

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ASOCIACIÓN
AMBIENTE Y SOCIEDAD

The following is a presentation of our main actions, achievements, and advancements in 2019 for each of our thematic areas:

1. Territory and Environmental Democracy
2. Finance and Social-Environmental Rights
3. Climate Justice
4. Strategic Communications for Sustainable Development

Territory and Environmental Democracy

Our work in this area consists of capacity building with local communities on participation and advocacy related to social-environmental decision-making processes that impact their territories.

Colombian Government Signs the Escazú Agreement

2019 ended on a positive note: on 11 December, Colombia signed the Escazú Representative of Colombia to the United Nations. Ambiente y Sociedad applauds this step, since, as representatives of the public, we have been contributing with the aim of reaching this goal since the negotiations began.

The Escazú Agreement is a tool for strengthening citizen participation. For that reason, for AAS, its signature, from the moment it occurred, constitutes a recognition of the demands presented by civil society and those who protested during the national strike, which began on 21 November, 2019, as well as participants in the environmental round table.

Currently, we are working on an advocacy strategy for its quick ratification. These are joint efforts together with the Alianza por el Acuerdo Escazú (Escazú Agreement Alliance), which includes organizations such as WWF, AIDA, Universidad del Rosario, Universidad de los Andes, and Universidad de Medellín.

"This instrument's ratification would strengthen our national regulatory framework on citizen participation and environmental protections, establishing the state's obligation to provide direct protection to those who defend rights in the context of the three fundamental pillars of a democracy: citizen participation, access to information, and access to justice, all of which are broadly injured in the direct attacks against leaders throughout the country."

Vanessa Torres, Deputy Director of Ambiente y Sociedad

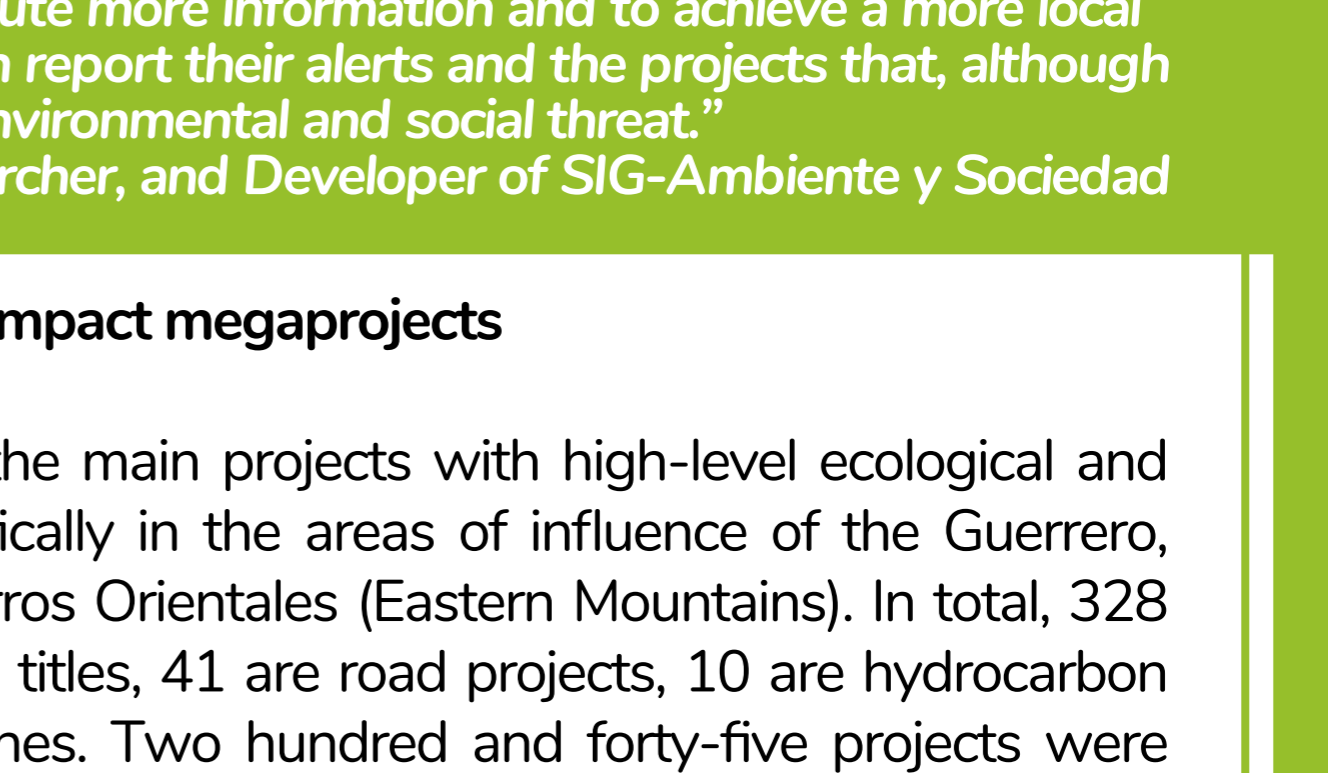
Geoportals for Social-environmental Analysis Launched

In 2019, we presented two new geoportals that were designed for transparency and to facilitate access to social-environmental information for local or regional communities, decision makers, NGOs, the public and private sector and, in general, to those individuals interested in this information. Geoportals are digital tools that make it possible to look for and access geographic and specific information on projects in the following strategic areas:

1. Early alert system for megaprojects in Colombia (www.ecosistemasenalerta.info).

This platform allows for an early and timely identification of possible threats generated by the implementation of infrastructure and mining-energy megaprojects in the country's high-priority conservation areas, cataloged as such due to their relevance in relation to biodiversity. This was done through a support agreement with the Global Forest Watch platform.

The geoportal made it possible to identify 519 alerts for hydrocarbon projects, 70 for hydroelectric, 201 for 4G roads, and 580 for mining projects. The departments with the highest number of alerts are Antioquia, with 497, and Santander, with 327.



"We hope in the future to be able to contribute more information and to achieve a more local and participatory coverage so that people can report their alerts and the projects that, although not visible, represent an environmental and social threat."

Hernando Ovalle, General Coordinator, Researcher, and Developer of SIG-Ambiente y Sociedad

2. Páramos (high altitude wetlands) and high impact megaprojects (www.cuidemoslosparamos.info).

This geoportal facilitates the identification of the main projects with high-level ecological and social impact in the Bogotá Savannah, specifically in the areas of influence of the Guerrero, Chingaza, and Sumapaz páramos and the Cerros Orientales (Eastern Mountains). In total, 328 projects were found. Of these, 272 are mining titles, 41 are road projects, 10 are hydrocarbon projects, 2 are reservoirs, and 3 are power lines. Two hundred and forty-five projects were characterized and mapped. Currently, we have updated the information on 20 of the most representative megaprojects in this area.

"This tool is helpful to strengthen and back the actions that different social actors seek to carry out in defense of their territories. The geoportal was designed with simple language so that any person, community, or organization can use it without needing to have prior knowledge of other programs, and seeks to reduce the gap between local communities and geographic information technologies."

Andrea Prieto, Geographer and Research Co-Coordinator at Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad

Advocacy on the Community Management of Páramo Ecosystems

In 2019, we continued our work on páramos, given their importance for the provision of water, maintenance of the main ecological structure, and high altitude biodiversity, and because these areas are inhabited by ancestral peasant communities who have protected these ecosystems, but lack land titles. Many of them were prioritized in the Agreement to end the conflict, signed in 2016 between the Colombian state and the former insurgency organization, FARC-EP.

We focused on analyzing the implementation of law 1930 of 2018 (Páramos Law). To do this, we created community tools and proposals to implement the legislation, so that we could design for the country integral management of the páramo ecosystems while facilitating community empowerment, the creation of participatory instruments for the process of delineating the boundaries, and the protection of peasant lands.

"The environmental authorities have said that they are not going to evict the peasants, but it isn't so simple because the Páramos Law allows for the purchase and expropriation of land, even if the farmers do not agree. If the possibility exists, it is because it can be used, even if the environmental authorities try to put people at ease."

Edwin Novoa, Researcher at Ambiente y Sociedad

2019 Actions, Advancements, and Results

1. Joint efforts with the Regional Coordinator for the Defense of Peasant Farmers and Territorial Rights in the Cruz Verde-Sumapaz Páramos. This organization groups the traditional inhabitants of the southern section of the páramo. Six municipalities and their respective villages are included.

2. Analysis of the Páramo Law's regulatory framework, using pedagogical tools such as handbooks, infographics, and a document, seeking to provide input on the ongoing debate about finding a balance between ecosystem sustainability, the peasant population's traditional uses of the páramo, and community governance.

Web addresses where some pedagogical tools can be found:

• Handbook "Ley de páramos, oportunidades y retos para su aplicación" (Páramos Law, Opportunities and Challenge for its Applications) <https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/ley-de-paramos-oportunidades-y-retos-para-su-aplicacion/>

• Infographic: ¿Es verdad que le van a quitar la tierra a los campesinos de los páramos? (Are they Really Going to take away land from Peasants in the Páramos?) <https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/es-verdad-que-le-van-a-quitar-la-tierra-a-los-campesinos-de-los-paramos/>

• Podcast: ¿En qué va la ley de páramos? (Where does the Páramos Law Stand?) https://co.ivoox.com/es-en-va-la-ley-paramos-audios-mp3_rf_38691049_1.html

Construction of Agendas in Coordination with Peasant Communities and Indigenous Reservations of the Amazon Foothills

The Amazon foothills feed important rivers such as the Caquetá and Putumayo Rivers and tributaries of the Amazon River, in addition to a massive diversity of flora and fauna present in the region. For that reason, the foothills are a vital part of the Amazon. To understand the ecosystemic relationship between the foothills and the Amazon forest we have investigated the environmental and social impacts of large-scale productive activities, such as cattle ranching and monocropping, as well as high-impact activities such as oil exploration and production.

In 2019, we worked together with indigenous and peasant communities and leaders within the social organizations in relation to planning instruments and mechanisms, and for the fight against climate change. The joint work of UNIOS Network (Union of Social, Peasant, Environmental, and Human Right Organizations) of San Vicente del Caguán, the Siona indigenous peoples of Putumayo, and the Peasant Association of the Southwest of Putumayo (ACSOMAYO) merits highlighting.

"Working in the Amazon foothills opens the possibility of working in a scenario where unequal land distribution, the presence of unproductive economies, major environmental impacts, the absence of basic social welfare, and an intensification of the armed conflict all overlap. All of these elements make it even more complex to address the social-environmental conflicts caused by the oil industry, as they intensify and add complexity to all the other elements. Nevertheless, the strength of the organizational initiatives, the resilience of these communities, and their interest in receiving us and allowing us to make this journey together gives us hope and allows us to learn."

Karla Díaz Parra, Researcher at Ambiente y Sociedad

1. Advocacy exercise implemented by the communities in decision-making spaces

• Technical and legal support for the municipality of Puerto Asís (Putumayo) to file a tutela (writ of protection of constitutional rights) before the Administrative Court of Cundinamarca due to a violation of their rights to life and prior consultation, based on an oil company's exploration attempt. The ruling was granted in favor of the community (Ruling SC3-1908-2102). This legal action, in addition to demonstrating a violation of rights, also shows the role of the concepts and strategies used by the Siona peoples, in addition to established ties of trust and strategic work with the communities.

• At the municipal level and based on joint capacity-building efforts, the social organizations have been able to influence government stakeholders in participation spaces: In the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán (Caquetá),

advocacy efforts were carried out before the Municipal Council. The peasant communities hope that the Municipal Development Plan includes issues that favor the inhabitants.

In the municipality of Mocoa (Putumayo), we provided support on some legal concepts presented by the Alianza de Mujeres Tejedoras de Vida del Putumayo in relation to the Basic Territorial Land Use Plan (PBOT).

In the municipality of Puerto Asís (Putumayo), the communities have presented freedom of information requests (derechos de petición) to carry out monitoring and oversight of the contracted consultant in charge of writing the Land Use Regulation Scheme (EOT).

2. Proposal building for a dignified life and environmental protections for territory

An outcome of the workshops, round tables, and convenings with communities is the creation of diversified production proposals, with a focus on building territories with food sovereignty in San Vicente del Caguán. The grave context of food security and deforestation in this municipality was evident, mainly caused by large-scale cattle ranching.

3. Appropriation of knowledge through community communications tools

We have focused on methodologies such as "peasant to peasant" learning, where the rural subjects are the most important. The importance attributed to the communications tools has been a great success, as we have managed to have a greater impact in the territory using these tools. The people feel included when they see that they are the protagonists of the processes. The appropriation of knowledge and the reflections that arose out of the joint learning during the convenings are best seen in the video-clips, with the participation of several peasant leaders. See: <https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/piedemonte-amazonico/>

We wrote two informative newsletters in the context of the Coalition for the Promotion of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples Territorial Rights and the Protection of the Environment, in which AAS is a participant. These newsletters are:

• Petróleo en la Amazonia: ¿pueblos indígenas en peligro? (Oil in the Amazon: Indigenous peoples at risk?) <https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/petroleo-en-la-amazonia-pueblos-indigenas-en-peligro/>

• Amazonia: desafíos para su ordenamiento territorial (Amazon: Challenges of its Land Use Plan) <https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/amazonia-desafios-para-su-ordenamiento-territorial/>



Finance and Social-environmental Rights

This area supports communities affected by the financing of infrastructure and hydrocarbon projects in the regions. We do this by identifying probable or current social and environmental impacts, through advocacy, and by monitoring what are called International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the National Development Bank, and climate funds.

Advocacy on the Process to Update the Safeguards of the IDB Group

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) continues to be the lending institution with the largest investment in Latin America. In 2018, it approved 13.5 billion dollars in loans for infrastructure and energy projects. The announcement that it would update its social and environmental policies in 2019 was therefore relevant to civil society organizations and communities in the region, considering that many of these projects have generated major social and environmental impacts.

One of the actions of IDB Invest, part of the IDB Group in charge of supporting the private sector, was to carry out public consultations in four Latin American countries, based on an express request from different civil society organizations from the region. This process was led by Ambiente y Sociedad. One of the chosen countries was Colombia. During this updating phase, leaders from communities affected by projects financed by this entity, social organizations, NGOs, and stakeholders interested in this agenda could send comments to Bank employees on the rough draft of the proposed environmental and social sustainability policy. The input should be considered in the writing of the final document.



2019 Actions, Advancements, and Results

1. Promote and strengthen an active dialogue with IDB Group to establish social and environmental policies with community and civil society participation.

We led the public consultation that took place in Bogotá. To do this, we mobilized and trained social leaders, indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and peasant communities affected by projects financed by IDB Invest, including Hidroituango, Ruta del Cacao, and Perimetral de Oriente. In this consultation, we guaranteed a participatory experience that was high-level and under equal conditions.

2. Technical analysis of the IDB Group's safeguard policies in coordination with allied organizations in Latin America and the United States.

Three technical documents were written and presented focused on strengthening human rights standards and safeguards for indigenous peoples and prior consultations, participation and access to information, and the implementation of environmental procedures such as environmental impact evaluations. These documents are:

"The new social and environmental policy of an institution like the Inter-American Development Bank must go beyond "not causing harm," to having the "generation of benefits" as a central focus, which is why its content cannot focus solely on mitigating the damages that would be generated by a given project, but should focus on the inclusion and recognition of a sustainability framework of benefits for the communities, based on the investment portfolio, which is necessary for the effective prevention of social-environmental conflicts."
 Vanessa Torres, Deputy Director of Ambiente y Sociedad

- **Political Analysis of the IDB Invest Environmental Sustainability and Social Policy:**
<https://www.coalicionregional.net/analisis-politica-de-sostenibilidad-ambiental-y-social-del-bid-invest/>
- **Recommendations and Comments on the Draft of IDB Invest Environmental Sustainability and Social Policy:**
https://bankinformationcenter.cdn.prismic.io/bankinformationcenter%2F5002c7-f91b-41c3-bedb-6521d6f99829_vf-recomendaciones+de+osc-borrador+de+politica+idb+invest.pdf
- **Comments on the Implementation Directives for the IDB Invest Access to Information Policy:**
<https://www.coalicionregional.net/comentarios-a-las-directrices-de-implementacion-de-la-politica-de-acceso-a-la-informacion-del-bid-invest/>



What Can We Do to Prevent the Social and Environmental Impacts Generated by Projects with Chinese Investment?

The relationship between China and Latin America has expanded in an accelerated manner over the last decade, and this is confirmed by several elements: China's signing of a FTA with Chile, Peru, and Costa Rica, the arrival of 300,000 Chinese tourists to Latin American countries in 2018, the creation of 41 Confucius Institutes in the region, \$153 billion dollars loaned to the region between 2008 and 2018, making China an important source of financing, and approximately 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries joining the Road and Belt Initiative.

The regional experience has been replicated in Colombia. The increase in Chinese financing of infrastructure, energy, and hydrocarbon projects—from the Bogotá metro to the production of solar energy in Meta—are examples of a relationship that is destined to become closer in the future.

"We believe that information must be public, citizens must be able to influence the projects, not when the environmental license has been granted but from the moment when the project begins to be designed. This practice has been lacking in Colombia and today it is leading to multiple social and environmental conflicts."
 Margarita Flórez, Director of Ambiente y Sociedad

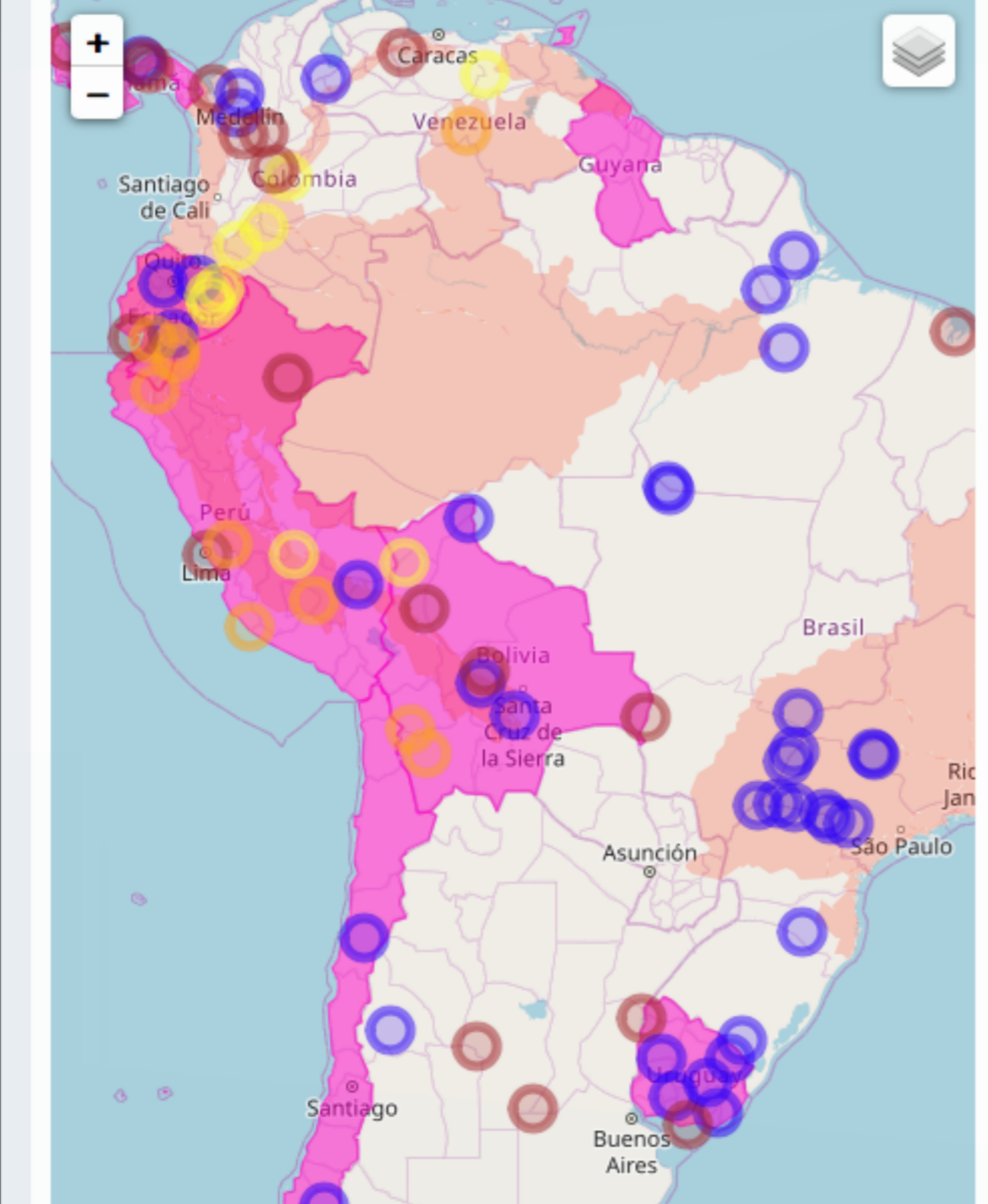


2019 Actions, Advancements, and Results

1. Multi-actor dialogue on the role of China in Colombia, towards the inclusion of an analysis of human rights and strategic ecosystems

For the prevention of social and environmental conflicts due to the execution of megaprojects with Chinese investment, we have created an advocacy strategy, based on an understanding of China, not only regarding the impacts generated by its investments in Colombia and the region, but also on its cooperation proposals, which includes infrastructure, education, exports, and industry development.

As a part of this strategy, we have joined efforts with universities in Colombia that have been researching the Asian country's role, with a focus on our interest areas, for over 20 years and have a close relationship due to educational agreements.



Descripción		
Proyecto	Resumen	Problemáticas
Línea de Transmisión Melo-Tacuarembó	El proyecto consiste en el diseño y construcción de Línea de transmisión de 500Kv entre Melo y Tacuarembó, en el noreste de Uruguay. El proyecto será implementado mediante una modalidad de arrendamiento operativo. El proyecto se realizará mediante la modalidad de Asociación Público Privada (APP) y hace parte del proyecto IIRSA.	Sin Información

Información Empresarial	
Empresa Local	Empresa China
Terna S.p.A	Sin Información

Costo e Inversión

Banco Popular de China a través del Fondo de Cofinanciamiento Chino a...

Oro (USD)

2. Relaunching of the geoportal on Chinese Investments in Latin America (www.chinaenamericalatina.info).

This digital tool is one of the main resources that we have used to monitor Chinese investment in the region. That is why we continue to strengthen this tool. The online platform makes information available on mining, energy, infrastructure, and hydrocarbon projects executed by Chinese companies or with financing from the main Chinese banks in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to the map, the web platform has information on the Cooperation Agreements between China and Latin America, cases of regions and communities affected by Chinese investment, and analysis and research documents.



CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our work in this area consists of capacity building with local communities on participation and advocacy related to social-environmental decision-making processes that impact their territories.



Climate change impacts ecosystems, communities, and economic sectors. It has natural causes and others originating from human activities connected to the emission of greenhouse gases, such as cutting down tropical forests, an increase in cattle ranching, the production and use of fertilizers with nitrogen, and oil extraction. Given this situation, Colombia and many other countries in the world signed the Paris Agreement, in which they committed to act effectively to confront climate change.

We have followed the negotiations and implementation of this agreement and, in particular, the points on forests and communities, with the aim of fully understanding the commitments and monitoring their fulfillment. Also, we maintain the goal of strengthening its appropriation by diverse actors and audiences.

2019 Actions, Advancements, and Results

1. Active participation and formulation of proposals within the framework of the 2020 climate agenda

We monitored and carried out follow-up on the international climate change negotiations of the UNFCCC (COP25), its impact in the region and, in particular, on local and ethnic communities and natural forests. From this particular perspective we drafted and disseminated position papers in spaces such as the intersessional meetings in Bonn, the Pre-COP25 in Costa Rica, and the COP25 in Madrid. During these events we shared information with interested citizens via our digital channels and mass media allies. Additionally, we coordinated and participated in different technical panels on issues such as the Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (Nationally Determined Contributions, NDC, and carbon markets).

We held the position of Secretary for CLARA (Climate, Land, Ambition, and Rights Alliance) together with Pivot Point. CLARA is a global network that looks for climate solutions by protecting the rights to land for indigenous peoples and local communities. Of the advocacy efforts advanced by members of CLARA, we want to highlight that during 2019 we wrote and sent a position paper about the Convention on Climate Change related to possible activities and functions that could improve LCIPP's role in the UNFCCC.

see:
https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/201903011239---CLARA%20LCIP%20Platform%20Submission_.pdf



At the Pre-COP25 and COP25 we advised, together with the Rights and Resources Institute (RRI), local Central American communities like the Red Mexicana de Organizaciones Campesinas Forestales (Red MOCAF), the Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques (AMPB), and organizations of black Colombian peoples, such as the Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN) to advance in defining the concept on local communities, and to increase visibility on their importance and knowledge regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation. The aim is to strengthen their recognition and advocacy in these international negotiation spaces, specifically, in the LCIPP.

“Climate action without a human rights approach will increase the risks to indigenous peoples and the conservation of ecosystems. Without the appropriate social and environmental safeguards, there is a risk that these activities significantly harm local communities, indigenous peoples, and the environment. Article 6 with weak safeguards will only aggravate the difficult situation in Latin America, where the origin of many challenges is social and environmental conflicts.”
 Angelica Beltrán of Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad, Colombia

Also at the COP25, we presented a case study on the impact of climate change using the projected base line of deforestation in Colombia's NDC goals. We also participated in parallel events to analyze the state of ambition of the Latin American NDC and the impact of climate change on strategic ecosystems, such as páramos, establishing a critical position in favor of an efficient implementation of these tools.

At the United Nations Climate Summit, during the discussion on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), we presented with the Culture and Environment Research group from the Universidad Nacional on the experience of cultural and local perspectives on climate in Colombia, a holistic vision that seeks the recognition and inclusion of traditional knowledge in the search for climate crisis and biodiversity solutions.

See:
<https://www.ambientesociedad.org.co/local-and-indigenous-knowledge-in-expert-climate-dialogues/>



2. Climate analysis documents:

We wrote several newsletters to analyze the causes and consequences of climate change and possible NBS, the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), and the LCIPP, using clear and concrete language to reach a broader audience, achieve increased understanding on the topics, and to promote interest in them and their monitoring. The newsletters are:

- Entendamos el cambio climático (Understanding Climate Change):
<https://www.ambientesociedad.org.co/entendamos-el-cambio-climatico/>
- Colombia y sus compromisos frente al cambio climático (Colombia and Its Climate Change Commitments):
<https://www.ambientesociedad.org.co/colombia-y-sus-compromisos-frente-al-cambio-climatico/>
- Reconociendo el saber de los Pueblos indígenas en las negociaciones de cambio climático (Recognizing the Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in Climate Change Negotiations) :
<https://www.ambientesociedad.org.co/reconociendo-el-saber-de-los-pueblos-indigenas-en-las-negociaciones-de-cambio-climatico/>



CLIMATE JUSTICE

CLIMATE JUSTICE

CLIMATE JUSTICE

JUSTICIA CLIMÁTICA

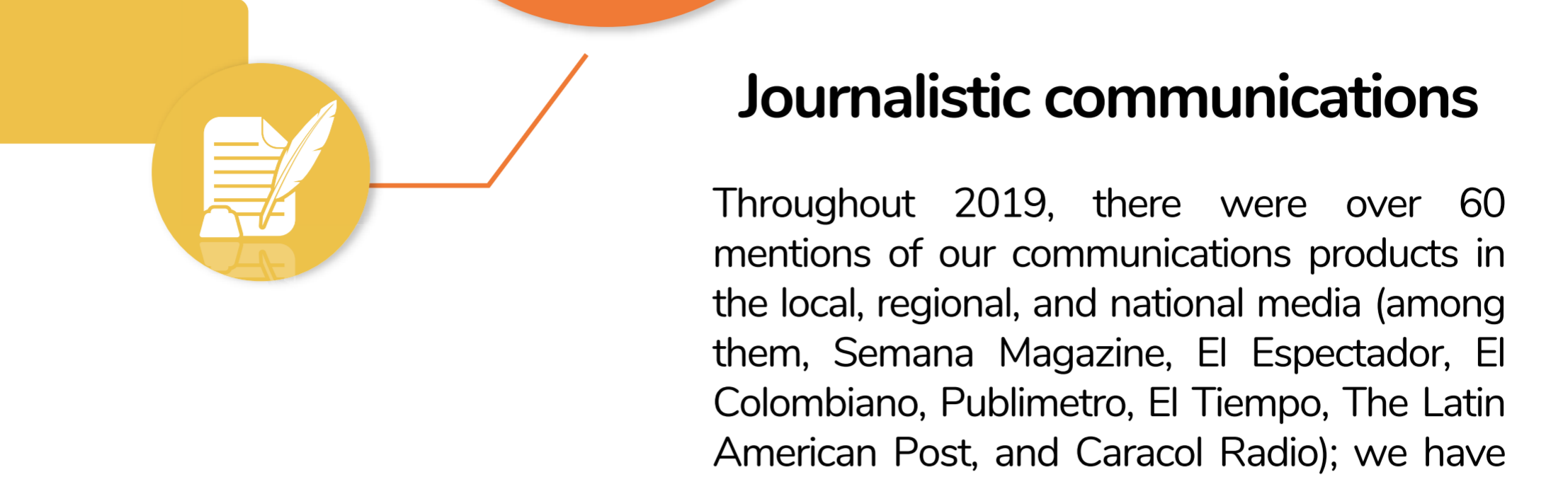


Strategic Communication for Sustainable Development

Here our work is to shape opinion and promote citizen processes for accessing information, participation, and action through digital and journalistic communications.

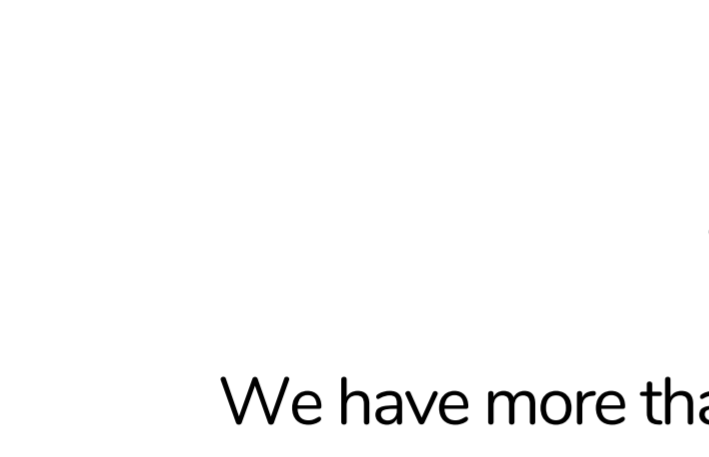


The numbers on our communications work:



Digital Communications

202,623 active users were registered on the website between January and December 2019. During this period there were 100,793 new users. The average time registered on the page is 1:06 per session. We had over 5,000 downloads of publications, documents, and graphic materials.



202.623



Journalistic communications

Throughout 2019, there were over 60 mentions of our communications products in the local, regional, and national media (among them, Semana Magazine, El Espectador, El Colombiano, Publimetro, El Tiempo, The Latin American Post, and Caracol Radio); we have written more than eight press releases that were disseminated by national and international media outlets and over 15 opinion columns, in mediums like the blogs for El Espectador, Semana Sostenible, and La Silla Vacía.

Social Media

We have more than 40,898 active followers on social media

IN 2019, OUR CONTENT ON TWITTER WAS SEEN BY MORE THAN 3 MILLION PEOPLE

TWITTER MENTIONS : **4.394**

22.800

14.405

3.693

"Environmental and social issues are fashionable, there is more and more information of this type on social and mass media, but in most cases it continues to be very technical. Our objective is precisely to transform that information into clearer language with more friendly formats for indigenous peoples, peasants, black communities, and the public in general. It is exciting to see the statistics that show the growth of our community on networks and the website. It motivates us to know that people are reading us, listening to us, and downloading our materials. Everything we do in our communications area is for you. Thanks."

Alicia Gómez Araujo, Communications Coordinator at Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad.

Our Most Popular Communications Campaigns

¿Quienes están detrás de los megaproyectos en Colombia? (Who is Behind Megaprojects in Colombia).

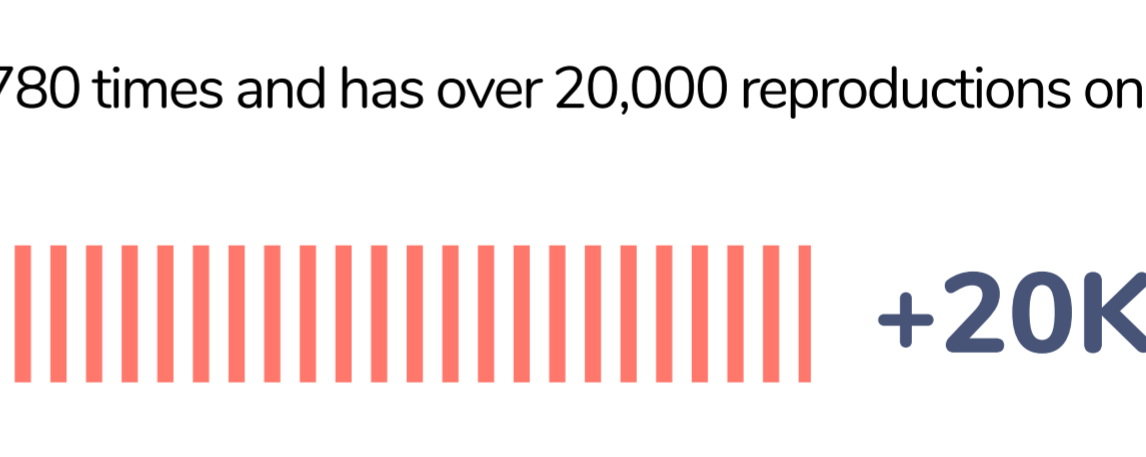
#BancaYDerechos :

<https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/bancos-megaproyectos-y-conflictos/>

With the aim of formulating strategies to defend territory and territorial rights, the campaign seeks to raise awareness on the significance of financial institutions and their investments in megaprojects that generate social-environmental conflicts. Also, to inform the communities on who the actors are behind financing and the characteristics of their accountability mechanisms and safeguard policies.

Results:

More than 2,000 people have visited the campaign website. There communications pieces can be accessed and downloaded: infographics, banners, newsletters, and animated videos.



The dissemination of the social media campaign has led to over 80,000 people seeing and interacting with our publications.

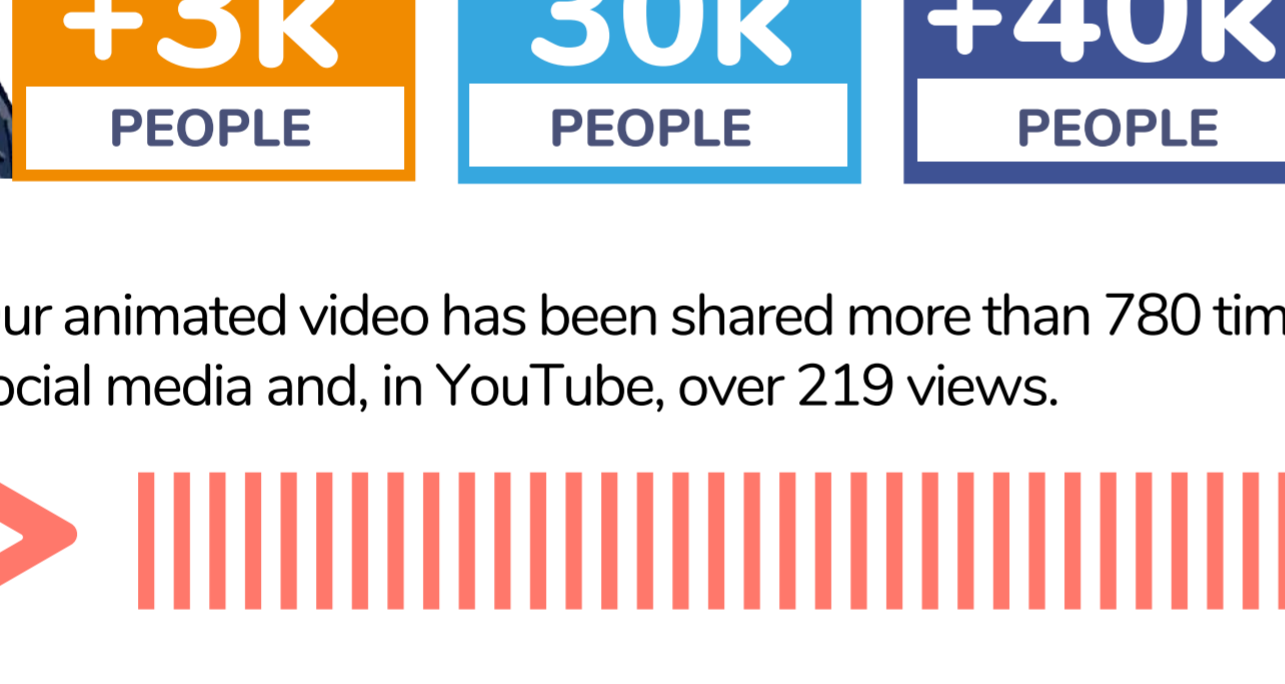


Specific pieces of information

Twitter: 30,000 people

Facebook: more than 40,000

Instagram: more than 3,000



Our animated video has been shared more than 780 times and has over 20,000 reproductions on social media and, in YouTube, over 219 views.



#PLANETA ENCRISIS



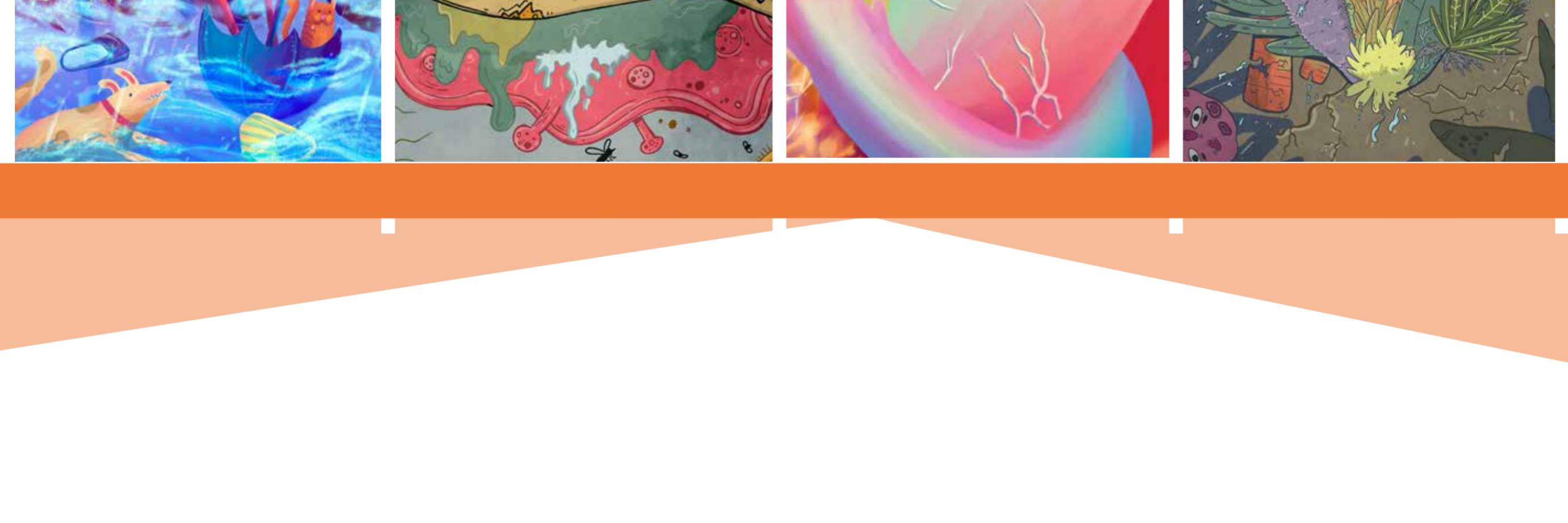
#PlanetaEnCrisis: evitemos que la tierra se siga calentando (Planet in Crisis: Let's Avoid the Earth's Continued Warming)

<https://www.ambienteysociedad.org.co/planetaencrisis/>

This campaign was carried out in the context of the United Nations Climate Conference (COP25), held in Madrid in December 2019, with the hashtag #PlanetaEnCrisis. The content was: five illustrations on global warming, deforestation, disease, extreme climates, and impacts on páramos; and one video supporting the call to action under the name of PreocupAcción, produced in alliance with the Publicity Department of the Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano

The campaign's objective was to stimulate and mobilize groups of university youth to urgently act on the climate crisis, demanding greater political will from their governments in considering the country's climate commitments in relation to the international agenda.

In order to expand dissemination, we coordinated with several youth networks. The publications have reached approximately 1,000 visits on the website and over 80,000 people on social media.



THANK YOU



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