



This technical proposal is prepared by the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance (ASHA), which brings together 28 member organizations, with the aim of contributing to the roadmap for the transition away from fossil fuels fostered by the COP30 Presidency. These inputs address each question and integrate the visions of territorial autonomy, climate justice, and alternatives to development.

QUESTIONS

a) What are the main obstacles—physical, economic, financial, institutional, technological, or social—impeding the transition away from fossil fuels?

From an Amazonian perspective, barriers are not merely technical but structural and colonial:

Economic and Fiscal Barrier (Extractivist Inertia): The transition away from fossil fuels faces a structural barrier derived from fiscal dependence on extractive rents. In several countries of the Amazon bioregion, a substantial share of public revenues, foreign exchange earnings, and macroeconomic stability depend on hydrocarbon exploitation. This configuration generates political-fiscal inertia that hinders the adoption of non-expansion measures and transition pathways away from fossil fuels, as any decision to limit extraction entails immediate fiscal and macroeconomic costs perceived by governments as politically risky.

This dependence is reinforced by the “debt–fossil trap,” whereby the need to generate foreign currency for external debt servicing incentivizes the expansion of the extractive frontier as a short-term stabilization mechanism. This is compounded by carbon lock-in: the existence of fossil infrastructure with lifespans of 30 to 50 years generates sunk costs and contractual commitments that incentivize its continued use, creating dependent technological and fiscal trajectories. In this context, the growing risk of stranded assets—both for state-owned enterprises and public finances—reinforces political resistance to divestment and prolongs dependence on carbon-intensive assets. Together, these factors operate as structural economic barriers that constrain policy decisions and limit the feasibility of an accelerated and orderly energy transition.

Financial Barrier: Access Constraints and Biases in Resource Allocation: The transition away from fossil fuels faces structural limitations linked to financing conditions. Countries in the Amazon bioregion operate in contexts of high country risk and elevated costs of

capital, which increase the cost of financing and reduce the economic and financial viability of clean energy projects. At the same time, international financial flows continue to favor extractive activities through credit, guarantees, and consolidated regulatory frameworks, creating a persistent bias in capital allocation.

Furthermore, although international climate finance mechanisms exist, they often involve high transaction costs, lengthy approval processes, and technical requirements that exceed institutional capacities, delaying or limiting the effective mobilization of resources for the transition.

Additionally, financing schemes tend to prioritize conventional, large-scale mitigation projects, while territorial alternatives and processes led by Indigenous Peoples and forest communities face greater barriers to eligibility and implementation. This configuration restricts the direct and adequate flow of resources to actors who play a central role in building territorially viable post-extractive alternatives and ensuring climate stability.

Institutional Barrier: Weak Guarantees of Rights and Violation of FPIC: From a rights-based perspective, the transition is constrained by the absence of effective mechanisms—both state and non-state—to guarantee compliance with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the principles established in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The systematic violation of FPIC restricts the exercise of self-determination, affecting the viability of transition processes designed by territorial communities and oriented toward the protection of territories and global commons, which are fundamental for climate stability.

The implementation of projects without consent generates social conflict, territorial tensions, and institutional instability, while reinforcing dependence on existing extractive models and inhibiting the emergence of territorial alternatives based on regenerative economies and Buen Vivir. In this context, states have tended to prioritize legal certainty for extractive activities over their role as guarantors of rights. This has led to an “architecture of impunity,” where state-owned and multinational companies operate with limited accountability for their socio-environmental impacts. A regional analysis identified 8,278 environmental liabilities and accumulated oil impacts across the Amazon in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia, evidencing the systemic nature of this issue.

Ecological Barrier: Risk of Bio-physical Collapse of the Amazon Biome: The Amazon faces an increasing risk of surpassing critical ecological resilience thresholds. Studies place the biome’s tipping point between 20% and 25% of accumulated deforestation and degradation; by 2025, some key regions already reach approximately 29%. This increases the likelihood of savannization processes, irreversible alterations to the hydrological cycle—including disruption of the “flying rivers”—and the massive release of stored carbon, turning the forest into a net emissions source.

Unlike institutional or financial barriers, this represents a concrete, biophysical constraint specific to the Amazon territory. The potential functional collapse of the biome would constitute a structural barrier to post-fossil transition at the regional level, eroding the ecological and material foundations that sustain livelihoods and enable productive alternatives based on standing forests, such as bioeconomy, community forest management, and territorial tourism.

The degradation of critical ecosystem services would increase social vulnerabilities, displacement, and conflicts over resources, deeply affecting territorial coordination. Thus, ecological stability is not only an environmental objective but a material enabling condition for any energy and territorial transition strategy in the region.

b) What possible measures—economic, financial, institutional, social, or technological—exist to accelerate the implementation of the transition commitment?

- **Institutional Actions: Rights of Nature and International Governance for Fossil Non-Expansion.** Recognizing the Amazon and other strategic ecosystems as subjects of rights strengthens their structural protection and aligns public decision-making with ecological integrity. Simultaneously, promoting a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty would allow for the prohibition of new exploration, the establishment of planned decommissioning schedules for existing infrastructure, and the alignment of global production with climate limits.
- **Technological Actions: Territorial Monitoring and Strengthening Accountability.** Combining indigenous knowledge with advanced technologies such as drones, high-resolution satellite imagery enables deforestation, invasions or spills to be detected in real time. This approach strengthens territorial governance, provides evidence for strategic litigation and enhances the effective implementation of non-expansion commitments.
- **Socioeconomic Actions: Standing Forest Bioeconomy centered on People and Nature.** Promoting a bioeconomy based on standing forests drives local regenerative economies that value ecosystems for their living functions rather than extraction. This approach facilitates territorial job creation, strengthens value chains, and accelerates the practical substitution of fossil activities.
- **Territorial Actions: Life Zones and Delimitation of Extractivism-Free Areas.** Establishing "Life Zones" or fossil-fuel exclusion zones in strategic territories serves as a preventive measure to limit fossil fuel expansion and protect critical carbon and biodiversity reservoirs. These clear delimitations send unequivocal regulatory signals, reduce the risk of stranded assets, and consolidate the irreversibility of the transition.

c) What experiences, best practices, and lessons learned regarding national, regional, or sectoral roadmaps can be shared?

The Amazon already has milestones demonstrating that transition is possible:

- **Binding direct democracy:** The Yasuní referendum in Ecuador (2023), in which 58.9% of citizens voted to leave the oil in the ground in the ITT block, is a prime example of how citizen participation mechanisms can directly influence land-use decisions. This result was made possible by the existence of binding direct democracy mechanisms, supported by an institutional framework that allowed for the channeling of social demand. In this regard, this experience highlights the need to strengthen these mechanisms and expand their application at both the local and national levels, ensuring their support within legal frameworks, preferably constitutional ones, that empower direct democracy processes and guarantee their effective implementation.
- **Land titling and/or territorial demarcation:** Indigenous Territorial Entities (ETIs) in Colombia, which recognize the public authority and territorial control of indigenous peoples, constitute a concrete example of governance that directly influences land use. This model demonstrates that when communities have recognition and effective control over their territories, the advance of extractive activities—including fossil fuels—is significantly limited. In this regard, the lesson is clear: establishing legal frameworks that guarantee the territorial rights of indigenous peoples is an effective strategy for curbing the expansion of the fossil fuel frontier.
- **Fossil Fuel Exclusion Zones (“Life Zones”):** Establishing fossil fuel exclusion zones represents a concrete and forward-looking land-use planning tool aimed at preventing extractive expansion in areas where reserves exist and/or expansion plans are in place. This approach can be advanced using instruments already in place in many countries, such as protected areas, national parks, or indigenous reserves, which can be adapted to incorporate explicit restrictions on fossil fuel exploration and exploitation. Criteria for designating a “Zone of Life” can also be established, taking into account factors such as land use, the existence of clear transition alternatives, and the value of biological and cultural diversity. In this regard, the lesson is that states can reorient existing regulatory frameworks to establish exclusion zones more quickly, thereby accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels without relying on the creation of new legal mechanisms. This has already occurred in Colombia when it declared the Amazon a fossil-free territory.
- **Community Monitoring and Surveillance:** Community monitoring initiatives, such as those carried out by indigenous peoples and communities—including the Waorani people and the Sharamentza community in Ecuador—with the support of technological tools, serve as a key mechanism for monitoring and defending their territory against extractive activities. These processes allow for the early documentation of road construction (necessary for exploration), as well as non-compliance with the cessation and dismantling of operations. Strengthening monitoring systems at the territorial and community levels contributes, on the one hand, to generating key evidence to trigger

legal action, public pressure, and institutional scrutiny, in order to promote the transition and facilitate the monitoring of transition processes. It is crucial to note that community monitoring not only improves transparency but also increases the political, legal, and reputational costs of fossil fuel expansion, thereby helping to limit its advance.

d) How can a just, orderly, and equitable transition better reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development and with varying degrees of fossil fuel dependency?

A just transition must reflect asymmetries in historical responsibility, development levels, and degrees of fossil dependency. From an Amazonian perspective, this implies:

- **Effective Differentiation based on Historical Responsibility and Ecological Debt:** Global North countries must be the first to stop fossil fuel expansion, both in their territories and through their companies operating elsewhere. They must establish exclusion zones in their own strategic ecosystems and respect similar decisions by other countries. This requires concessional financing, technology transfer, and debt relief to allow countries with higher fiscal dependency to transition without economic destabilization.
- **Global protection of strategic ecosystems for climate stability:** The Amazon and other tropical forest basins play essential roles in climate stability and global public goods. To protect them, it is essential that the countries hosting these ecosystems have differentiated international cooperation mechanisms that recognize their strategic role and allow them to prioritize ecological integrity as a material constraint and central criterion for transition planning.
- **Active replacement of economic and fiscal dependence on fossil fuels:** In Amazonian countries with high dependence on extractive income, an orderly transition requires the progressive replacement of fossil fuel revenues, and for this, access to secure, adequate, and high-quality financing will be essential to strengthen the standing forest economy and territorial bioeconomies, as well as the creation of new financial instruments geared toward conservation. This includes innovative mechanisms and payment-for-results schemes, the establishment of biocultural or conservation units, and other financial mechanisms that provide compensation for the protection of standing forests. Promoting innovative financial instruments is key to generating fiscal stability without resorting to new extractive expansions.
- **Decentralized energy sovereignty as a path to territorial equity:** In Amazonian contexts marked by energy poverty and low coverage, an equitable transition must prioritize decentralized and community-based energy systems, such as solar microgrids, hybrid solutions, and small-scale technologies, which strengthen territorial

autonomy, reduce structural inequalities, and contribute to decarbonization without replicating centralized and extractive models.

- **Diversification based on locally developed models:** Reflecting diverse realities means recognizing that the transition cannot impose uniform pathways. In the Amazon, this involves strengthening economic models based on standing forests, community-based management, and productive autonomy, thereby enabling communities to overcome structural dependencies without replacing them with new forms of extraction.

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