

Biocultural Inventory in Traditional Ceremonies as a Tool for the Conservation of Indigenous Territories in the Amazon

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Summary

The very high correspondence between the areas of significant biodiversity on the planet and indigenous territories has given rise to a "biocultural axiom" that introduces the concept of symbiotic conservation, in which biological and cultural diversity are reciprocally dependent and geographically related. For example, the indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin have conserved biodiversity in a close relationship with nature by applying their knowledge systems associated with traditional norms and subsistence agriculture. Thus, the more alive and present the traditional knowledge in an indigenous territory, manifested in their ceremonies and rituals, the higher the diversity of elements of nature used, and consequently, better preservation of the landscape within their territory. We propose a step-by-step approach to maintain the traditional knowledge systems and preserve biological and cultural diversity in indigenous Amazonian territories by conducting a biocultural characterization led by the shamans: 1) perform a traditional ceremony; 2) carry out an inventory of natural resources necessary for this ceremony; 3) identify in their habitat, through territorial expeditions, the presence or absence of these resources, and 4) propose a traditional management plan for the conservation of the existing resources and the possible recovery of the missing resources and those at risk of extinction, seeking integrated bio-cultural conservation. With this intercultural dialogue between indigenous peoples and external actors, this novel method can improve biological and cultural diversity knowledge and thus maintain the subsidiary conservation that indigenous peoples have performed thanks to their traditional knowledge systems.

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