

COLLECTIVE ACTION WATER STEWARDSHIP IN ICA, PERU

Mid-term reflection on results and next steps



Water Stewardship in the Ica valley

Collective action for water stewardship in the Ica valley in Peru started in 2023, when 10 EU and UK retailers and traders, 5 Peruvian agro-exporters, 3 civil society organizations, and the Dutch Government joined forces to build a more resilient value chain through responsible water management. Halfway through the first year of the Ica Water Stewardship project, the project partners share results and insights.



Centuries ago, the Incas brought water from the high Andes to the Ica valley on the coast to develop their communities through agriculture. In modern ages, the Ica valley has continued to play a quintessential role in Peruvian agriculture as the cradle of Peruvian agro-export. Today, markets around the globe receive blueberries, citrus, grapes, asparagus, and avocados from Ica. The export model has brought unprecedented socio-economic benefits to the region. However, its long-term sustainability is under pressure as

groundwater levels are dropping and less water from precipitation is available as a result of climate change.

First steps for collective action

In 2019, leading players in the fresh produce sector in Peru and Europe came together with the aim of creating a long-term strategy to address these challenges. Different stakeholders were invited to this process, including societal actors and small farmers. The challenges in Ica for people, nature and food

production are significant. Bringing the catchment back into balance will require a long-term effort of multiple stakeholders. Against this backdrop, a group of committed partners in Peru and Europe took the first steps for collective action in the region. At this initial stage, the project has carefully built trust with local stakeholders and shown that change for good is possible. We are excited to build on this as we develop the project's second phase and invite more stakeholders to collaborate with us.

WATER STEWARDSHIP IN ICA

Project timeline

2019

Nature's Pride prepares work for collective action in Ica and consults multiple stakeholders in Ica

2020

Collective action becomes an official line of action in the SIFAV 2025 Agenda

2021

XynergICA - collective of Ica agroexporters created

2022

Nature's Pride, Farm-house Int., Greenyard Group, Salud Food Group and SIFAV hire a water expert to create project short list

2023

The Partners for Water Program from the Dutch government backs the project

Nature's Pride Foundation and IDH finance the Ica Catchment Passport, a baseline assessment.

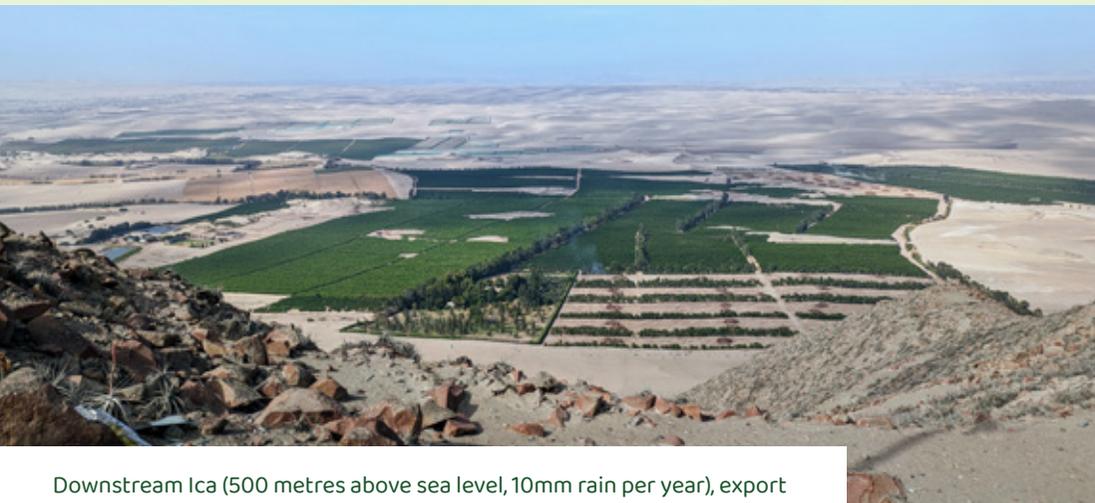
Interviews and 2 workshops are conducted involving civil society (NGOs), small farmers, a university, a water board, and the Peruvian water authority

SIFAV partners choose Ica as the 1st priority catchment in the SIFAV water objectives

Start of collaboration with WRAP (UK)

Ica stakeholders select the priority project through a workshop and voting

Official start of collective action



Downstream Ica (500 metres above sea level, 10mm rain per year), export agriculture using water from the Ica villacuri aquifer and the Ica river



Upstream Ica, community of Los Libertadores (3,000 metres above sea level, 600 mm rain per year); infiltration ditches and trees (Queñales) were planted in February 2024

The project

Following four years of stakeholder engagement and catchment analysis, the project partners committed to a three-year water stewardship project that kicked off with a one-year initial phase before moving to a consolidated water stewardship plan.

The initial phase focuses on the high part of the catchment (over 3000 meters above sea level): the focus areas are water retention and infiltration, biodiversity, and the improvement of livelihood of

communities that live there. Furthermore, first steps are taken to develop an integrated water stewardship plan for the catchment.

This collective action project is convened by SIFAV in partnership with WRAP and supported by private and public sector partners through funding and in-kind support. The project is co-managed by water expert consultancy Good Stuff International and the local organization of Ica growers Xynergica.

The challenges in Ica for people, nature and food production are significant and the catchment is not expected to return to health quickly. However, the project has carefully built trust with local people and stakeholders and shown that change for good is possible.

SIFAV and WRAP are excited by building on this and developing the project's second phase and invite more stakeholders to join the project.

Map of Ica catchment with the locations of the project



IMAGE: GOOGLE EARTH

OBJECTIVE 1



IMPROVING WATER RETENTION AND PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

Progress and next steps

Approach and aim

- ▶ Create infiltration ditches and reservoirs to increase volumes of water infiltration and capacity to retain water in dry periods
- ▶ Plant a local tree species to help regulate climate, capture nutrients, reduce erosion and increase biodiversity
- ▶ Monitor effects of the interventions and impact on the catchment water cycle through a proven model

Progress to date

- ▶ 68 km of infiltration ditches created at the top of the Ica catchment, around the community of Los Libertadores, enabling an estimated 10,000 m³ of infiltration
- ▶ 9,000 native trees planted

What's next?

Create a basin to retain water, put in place livestock fences to protect the planted trees

OBJECTIVE 2



EMBEDDING INTERVENTIONS IN A WATER STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Progress and next steps

Approach and aim

- ▶ Develop a water stewardship plan that incorporates the learnings from the project activities, ensure maintenance, scale up current activities, and make plans for the second phase of the project

Progress to date

- ▶ Identified components for the water stewardship plan in year 2 and 3:
 - Sustainable upstream land management, improve livelihoods

- Sustainable water demand management in the valley
- Creation of a multi-stakeholder catchment platform
- Protect planted trees and extend infiltration ditches

What's next?

Stakeholder meeting to share the project plan and receive feedback

OBJECTIVE 3



IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Progress and next steps

Approach and aim

- ▶ Engage the local community to validate the landscape level interventions and to identify, co-design and implement a plan for sustainable land management with benefits to their livelihoods

Progress to date

- ▶ 20 members of the community of Los Libertadores received extra income for the construction of infiltration ditches and tree planting
- ▶ Through two participatory workshops, a plan was developed to improve land management and alpaca wool production

What's next?

Implementation of the high quality wool production (alpaca among others) and land management plan



LOOKING AHEAD

Scaling activities and benefits

The results of the pilot phase demonstrate tangible progress: the outcomes of the modeling show that the infiltration ditches deliver hydrological benefits such as reduced run off, higher levels of infiltration of water, and increased catchment of sediments. At the same time, the involvement of the community of Los Libertadores has led to direct financial benefits for

some of its members. A plan for future improvements regarding land management and livelihoods is currently being developed.

While there is still work to do in this initial phase, project partners have a clear ambition to include more stakeholders into the project and expand and refine the scope in years 2 and 3.



Aspired long-term benefits

COMMUNITIES

- ▶ A better overall quality of life for communities upstream and downstream
- ▶ In upstream communities, the project activities support better pasture for alpacas, better wool, and better ways to commercialize it
- ▶ Upstream communities receive income for maintenance of the infiltration ditches, tree planting and overall land management and protection
- ▶ How to concretely involve downstream communities into the project activities is part of the currently ongoing planning activities for year 2 and 3 of the project

GOVERNMENTS

- ▶ International support for its national water and climate adaptation strategy
- ▶ Stronger relationships between the government and a wide variety of stakeholders in the upper and lower catchment
- ▶ Development of a strong, collective strategy on how to address the challenges in the Ica catchment, including roles and responsibilities between the public and private sector

AGRO-EXPORTERS IN ICA

- ▶ A more resilient and reliable Ica catchment
- ▶ A better relationship with the upstream communities
- ▶ Strong commitment from international clients to support water stewardship on the ground in Ica
- ▶ Positive communication about how collectively action is being undertaken

TRADERS AND RETAILERS

- ▶ A more water resilient value chain
- ▶ Being part of the solution: showing commitment and the will to action to communities, growers, customers and consumers
- ▶ Development of a scalable methodology to address high water stress in catchments around the world
- ▶ Comply with upcoming EU legislation on due diligence and sustainability reporting



PROJECT PARTNERS



Join us and let's make a difference together!



AT A GLANCE THIS PROJECT:



- ▶ shows leadership and a genuine commitment to long-term sustainability in Ica, Peru
- ▶ allows partners to be part of the solution
- ▶ is an essential component of companies' future-proof water stewardship strategy
- ▶ allows partners to achieve the scale, scope and speed required to address shared water challenges at a shared cost
- ▶ helps partners with due diligence and comply with European legislation

GET IN TOUCH!

If you are interested in joining our Water Stewardship Project, please contact the SIFAV Secretariat.

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