

# Bolivia Sustains And Profits From Eco-forestry

## Challenge

Spurred by growing global demand for timber and paper, illegal logging remains one of the key threats to the world's oldest forests. Only 17 million hectares, or .5 percent of all forests, are certified as ecologically friendly by the Forest Stewardship Council, an independent international authority. To help save the forests, environmentally conscious furniture retailers have decided to purchase timber from certified well-managed forests. Thus, like many developing countries with vast, potentially lucrative forests, Bolivia has been forced to comply with international standards to benefit from its natural resources.



Photo: Laura Miller

Botanist Marisol Toledo inspects a tree trunk in La Chonta forest.

***This will guide the Bolivian forestry sector into the future. It has led to better understanding and respect for the forest ecosystem and ultimately to better forest management and planning.***

## Results

Bolivia has become the country with the largest area of certified natural forest management in the tropics, with more than one million hectares and growing. Thanks to the way the country now manages its forests, it is home to almost eight percent of the world's eco-certified forests. In one year, the country's exports of certified products soared from less than two percent to ten percent. The project has also been instrumental in the start-up of the Amazonian Center for Forest Enterprise Development to facilitate the development of business skills, product development, and marketing of certified products, as well as to link large industrial forestry operations and community based projects.

## Initiative

To help Bolivia comply so that loggers and indigenous communities could profit from their trade, USAID provided \$16 million for the Bolivia Sustainable Forestry Management. This project worked with public and private groups to better manage their resources and develop sustainable practices from an ecological and economic standpoint.

The goals were to limit the degradation of forest, soil, and water resources while protecting biological diversity. The program emphasized community participation in the economic benefits of certified forest management through joint ventures between the public and private sectors.

The project also helped put in place a new law to govern logging practices and to create a Forestry Superintendency, which is in charge of regulating the sector, granting forest concessions, and collecting an area-based forestry tax.