

COMMUNICATION MANUAL

Amazonian Connection of Communicators



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Introduction

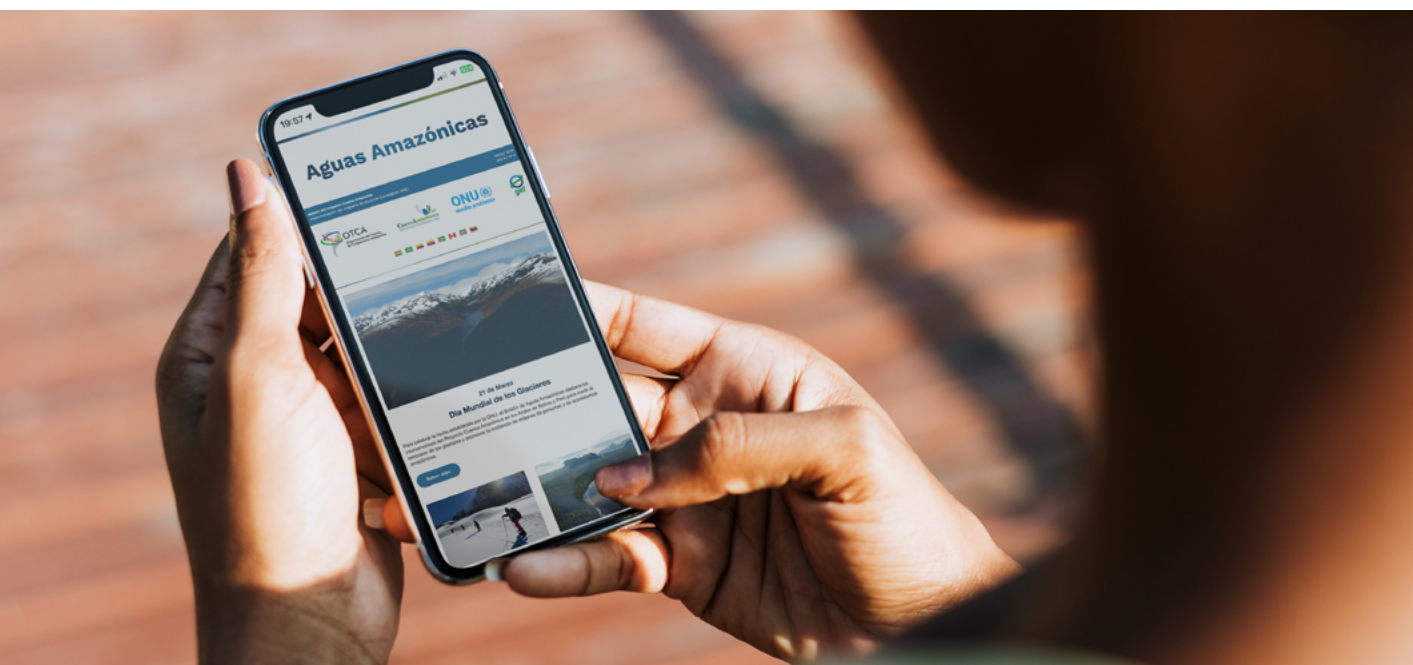
This Communication Manual is intended for professionals hired by the Amazon Basin Project to carry out fieldwork in direct contact with the beneficiaries of events, activities, and intervention projects. It includes National Assistants and communication professionals from partner institutions who, in addition to their specific technical functions, play a key role in communicating the Project and promoting the visibility of its actions.

These professionals have the strategic task of recording and producing photographic, audiovisual, and textual material that enriches the quality and quantity of the news and content published on our communication channels. Their work strengthens the connection with local communities, governments, and partner institutions, ensuring that the efforts of the Amazon Basin Project are understood, valued, and supported.

With the aim of supporting the mission of professionals, this manual provides practical guidelines for conducting interviews, recording high-quality videos, taking appropriate photographs, and publicizing the Project's activities and achievements in institutional media and the press, in line with the objectives of the Amazon Basin Project and its communication guidelines and methods.



Strategic Communication of the Amazon Basin Project



OUR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

To strengthen its capacity to promote shared and sustainable management of the Amazon Basin, the Amazon Basin Project disseminates information to various audiences—public institutions, civil society, and society at large, particularly Amazonian communities—promoting its initiatives through the following channels:

The Amazon Basin Project Focal Points in the countries (ministries and water agencies) play a key role in disseminating our actions and activities. Through their communication channels, messages reach a wider audience.

PROJECT WEBSITE

The official website of the Amazon Basin Project is a central information platform. It was designed to be sufficiently informative and accessible, meeting the needs of various audiences and effectively communicating the Project's activities and achievements.

<https://aguasamazonicas.otca.org/>

ACTO SOCIAL MEDIA

The Project uses the social media channels of its implementing institution, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), to publicize its activities and achievements. These channels allow for greater interaction with the public and broaden the reach of the messages.

AMAZON WATERS NEWSLETTER

The Amazon Basin Project's quarterly newsletter updates the public on its main activities. Requests to receive the newsletter by mail should be sent to proyectocuenca.amazonica@gmail.com

GEF IW PORTFOLIO BULLETIN

Through this newsletter, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which funds the Amazon Basin Project, provides updated information on the progress and achievements of its peers around the world. We share news, stories, and experience notes with the aim of providing useful technical information or best practices to share.



We seek to strengthen our relationships with the press to achieve spontaneous media coverage of the transboundary issues that Amazonian countries are addressing through the Project, how they are doing so, and the achievements made in the shared and sustainable management of the Amazon Basin. This communication effort helps to broaden our audience, inform public opinion, and engage different segments of society.



proyecto

Cuenca Amazónica

ESPAÑOL

PORTUGUÊS

ENGLISH

SOBRE

INTERVENCIONES

MONITOREO

RADA

TOOLBOX GIRH

NOVEDADES

PUBLICACIONES

PROGRAMA DE ACCIONES ESTRATÉGICAS

Q

Implementación del Programa de Acciones Estratégicas en la Cuenca del río Amazonas considerando la Variabilidad y el Cambio Climático



ÚLTIMAS NOTICIAS

TICIA Y TABATINGA

REGIONAL COURSE MARKS THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD CREATING A SATELLITE MONITORING NETWORK FOR AMAZONIAN RIVERS

CURSO REGIONAL MARCA OS PRIMEIROS PASSOS PARA A CRIAÇÃO D



6,1 millones de km²

que representan más de la mitad de los bosques tropicales del mundo y el 44% de la superficie de Sudamérica



20% del agua dulce superficial del planeta

gracias al río Amazonas y sus más de 1.000 afluentes, algunos de los cuales, como el Madera, el Negro y el Japurá, figuran entre los 10 mayores ríos del mundo

Cuenca Amazónica

Más de 50 millones de personas

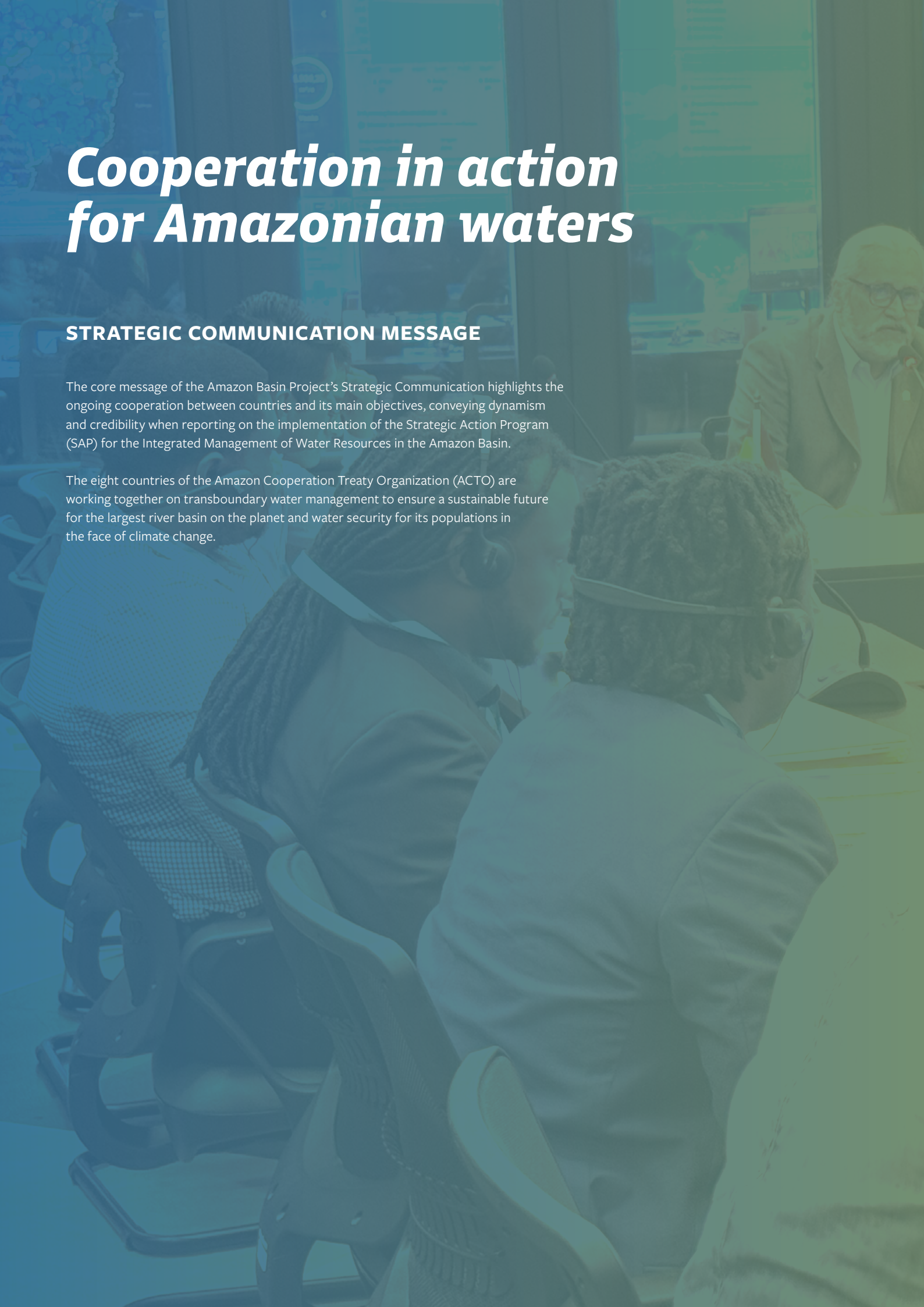
forman una población heterogénea con características socioculturales diversas, dividida entre la mayoría que vive en centros urbanos y los pueblos y comunidades tradicionales del interior de la selva



+ 420 pueblos indígenas

ocupan el 28% del territorio, de los cuales el 17,7% están en zonas protegidas para la conservación del medio ambiente





Cooperation in action for Amazonian waters

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MESSAGE

The core message of the Amazon Basin Project's Strategic Communication highlights the ongoing cooperation between countries and its main objectives, conveying dynamism and credibility when reporting on the implementation of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) for the Integrated Management of Water Resources in the Amazon Basin.

The eight countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) are working together on transboundary water management to ensure a sustainable future for the largest river basin on the planet and water security for its populations in the face of climate change.

ASSOCIATED CONCEPTS AND THEMES

The Amazon Basin Project works with interconnected concepts and issues that must be considered when producing communication materials. These are:

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

Promotes sustainability by integrating rational water use with ecosystem preservation.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Addresses the challenges of climate change by strengthening the resilience of Amazonian communities and aquatic ecosystems.

Source-to-Sea Approach

Considering the interdependence of the aquatic systems that make up the Amazon Basin, from the source of the Amazon River in the Andes to its mouth on the Atlantic Ocean, the Project works to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events and sea level rise, prevent and reduce water pollution and overexploitation, and promote water security and efficient water use in the region.

Participatory governance

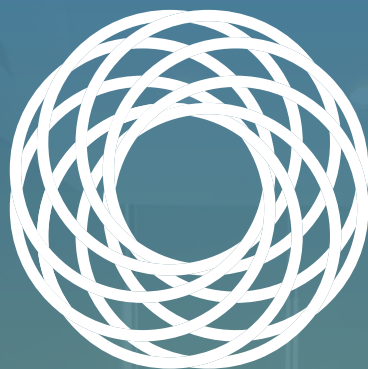
Ensures that decisions are inclusive and represent a wide range of actors, from local communities to national governments..

Environmental monitoring

Provides the information necessary for planning, decision-making, and operational management of water at the local, national, and transboundary levels.

Institutional strengthening

The Amazon Basin Project works to promote the development of policies and regulations in a context of institutional strengthening and capacity building in countries for the Integrated Water Resources Management of the Amazon Basin.



RADA

*Amazonian Network
of Water Authorities*

Created by the presidents of the countries at the Amazon Summit (Brazil, 2023), RADA coordinates efforts and shares knowledge to address common challenges in the preservation and sustainable use of Amazonian waters.

PROMOTION OF RADA

In addition to promoting the Amazon Basin Project, our institutional communication is also committed to continuously disseminating the actions of the ACTO Amazon Water Authorities Network (RADA), which works to strengthen regional cooperation in the integrated water resources management of the Amazon Basin.

Strategic Actions of the Amazon Communicators Network

The communication initiatives of the Amazon Basin Project partners that make up the Amazonian Network of Communicators are as follows:

- Prepare press releases and invite the media to Project and RADA events and activities, with the support of the National Focal Point's communications office.
- Produce photos and interviews with participants in Project and RADA events and activities for news items to be published on the Project's communication channels.
- Record video interviews for the Amazon Voices series.
- Contribute to expanding the Project's mailing list of individuals and institutions.

In order to support the valuable work of the Amazonian Network of Communicators, the following pages offer practical guidelines for conducting interviews, recording high-quality videos, taking appropriate photographs, and disseminating the activities and achievements of the Project and RADA in institutional media and the press.



The interview

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is a respectful conversation with clear objectives, in which the interviewee is the protagonist. Our main objective is to gather useful information about the actions and activities of the Amazon Basin Project in order to communicate its partial and final results to the public, informing them of the social, environmental, and economic benefits it provides.

QUESTIONS TO START THINKING ABOUT:

Who to interview?

What kind of testimony is needed to communicate the message?

What lessons and experiences could be useful for the Project?

CREATING THE SCRIPT

How to prepare interview questions?

Define clear objectives:

- What do you need to know?
- What is the interviewee's relationship to the Project?

Do some research beforehand:

- Relevant information about the interviewee and their background.
- Information about the Project's action or activity and the interviewee's relationship to it.

Organize 4 or 5 objective and relevant questions:

- Try to obtain specific information in the interview that conveys the interviewee's real experience.
- Prefer open-ended questions, which generate long answers and provide more information. Closed questions seek simple yes or no answers.

PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS

Contact the people to be interviewed in advance. It is a good idea to agree on the place and date of the interview.

Prepare the equipment:

- Check that the recorder or cell phone is charged.
- Bring a basic script with questions.

For interviews that take place in the Project's interventions and require travel, please **make sure of the following before traveling:**

- Research the geographical and water context of the location. For example: How many rivers or lakes are there? What is the water quality like?
- The current situation of the intervention.



The best interviews are those that flow naturally and feel like a conversation. Even with a prepared script, you can create a relaxed dynamic. Improvisation is welcome whenever an interesting topic arises during the interview.

A good script does not guarantee that the interview will achieve its objectives. Sometimes the interviewee simply does not work. In that case, it is important to find someone else. The job is only finished when you have enough valid material.

KEY POINTS FOR CONTACTING INTERVIEWEES

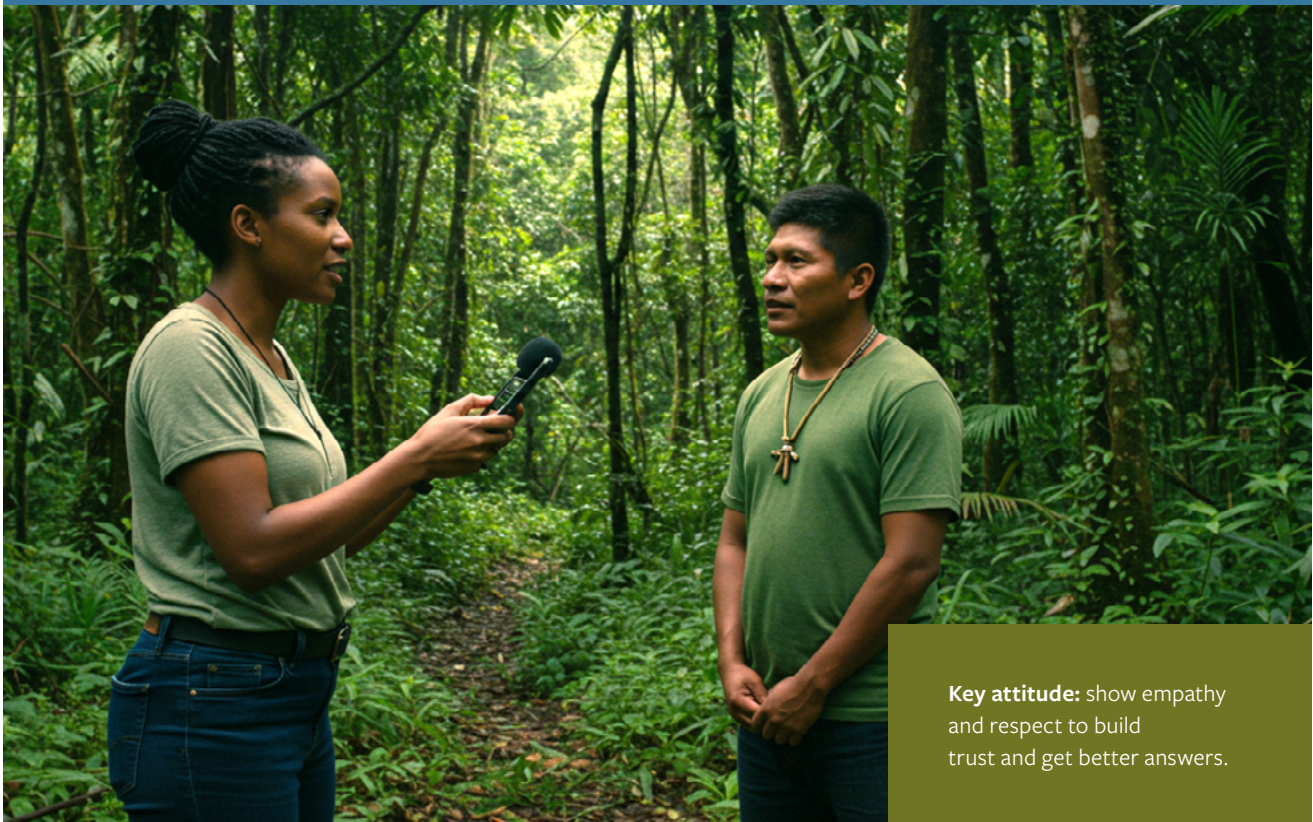
For a remote approach:

- Send an introductory message informing them about the Project and the purpose of the interview.
- Gather basic information about the interviewee: full name, address, profession, etc.
- If possible, conduct a preliminary interview by telephone to gather information that will help you develop a script with more coherent questions.
- Agree on a place and date for the interview.

The first moment you meet the interviewee is crucial:

- Greet them warmly and introduce yourself.
- Explain the purpose of the interview, if this was not done during the initial contact.
- Establish a respectful connection.
- Ask simple questions at the beginning to make the interviewee feel comfortable.
- Exchange contact information: Write down the interviewee's name, phone number, address, email address, and occupation.

When the interview is not being videotaped, because it is only being conducted for a written news story, it is important to record the audio so that no details are lost. **Always ask for permission before starting to record.**



Key attitude: show empathy and respect to build trust and get better answers.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Make sure the equipment is recording.
- Listen carefully and show interest.
- Ask questions as important issues arise.

PROCESSING THE INTERVIEW

What to do next?

- Transcribe the audio using tools such as Transkriptor to make the work easier. <https://transkriptor.com>
- Analyze the information and write a report highlighting the key points to make it quicker the editing of the material by the professional in charge.

Each interview is an opportunity to strengthen the Amazon Basin Project mailing list, including local authorities, beneficiaries, and allies from universities, research institutes, and NGOs. Everyone on the Project mailing list receives our quarterly newsletter.

Therefore, the main details of the interviewees—name, phone number, address, email, and profession—must be collected and sent to the email address assigned to the Project database: proyectocuenca.amazonica@gmail.com.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

- Beneficiaries of the Project's interventions: women, older adults, indigenous people, riverine communities, teachers, and nurses.
- Technicians responsible for the interventions.
- Students and teachers of training workshops.
- Authorities involved in Project actions and/or activities.

ORGANIZATION OF QUESTIONS

Questions can be ordered from the general context of the community to the personal, to give the interviewee time to feel more comfortable.

Prefer opening questions, which generate long answers and provide more information.

GENDER APPROACH

Consider gender equality in all interactions. For more details, see: [Gender approach of the Amazon Basin Project](#).

For further details, see: [Gender approach of the Amazon Basin Project](#).



PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES AND SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

There are some common profiles of interviewees related to the Project, for which we have listed some key questions focused on the specificities of each group, considering the climate change that are impacting their lives:

RURAL WOMEN

- Where do you get water for your household?
- How long does it take to collect it and how does this task affect your health?
- What is the quality of the water you use and how do you purify it?

RURAL AND INDIGENOUS OLDER ADULTS

- How many people live in the community and how do they obtain water?
- How has climate change changed access to water in your community?
- What impacts have recent droughts or floods had?
- How are food security and access to water affected in your community?
- What traditional uses of water did you inherit from your grandparents?

TEACHERS AND NURSES

- **Teachers:**
What do you teach children about water?
- **Nurses:**
What are the water-related health problems that most affect the community?

INTERVIEWS IN COMMUNITIES

The Amazon Basin Project considers it vital to give a voice to the beneficiaries of the interventions it promotes in the countries, listening to them at all stages of implementation. **Some questions are key** during the interview: :

BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERVENTION

- What are your expectations and those of the community?
- How can this activity improve the quality of life in the community?
- How do you expect the community to participate?
- What difficulties do you anticipate?

DURING THE INTERVENTION PROCESS

- How is the community participating in the intervention?
- What progress and challenges have you encountered so far?
- What lessons have you learned?
- What are your current expectations?

CLOSURE OF THE INTERVENTION

- What is the overall assessment of the activity?
- What lessons have been learned?
- How has the community benefited, especially women?
- How will the actions implemented be followed up?

Questions focused on the specific characteristics of each group should not exclude questions about the particularities of the interviewee, which can generate personal stories that illustrate the topic of the interview. It is also necessary to ask specific questions related to the intervention in focus.





RECORD VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH A CELL PHONE

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Duration:** ideally between 3 and 5 minutes, using clear and direct language.
- **Preparation:** use the interview script included in this manual.
- **Delivery:** send the raw material to the professional responsible for editing.

PREPARATIONS

Before you begin, check your cell phone:

- Make sure the battery is charged.
- Make sure you have enough storage space.
- Clean the camera lens. Dirt on the lens is the most common reason for blurry images.

These precautions are essential so you don't miss any important moments of the activity you are filming.

LIGHTING

- **Natural light:** take advantage of daylight, as it is the best option.
- In dark indoor environments, move closer to a natural light source.
- In any situation, avoid backlighting, that is, background light that makes the subject appear completely dark and poorly exposed. Be careful with windows.
- In open environments, it is best to film early in the morning, until around 9 a.m., or between 4 and 5 p.m., when the light is softer.

FRAMING

- Adapt the shot to the context of the interview: for example, a landscape with a river or any other setting related to the topic of water. It could also be a place related to the interviewee's life, such as their home or workplace.
- If the background is an attractive landscape, frame the interviewee in a medium shot (at waist height) or medium close-up (at chest height).
- If the interview is at the interviewee's home, you can place them in a chair facing the dining room table and use a short medium shot. Use the table to stabilize the phone.

STABILITY

- Preferably use a tripod.
- If you have to hold the camera steady with your hands, it is advisable to pause the recording once (twice at most) to rest. But be careful: never interrupt the interviewee..

IMPROVE THE AUDIO

- Preferably use an external microphone. If this is not possible, use a second cell phone to capture only the audio of the interview.
- Avoid places with excessive noise.



ILLUSTRATIVE IMAGES

Include supporting images related to the topic of the interview (events, field visits, equipment installation, etc.). These can be useful during editing to fill in gaps in the interviewee's narrative.

Image options:

- **Open static shot:** used to show the general environment.
- **Close-up shot:** used to highlight details, such as equipment or participants' faces.
- **Panoramic:** to describe a space and allow the viewing audience to orient themselves. This camera movement rotates on its own axis and can be:
 - **Horizontal:** from left to right (preferred for Project activities).
 - **Vertical:** from top to bottom or vice versa, if you need to show a tall building, a tower, or a tank, for example.
- Avoid using zoom.

All persons filmed, especially those interviewed, must sign an image use agreement.

This type of document is a kind of contract that aims to protect the party using someone's image, as well as the person themselves, as it prevents the violation of image rights and defines penalties in this case. The template is available for download in this section of the website. Once signed, it must be scanned and sent to

proyectocuenca.amazonica@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE: No authorization is required to use images of people in a crowd. However, people in small groups must not only allow themselves to be filmed, but also sign the image use agreement.



VIDEO INTERVIEWS FOR *THE AMAZON VOICES* SERIES

Amazon Voices is a web series of interviews that highlights the perspectives and local knowledge of indigenous, traditional, and riverine communities in the Amazon. Through their stories, the challenges posed by climate change, water pollution, deforestation, and other environmental problems are explored.

The series also seeks to understand how communities perceive the interventions of the Amazon Basin Project, designed to mitigate environmental problems resulting from climate change. Through testimonials, the communities' expectations about the impacts of these actions on their quality of life and the protection of their natural environment are explored.

ABOUT THE INTERVIEW FORMAT

- At the beginning of the interview, the interviewee should introduce themselves and their community.
- Adjust the camera angle to suit the location of the interview. If the background is a beautiful landscape, the interviewee can be framed in a medium shot, that is, cut off at the waist, or a medium close-up, at chest height.
- Only the interviewee should be in the frame.
- The edited interview should not last more than 3 minutes. To achieve this, the raw material should not exceed 5 minutes.



All interviewees must sign an image use agreement. The Amazon Basin Project will not use anyone's image without express written permission.

Access the template [here](#).

Photographing with your Cell Phone

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE GOOD PHOTOS

Photographs tell stories and convey emotions. For the Amazon Basin Project, it is essential to capture images that reflect the impact of its activities. Good photos are an effective way to connect with communities and partners. They can make the difference between a forgotten story and one that inspires.

BEST PRACTICES

Capture with purpose

Think about the context: what story are you trying to tell? How will these photos support the project's objectives?

Capture key moments

Activities in the field.
Interactions between communities.
Visible impacts of the project.

Respect privacy

Ask permission before photographing people.

Adapt your approach

Consider the local culture and context.

HOW TO TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

PREPARATIONS

Before you start, check your cell phone:

- Make sure the battery is charged.
- Make sure you have enough storage space.
- Clean the camera lens. Dirt on the lens is the most common reason for blurry photos.

These precautions are essential so you don't miss any important moments of the activity you are photographing.

LIGHTING

- In low-light indoor environments, move closer to a natural light source, such as a window, whenever possible. Cell phone flashes don't usually work as well as camera flashes.
- In outdoor settings, it is best to shoot early in the morning,

until around 9 a.m., or between 4 and 6 p.m., when the light is softer.

- In any situation, avoid backlighting, that is, background light that makes the subject appear completely dark and poorly exposed.

FOCUS

- Identify the main subject of the photo.
- Manual focus can be challenging for those who are not familiar with it. Therefore, the advice is to use autofocus to ensure accurate photos.
- Keep your cell phone steady:
 - If you don't have a tripod, rest the device on a flat surface, such as a table, or hold it steady.



In all Amazon Basin Project activities, it is important to take the classic group photo.

Variety in photographs:

Photographing activities during Project interventions and practical classes in training workshops are good opportunities to experiment.

- Try different angles: Photograph from above, at eye level, or from the ground.
- Change the composition: Frame the subject or subjects in different ways. Use elements of the environment to provide context.

Selection and editing:

After the session:

- Review the photos: Delete any that are blurry or poorly lit.
- Tag and organize the photos for easy identification.

Send unedited photos to the Project. Those responsible for communication will take care of editing.

It is always a good idea to take a good number of photos, but not too many, so that you have options.

Dissemination in the Press and Local Media

IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL MEDIA

Disseminating the Project in the cities and communities where the interventions are carried out through the local press is essential to give visibility to the Project and encourage the participation of the local population. Through the local media, the Project can reach a wider audience and explain in a clear and accessible way:

- The problems it aims to mitigate.
- How the interventions will have a positive impact on the cities and/or communities.
- The importance of the participation of public authorities and local communities to ensure participatory governance within the framework of the intervention.
- The collaboration with national institutions and the general context of the Amazon Basin Project, the SAP, and the ACTO.

RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND LOCAL MEDIA

The main benefits of relations with the press are to raise awareness of the Amazon Basin Project among a wider audience, transform information about it into news stories with greater reach, and convey a higher level of confidence to communities.

Achieving positive media coverage increases the chances of mobilizing the community in favor of the Project and the success of its objectives.

Interaction with the media can take the form of press releases, interviews, and press conferences. These actions can be supported by the Communication Offices of the Focal Points and the Amazon Basin Project's press contact list.





Local press often has the trust of the community, which increases the credibility and reach of the information shared.

WHAT IS A PRESS RELEASE AND HOW DO YOU WRITE ONE?

A press release is a key tool for disseminating information quickly and effectively to the media. It serves to announce relevant news about the Project, such as events, achievements, progress, or new developments, with the aim of capturing the attention of journalists and the public.

To attract the interest of the media, it is important to write press releases with clear, concise, and complete information, highlighting the key aspects of the interventions and taking into account the following basic structure:

- **Attractive headline:** Short, clear, and summarizing the main news item.
- **Subtitle** (optional): Complements the headline with more details.
- **Opening paragraph:** Answer the key questions: what, who, when, where, and why? It should include a description of the intervention.
- **Development:** Include additional details, relevant data such as the number of beneficiaries of the intervention, the expected impact, quotes from experts or project spokespersons, and ways in which the community can get involved.
- **Contact information:** Details of the person responsible for clarifications or interviews (name, email, phone number).
- **Final notes** (optional): Additional information, such as links or background information.

Press releases should be sent through the Project's press contact lists.

INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS AND AUTHORITIES

Interviews are key to providing detailed, expert-backed information, increasing the credibility and understanding of the Project. Therefore, it is very important to facilitate contact between journalists and interviewees by providing contact information and organizing interviews.

The right people to talk about the Project, such as technical experts or responsible authorities, should be identified in advance.

We recommend including a paragraph about the Project at the end of each publication. The template we use is as follows:

Since 2021, the Amazon Basin Project has been supporting the eight member countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) in the implementation of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) for Integrated Water Resources Management in the Amazon Basin in a continuum from source to sea. Based on the SAP's strategic response lines, the Project aims to institutionally strengthen water governance in the eight Amazonian countries and at the regional level, increase the resilience of communities and protect aquatic ecosystems to address climate change, as well as monitor water resources and ecosystems through a Regional Environmental Monitoring System.

Implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Project is executed by ACTO.

For more information on the Amazon Basin Project - Implementation of the SAP, visit our website <https://aguasamazonicas.otca.org/>

TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PRESS RELEASE

- Be brief and to the point. The text should not exceed one page.
- Use clear language and avoid technical terms.
- Highlight the positive impact or relevance of the news.
- Include verifiable data, if possible.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A PRESS CONFERENCE

Press conferences are key events for communicating relevant information directly and effectively to the media. When well planned, they strengthen relationships with the media and improve perceptions of the Project.

To ensure they are useful and do not lose their impact, it is essential to organize press conferences only when necessary and with a clear purpose. A well-planned press conference strengthens the relationship with the media and improves the perception of the Project.

WHEN TO ORGANIZE A PRESS CONFERENCE?

- Important announcements: results, launches, or significant events.
- Strategic alliances or notable achievements.
- Crises or sensitive issues: to provide accurate information and avoid speculation..

OBJECTIVES

- To disseminate information widely and accurately.
- Generate positive media coverage.
- Answer questions directly.

KEY STEPS

- Define the key message and prepare a press release.
- Choose an accessible location, date, and time.
- Prepare and send invitations in advance.
- Prepare presentations and materials.
- Select experienced speakers.
- Coordinate logistics: registration, technical equipment, materials.
- Follow up: share a summary and monitor coverage.

TIPS

- Keep the event short (30-45 minutes).
- Include time for questions and answers.
- Provide concrete and visual data.
- Express gratitude and encourage a professional attitude.



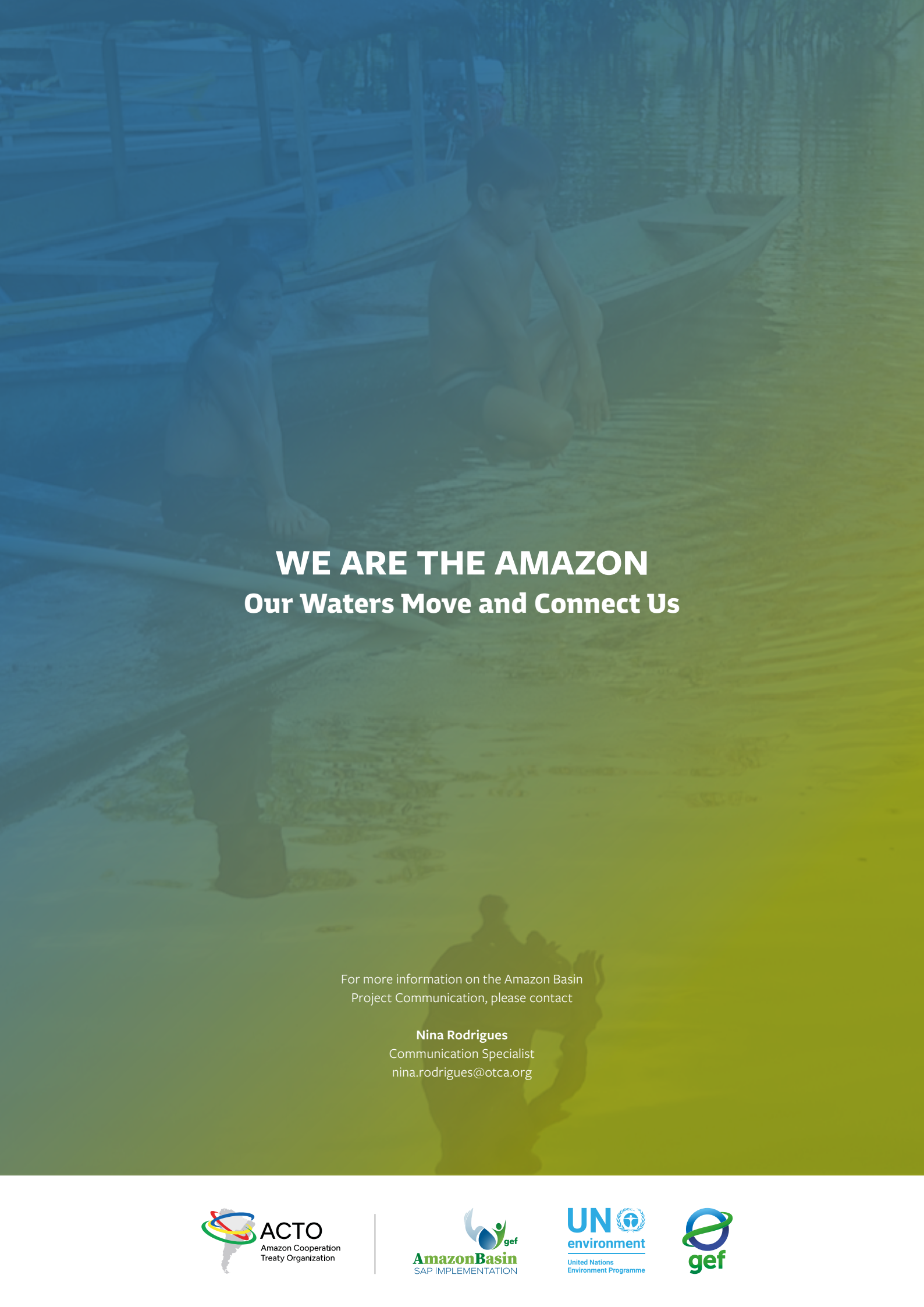
Expanding the Communicators Network

To strengthen communication about the Amazon Basin Project, it is essential to encourage the active participation of local communities in the intervention areas.

We invite our National Assistants and other contracted staff to take advantage of their work in the field to encourage community members to become active contributors to this network. By participating, they can share photos and videos documenting the progress of Project activities, capturing important moments that reflect the positive impacts on their environment.

This initiative not only increases the visibility of the actions carried out, but also empowers communities by involving them in the communication and promotion of the Project's results. It also raises awareness of the importance of preserving and sustainably managing water resources in the Amazon Basin.

The contributions of the communities will be a valuable addition to enrich the Project's communication, promoting a more inclusive and diverse narrative that reflects local voices and perspectives.



WE ARE THE AMAZON

Our Waters Move and Connect Us

For more information on the Amazon Basin
Project Communication, please contact

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