

Higher education cooperation for sustainable development between

Peru

and Flanders (Belgium)

February 2024

Peru continues to be an important partner country of VLIR-UOS with a lot of potential. From 2003 to 2023 VLIR-UOS spent about € 13,8 million in cooperation with Peru, including a long-term Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) Programme with Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (UNALM). Currently 4 TEAM/SI projects are ongoing in Peru.



Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

There is a **longstanding history of cooperation** between Peruvian and Belgian higher education institutions which goes back to programmes of the Belgian technical cooperation in the Cajamarca region and university cooperation with the Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina which was even founded through a cooperation with the university department of Gembloux.

VLIR-UOS revised its country approach towards an 'Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development' centered approach, where country reference frameworks (CRF) are worked out. The CRF document supports teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity within the Joint Strategic Framework of Belgian Non-Governmental Actors active in Peru. On the other hand Belgian HE and Science actors joined in a thematic Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) on HES4SD.

VLIR-UOS cooperation in Peru has always been strongly aligned with the Peruvian national strategies and supported interventions that **strengthen higher education institutions** in their role as actor of change by improving education, research and extension of new knowledge, applications and services in various domains.

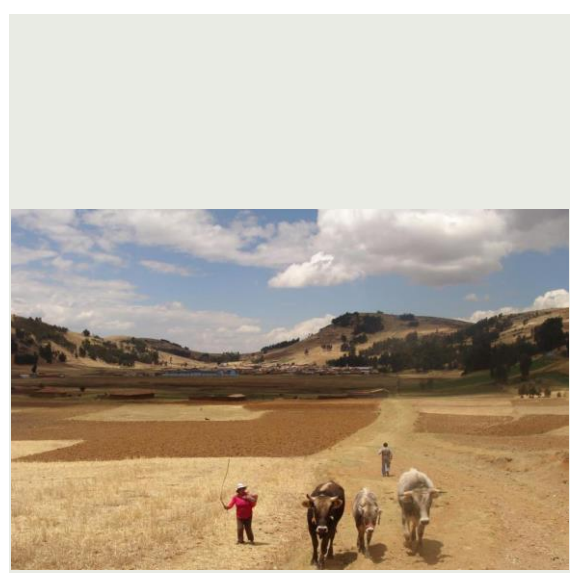
HEIs as drivers of change

Results of long-term institutional University cooperation with UNALM

The institutional university cooperation (IUC) programme with the Universidad Agraria La Molina (UNALM) was initiated in 2009 and finalised in 2021. The programme strengthened UNALM's **academic capacity** in research, education, knowledge-transfer and technological innovation in **sustainable management of agro-ecosystems**. UNALM is now one of the nation's preeminent public research universities. At **impact** level, the IUC contributed to improving food security, local income, stability and competitiveness of the agro-ecosystems in specific ecosystems of Peru and more in particular to the **livelihood situation of small scale family based agriculture in intervention regions in Peru (e.g. Mantaro valley)**.

Institutional partnerships

At the start of the IUC, UNALM had no institutional experience of large-scale international cooperation initiatives, and little experience of cross-disciplinary collaboration. The mid- and end term evaluations of the IUC identified “**significant contributions** to introducing **innovation** in the university's education and training programmes, and delivered dramatically **improved research, teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure**”. More specifically, important research on sustainable management of agro-ecosystems, with two different projects on **farming systems** and **native grains and vegetables** was produced and education and extension with focus on developing **educational models** for agrarian sciences and training of agrarian **professionals** was strengthened. The IUC also led to institutional policy developments in various domains such as ICT and information management and curriculum development.





Uptake by stakeholders



As local communities are a crucial factor for the uptake of research outputs, different VLIR-

UOS projects in Peru worked on **improving computer literacy** in isolated primary schools. Belgian and Peruvian researchers provided the necessary technical support.



Focus on sustainable development challenges

TEAM projects and Short Initiatives (SI) aim to strengthen the research and education capacity, exploring and building capacity in view of creating sustainable solutions to local and global development challenges.

Environment and sustainable rural development

A finalised TEAM project studied the impact of **mining** on the quantity and quality of the **water resources** in the region of Cajamarca. This project strengthened involved units at Universidad Nacional de Cajamarca as agents/drivers of change so that the **environmental impact** could be **assessed** in an objective and neutral way, allowing mitigation of the impact by open cast mining in the region.

An SI project with the Universidad Nacional de Trujillo focussed on **community based eco-tourism** in the Chaparri reserve as to trigger to potential for sustainable rural development. The project made use of an action research methodology and was followed by a TEAM project dealing with social innovation and biodiversity conservation related to sustainable rural development in the same region.

Government and society

Socio-environmental conflicts in the Peruvian Amazon are increasingly linked to the access to and quality of water sources. Extractive activities and infrastructure projects carried out in indigenous territories without consultation seem to systematically violate **indigenous peoples' right to water**. An SI project with the Universidad Nacional de la Amazonía Peruana (UNAP) analysed the causes and circumstances as well as local resistance strategies, in order to **build the capacity of the indigenous peoples and state functionaries** involved.

Health

Another SI project focused on **malaria transmission and control policies** in the Amazon in a triangular cooperation between a Flemish university, Lima based Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia and targeting also capacity building at level of UNAP.

Scholarships

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About the country reference frameworks

VLIR-UOS Country Reference Frameworks (CRF) support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity within the Joint Strategic Framework of Belgian Non-Governmental Actors active in Peru. On the other hand Belgian HE and Science actors joined in a thematic Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) on HES4SD. The country reference frameworks consist of three components: (i) overview of VLIR-UOS projects in the country; (ii) context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector; (iii) overview of Belgian development actors (ANGCs involved in thematic or geographic JSFs & Enabel), their local partners and their regional/thematic focus.

More information:
vliruos.be/peru

Total budget Peru 2003-2023 (in €)	
Projects	€ 10,744,584
Individual scholars	€ 3,119,862
Total	€ 13.864.446


Scholars from Peru in the context of VLIR-UOS cooperation (2003-2020)	
PhD*	/
Short Term*	49
Study/Master*	84
Total	133

*Only scholarships outside projects and programmes are shown; a lot of scholarships are included in projects or programmes.

In addition to Peruvian scholars coming to Belgium, 387 Belgian scholars were granted a travel grant (short term) to Peru and another 2 were granted a sandwich Ph.D. scholarship. More information on the scholarships of VLIR-UOS: www.vliruos.be/scholarships.

About VLIR-UOS

VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and universities of applied sciences and arts in Flanders (Belgium) and partner countries looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges. VLIR-UOS is part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council and receives funding from the Belgian Development Cooperation. www.vliruos.be

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