from 550 to 1000 meters above sea level in one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and connected to another 250.000 acres of communally owned forest that melts together with a vast patch of primary forest all the way to Peru and Brazil.

The flora of this rainforest is exceptionally varied, with everything from mahogany, palms, bromeliads and an overwhelming variety of orchids. The fauna is just as varied, including viable populations of mammals that are rare or extinct, such as Jaguars, howler monkeys, saki monkeys, tamarin monkeys, nocturnal monkeys, squirrels, white-lipped and collared peccaries, ocelots, margay cats, sloths, anteaters, armadillos, coatis, agoutis, pacas, otters, caimans and occasionally tapirs.

The birds are even more numerous and represent species such as military macaws, parakeets, toucans, curassows, guans, hummingbirds, manakins, antbirds, tanagers, tinamous and oropendolas. Local villagers can name and know more than 220 species of birds present in the community's immediate surroundings. A particular characteristic bird and sound of the forest is the screaming Piha (*Lipaugus vociferans*) or paipainch in Shuar from its characteristic call – paiaiaiaiaia.....painch. Of the more rare species, the reserve contains one species of curassow – the nocturnal curassow (*Nothocrax urumutum*) or ayachui in Shuar. Several species of parrots are present all year round, such as the blue-headed parrot, blue-winged parrotlet, cobalt winged parakeet, and maroon-tailed parakeet. Occasionally around December, groups of military macaws migrate to the forest. In the mornings and afternoons, and after heavy rains and around fruiting trees are the best time for observing birds in the forest. You are likely to hear the loud call of the couviers toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus curvieri*) or tsukanka.

The forest in the area is home to an overwhelming variety of reptiles, amphibians and insects. There are some 350 species of reptiles in Ecuador, containing over 200 snakes alone and around 400 species of amphibians – with an incredible amount of frogs. Each hike into the forest always reveals new species – even to the locals. The most infamous and well-known species are the tarantula, anaconda and caimans. The tarantula is very common but usually is very quiet if left undisturbed. Anacondas belong to the lower parts of the Amazon, where there are more swamps and slower streaming rivers. However, local stories and sightings in the Pastaza River make the myth live in the area.



# MAKE A CHANGE SUPPORT US



## Ways to support

There are various ways to support the project. The number of trees and the size of the protected area can be scaled and matched according to the individual company and campaign.

Planting 1 hectare of balsa forest (2,500 trees / 30 ton carbon): + protection 1 hectare of existing rainforest:	DKK 40,000
Planting 1 hectare of balsa forest (2,500 trees / 30 ton carbon): + protection 3 hectares of existing rainforest:	DKK 60,000
Help protect 10.000 sq. m. of rainforest (1 hectare):	DKK 5,000
Donate any number of trees. Price per tree:	DKK 16

(For companies, all prices are VAT free and for private person's tax deductions apply)



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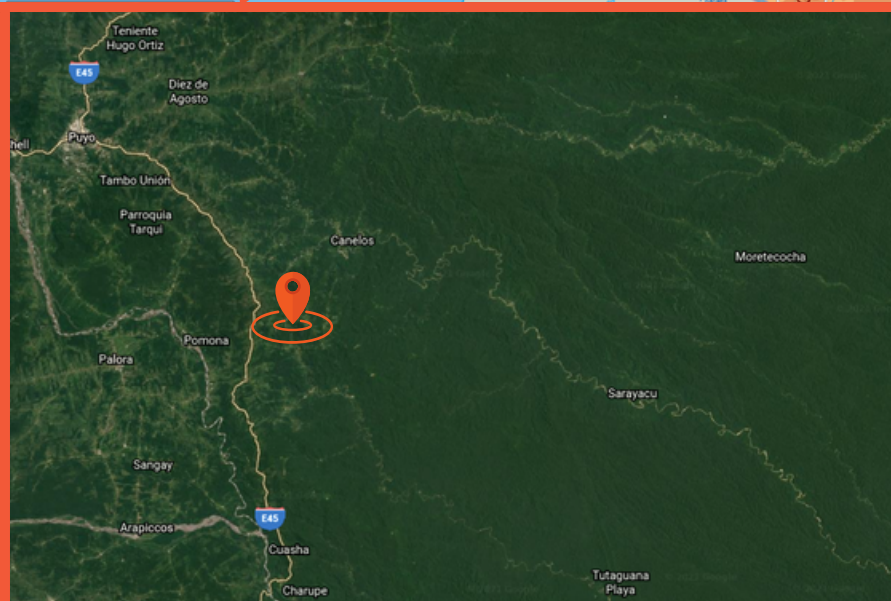
# The project area



The project area is located in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The area is one of the most biodiverse nature areas in the world and home to the Indigenous Shuar people.

The trees will be established on previous farmland in three different Shuar villages in the Pastaza region.

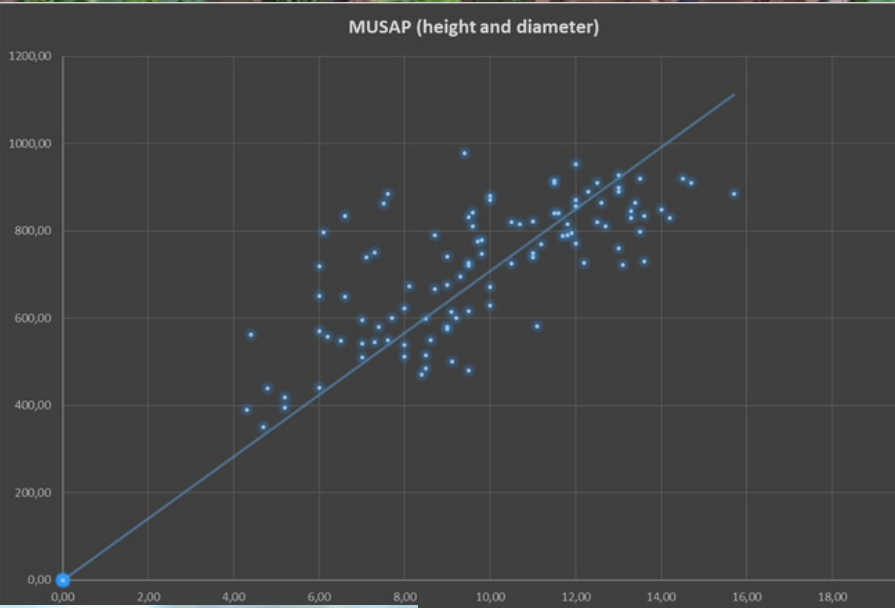
Take a view of the area in Google Maps  
<https://goo.gl/maps/o5AP6xaCxxUHczSM8>



# The balsa forest



# Documentation and updates



We prioritize a high level of information and documentation in the reforestation projects. This way we can deliver a high level of regular status and pictures of the project progress targeted to the individual customer.

The growth and health of the trees are being monitored by the locals and our forestry experts. That way, we can document the amount of carbon that is absorbed and captured in the trees, and the Shuar gain useful knowledge about sustainable forestry.

