

A photograph of a tropical landscape. In the foreground, a body of water is covered with many yellow lily pads. In the middle ground, there is a dense line of green trees and vegetation. The sky is blue with some white clouds. A green rectangular box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the title text.

# **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIELD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OECM FRAMEWORK IN BOLIVIA**



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# I. INTRODUCTION

In September 2025, managers of conservation-contributing areas from Peru and Bolivia gathered in Madre de Dios, Peru, within the Southwestern Amazon landscape, to exchange experiences on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs). The exchange brought together local Bolivian actors involved in conservation processes, including Florestania, Pascana Etsawa Tejje, and the Tahuamanu Biological Station, as well as representatives from two of the first OECMs officially recognized in Peru: Los Amigos Conservation Concession and Taricaya Ecoreserve Ecotourism Concession. The event was organized by WWF-Bolivia, WWF-Peru, and the WWF-US Conservation Areas team.

Peru has an OECM framework currently under implementation, with 10 areas reported to the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPA) as of December 2025. In contrast, Bolivia is in the early stages of implementing the OECM framework at the national level. This presents a concrete opportunity: Bolivia can draw on lessons learned from the Peruvian experience and use them as inputs to design a process that responds to its own social, cultural, and institutional context. In this sense, the meeting served as a peer-to-peer learning space, where practical implementation experiences from Peru provided an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities associated with advancing OECMs in Bolivia.

This document captures the practical lessons that emerged from the exchange and organizes them into four strategic areas: governance and institutional arrangements; stakeholders and strategic partnerships; effective conservation; and long-term vision and sustainability. Rather than providing a comprehensive assessment of Peru's OECM process, it presents a set of practical lessons and recommendations based on participants' reflections, aimed at supporting the development of the OECM framework in Bolivia.



## II. LESSONS BY STRATEGIC AXIS





# 1. GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Peru's experience demonstrates that the institutional development of OECMs was a gradual process that unfolded over several years and is still ongoing. Throughout this journey, it was necessary to align the existing legal framework, coordinate among government institutions, strengthen technical capacities, and engage civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other territorial stakeholders. This took place within dialogue platforms aimed at strengthening governance throughout the process.

An important first step was the publication, in 2021, of the Guide to Conservation Modalities by the Ministry of the Environment. This instrument increased the visibility of the different conservation modalities existing outside Peru's National System of Protected Natural Areas, and provided a reference framework for recognizing conservation efforts beyond protected areas.

In 2022, Los Amigos Conservation Concession, managed by Conservación Amazónica-ACCA, was reported as Peru's first OECM.

This experience helped open the dialogue on the identification and reporting of OECMs in the country and generated practical lessons that informed the development of national guidelines.

In 2023, Peru approved the Guidelines for the Identification and Reporting of OECMs through Ministerial Resolution No. 339-2023-MINAM, establishing a regulatory foundation on the subject. In addition, the country incorporated OECMs into national planning instruments such as the 30x30 Roadmap and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

The implementation of the OECM framework in Peru is supported by an Ad Hoc Working Group established under the National Biodiversity Commission. This intersectoral platform evaluates and validates areas with OECM potential for reporting to the Global Database on Protected and Conserved Areas, managed by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).



The Working Group is composed of the Ministry of the Environment (MINAM); the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI); the Ministry of Production (PRODUCE); the Ministry of Culture (MINCUL); the National Service of Natural Areas Protected by the State (SERNANP); the National Forest and Wildlife Service (SERFOR); the National Institute for Agrarian Innovation (INIA); the Geophysical Institute of Peru (IGP); and the College of Biologists of Peru.

Civil society has also played a key role in this process in Peru. In parallel with the Ad Hoc Working Group, the OECM Promotion Group (Grupo Impulsor OMEC) was established, bringing together civil society organizations with a complementary function: to stimulate technical discussions, facilitate inter-institutional coordination, and promote enabling conditions for the implementation of the OECM framework. This Group has contributed to strengthening the understanding of the OECM concept, identifying conservation modalities with recognition potential, and supporting local actors in strengthening their management capacities.

Through WWF and WCS, the OECM Promotion Group supported, in coordination with MINAM and SERFOR, an assessment of potential OECMs within conservation and ecotourism concessions and assisted concession holders in meeting the criteria required for official recognition. This process also helped identify non-timber forest concessions that do not yet meet the OECM criteria established under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).



With technical support and capacity-building efforts, these concessions could eventually meet the required criteria. In this way, the approach was not solely focused on achieving formal recognition but primarily emphasized the effective in situ conservation of biodiversity, setting an important precedent for replicating the process with other stakeholders and in other regions.

This experience demonstrates that the implementation of the OECM framework in Peru has been the result of a gradual and coordinated process involving government institutions, civil society organizations, and local stakeholders.



For Bolivia, this trajectory represents a valuable experience and provides concrete lessons for advancing toward an OECM system that is sustainable over time.

Despite these advances, participants reflected on the limited visibility associated with the formal recognition of OECMs in Peru. In some cases, recognition was communicated through electronic notifications issued by MINAM, which did not convey the symbolic significance of the achievement nor generate the level of visibility that had been expected. In practice, it was civil society organizations and the site managers themselves who publicized these achievements through their own networks and communication channels.

More recently, MINAM promoted an official OECM recognition event, which helped provide greater visibility and institutional support to those managing these areas. Public recognition, certifications, and incentives are powerful sources of motivation for local stakeholders. This experience reinforces an important lesson for Bolivia: when designing its OECM process, it will be essential to establish official, visible, and meaningful recognition mechanisms that can foster a sense of pride and strengthen the commitment of those already leading conservation efforts in their territories.



Another reflection raised by participants concerns the absence of both financial and non-financial incentives associated with OECM recognition, as well as the lack of financial mechanisms that can help sustain OECMs over time.

Bolivia has an opportunity to explore these mechanisms from the outset of its process, for example through conservation funds, tax incentives, access to training and technical assistance, the development of strategic partnerships, or access to differentiated markets, provided these are compatible with the priorities of local stakeholders.

Another key lesson highlighted was the importance of ensuring that OECM recognition does not translate into excessive administrative or technical burdens for site managers. In Peru, efforts have been made to keep recognition processes simple, low-cost, and manageable for both organizations and government institutions by relying on management instruments already required under national legislation. This approach provides a useful example of how to balance administrative simplicity with the responsibility of ensuring credible conservation outcomes. Nevertheless, the challenge remains of defining what type of monitoring is necessary to verify that recognized areas effectively maintain their conservation values over time.

Finally, the OECMs visited in Peru—Los Amigos and Taricaya—stand out for their focus on connectivity and local empowerment.

Far from being isolated initiatives, they operate in close collaboration with public and private institutions, neighboring landholders, research organizations, and competent authorities that help address threats such as land invasions and illegal activities. This network of relationships strengthens the legitimacy of the areas, expands response capacity, and reinforces conservation as a collective effort. Within this context, site managers expressed a recurring expectation: that recognition as an OECM will help strengthen institutional attention to requests, alerts, and complaints, facilitating more timely responses from the relevant authorities.

The Peruvian experience makes it clear that implementing the OECM framework is a living and evolving process, built progressively and adjusted over time in response to emerging needs. Participants in the exchange agreed that some of the main challenges include developing both financial and non-financial support mechanisms and consolidating monitoring systems capable of verifying conservation outcomes. For Bolivia, this represents a concrete opportunity to learn from a model that continues to evolve and improve, while building its own OECM framework in a manner that reflects its national context and incorporates the lessons learned from Peru.

Peru's experience demonstrates that OECM recognition requires a strong institutional framework and consistent public policies. For this process to be legitimate and sustainable, governance must be supported by institutional stability, support mechanisms, meaningful recognition for site managers, simple administrative procedures, and well-articulated local collaboration networks. At the same time, it should be understood as an ongoing process of learning, adaptation, and improvement. Bolivia has the opportunity to design its own model from the outset, combining legitimacy and efficiency while establishing a solid foundation for ensuring the long-term sustainability of its OECMs.





## 2. STAKEHOLDERS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A central lesson emerging from the Peruvian experience is that OECMs are sustained through the collaboration of multiple stakeholders. The State has played a fundamental role and has the opportunity to further strengthen its coordinating function by enhancing intersectoral collaboration and creating enabling conditions for the participation of diverse actors. NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and academic institutions have contributed technical and methodological capacities that complement government action. However, it is local managers, through their knowledge of the territory and their direct connection to these areas, who are at the heart of effective OECM management.

Peru demonstrated that committed local leadership is a critical asset: these leaders inspire collective engagement and help ensure the continuity of conservation efforts over time. Such leadership represents an invaluable form of social capital that Bolivia should seek to promote and strengthen from the very beginning.

A key lesson for Bolivia is that the design of its national OECM framework should guarantee, from the outset, the effective participation of local stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, through culturally appropriate dialogue processes.



Engagement with the private sector, foundations, NGOs, and international cooperation agencies represents an important opportunity to design processes that involve potential OECM managers in the development of the national framework from its earliest stages.

The Peruvian experience also highlights the potential of radio, television, and digital media to raise awareness of OECMs and their importance for conservation. Bolivia can incorporate this tool from the outset of its process by developing narratives that resonate with the public and strengthen the social legitimacy of this conservation recognition mechanism.



The Peruvian experience makes it clear that OECMs are strengthened when they are built upon broad, multisectoral partnerships. Bolivia has the opportunity to design an inclusive model from the outset—one that provides clearly defined spaces for the participation of local communities, government institutions, the private sector, international cooperation partners, and the media—thereby ensuring a strong and diverse foundation to support the long-term sustainability of the process.





### 3. EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION AND PRACTICAL LESSONS

The sites visited in Peru, Taricaya and Los Amigos, are concrete examples of OECMs delivering effective conservation outcomes. Although their recognition as OECMs is recent, both are built upon many years of conservation work, accumulated learning, and sustained management efforts. The maintenance of healthy ecosystems is grounded in local knowledge, a strong sense of ownership, and long-term commitment. For Bolivia, the lesson is clear: as OECMs are implemented, local knowledge should be valued as a strategic asset, complementing the contributions of science and technical expertise.

In both OECMs visited, significant progress has been made in the monitoring of flora and fauna, representing an important strength. This monitoring is carried out primarily by researchers who visit the areas to document species behavior and ecological processes. The resulting reports make it possible to verify conservation status and are kept on record within the areas, with copies available for local management purposes. In this way, scientific information becomes a continuous input for decision-making and for the objective verification of conservation outcomes.

An important consideration is that OECMs must demonstrate positive conservation results. However, for many local initiatives, generating robust means of verification can be difficult without external technical support. For this reason, it is advisable to promote collaboration among initiatives so they can share capacities and develop efficient monitoring schemes, supported by public or private institutional structures that provide assistance with monitoring, data management, and reporting.

The Peruvian experience also reveals challenges that Bolivia can anticipate. The absence of a standardized national monitoring system, adapted to different types of areas, highlights the need to integrate locally generated data into a common platform. Added to this is the challenge of designing monitoring processes capable of demonstrating that OECMs are delivering tangible biodiversity conservation outcomes, without creating excessive burdens for managers who are often already conducting conservation work under difficult conditions and with limited resources.

Bolivia has the opportunity to design, from the outset, clear and nationally compatible monitoring mechanisms, accompanied by simplified reporting formats that facilitate the work of local stakeholders without compromising data quality. The challenge is not to avoid monitoring, but to ensure that it is useful and practical, strengthening OECM management rather than imposing excessive demands on local managers.

OECMs also hold significant potential as platforms for environmental education. In Peru, these initiatives are inspiring new generations, promoting conservation values, and demonstrating that productive and sustainable landscapes can coexist. Bolivia can harness this potential by integrating the educational dimension into the design of its future OECMs from the very beginning, making it a core component of the framework.







Effective conservation is demonstrated through tangible results in practice, and the Peruvian experience provides a clear lesson in this regard. Bolivia can build on this learning by designing monitoring systems that combine scientific rigor, administrative simplicity, and practical value for local management, ensuring that the information generated serves as a meaningful input for decision-making rather than merely fulfilling a formal requirement.



## 4. FUTURE OUTLOOK AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Peruvian experience shows that official state recognition and international reporting through the global database provide greater visibility to OECMs. At the same time, participants emphasized the importance of developing support mechanisms that contribute to the long-term sustainability of these areas and facilitate their integration into national policy frameworks.

One of the most illustrative observations during the exchange was that both OECMs visited in Peru have achieved financial viability through income-generation schemes linked to hosting researchers and volunteer programs. These models, based on fees for accommodation and participation, attract scientists and volunteers interested in conducting research or engaging in conservation activities. The reputation built by these initiatives over time has generated sustained international demand, allowing resources to be reinvested into monitoring, management, and the maintenance of the areas. This model provides a valuable example of how scientific excellence and economic sustainability can be effectively combined.

Advancing the implementation of the OECM framework in Bolivia would not only make it possible to recognize and strengthen conservation processes led from within local territories,

but also contribute directly to the achievement of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This alignment reinforces the political relevance of the process and creates opportunities to attract technical and financial support from international cooperation partners, which can help advance and sustain OECMs in the country.

Bolivia has the opportunity to anticipate this challenge by designing innovative financing mechanisms that combine public resources, international cooperation, and partnerships with the private sector, complemented by income-generation strategies tailored to local realities. Establishing this financial foundation from the outset will be critical to supporting the long-term sustainability of OECMs.

The development of conservation networks and strong collaboration among stakeholders is equally essential for sustaining these processes beyond specific circumstances or short-term initiatives. In the Bolivian context, strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms from the early stages of the process will not only facilitate inter-institutional coordination, but also contribute to build a social and technical foundation capable of sustaining the development and implementation of the OECM framework over time.





Finally, bilateral and trilateral cooperation represents a strategic opportunity that Bolivia should not overlook, particularly in Amazonian landscapes shared with neighboring countries. OECMs can be designed from a regional landscape perspective that strengthens joint efforts, leverages transboundary synergies, and contributes to the conservation of ecosystems that extend beyond national borders.



Recognizing the role of rights holders and local stakeholders in conservation, promoting participatory processes from the design stage of the OECM framework, strengthening capacities and coordination platforms, and consolidating support mechanisms are key elements for advancing toward a robust, socially legitimate, and sustainable national OECM framework. Regional cooperation and the exchange of experiences can provide valuable insights to help guide this process.



### III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BOLIVIAN CONTEXT





Based on the reflections and lessons shared during the exchange and the visits to OECMs in Peru, the following recommendations are presented to contribute to the development of an OECM roadmap for Bolivia. These recommendations aim to support a process that recognizes and strengthens the role of rights holders and local stakeholders already leading conservation efforts, while contributing to the achievement of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

1. Build a strong institutional framework for OECMs, supported by state policies that transcend political cycles and ensure the long-term continuity of the process.

2. Ensure the effective participation of local stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in the development of the OECM framework, respecting their rights, priorities, worldviews, and governance systems.

3. Promote multi-stakeholder networks at national and local levels to strengthen capacities, facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of OECMs.

4. Design financial and non-financial support mechanisms that strengthen effective conservation on the ground over the long term, including technical assistance, capacity building, access to differentiated markets, and conservation funding.

5. Identify opportunities for improvement in areas with OECM potential, directing technical support toward the progressive fulfillment of the recognition criteria established by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

6. Establish a visible and meaningful official recognition system for OECMs that fosters pride, reinforces the legitimacy of the process, and motivates communities and local managers to sustain their conservation efforts.

7. Develop practical monitoring and reporting mechanisms designed to generate reliable information that strengthens OECM management without imposing excessive burdens on local stakeholders.

8. Integrate environmental education as a cross-cutting component in the design and management of OECMs, linking it to the realities, values, and cultural contexts of each territory.

9. Develop a communication strategy for OECMs based on clear, accessible, and locally relevant narratives that engage stakeholders and strengthen the social legitimacy of the process.

10. Promote regional and bilateral cooperation on OECMs, particularly in transboundary landscapes, by fostering inter-institutional coordination, the exchange of experiences and lessons learned, and ecological connectivity to enhance conservation outcomes at the landscape scale.



To learn more, visit:

- **Video:** [Intercambio de experiencias OMEC Peru-Bolivia \(ES\)](#)
- **Video:** [OECM Peru-Bolivia Exchange of Experiences \(EN\)](#)

Beyond formal recognition, these initiatives exist because they are sustained by the motivation and commitment of rights holders and local stakeholders. They all share a common feature: regardless of their primary purpose, they contribute effectively to conservation. Their greatest value is not measured by the area they cover, but by their ability to generate transformative experiences, catalyze changes in the way people relate to their territories, and demonstrate that effective conservation models can deliver meaningful and lasting impacts for both nature and people.





