NEW PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENS FOREST GOVERNANCE WITH TECHNOLOGY
EIA and Digital Democracy support innovations in Indigenous forest monitoring

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) is partnering with the San Francisco-based nonprofit organization Digital Democracy to support Indigenous peoples' organizations to monitor and document rights violations and illegal logging in the Peruvian Amazon. The partnership aims to reduce illegality and will help strengthen the capacity of communities to control and benefit from forest resources.

The partnership launches a year-long project to develop software and mobile apps that will work effectively offline, in remote regions of the Peruvian Amazon. These tools will be designed with input from Indigenous "forest monitors" and used to gather, systematize, and visualize conflicts over resources, human rights violations, illegal logging, and the status of forest projects on their lands.

"Communities are already on the front line," said Annalise Udall Romoser, EIA Latin America Program Coordinator. "Under threats of violence, they have taken initiative to map their lands, advocate for land titling, and claim their rights to valuable forest resources. They do this with minimal support.

"Our partnership with Digital Democracy makes EIA a stronger, more effective ally to Indigenous communities in Peru, and will help improve forest governance in the country by making cutting edge tools available to these communities."

The initial phase of the project will be implemented in Peru's Atalaya province, in the Ucayali region—an area plagued by illegal logging and with little oversight of logging activities by Peruvian authorities.

EIA and Digital Democracy's partnership bolsters efforts already underway in Peru by Indigenous communities and the national Indigenous organization of the Peruvian Amazon,

AIDESEP, to monitor forest crime and resources through a national monitoring system known as *Veeduria Forestal Nacional* (National Forest Monitoring Initiative).

In February, Digital Democracy will host a [hackathon](#) in Tarapoto, Peru for mobile app developers, technologists, and civic-hackers. Participants will help improve the software design for forest monitors that have no previous experience with tablets or laptops, as well as allow the monitors to collect and share information without needing an internet connection, and to build offline workflows for photo and video data from remote regions. These products will be the foundation for tools used by forest monitors in Atalaya.

"Indigenous people are the experts on environmental threats happening in their communities and the forests around them, but too often they don't have the right tools to share this information widely," said Emily Jacobi, Digital Democracy Executive Director. "We're excited to partner with EIA and AIDESEP to build data collection tools designed to work in rugged, offline environments, and help local communities leverage these tools to document and address forest crime in their territories."

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