



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

AMAZON WATERS ALLIANCE

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW



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Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027

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We would like to inform our readers that the original version of this document is in Spanish (available here [\[link\]](#)) (or can be requested by email to [\[gleite@wcs.org\]](mailto:gleite@wcs.org)). In case of discrepancy with other versions in different languages, the Spanish version will take precedence and will be the only one valid for all purposes.

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Presentation

The Amazon Waters Alliance (AAA) Strategic Plan (hereafter "Strategic Plan") was developed under the leadership of the Steering Committee of the Citizen Science Network for the Amazon and the Amazon Waters Steering Committee, and received input from several individuals and institutions that are partners of the Network and signatories of the Amazon Waters Declaration, and other key stakeholders.

The plan presents a common vision, agreed objectives, a theory of change with identified outcomes, and strategies to be implemented to contribute to the conservation of the Amazon Basin, its ecosystems and species, as well as to maintain ecosystem services and contribute to the well-being of the local communities and populations that depend on them. Once the first action plan associated with this Strategic Plan is completed, with measurable goals and defined activities, the plan can be used to evaluate AAA's success and make adjustments as necessary to improve our effectiveness over time.

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document that will be modified as the context and factors influencing the Amazon Basin, and the targets initially stated in the document, change. Likewise, it is expected that such changes will be based on evidence and information gathered by AAA and other stakeholders.

It is an important first step for us to collaborate around our shared vision of keeping the Amazon Basin whole, dynamic, diverse, and interconnected, ecologically, socio-culturally, and institutionally from the Andes to the Amazon plain and the Atlantic Ocean, and thanks to a local and global population that values, cares for, and benefits from its goods and services. We will build this by sharing knowledge, connecting people, and informing policies and decisions at the scale of the entire Basin.

Scope

The geographic scope agreed upon for the strategic plan is the entire Amazon Basin (Figure 1), and its temporal scope is 10 years for the **Vision (to 2032)** and 5 years for the situational analysis and the definition of **conservation targets and strategies (to 2027)**.

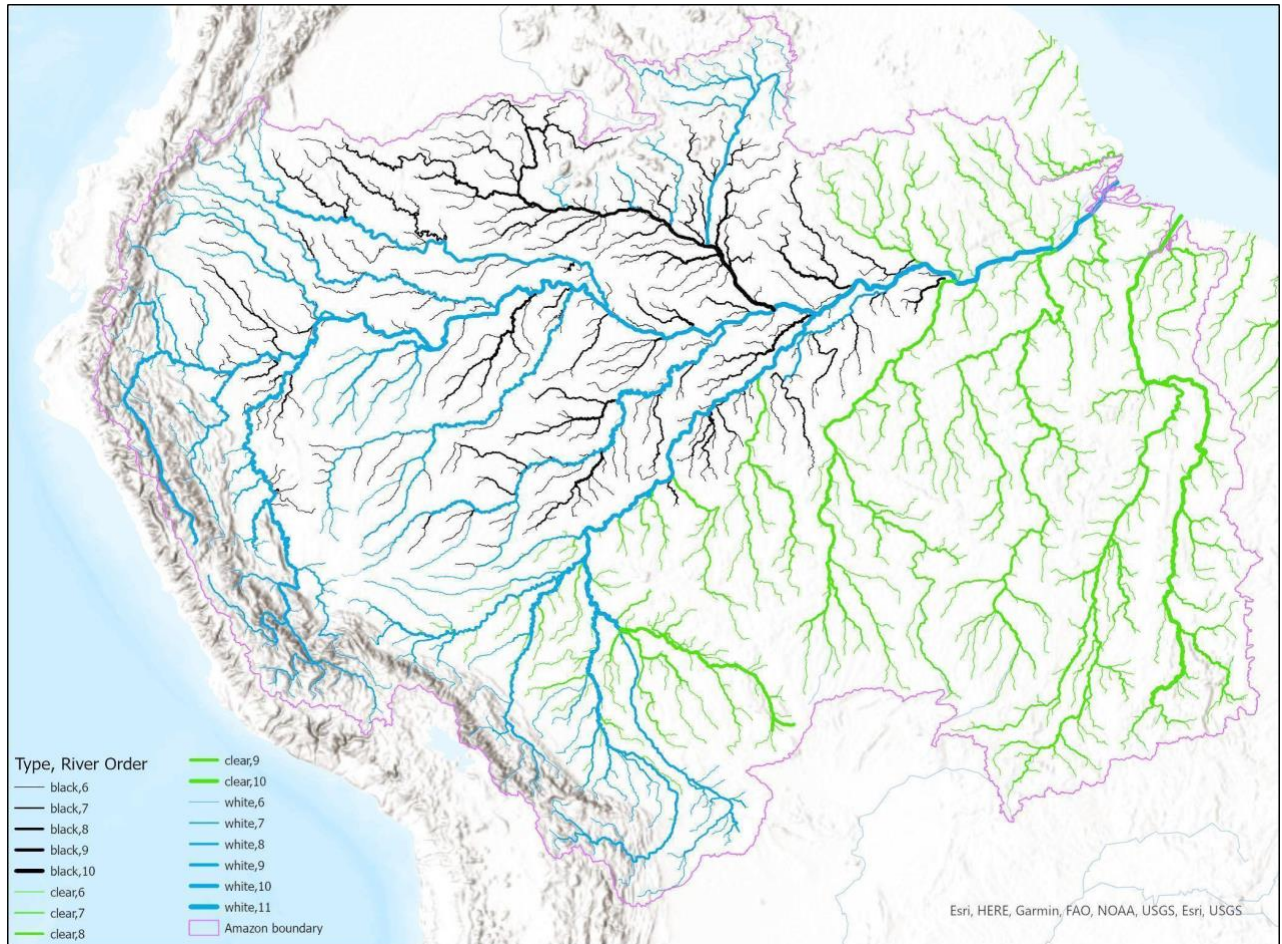


Figure 1. Geographic scope of the Amazon Waters Alliance (AAA) Strategic Plan. It includes the Amazon Basin (including the Tocantins Basin and estuarine areas), with an area of 7.282 million km² ([Ventincinque et al., 2016](#); updated in [Ventincinque et al 2021](#)).

Vision

The Amazon Basin remains intact, dynamic, diverse and interconnected, ecologically, socio-culturally and institutionally, from the Andes to the Amazon plain and the Atlantic Ocean, thanks to a local and global population that values it, cares for it and benefits from its goods and services.

Mission

We are an alliance whose actions are based on traditional science and citizen science and look forward to strengthening the governance of the Amazon Basin. We enhance the understanding of ecological and social processes, generating accessible, reliable, and timely information. We connect initiatives and actors from civil society and the public sector, generating knowledge, solutions, and actions in favor of the conservation and management of aquatic ecosystems in the Basin, and respect for the rights of Amazonian peoples. We create spaces and strategies for dialogue, debate, and agreements for the conservation and management of the Amazon Basin, promoting timely and reliable information to stakeholders, developing strategic advocacy, and assuming agreements and commitments towards the development and sustainability of the Amazon Basin.

Purpose

Developing responsible and committed actions to maintain the ecosystem integrity of the Amazon Basin and the services it provides to the region and the world, based on knowledge at multiple scales and collective action, through spaces for dialogue and agreements for informed decision-making about the conservation and management of the basin for social and environmental well-being.

Conservation Targets

The Conservation Targets are formal statements detailing the ultimate impact to be achieved through the collective action of the Amazonian Waters Alliance (AAA), on conservation targets previously defined by Anderson et al. 2021 (see Figure 2).

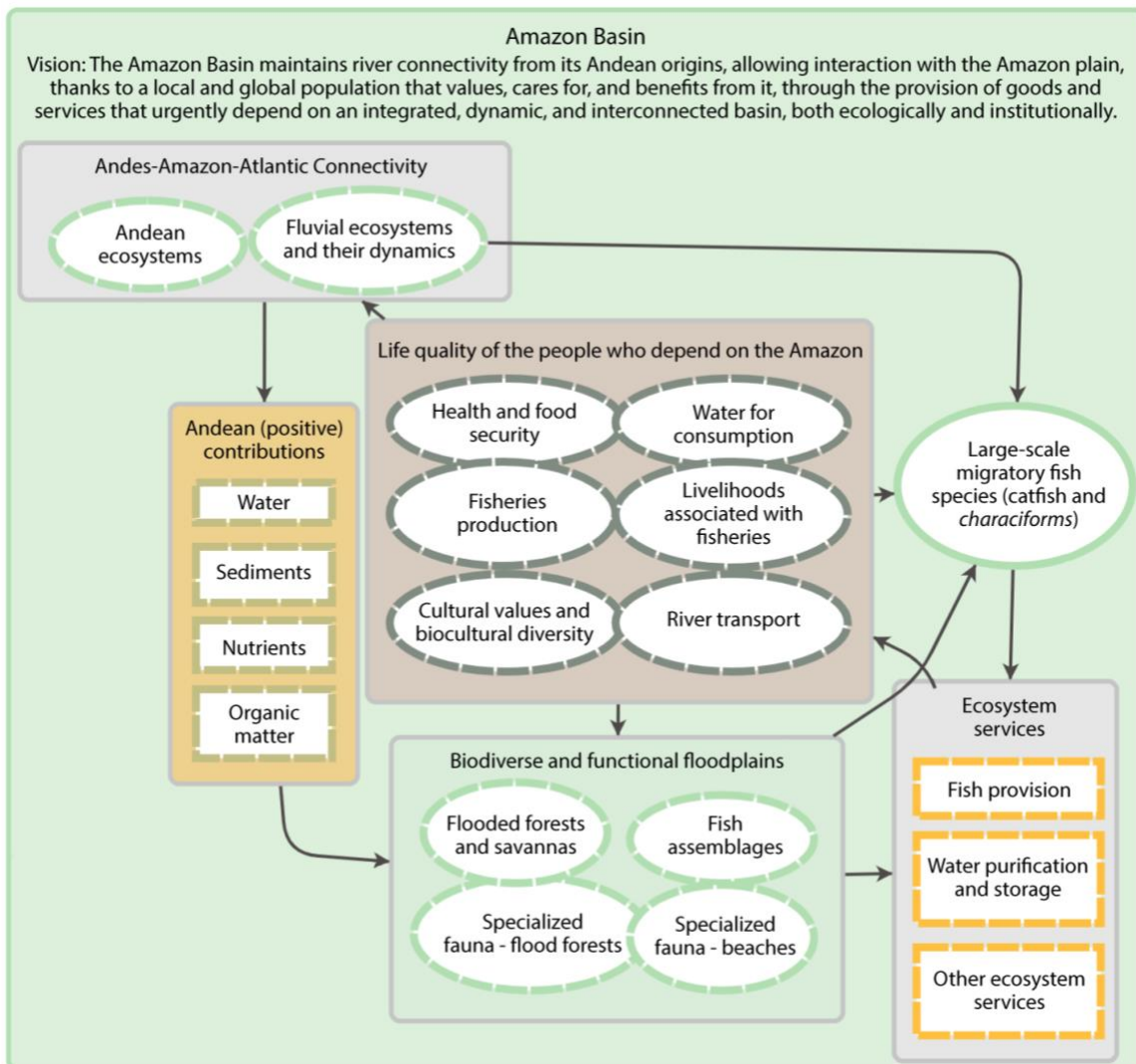


Figure 2. Conservation targets and human well-being targets prioritized in the Strategic Plan of the Amazonian Waters Alliance (AAA).

The conservation targets constitute the measure or reference threshold defined by the Amazon Waters Alliance to transparently evaluate the impact of its management over a 10-year period. For some targets, those that do not yet have determined quantities, it is necessary to establish a baseline. As mentioned in the section on contributing factors, one of the weaknesses at the Amazon Basin level is the lack of information. One of the first activities of AAA will be to establish these baselines related to conservation targets.

Conservation Target 1: Andean-Amazonian-Atlantic Connectivity

- **Objective 1.1.** Free-flowing rivers in the western Amazon remain connected.
- **Objective 1.2.** Natural sediment and nutrient loads of priority Andean rivers are maintained at least at 2022 levels.

Conservation target 2: Biodiverse and functional floodplains

- **Objective 2.1.** The sedimentation process to maintain the natural geomorphology of the floodplain is preserved in priority level basins.
- **Objective 2.2.** The natural flood pulse to ensure that flood ecosystems maintain their ecological functionality is maintained in priority basins.
- At least 80% of native floodplain vegetation cover is maintained and/or restored in priority basins.

Conservation target 3: Large-scale migratory fish species (catfishes and characiformes)

- **Objective 3.1.** The fishery exploitation of large-scale migratory species is maintained under sustainable thresholds in all basins.
- **Objective 3.2.** Fish migrations to the Upper Madeira recover.
- **Objective 3.3.** Fish migrations are maintained without interruption in rivers that remain undammed as of 2022.
- **Objective 3.4.** By 2032, 80% of the remaining highland and flooded forests are conserved in critical basins for commercial fishing.

Strategies

For the identification of strategies, a reflection focused on the scale of the Amazon Basin was encouraged, foreseeing the combination of different types of strategies, and capitalizing the lessons learned by the Citizen Science Network for the Amazon and by its partners and other key actors in relation to "scaling up" strategies. As this is a regional plan, some strategies operate as an umbrella, indicating the general direction of actions and Outcomes to be achieved at more local scales.

Figure 3 presents the high-level Theory of Change of the Amazon Waters Alliance Strategic Plan. It is composed of four synergistic strategies: one support strategy and three advocacy strategies.

High-Level Theory of Change of the Amazon Waters Alliance Strategic Plan to 2027

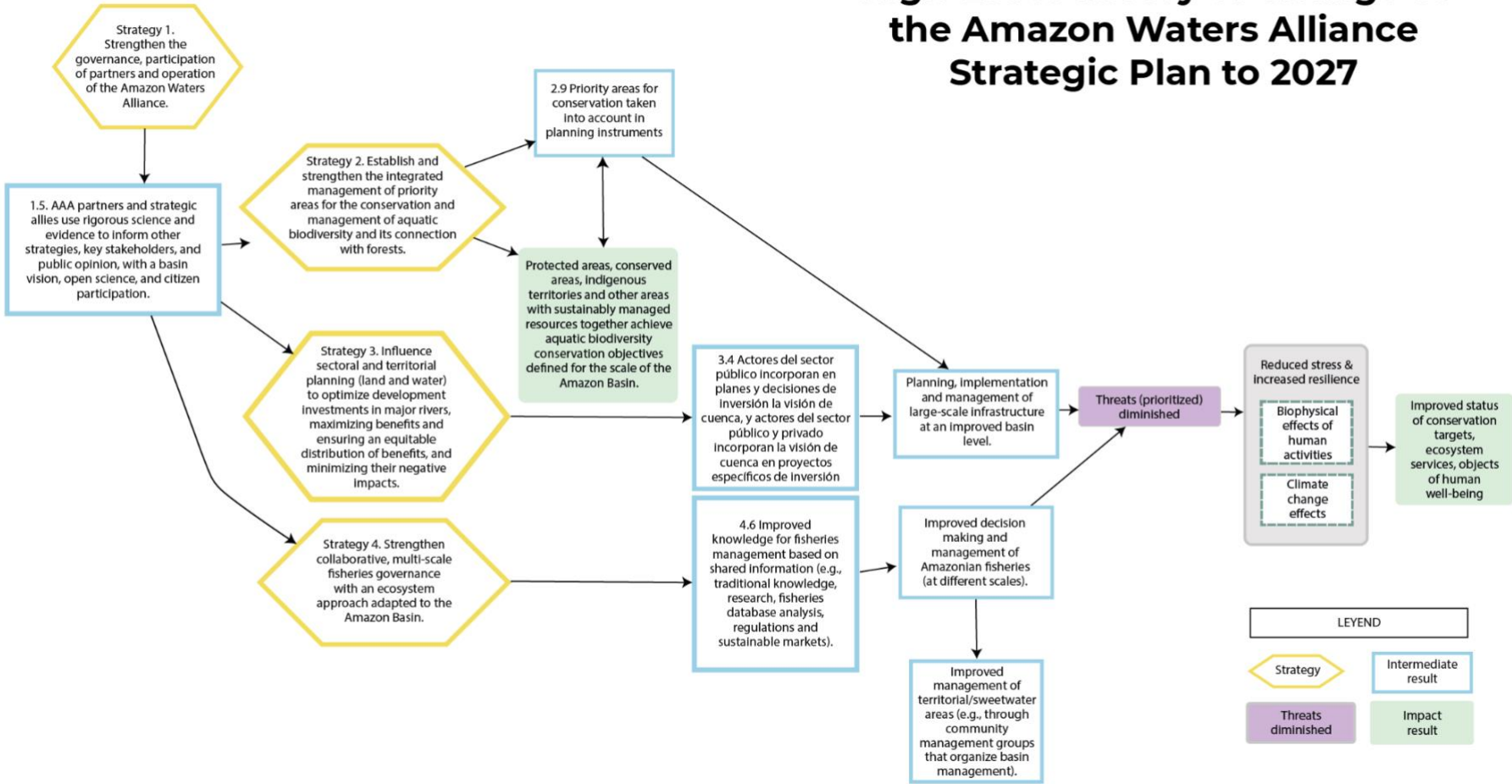


Figure 3. High Level Theory of Change of the Strategic Plan of the Amazonian Waters Alliance (AAA) to 2027.

The strategy "Strengthen governance, partner participation, and the functioning of the Amazon Waters Alliance to achieve effective advocacy using scientific information as a key element." (Strategy 1), corresponds to a support strategy that seeks to achieve effective inter-institutional collaboration and facilitate the implementation of advocacy strategies. The advocacy strategies are: (2) Establish and strengthen the integrated management of priority areas for the conservation and management of aquatic biodiversity and its linkage with forests (protected areas, conserved areas -OMEC-, indigenous territories and other areas with sustainably managed resources), (3) Influence sectoral and territorial planning (land and water) to optimize development investments in major rivers, maximizing benefits and ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits, and minimizing their negative impacts; and, (4) Strengthen collaborative, multi-scale fisheries governance with an ecosystem approach adapted to the Amazon Basin. Together, the advocacy strategies seek to improve the planning, implementation and management of large-scale infrastructure at the basin level, contribute to reducing priority threats and achieve conservation and human well-being objectives. To this end, they seek to achieve a series of outcomes described in the theory of change.

The implementation of each of these strategies will be based on two principles that characterize the actions of the Amazon Waters Alliance, and that will be worked transversally in the strategies. This is, on the one hand, (a) to continue generating rigorous, open and collaborative knowledge, and synthesize this information, making it accessible to policy makers, organized citizens and donors, and, on the other hand, (b) to continue informing, sensitizing and strengthening the capacities of organized citizens (civil society) on the need for an integrated vision of the basin, to conserve the Andean-Amazonian-Atlantic connectivity, and to continue promoting their actions in different spheres (as economic agents and as political, social and cultural actors) to achieve the conservation of the Amazon Basin, while AAA continues learning, feeding back and strengthening its own capacities thanks to organized citizenship.

Strategy 1. Governance for effective advocacy

Strengthen governance, partner participation, and the functioning of the Amazon Waters Alliance to achieve effective advocacy using scientific information as a key element.

- **Outcome 1.1.** Actors who share knowledge and concern about the underrepresentation of freshwater ecosystems in conservation mechanisms, agree to work collectively with clear rules and effective functioning mechanisms.
- **Outcome 1.2.** AAA partners strengthen their own capacities and those of strategic allies to advance collaborative work objectives within AAA, with a basin-wide vision.
- **Outcome 1.3.** AAA partners and strategic allies agree on and implement effective systems for sharing information and knowledge.
- **Outcome 1.4.** AAA partners and strategic allies improve understanding and monitor conservation targets and key processes affecting them.
- **Outcome 1.5.** AAA partners and strategic allies use rigorous science and evidence to inform other strategies to key stakeholders, and to public opinion, with a Basin vision, open science, and citizen participation.

Strategy 2. Integrated management of priority areas

Establish and strengthen the integrated management of priority areas for the conservation and management of aquatic biodiversity and its linkage with forests (protected areas, conserved areas -OMEC-, indigenous territories and other areas with sustainably managed resources).

- **Outcome 2.1.** The Amazon Waters Alliance establishes an agenda and a conceptual reference framework for integrated management of priority areas.
- **Outcome 2.2:** Improved evidence to influence the achievement of Outcomes.
- **Outcome 2.3.** Specific advocacy actions by key stakeholders are supported and encouraged by AAA.
- **Outcome 2.4.** Key actors of international (e.g. CBD) and national relevance know and apply common criteria (agreed and promoted or facilitated by AAA) to design, manage and evaluate the effectiveness of protected, conserved and managed areas and other mechanisms, from an aquatic biodiversity perspective and with an Amazon Basin vision.
- **Outcome 2.5.** Enabling conditions created at the international and national levels, which facilitate the achievement of the Outcomes proposed below at the territorial level.
- **Outcome 2.6.** Conservation in indigenous territories and local populations strengthened with a Basin vision and citizen participation.
- **Outcome 2.7.** Different mechanisms for the conservation and management of aquatic biodiversity are established in aquatic-based territories, in accordance with the legislation of each country and with an integrated vision of the Basin and citizen participation.
- **Outcome 2.8.** Management of protected and conserved areas, along with other areas with sustainably managed resources and indigenous territories, is strengthened from the perspective of aquatic biodiversity with a vision of the Amazon Basin and citizen participation.
- **Outcome 2.9.** Priority areas for conservation are taken into account in planning instruments.

Strategy 3. Sectoral and territorial planning (land and water)

Influence sectoral and territorial planning (land and water) to optimize development investments in major rivers, maximizing benefits and ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits, and minimizing their negative impacts.

- **Outcome 3.1.** AAA partners establish collaboration agreements with strategic allies that lead priority initiatives in sectoral and territorial planning (land and water).
- **Outcome 3.2.** There is an increase in the number of strategic stakeholders who adopt the Basin vision and citizen participation, and incorporate them into their advocacy actions at the transboundary, national or subnational scale.
- **Outcome 3.3.** Strategic financial sector actors at national and international levels have evidence and tools to make decisions incorporating a Basin vision and possible cumulative impacts on the Amazon.
- **Outcome 3.4.** Public sector stakeholders incorporate the Basin vision into investment plans and decisions, and public and private sector stakeholders incorporate the Basin vision into specific investment projects.

Strategy 4. Strengthening multi-scale fisheries governance

Strengthen collaborative, multi-scale fisheries governance with an ecosystem approach adapted to the Amazon Basin.

- **Outcome 4.1.** AAA partners and strategic allies agree and implement a common agenda of shared knowledge and advocacy, and strengthen spaces for dialogue and coordination to promote fisheries management with a Basin vision and citizen participation.
- **Outcome 4.2.** Government entities with (1) capacities to implement relevant approaches, (2) understanding of the relevance of collaborative strategies for Amazonian fisheries management, (3) openness to information systems for decision-making, (4) capacities to use them, and (5) capacities to provide technical advice to Amazonian fisheries on Access to sustainable markets.
- **Outcome 4.3.** Articulated mechanisms for fisheries management in transboundary and bordering rivers.
- **Outcome 4.4.** Fishing catch and landing information system is integrated (public and private) contributing to decision making.
- **Outcome 4.5.** Sustainable, equitable and inclusive markets are linked to Amazonian fisheries contributing to decision making.
- **Outcome 4.6.** Improved knowledge for fisheries management based on shared information (e.g., traditional knowledge, research, fisheries database analysis, regulations, sustainable markets).

We share knowledge and connect people to understand and conserve the aquatic ecosystems of the Amazon!