

## **ANNEX 16**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2014 for Environment and Climate Change under the Global Public Goods and Challenges Thematic Programme, to be financed from the general budget of the European Union

### **Action Document for “Páramo: biodiversity and water resources in the Northern Andes”**

#### **1. IDENTIFICATION**

Title/Number	<b>Regional Project “Páramo: biodiversity and water resources in the Northern Andes”-</b> <b>CRIS number:</b> DCI-ENV/2014/037-343 DCI-ENV/2014/346-637		
Total cost	Total estimated cost: EUR 6 250 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 5 000 000 This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by: - Alexander von Humboldt Institute, for an amount of EUR 250 000 - Colombian Local environmental public corporations (CARs)/ Ministry of Environment of Colombia for an amount of EUR 800 000 <u>Other organizations</u> (IUCN, WWF Colombia) for an amount of EUR 200 000.		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach Direct management - grant – direct award		
DAC-code	14015 41030	Sector Sector	Water resources conservation Biodiversity

#### **2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT**

##### **2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives**

The *páramo* is the ecosystem of the regions above the continuous forest line, yet below the permanent snowline in the northern Andes of South America. It presents a unique ecosystem and is of utmost importance in water regulation in downstream watershed. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the reduction of threats to the hydrological regulation capacity and biodiversity of *páramo* ecosystems in selected key areas in South America. It will be implemented by local governmental and non-governmental agencies in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Seven local *páramo* areas have been identified, where the project will support institutions to: 1) define and apply conservation and sustainable management strategies, including integrated ecosystem management, 2) develop financial instruments to support maintenance of ecosystem services, in particular hydrological regulation, and, 3) strengthen civil society capacities (indigenous and farmers

organizations) to develop sustainable activities in *páramo*. At regional level, a knowledge exchange network will be consolidated to develop a set of resources for the management and monitoring of *páramo* at the Andean level. Finally, local and national environmental public policies will be strengthened in the three target countries, to support the conservation and sustainable use of *páramo*.

## **2.2. Context**

### **2.2.1. Economic and development context**

#### **2.2.1.1. Economic and social situation and poverty analysis.**

Colombia, Ecuador and Peru have seen annual economic growth rates during recent years (4.7, 4.9 and 6.7 %, resp.), which are higher than the average for the region (2,7%). An important part of their economies continue to be based on natural resource extraction (oil, mining, agriculture) for which environmental management (protection of water, soils, climate and biodiversity) is crucial. Recent accelerating growth in these countries' economies has led to competition to attract foreign investment in natural resources exploration. This has been supported by policies that weaken the role of the state and its capacity to promote good governance over natural resources, particularly mining. Mining increased from 0.6 to 1.9% of regional GNP, with most growth in Peru (0.2 to 7.5% of GNP) and Colombia (0.2 to 2%). The economic importance of the mining sector and the environmental concerns resulting from the activity, have created socioeconomic and environmental conflicts in *páramo* areas in all three countries.

According to the multidimensional measures of poverty of the United Nations Human Opportunity Index, the three countries have made significant progress in coverage of basic health and education. In recent years, the population below the poverty line and the population in rural areas under the extreme poverty line have been reduced. This reduction of poverty is due to sustained economic growth, low levels of inflation, and the consolidation of a system of social protection schemes granting conditional cash transfers to the most vulnerable. According to the 2013 United Nations Human Development Report, Colombia has a Human Development Index of 0.719 -ranking 91st of 187 countries-, Ecuador 0.724 -ranking 89th- and Peru 0.741 -ranking 77th-.

Recent governmental policies in all three countries (national development plans) have included specific directives aimed at reducing inequality. Nevertheless, inequality still remains as one of the biggest challenges for these countries: GINI indices are high (approx. 0.50 for Peru and Ecuador and 0.56 for Colombia); and the share of the population below the poverty line is 26%, 33% and 27% in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador respectively. Inequality is manifested especially by the marked difference between urban and rural areas. According to ECLAC data, half of Latin American poor people live in rural areas, which hold only 22% of the total population. Directly related to inequality, rural areas have seen intense migration processes. In Ecuador approx. 3 million people, especially from the Southern highlands, have migrated to the USA, Spain and Italy. In Peru, poor highland farmers were the main colonizers of the Amazon basin. In Colombia, an estimated 4 million people were forced to leave their homes due to the armed conflict. The concentration of land property in Colombia is among the highest in the world. This situation has worsened in the nineties due to the paramilitary and guerrilla groups displacing high numbers of small farmers from their lands.

The largest share of the population in the three Andean countries lives in the mountainous regions, in inter Andean valleys and coastal plains under their direct influence. In Colombia, 70% of the population live in the Andean region and depend directly on the ecosystem services of *páramo* ecosystems, especially for water regulation where 272 municipalities (26% of total) are located above 3300 meters, areas with close ties to *páramo*. Estimated populations of 150.000 people are living in or

directly below *páramo*. In both Ecuador and Peru, 90% of the population lives either in the Andes or the semi-arid and arid coastal plains, and the economy and society of both regions depend on water originating from the (humid) Andes. In Ecuador, 82 municipalities (37% of total) have more than 5% of their territories in *páramo*, including two of the three largest cities of the country. The Ecuadorian *páramo* population is estimated at 300,000 people. In Peru few people live directly in *páramo*, however, given the extremely arid coastal plains with intensive irrigation-fed agro-industry, the economic importance of the hydrological ecosystem services from *páramo* is very high.

#### 2.2.1.2. Regional/national development policy

Initially, national policies for *páramo* management focused on strict conservation. However, *páramo* dwellers claimed they had a right to remain in *páramo*, but requested external technical and financial support to ensure better practices for *páramo* management. Indigenous people also had claims to paramo areas. In time, conservationists realized that working with local inhabitants was in many cases a far more effective means of enabling improved resource management, as they become a force for conservation and social development goals, proving to be a good basis for *páramo* management. Therefore, Andean country governments now have several tools and experiences available to promote local sustainable management. In the last decade, several of these successful local *páramo* management initiatives have created a positive momentum towards *páramo* conservation, but intensive potato and onion farming, extensive cattle ranching and mining activities still remain a significant threat in many areas.

National policies regarding *páramo* management are inserted in sectorial plans of the Environment Ministries of the three countries. In Colombia, the governmental agency directly responsible for *páramo* management is the Direction for Ecosystems in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. In Ecuador's case, the responsibility at the national level lies with the sub-secretary of Natural Patrimony of the Ministry of Environment. In Peru, national ecosystem policy is led by the General Direction for Biological Diversity of the Ministry of Environment. However, several other divisions within the three Ministries of Environment deal with *páramo* management, particularly the Directions responsible for protected areas management and climate change policies.

In the three countries, environmental management is (partially) decentralized. In Colombia, the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CARs) are responsible for the implementation of policies in *páramo* outside the National Protected Areas system (which is under responsibility of the National Parks Agency). In Ecuador, the national planning secretariat (SENPLADES) has proposed a division of the country in seven administrative regions, each consisting of two to four provinces, with the idea of decentralizing the functions of all ministries. Although this "de-concentration" process is not yet complete, the Ministry of Environment has regional coordinators in all administrative regions; six of which deal with *páramo*. In Peru, the decentralization process started a decade ago and several functions of the central government have been decentralized. The regions (formally departments) have a large degree of autonomy and environment is one of the sectors that already transferred much of its responsibility to these jurisdictions. *Páramo* are present principally in the region of Piura, with some extension in Cajamarca.

Although each country has extensive legislation that shows its commitment to *páramo ecosystems* (see 2.2.2 - policy context), the fiscal resources for the implementation of these actions are scarce. For instance, in Colombia, the 2014 budget for the Ecosystems Directorate for its actions in the entire country is 2 million euros. CAR's have general budget assignments for the management of strategic ecosystems, but these are not focused specifically on *páramo* ecosystems. Overall budgets of the

CAR's are typically variable with some corporations (related to big cities, like CAR, CVC, Corantioquia) having important budgets and many others (with more rural coverage, like Corponariño or Corpochivor) having much smaller budgets. A general analysis has evidenced that the average investment in *páramo* is less than 100.000 euro/year. Moreover, most *páramo* are shared by several CARs and the National Parks system and in most cases; the investments do not follow a joint action plan. There is also a legal obligation that municipal and departmental governments have to invest 1% of their recurrent budget to environmental conservation, mostly related to watershed management, but there is no specific focus on *páramo*.

Other sectorial Ministries have direct impacts on *páramo*. Although the three countries have recognized *páramo* as strategic ecosystems, especially because of their singular biodiversity, vulnerability to climate change and their important role in hydrological regulation, economic development policies related to agriculture, infrastructure, energy and mining are the ones that determine *páramo* use. Inter-sectorial coordination is still incipient and frequently, policies of different sectors are conflicting. Recent examples include the conflicts around mining in Santander and Tolima in Colombia and Piura in Peru and road construction crossing a *páramo* (including national parks) in Ecuador as part of the IIRSA project. This calls for clear coordination between different ministries and harmonization of territorial zoning policies, coherent with national development policies but respecting environmental policy and enhancing the maintenance of *páramo* ecological good and services

### **2.2.2. Sector context: problems, policies and opportunities**

**Importance of *páramo*:** The *páramo* is a high mountain landscape, covering the area above the forest line in the wet tropical Andes, from Venezuela to the North of Peru as well as Costa Rica. Similar landscapes can be found on isolated peaks in equatorial Africa and Oceania. The largest *páramo* areas (almost 90% of total) are found in Colombia and Ecuador. Because of their extreme climatic conditions, a unique biodiversity has evolved in *páramo*. Also, because of their geographical position in the upper watersheds, high water balance, deep water retaining peat soils and many glaciers and wetlands, *páramo* are the “water-towers” of the Andes, securing water supply to 80% of the population, irrigating agriculture, sustaining industries and generating electricity. Finally, major continental river systems, including the Orinoco, Amazon, Magdalena and the Chocó basins, depend significantly on *páramo*'s water regulation capacity.

Since pre-hispanic times, *páramo* have been used by humans (camelid grazing, transport) and cultural use. Since colonial times, *páramo* have been increasingly used for wide-spread animal husbandry and food production; particularly potatoes, onions and grains.

The history of human occupation in *páramo* has resulted in the presence of different user groups, all having agriculture as the main activity. Large *haciendas* of thousands of hectares still remain in *paramo* areas (particularly in Ecuador), but most have been divided through the agricultural reform processes. In recent decades, new *páramo* occupants with an entrepreneurial approach, planted potatoes, onions or pine trees, sometimes in combination with small to medium scale (coal and gold) mining. Today, most *páramo* areas are in hands of small holders, either individually or organized in communities of producer organizations or indigenous peoples. The latter are particularly present in Southern Colombia and North and central Ecuador. Due to a combination of processes related to marginalization, lack of access to technical and financial support and inadequate rural development policies, these communities are extremely poor.

Most *páramo* areas can now be considered a cultural landscape, or a socio-ecosystem. The presence of human population adds to the diversity of *páramo*, especially because of the cultural and landscape diversity, but on the other hand, it forms a threat to ecosystem integrity. Few productive activities in *páramo* are sustainable, either from an environmental nor economic point of view. Widespread animal husbandry and ill-planned cultivation have led to loss of vegetation cover and soil degradation, resulting in considerably less water retention capacity for affected *paramo*. Other factors stress *páramo* integrity; mountain ecosystems in general are highly vulnerable to climate change and *páramo* are no exception. Increasing demand for water resources puts external pressure on water governance in the high Andes. Infrastructure developments increase accessibility and create opportunities for more intensive economic activities. Finally, high mineral prices have increased mining exploration and mining concessions (particularly coal and gold) that have caused major social and environmental conflicts in *páramo*.

*Páramo* conservation is of crucial importance for the Northern Andes: it not only preserves unique endemic biodiversity, but also ensures continuous water provision to approximately 50 million people and supports the livelihoods of approximately 500,000 impoverished *páramo* dwellers. This multi-country project is in line with the EU's Thematic Programme on Global Public Goods and Challenges, because it will build alliances of relevant stakeholders and support regional and cross-cutting actions to reduce inequalities in access to resources and opportunities, in a landscape where environmental degradation and the effects of climate change are ever-increasing.

**Problem context:** It is estimated that only 30% of all *páramo* are in a relatively well-conserved state, another 30% is modified and under continuous human use, and 40% is transformed to agricultural land or degraded. Any modification and transformation by human use, decreases the *páramo*'s unique capacity to regulate regional hydrology. Therefore, a good management of *páramo* is of national and global importance. This has been recognized in international (Andean) and national decrees, but currently, no comprehensive policy is under implementation that ensures *páramo* preservation at different scales. Perhaps worth mentioning Resolution VIII 39 of the Ramsar Convention to conserve high andes wetlands recognized as strategic ecosystems extends to *paramo* and others (peru, chile, Bolivia and argentina).

Positive experiences at local scale remain at pilot level and are not sufficiently scaled up. Capacities have been built among communities who still do not fully participate in local governance, farmers are willing to change inadequate productive activities but have no access to financial mechanisms to compensate for the loss of opportunities or switch to sustainable activities.

At the subnational level, there is an overlap among authorities for *páramo* management; policies at different levels and sectors (particularly agriculture, infrastructure, energy and mining) are not always consistent and there is a lack of coordination between the activities and programs of the different governmental agencies. Lack of agreement among those sectors on *paramo* delimitation is also a significant problem. The lack of agreements and priorities and coordination is particularly challenging because *páramo* by default are shared between various territorial authorities. At the national level, policy frameworks are under construction but still encounter many challenges to find viable policy tools, internalized in different sectors and levels. For instance, in Colombia the mining code prohibits mining activities in *páramo*, but to apply this legislation, a clear delimitation of *páramo* is required. This rather technical effort has however been confronted with a diversity of sectorial interests and conflicts over land use. In Ecuador, almost 40% of *páramo* are included in Protected Areas but in many of these, land is privately owned.

At regional (Andean) level there are bilateral and multilateral agreements that prioritize páramo conservation and integrated water resources management, in practice there are currently no joint programmes in place that harmonize páramo conservation plans. In general, knowledge about the functioning of the páramo socio-ecosystem is not yet adequate nor disseminated enough among all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, in spite of the increased awareness and positive experiences at local level, the aforementioned barriers at regional, national and subnational levels have resulted in a lack of páramo governance. Farmers continue to be in conflict with industrial mining and agriculture, financial compensation mechanisms are not in place in most areas and mistrust in government agencies cause lack of collaboration to sustain positive management models.

**Policy context:** At the regional level, páramo are considered strategic ecosystems and are included in various decisions and policies of the Andean Community, including the regional biodiversity strategy for the tropical Andean countries (decision 523) and the Andean strategy for Integrated Water Resources Management (decision 763). The major strategic plan (Andean Environmental Agenda 2012-2016) calls for the promotion of social governance for conservation of Andean ecosystems, a sub-regional action plan for páramo and the creation and strengthening of a páramo expert group.

At the national level, several environmental policies in each country cover the páramo ecosystems:

**In Colombia,** Article 8 of its Constitution indicates that *“it is the obligation of the State and the people to protect cultural and natural capital of the nation....and.... to protect the diversity and integrity of the environment and conserve areas of special ecological importance”*. Environmental management is regulated by law 99 (1993) that created the Ministry of Environment and the National Environmental System (*Sistema Nacional Ambiental*; SINA). This is a semi-decentralized management system, in which the Ministry defines and approves legislation and norms and subnational environmental authorities (*Corporaciones Autonomas Regionales*, CAR) implement them in their territories in cooperation with local authorities.

Colombian legislation includes particular attention to páramo conservation. It has been declared an area of special importance through different legal instruments, not only because of its social interest and its importance for humanity, but also because of the State's obligation for its protection. Law 99 (1993) declares that Biodiversity is considered national patrimony and of interest for humanity and needs to be protected as a high priority. It includes special protection of páramo and their lower adjacent ecosystems (*sub-páramo*) and water recharge areas. Law 373 (1997) established that for efficient water use, páramo areas (among others) have to be identified and purchased by the State for their restoration, conservation and provision of ecosystem services.

In 2001, the Ministry of Environment launched a specific páramo policy (*Programa para el Manejo Sostenible y Restauración de Ecosistemas de la Alta Montaña Colombiana*), which invites CARs to characterize and map their páramo and to develop specific management plans (formalized by resolution 769 de 2002 and ratified by decree 1729 of 2002 on watershed planning). Several laws exclude economic activities from páramo, including mining (article 34 of Law 1382 of 2010; mining code) and commercial reforestation (article 7 of Law 1377 of 2010 on reforestation). This legislation is recognized in Chapter VI of the current National Development Plan “Prosperidad para todos” (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, PND*), which calls for a clear definition and delimitation of páramo to make the legislation applicable. This effort is currently under way, led by the Humboldt Institute.

Colombia's new biodiversity policy (PNGIBSE, 2011) promotes an ecosystem approach to integrated biodiversity management and focuses on ecosystem services. Subsequently, decree 953 (2013)

modified Law 99, in which territorial authorities are urged to apply 1% of their income for the conservation of natural areas relevant for water management and allowing this 1% for payment for ecosystem services, particularly for land owners of low income and emphasizing *páramo*. Currently, the National Planning Department is developing a state and national policy normative on *páramo* (*CONPES páramo*).

**Ecuador's** Environmental Plan, the National Strategy of Biodiversity Conservation, and the Andean Ecosystems Policy are its main instruments to regulate *páramo*. Since 2008, Ecuador has embraced a progressive Constitution that recognizes the rights of nature (Art. 71) and safeguards and promotes the conservation of biodiversity, soils and fragile ecosystems (Art. 276; 404; 409). The Constitution explicitly recognizes high Andean ecosystems, such as the *páramo* and wetlands, as fragile and critical ecosystems for human wellbeing (art 406). It also considers that ecosystem services cannot be privatized and that their provision, use and profit are regulated by the State (Art. 74).

Such commitments have been explicitly included in the National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir*), and other current environmental plans and strategies. All environmental policy is aligned with the *Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir*, and this project will also actively contribute to sustainable development goals, including environmental sustainability (objective 7), supporting solidarity economy, creating rural labor and changing the productivity matrix (objectives 8, 9 and 10; by stimulating environmentally sustainable labor in high altitude agriculture), moving towards renewable energy (objective 11; water-regulation for hydropower generation) and stimulating Latin-American cooperation (objective 12). Finally, the national conservation incentive programme "*Socio Bosque*", has a particular chapter for *páramo* and the proposed project will support the alignment of *Socio Bosque* with local conservation policies in Ecuador.

**In Peru**, the present project proposal is in line with the National Environmental Policy, the National Strategy for Climate Change, and the Action Plan for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change. Peru has recognized high Andean wet ecosystems (*páramo* and its southern extension: *jalca*) as fragile ecosystems in its general environment law (28611, 2005). This law calls upon regulation of *páramo* and *jalca* conservation, which is currently under preparation by the Ministry of Environment.

Law 464 (2011) creates a levy on hydrological resources and regulates its distribution favoring local governments in water source zones. The regional government of Piura (the Peruvian region where most *páramo* are situated) has declared *páramo* of regional interest (regional agreement 672-2010/GRP-CR, 2010) and established organized community surveyor groups (*rondas campesinas*) as guardians of *páramo* (agreement n° 205 – 2011). In March 2014, local governments that include *páramo* (provincial municipalities of Ayabaca, Huancabamba, Jaén and San Ignacio, together with the *rondas campesinas* and farmer communities), have established a multi-governmental platform for *páramo* management ("*Mancomunidad Municipal Páramos Andinos del Perú*")

Both border regions (Colombia-Ecuador and Ecuador-Peru) have bi-national programmes that include environmental chapters. Bi-national technical committees are supporting cross-border management of ecosystems, such as *páramo* and high mountain forests, and shared watersheds (*Mira-Guaytara-Putumayo* and *Catamayo-Chira*).

### **2.3. Lessons learnt**

During several decades of increasing attention to *páramo* conservation and sustainable development of Andean rural communities, many positive lessons have been learned:

First, there is a strong increase in awareness of the strategic value of *páramo*, not only among the local population and conservation organizations, but also among policy makers and the population in general. Second, there is now a clear focus on the integrated management of *páramo*. Where earlier sectorial interests (biological vs. social) formed a barrier to coordinated action, now conservation efforts focus on an integration of environment, society, policies and conflict resolution. Finally, trans-sectorial governmental interest has highly increased and there is an equilibrated development of policy development in the Andean region.

International collaboration for knowledge exchange and coordinated action proved to be a powerful tool to increase widespread awareness, strengthen individual initiatives and guide policy development at different levels. In 2001, an international working group on *páramo* was established among several NGOs, government agency representatives and academic experts. The group developed the regional “*Proyecto Páramo Andino*” (PPA), which provided an efficient workspace for international collaboration, networking, and knowledge exchange. Several *páramo* working groups have been active (even before PPA) in all countries convening national and local stakeholders. In recent years, *páramo* research has increasingly focused on hydrology, land use and climate change. Knowledge on socio-economic aspects of *páramo* still lags behind and is under development.

Field-based activities have resulted in a good basis of knowledge on how humans influence *páramo* by developing good governance models, namely the principles of integration, participation, subsidiarity and trans-sectorialisation.

Compensation schemes for ecosystem services have been developed, in particular for hydrological services. In this context, direct payment schemes faced some resistance due to the complex valuation of the service, benefit sharing, resistance to marketization of water, land rights and financial transparency. Conservation funds proved more effective and sustainable e.g. the Quito water fund (FONAG) and the Tungurahua *páramo* conservation fund. The Ecuadorian government established a national incentive for the conservation of forests and *páramo* (*Programa Socio Bosque*) for their importance to provide ecosystem services (biodiversity, water, carbon stocks). Other financial instruments applied to *páramo* conservation including direct (project based) support and fiscal incentives. Possibilities to create financial incentives in *páramo* for climate change mitigation also have been explored

#### **2.4. Complementary actions**

The proposed project will complement and create synergies, wherever relevant, with other projects in the *páramo* areas, in particular with the following:

*EU financed:*

- *Paramo y sistemas de vida.* Financed by EU and implemented by the Humboldt Institute in Colombia, the project focuses on socio-environmental participatory research on the *páramo* ecosystems and the livelihoods of the people, connecting this to the local institutional setting. The proposed project will build on the lessons learned from this intervention.
- *Watershed and Coastal Management in the context of Climate Change in Latin America and Caribbean (WATERCLIMA LAC; EU)*, the project supports the design and implementation of sustainable technical and financial mechanisms in watershed management. It will be implemented by calls for proposals (currently under construction).
- *Latin American Network of Knowledge Centers in the Water Sector (RALCEA; EU)*: this project fosters information based policy by promoting south-south cooperation in capacity development in



the water sector through the development of a network of knowledge centers involving governmental representatives (CODIA – Latin American Water Directors) and scientific-technical institutions.

*Projects for conservation of páramo and other Andean ecosystems:*

- *Comunidades de los páramo*. Financed by Finland and coordinated by IUCN, this project includes activities in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and focuses on creating capacities among páramo communities to reduce their vulnerability to climate change and promote adaptive strategies and policies. It has a strong gender focus.
- *Delimitación de páramo*. In order to apply governmental decisions to avoid mining and other activities at industrial scale in Colombia, the country decided that páramo should be clearly delimited. The Humboldt Institute is in charge of this process, executed in coordination with IGAC (National Geographic Institute), IDEAM (National Institute for Meteorology), CARs and several academic institutions and NGOs.
- *Partnering for Adaptation and Resilience – Agua (PARA-Agua)*. This regional project, implemented by AECOM and The Mountain Institute and Stockholm Environmental Institute, focuses on partnering scientists, decision-makers, and communities to strengthen watershed resilience to climate change impacts. It will produce and disseminate policy-oriented data on watersheds with glaciers and páramo, in Colombia (Chinchiná) and Peru (Piura).
- *Multiplying Environmental and Carbon Benefits in High Andean Ecosystems* (CONDESAN, GEF/UNEP). This new project focuses on high Andean ecosystem services in Peru and Ecuador (including páramo).
- *Proyecto de Adaptación al Impacto del Retroceso Acelerado de Glaciares en los Andes Tropicales*. (Phase II) Financed by GEF/World Bank, coordinated by the Andean Community and the governments of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. It focused on consequences of climate change on glaciers and high Andean hydrology, including páramo and puna.
- *Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments (GLORIA)*: A global research network to monitor biodiversity in high mountain areas, implemented in the Andes by CONDESAN and receiving partial financing from AECID.
- *Environmental Incentive Payments for Community Conservation of the Ecuadorean páramo*. An IABD (Interamerican Bank for Development) Project in the Tungurahua province in Ecuador, currently under development. It will support the strengthening of its funds for páramo conservation and poverty reduction.

## **2.5. Donor coordination**

Current donors to regional páramo conservation initiatives include bilateral (USAID, Finland, Spain) and multilaterals (GEF, IADB) entities. Coordination of the different support programmes will be fostered at the regional level by the second result area of the proposed Project which particularly focuses on knowledge sharing and coordination of existing initiatives in páramo. At the local level, the Project will interact with field activities of several of the above mentioned initiatives and local coordination mechanisms, lead by the co-beneficiaries of the present proposal to ensure full complementariness and coordination of efforts. At national and regional policy levels, the Project will profit from the EU's participation in national donor platforms on thematic issues, like *Colombia's biodiversity and climate change donor coordination initiatives* (lead by the Embassy of Germany, the Ministry of Environment and the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation –APC-). In Peru, the "mesa verde" is a donor coordination group, recognized by the Peruvian Agency for International

Cooperation (APCI). Currently, in Ecuador there is no donor coordination platform active, but because of its status, IUCN participates in meetings of international organizations accredited in Ecuador, among which most bilateral and multilateral agencies can be found.

### **3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1. Objectives**

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the reduction of threats to the hydrological regulation capacity and biodiversity of *páramo* ecosystems in selected key areas. The specific objective is to strengthen the capacity of institutions involved in *páramo* management in order to conserve biodiversity and water resources regulation, supported by financial instruments, including payment for ecosystem services.

#### **Expected results and main activities:**

**Result 1.** By 2018, Institutions (environmental authorities, local territorial authorities, communities, water resources users, research centers and civil society organizations) agree on and apply conservation and sustainable management strategies including integrated management of *páramo* and financial instruments to support maintenance of ecosystem services. **Activities** will include three levels of field-based action to be implemented, in a differentiated way, in seven pilot *páramo* complexes (4 in Colombia, 1 in Ecuador, 1 in Peru and 1 trans-border *páramo* area):

(1.1) Support the strengthening and articulation of different stakeholders for territorial planning activities in the three selected countries. The project will support stakeholder mapping and analysis; assess current territorial planning tools and strategies to identify gaps and overlap, and support articulation mechanisms (joint committees of environmental authorities in Colombia, collaboration structures of local governments *-mancomunidades-* in Ecuador and Peru, local protected area networks, etc.); promote harmonized, integrated management of complete *páramo* complexes (multi stakeholder platforms, development of joint planning instruments, harmonization of local policies and strategies) and support communication strategies to create environmental citizenship in surrounding urban centers.

(1.2) Support the development of financial instruments (including compensation schemes –payments-for ecosystem services) for the conservation and sustainable use of *páramo* (focused in Ecuador and Colombia). The project will support specific (economic, hydrological, social, legal) studies on valuation and feasibility of financial instruments work with local governments and urban/rural populations at the watershed level to explore possibilities for financially sustainable compensation schemes for ecosystem services or other incentives, and promote learning routes/exchange of experience with other financial initiatives at national/international level.

(1.3) Support indigenous peoples and farmer communities to implement sustainable management practices in specific *páramo* areas; (focused in Ecuador and Colombia). Pilot activities will be promoted to support *páramo* conservation (private and communal protected areas and water resources protection), ecological restoration of degraded areas and promotion of more *páramo* friendly production systems (agroforestry, conversion of cattle husbandry, ecotourism, etc). This will be done using participatory tools and a gender focus throughout, and activities will be sustained with traditional knowledge, participatory action research (farmer field schools) and applied scientific research.

**Result 2.** By 2018, a set of resources for the management and monitoring of the *páramo* is consolidated at Andean level (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru). This set of resources includes a monitoring process through the research and evaluation of environmental indicators (incl. hydro-meteorological variability), decision support systems for the conservation and sustainable use of *páramo* and toolkits for development of financial instruments to support *páramo* conservation and its inhabitants' development goals. The instruments will be identified and analyzed within the setting of a regional platform of knowledge management (*Grupo de Trabajo Técnico*), connecting all stakeholders of the current Project with other *páramo* conservation initiatives in the region. **Activities** will include:

(2.1) Development of a regional (Andean) monitoring system for *páramo*. The project will convene research institutions and international organizations on Andean knowledge management to share their information on *páramo* geography (mapping), hydrology, ecology and society aiming at analysis of the status and trends in *páramo* and monitor effects of regional policies;

(2.2) Execution of specific regional research required to provide information for regional monitoring, specifically on hydrology;

(2.3) Organization of events (learning routes, roundtable events) to share experiences between *páramo* practitioners, communities and decision makers, aiming at identifying best practices in several aspects of *páramo* management (agricultural reconversion, spatial planning, indigenous peoples, integrated water resources management, conservation networks, etc.) that ultimately will feed into decision support systems;

(2.4) Evaluation and systematization of financial instruments developed by the Project and other initiatives, to develop toolkit for the implementation of these instruments (including payment for ecosystems services). All activities will involve a wide network of environmental authorities, on-going *páramo* conservation initiatives, research centers, local and regional authorities, civil society groups and local communities.

This result will strengthen and maintain a collaboration structure for exchange of information, data, knowledge and experiences between different *páramo* conservation initiatives, institutions and individuals at international level (*Páramo* knowledge exchange network; or *Grupo de Trabajo Técnico*). This will be based on existing platforms (such as the *Mechanismo de Información en Páramo* and InfoAndina, by CONDESAN, the Conservation and Social Equity portal of IUCN and the *Grupo de Trabajo en Páramo* active in Colombia and Ecuador), and link with specific networks such as IMHEA, GLORIA, and others. Organizations that are local executors of *páramo*-related projects (ECOAN, TNC, Ecociencia, Ecopar, NCI, the Mountain Institute) will be key members of the Andean knowledge exchange network and can provide concrete support for specific issues. Within the network, research for monitoring will connect national research agencies (IDEAM, INAMHI, SENAMHI) through existing hydrological research networks (IAI, RALCEA), academic institutions, international research networks (IMHEA, GLORIA, GreatICE, PARAGUAS-RAPGIHR, RALCEA) and national (CINARA, University of Cuenca) and international research institutions (IHE, SEI).

**Result 3.** By 2018, local and national public policies of environmental and territorial authorities in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, for the conservation and sustainable use of *Páramo* have been and improved and strengthened. **Activities** will include:

(3.1) Facilitation for strategic guidance in public sectorial policy making based on the experiences created in local articulation structures (inputs from result 1),

(3.2) Consolidation and systematization of the local and international experiences and policy impact monitoring (inputs from result 2), and

(3.3) Provide inputs for the harmonization of sectorial policies (mining, agricultural, etc.), in order to define a common agenda with the different development sectors.

For result area 3, key members of the *páramo* knowledge exchange network will identify specific issues that need to be included in subnational (Peru), national and regional public policy. These will be translated into elements for policy instruments such as laws, decrees and norms. A platform of high-level authorities will be established (*Comité Consultivo de Autoridades*), chaired and convened by national environmental authorities. This committee will meet regularly during the project to receive recommendations for public policy and provide guidance to the project on specific demands from decision-making.

### **3.2. Risks and assumptions**

The proposed project is developed on the basis of agreements by the institutions responsible for *páramo* and organizations/institutions that collaborate on *páramo* management in the Andean region. The success of the project will rely in the first place on the continued willingness of local and environmental authorities to collaborate on *páramo* conservation and find effective solutions for the population that depends on and uses this ecosystem. Continued commitment of local communities to collaborate with the authorities is also assumed. It is expected that collaboration with civil society and *Páramo* and wetland conservation, remain as a governments' priority. It is also assumed that there is complete openness of data and knowledge exchange.

Risks include changes in authorities and priorities, impossibility to implement legal frameworks or lack of funding at the local level. Several *páramo* areas suffer from social conflicts (including armed conflicts) and eventual intensification of these risks can threaten the viability of the project. Finally, intensification of environmental threats, especially climate change and *El Niño* Southern Oscillation, can have a significant impact on the *páramo* ecosystems as a whole and negatively compensate all positive results of the project.

### **3.3. Cross-cutting Issues**

The project is clearly aligned with the Andean countries' priorities given that *páramo* are ecosystems with unique biodiversity, crucial for water resources and particularly vulnerable to climate change. Conservation of *páramo* ranks high in all national environmental strategies and plans. A study by IUCN showed that local communities in various ecosystems, including *páramo*, are affected by climate change and clearly perceive it as affecting their natural, social and economic habitat. Adaptation strategies will be based on traditional knowledge but complemented with innovative strategies. Most existing conservation practices, including agriculture diversification, management of protected areas, corridor establishment and strengthening capacities for non-agricultural based economies, proved positive for climate change adaptation. The local-action and community-based activities for Result 1, ensure application of this approach in the current Project.

Specific studies showed that gender is an important dimension in *páramo* management. Most families that depend on *páramo* ecosystems have low economic resources and both, women and men, young and elderly people have to participate in productive activities. However, roles in the division of labor are clearly defined and generally women and young people are in charge of cattle herding and collection of fuel wood or useful plants from *páramo*. In general, day-to-day management of the farms (and the use of *páramo*) is undertaken by women and elderly people. Therefore, their direct

interaction with the *páramo* is higher than that of men. Increasing migration to economic development poles (cities, mining companies) results in less presence of men in labor active age and in many *páramo* areas. Research has also shown that women and elderly people are more vulnerable to environmental change because they have less access to resources, finance, technical support and decision-making power. Internal governance systems continue to be dominated by men, even when they only spend the weekends at home. The current project will apply a gender focus throughout its activities but particularly in the local management support activities of Result 1.

Another vulnerable population, indigenous peoples, have used *páramo* since prehispanic times. In Colombia, indigenous communities are associated to *páramo* in the southern part of the country (Cauca, Huila and Nariño) but in Ecuador, almost all *páramo* areas have a strong presence of indigenous peoples' groups. The project aims to strengthen their governance structures, respect good practices in FPIC and Indigenous Knowledge conservation, and learn from the experiences of territorial managements with strong Indigenous Peoples' presence. Two pilot *páramo* areas (Chimborazo and El Angel-Chiles-Quitasol) of this project are inhabited by well-organized indigenous groups, who participate in project implementation and share their particular expertise with the other areas of the project through the *páramo* knowledge management network (Result 2).

### **3.4. Stakeholders**

The proposed initiative acting at various scales in three countries, has a great diversity of stakeholders who benefit from the project either through its outcomes (policy beneficiaries) or through active participation in its execution (funding beneficiaries). During the formulation of the project, many meetings and workshops were held, both in the National capitals and in the field, with representatives of all the below-mentioned stakeholders. They have been consulted about the project and their expectations and priorities have been included as much as possible. Partners in the project's implementation have signed notes of interest in participation.

*Policy beneficiaries:* The key stakeholders in *páramo* areas are the local and environmental authorities: protected areas authorities, local environmental corporations (CAR, in case of Colombia), local territorial authorities (departments –Colombia-, provinces –Ecuador-, regions –Peru-), municipalities, etc. They are responsible for the effective governance through planning, management and conservation of the *páramo* biome at the local level and the coordination of policies and strategies and development of financial mechanisms. In some cases, local organizations collaborate in formal or informal structures (joint committees, *mancomunidades*, etc.). Likewise, relevant ministries, e.g. Environment, Agriculture and Forestry, Mining, Energy and Economy should contribute to *páramo* management and conservation in accordance with their roles and responsibilities. All these agencies will be the main policy beneficiaries of the project.

The three governments are members of several sub-regional and regional intergovernmental bodies that include environmental issues: *Comunidad Andina*, UNASUR, Organization of American States and the Amazon Treaty Cooperation Organization. Regional collaboration on nature conservation and water resource management has been subjected to analysis of all these bodies and these discussions will benefit from the proposed project.

*Locally,* the main stakeholders are *farmer communities*. In Colombia, these are organized in territorial units (veredas, represented by *Juntas de Acción Comunal*) or, in case of Indigenous Peoples' in *Resguardos*, with strong territorial autonomy over collectively owned land. In the South of Colombia and in most *páramo* areas in Ecuador and Perú, *páramo* dwellers belong to indigenous communities, many of them conserving traditional territorial governance and land use principles. In Ecuador and

Peru, farmer communities are organized either as Indigenous peoples' Communities, or producer associations; with either commonly or individually owned land. Communities and associations have their own democratically elected government systems, and are organized in second-level organizations and, in the case of Indigenous Peoples' groups, pertain to regional and national movements. In Peru, the *rondas campesinas* form an important social organization initially created to ensure the security of their territories but now involve broader issues of common interest. Other stakeholders include *páramo* families who develop off-farm economic activities (construction, mining, tourism, etc.), and individual landowners or land-users that live in nearby villages and cities but directly use *páramo* for cultivation. Companies that support sustainable use and value change of sustainable products (tourism, alpaca wool, agroforestry and eco-agriculture products) will benefit from better *páramo* management based on sustainable use. Finally, *private sector* is an important stakeholder, which is related to *páramo* both as a potential threat as well as part of the solution of these threats. Agricultural production within *páramo* (potato, onion and cattle producers) and mining companies directly profit from the *páramo* territory for production but should be involved in management initiatives to improve their performance. Agroindustry below *páramo* (producers of sugar cane, coffee, rice, etc) as well as hydro-power energy companies profit from water regulation from *páramo* and will be important beneficiaries of overall *páramo* conservation and will be involved in the project, among others as contributors to potential Payment for Ecosystem Services mechanisms. Other private sector representatives (tourism entrepreneurs, fish ponds, wood pulp) are also present in various areas and have a direct interest in *páramo* integrity. All these groups will be included in local multi-stakeholder platforms and will be invited to provide active and direct support to the harmonization of plans and programmes for *páramo* management at local level.

Other policy beneficiaries include organizations that work on *páramo* management and research. These will benefit from the knowledge products and practical experience from the proposed project. Also, they will find a platform for exchange of information and capacity building in result area 2 (knowledge exchange network). IUCN and CONDESAN are two organizations that have promoted regional collaboration and developed initiatives for *páramo* conservation. International NGO's like WWF, CI and TNC that have developed conservation projects at national level will also participate in the exchange. National NGOs (including: *Fondo Patrimonio Natural*, *Tropenbos* and *Fundación Natura* in Colombia, *Ecopar*, *Ecociencia*, *Altrópico* and *Grupo Randi Randi* in Ecuador, the *Instituto de Montaña* and *Naturaleza y Cultura Internacional* in Peru), have developed practical experience with *páramo* management, especially at the local level and will be included in the activities in Result area 1 of the project. The academy, both in the Andean countries and European and North American universities have developed research in *Páramo*; in particular on their natural history, hydrology and, recently, on the impact of climate change on the ecosystem. Their research results can be applied to activities in result area 1, but also they will participate actively in the Knowledge Exchange Network of result area 2.

Funding beneficiaries: In Colombia, the Humboldt Institute (IAvH) is a key institution in *páramo* research and policy advice. Since 2002, it works together with several (governmental and non-governmental) organizations in other Andean countries on regional *páramo* conservation and has a *factual* monopoly on *páramo* conservation and sustainable management issues in the region. IAvH will lead the consortium created for the project's implementation and it is selected as the coordinator and main funding beneficiary. Organizations that lead local implementation (result area 1) implement the funds dedicated to the six local *páramo* areas. These include: CVC, CARDER, WWF-Colombia, Corpochivor, Corponariño, CDMB, the economic development agency of Bucaramanga, and IUCN.

At the local level, affiliated agencies (other regional corporations, municipalities, *resguardos*) will also be funding beneficiaries by implementation of specific activities in their territories. Associated organizations (local NGO, other agencies) might be beneficiaries at the local level for implementing certain technical activities (studies, consultancies). IUCN and CONDESAN will participate performing support functions to IAvH for the organization of the Knowledge Exchange Network. IDEAM and other research organizations such as CINARA (Universidad del Valle) will benefit from the project by organizing research and monitoring activities.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

##### **4.1. Financing agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

##### **4.2. Indicative operational implementation period**

The indicative operational implementation period for this action, during which the activities described in sections 3.2 and 4.3 will be carried out, is 54 months, starting from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement or, where none is concluded, from the adoption of this Action Document. This document is subject to modifications to be agreed by the responsible authorizing officer in the relevant agreements. The European Parliament and the relevant Committee shall be informed of the extension of the operational implementation period within one month of that extension being granted.

##### **4.3. Implementation components and modules**

Grant: direct award (direct management).

(a) *The Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, and expected results* are indicated in the sections 3.1 and 3.2.

(b) *Justification of a direct grant*

Under the responsibility of the authorizing officer by delegation, the grant may be awarded directly to the consortium led by the Alexander von Humboldt institute (IAvH).

The IAvH has a *factual monopoly* on *páramo* conservation and sustainable management issues in Colombia. The Institute was created by Law 99 of 1993, as a research institute part of the National Environmental System (SINA) of the Republic of Colombia. It is an institute under mixed (private-public) regime with administrative autonomy, directed by a board chaired by the Minister of Environment. Law 99 (1993) specified the role of the Institute, concentrating in developing scientific research and technology on biodiversity, promoting the establishment of research stations, and providing advice to other agencies of SINA. Resolution 769 (2002) defines the role of SINA agencies in *páramo* management. For the IAvH, there is a specific mandate to the delimitation of *páramo* through resolution 937 (2011).

The IAvH is well known and recognized in the Andean region among institutional networks on *páramo*. It is a founding member and, together with agencies in Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, the executing agencies of the “*Proyecto Páramo Andino*” (GEF, UNEP; 2004-2011). The IAvH is also a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and in that network, they participate in the execution of the regional *Páramo* Communities project (funded by Finland), together with several organizations in Ecuador and Peru.

The project has specific characteristics requiring a specific type of beneficiary for its technical competence, specialization and administrative faculties, which are perfectly met by IAvH.

The local environmental public corporations (CARs) involved in the project are environmental authorities of SINA. They have a *legal monopoly* situation according to Law 99 of 1993.

#### *Implementation arrangements for project result areas*

Result 1: In Colombia, the project will be implemented fully in line with the institutional arrangements defined by Law 99/93 (SINA). The CARs will act as co-beneficiaries and will lead implementation of Result 1 in each of the regions (CARDER in the *páramo* of Los Nevados, Corpochivor in the *páramo* of Rabanal, CVC in the *páramo* of Las Hermosas, CDMB (and ADEL) in the *páramo* of Santurban, and Corponariño in the *páramo* of El Angel-Chiles –Quitasol), eventually in collaboration with other environmental local authority in the same *páramo* complex (CRQ, Corpocaldas and Cortolima in los Nevados, CAR and Corpoboyacá in Rabanal, local NGO and grass-root organizations). The local economic development agency of Bucaramanga (mixed public-private local institution), will also be a co-beneficiary for the implementation of the project in the *páramo* of Santurbán. In the same way, WWF-Colombia will act as co-beneficiary too, in order to provide specific support in the *páramo* of Los Nevados. Finally, IUCN will also act as co-beneficiary. IUCN is an international network organization, with the IAvH and the governments of Peru and Ecuador as members. Together with its national member organizations, it will lead the local coordination of the pilot areas in Ecuador and Peru. It will also facilitate local action with local stakeholders, when necessary, in the Ecuadorian part of the trans-border site of El Angel-Chiles-Quitasol.

Result 2 (*Páramo* knowledge exchange network) will be led by IAvH, in close collaboration with IDEAM (for hydrological monitoring), and other institutes with regional knowledge exchange mechanisms on Andean ecosystems (IUCN and CONDESAN). A Technical Working Group, consisting of different organizations and specialists according to the themes under analysis, will constitute the core of the exchange network. The IAvH will ensure active participation of technical level staff from the environmental authorities in all discussions of the Technical Working Group.

One of the foreseen contents of this result, consisting of monitoring and thematic regional studies (hydrological, ecological, economic social), will be under responsibility of specialized institutions, with a regional prestige, like CINARA (Valle del Cauca University) and others.

Result 3: national/regional capacities for policy making will be supported by IAvH, in collaboration with co-beneficiaries of the project, who will act as a coordinator. A high level committee (*Comité Consultivo de Autoridades*), chaired by the three environmental ministries (for Peru, the regional government of Piura, given the regional importance of *páramo* here) will be formed. The ministries will ensure close coordination and convening of other sector representatives when necessary. The IAvH, together with IUCN, will provide logistic support to the meetings of this committee.

The project will be steered by a Coordination Committee composed by the Coordinator and the co-beneficiaries. Performance of the project at local level will be overseen by a local supervision committee in which the lead organization, associated agencies, representatives of local communities and the IAvH participate.

#### *(c) Eligibility conditions*

The direct grant beneficiary is mentioned in (b) above.

The circle of potential beneficiaries of funding is detailed in 3.5.



*(d) Essential selection and award criteria*

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant and co-applicants.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

*(e) Maximum rate of co-financing*

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 80% of the eligible costs of the action.

*(f) Indicative trimester to contact the potential direct grant beneficiary*

4<sup>th</sup> trimester of the 2014

#### **4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants**

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act shall apply.

#### **4.5. Indicative Budget and calendar**

Module	Amount in EUR		Third party contribution
Direct grant with IAvH (direct management)	4 900 000		1 250 000
	<b>EU</b>	<b>Co-financing</b>	<b>Total</b>
Expected Result 1	3 200 000	900 000	4 100 000
Expected Result 2	1 200 000	250 000	1 450 000
Expected Result 3	150 000		150 000
Communication and visibility	150 000		150 000
Indirect Cost*	200 000	100 000	300 000
<i>Subtotal direct grant</i>	<i>4 900 000</i>	<i>1 250 000</i>	<i>6 150 000</i>
Evaluation and audit	100 000		100 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 000 000.</b>	<b>1 250 000</b>	<b>6 250 000</b>

*\* To be negotiated during contract preparation under responsibility of AO in sub-delegation.*

#### **4.6. Performance monitoring**

The project's implementation, including progress of activities per component, compliance with the foreseen timeframe, the achievement of results and fulfillment of objectives, will be monitored regularly. Each implementing organization will be responsible for undertaking close monitoring of the project's implementation in order to detect any potential problems at an early stage and to be able to report - in detail - on programme progresses.

It is the responsibility of the IAvH and co-beneficiaries to maintain daily monitoring of the technical and financial implementation of the programme. A permanent M&E System will be implemented, which will also generate data for the periodic progress reports. A full report at the end of each programming period shall be presented by the IAvH to EU.

Moreover, the contractors implementing the proposed activities will have to include a performance monitoring mechanism in their methodology, enabling the measurement of the evolution and implementation of activities.

The integrated Logical framework of the project, include key qualitative and quantitative indicators and their target objectives. They will be updated during the first three months of the project and through the project implementation. Consequently, the choice of indicators and the design of M&E procedures should all be a matter of mutual understanding and agreement between all the implementing entities and the Commission. Thus, recurrent monitoring of indicators devised by these entities is a prerequisite for permanent learning about projects' objectives and their expected results.

#### **4.7. Evaluation and audit**

Based on perceived needs, the Commission will decide to carry out audits and evaluations. Two evaluation missions are proposed: one at mid-term and one at the end of the programme. The final evaluation will address relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project. These evaluations will be in compliance with the existing procedures.

The beneficiaries, the implementing organizations and the Commission will analyze the conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation and jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustment to be made. The beneficiaries and the implementing organizations will collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts to provide them with all necessary information and documentation.

The Commission shall decide on the relevance to proceed with an audit of the project's expenditures by an external auditor.

#### **4.8. Communication and visibility**

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. This action shall contain communication and visibility measures, which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated before the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 4.5 above. The measures shall be implemented either (a) by the Commission, and/or (b) by the contractors, beneficiaries and entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in procurement. The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

The success of the project and its tangible outcomes will be largely based on this dissemination and visibility strategy. Result area 1 (local action) articulates local and regional stakeholders around páramo conservation, which is principally a communication effort. Result area 2 consists of communicating these different pilot *páramo* experiences at national and international levels. Seminars, workshops, learning routes and public events will be organized around specific themes, as well as the participation on the interactive platform for structured debate and exchange of information (i.e the Capacity4dev.ue platform). Finally, supporting public policy on *páramo* in the three Andean countries (Result area 3) requires active communication between the environmental authorities and field experience and between environment and other sectors. Public policy should be supported by social basis, for which country-wide visibility of *páramo* conservation issues is of key importance.