The Ayahuasca Dialogues report
Preliminary research and prospects for safer and more sustainable ayahuasca

with a foreword by Dennis McKenna
A research report from the Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council (ESC)  
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Note that we have agreed to keep all interview contents anonymous during this phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues for the purpose of protecting stakeholders and encouraging interviewees to speak freely. The Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee (ADRC) has access to and vouches for the accuracy of these stakeholder quotations from the research, as well as the proper stakeholder classification.

Abbreviations

ABS: Access and Benefit Sharing  
ADRC: The Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee  
CB: Certification Body  
CoC: Chain of custody certification  
COICA: Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (www.coica.org.ec)  
ESC: The Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council (www.ethnobotanicalcouncil.org)  
FSC: Forest Stewardship Council (www.fsc.org)  
IIAP: Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonia Peruana (Peruvian Amazon Research Institute)  
ICEERS: The International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research and Service (www.iceers.org)  
ILO: International Labour Organization (www.ilo.org)  
INCB: International Narcotics Control Board (www.incb.org)  
ISEAL Alliance: International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance (www.iseal.org)  
ISO: International Organisation for Standardization (www.iso.org)  
LLC: Limited liability company  
MAPS: The Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (www.maps.org)  
NTFP: Non-timber forest products  
SAN: Sustainable Agriculture Network  
UDV: União do Vegetal  
UEBT: Union for Ethical BioTrade (www.ethicalbiotrade.org)  
UMIYAC: Unión de Médicos Indígenas Yageceros de la Amazonia Colombiana (The Union of Yagé Healers of the Columbian Amazon)  
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (en.unesco.org)  
VCS: Verified Carbon Standard (www.v-c-s.org)

We use the terms ayahuasquero, curandero, and shaman, in the report, reflecting the terms used by interviewees or appropriate to the context. Generally, ayahuasqueros work primarily with ayahuasca. Curanderos work with a number of plants and traditional methods to heal. The term shaman is broader than refers to a healer who may also use non-plant based ritual practices.
Foreword by Dennis McKenna, PhD
ESC Special Advisor

The indigenous Amazonian medicine, ayahuasca, and its botanical ingredients, Banisteriopsis caapi and the DMT-admixture plant, Psychotria viridis (chacruna), have been in a co-evolutionary relationship with humanity for a very long time. No one knows exactly how long, but it seems clear that this medicine has been used for healing and ritual purposes in the Amazon since at least 500 years before the Christian Era. For most of that time, ayahuasca has been an esoteric tradition, a secret and sacred medicine and practice known only to the indigenous curanderos (traditional healers) of the Amazon basin. Indeed, ayahuasca only became known to western science in the middle of the 19th century, when reports of the English explorer Richard Spruce brought it to the attention of a few scientific investigators. Following the publication of Spruce’s observations of its use and occurrence, initially in 1873 in the Geographical Magazine, and later in A. R. Wallace’s Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes (1908), ayahuasca remained relatively obscure for most of the 20th century. It was known only to a few ethnobotanists and explorers; the chemistry of its active ingredients and its unique synergistic pharmacology interested a few chemists and pharmacologists, but by and large it remained an ethnobotanical curiosity, garnering little notice compared to more familiar ceremonial medicines such as Psilocybe mushrooms or peyote cactus. Until the last two decades of the twentieth century, it had little recognition outside of its traditional context in indigenous or mestizo communities. The major exceptions were the Brazilian churches that adopted the beverage for use in their own sacramental rites, in a context and manner that was decidedly different than any indigenous or mestizo use.

All this began to change around the beginning of the 1990s, when occasional intrepid travelers began to go to the Peruvian Amazon in search of the exotic and legendary medicine. There had been a few before, but the 90s witnessed a trickle that in time became a steady stream, then the torrent that we have witnessed in recent years. Suddenly, ayahuasca has emerged onto the global stage, hailed as the ‘new’ plant teacher come to save our troubled species, or reviled as yet another ‘drug menace’. The reasons for this sudden quantum jump in public awareness of ayahuasca are again obscure, but I speculate that an important catalyst may have been the 1991 publication, Ayahuasca Visions: the Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman (North Atlantic Press). This work, co-authored by anthropologist Luis Eduardo Luna and Pablo Amaringo, the visionary Peruvian curandero, opened a window onto ayahuasca cosmology and the practice of ‘vegetalismo’ that made the ayahuasca medicine and its visionary realms accessible to a large English-speaking audience.

Whether the publication of Ayahuasca Visions or some other factor triggered the sudden upsurge in interest in ayahuasca, it is certainly true that it has only grown in the twenty years since ‘ayahuasca tourism’ first emerged as a global social phenomenon. Now that ayahuasca tourism appears to be flourishing in some countries, most notably in Peru, we are beginning to witness some of the negative consequences that inevitably crop up anytime a relatively fragile culture and ethnomedical tradition are impacted by global economic and media-driven events originating from outside the culture’s boundaries. Up to this point, ayahuasca tourism has been a largely uncontrolled and unregulated activity. There have been abuses, and even a few tragedies, in which well-intentioned but naïve young people have lost their lives—not due to any inherent danger of the medicine itself but rather due to sinister or accidental circumstances, and the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In other cases, reports have surfaced of women being sexually abused at retreat centers either by the practitioners in charge or by other tourists or employees of the centers. All of these incidents are regrettable of course, and steps need to be taken...
to prevent such incidents from happening in the future. However it’s also important to note that though such incidents have happened, they are relatively infrequent and the vast majority of ayahuasca tourists who come to the Amazon to connect with the medicine and shamanic practitioners get exactly what they came for: a travel adventure in an exotic part of the world and a rich and rewarding personal and spiritual experience with the medicine.

The impact and the negative (and positive) consequences of ayahuasca’s growing popularity has not only affected the ‘pilgrims’ and seekers who come to the Amazon in search of the experience, but also the communities and the people for whom ayahuasca is a part of daily life. Many practitioners suddenly find themselves elevated to ‘superstar’ status, often accompanied by a dramatic growth in income, and the novel adulation of seekers. Such developments can be flattering but also at times overwhelming for people who have heretofore lived a humble, modest life. Other cultural and economic consequences to local communities have inevitably followed, such as the influx of foreign travelers into the region and the resulting increased economic activity, which is generally beneficial to the community but not always, and not for everybody. In response to the expectations of their foreign clientele, practitioners have altered aspects of the traditional use of ayahuasca and its ritual context has been changed to meet the needs of the market. Moreover, many non-indigenous, non-Peruvian people have also felt the calling to take up the practice of curanderismo. Many work hard at it, and eventually achieve a bona fide form of the practice; others are mainly in it for the money. Another burgeoning issue that is likely to worsen over time is the fact that with the increasing interest in ayahuasca, in Peru and abroad, consumption has risen markedly and sustainable supplies of the primary ingredient plants may not be assured into the indefinite future. Shortages of admixture plants and vine have already been reported in a few places.

So as ayahuasca makes its debut onto the global stage (a major co-evolutionary coup for a plant that, thirty years ago, almost no-one had heard of!), it seems that there are a few challenges that need to be met. In the historical context and knowing what we know about the way plants find their way into human affairs, none of what has happened should be surprising. The issue is symbiosis. That’s clearly what is going on with ayahuasca – it seems to seek a closer symbiosis with our species – and symbiosis is a two-way street. Ayahuasca has done its part in the last few decades by escaping from the Amazon and infiltrating, or at least presenting its case, to global society. The question now is, what can we, as the participating pri mate symbionts in this relationship, do to help this process? What can we do to help integrate ayahuasca and its many benefits into the fabric of modern society, while at the same time honoring the indigenous and traditional origins of the practice? How can we do this in a way that is respectful, and fair, to the plants, and to all the people whose lives are touched by ayahuasca in whatever ways?

It is in this wider context that I bring your attention to the Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council (ESC). Founded by some very bright people who are also compassionate and committed to doing the right thing, the mission of the ESC is, broadly, to address many of the challenges alluded to previously. Incorporated as a non-profit, ESC seeks to assure the sustainability of sacred medicines and the fair distribution of benefits to the communities associated with the cultivation of the ayahuasca plants and their traditional ethnomedical use by promoting best practices. Although the scope of their work encompasses many of the traditional sacred medicines that are now affected by globalization, their initial focus, understandably, is on ayahuasca, because it is changing the most rapidly. The objectives of the ESC’s work with ayahuasca are, broadly, three-fold:

- Ensure the safety of participants;
- Ensure sustainable supplies of the two primary ingredient plants; and
- Encourage fair compensation for growers and processors.
To achieve these objectives, ESC will:

- Facilitate the participatory development, through the Ayahuasca Dialogues, of a set of ‘best practices’ guidelines known as the ‘Ayahuasca Agreement’;
- Encourage ayahuasca retreat centers and communities to adopt the guidelines on a voluntary basis;
- Develop mechanisms for recognizing ayahuasca retreat centers that adhere to best practices, to enhance transparency for the benefit of participating centers and their prospective clients; and
- Seek to increase awareness of ayahuasca issues through education and communication.

The Agreement will address multiple factors that contribute to the optimum therapeutic environment; for example, quality assurance protocols for the medicine in use, and collection of more complete medical information from potential clients. The ESC’s approach requires the collaboration and cooperation of retreat center owners, many of whom may not be receptive to outside interference. The ESC believes that when center owners see that there is no coercion involved and that they stand to benefit by distinguishing themselves in the market based on quality and safety, a significant number will want to participate in crafting and implementing the Agreement.

The ESC functions essentially as a task force or working group. It provides a forum within which issues can be discussed, problems identified, and solutions proposed. It provides access to resources and specialists in various disciplines ranging from agronomy to pharmacology. It functions as a round table in which all stakeholders have a place, and all voices are heard, respected, and responded to. This document is the ESC’s first major effort to present and implement its mission. It represents months of work by many dedicated volunteers. It is far from perfect; however, it is a very good start, a place to begin the conversation. I urge everyone to read it, study it, question it, and participate actively in the ongoing Ayahuasca Dialogues. There can be no problems solved unless they are identified, discussed, and solutions proposed and evaluated in a spirit of cooperation and consensus. The ESC provides the loosely structured ‘community’ of ayahuasca stakeholders with something that it didn’t have before, something that it desperately needs: a framework for fostering cohesion, consensus, and coherence. The ESC needs your support to continue its good works. I urge everyone, all ‘stakeholders’, to support it in any way that you can, financially, intellectually, as a volunteer or even as a critic. It needs and will give a hearing to all voices, and in this way it will evolve into an organization that can effectively fulfill its mission of promoting stewardship of ayahuasca and other sacred medicines.

The globalization of ayahuasca is happening, whether we want it to or not. It is ayahuasca itself that is bringing this about, insisting on a more active co-evolutionary relationship with our species. It’s our job to do what we can to manage that process in a way that is sustainable, equitable, and ethical so that this sacred medicine can offer maximum health and healing benefits to all who choose to use it, while discouraging its misuse and profanation. The good works of the ESC can help us to continue and strengthen our relationship with this ‘ambassador’ from the Gaian mind, as we learn what it has to teach us: how to evolve toward more wisdom, knowledge, and love for each other, for all species, and for this beautiful and irreplaceable planet that we all share.

Dennis J. McKenna, Ph.D.
Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota
September 7, 2014
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Executive Summary

“The use of sacred plants implies a responsibility to the community. It implies that part of the knowledge and the teachings about the good use of the plant teacher leads us to attend to the needs of the communities in which we live.”

Indigenous academic and community leader, Peru (Corminboeuf, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
This report summarizes the ESC’s research findings to date on ayahuasca safety and sustainability issues and concerns. It presents a proposal for funding and collaborating on future continued work on the Ayahuasca Dialogues and subsequent Ayahuasca Agreement on safe use and sustainability best practices.

Whether ayahuasca cultures and ecologies are strengthened and respected—and whether this evolution produces more benefits than negative impacts for various affected groups—depends on the decisions we make and the actions we take now as a global community.

At stake are the future of indigenous traditions, international drug policy, human health, and even the future understanding of the mind.

Ayahuasca is entering global consciousness on a trajectory similar to the expansion of yoga or meditation practices over past decades. After hundreds, or possibly even thousands, of years of traditional uses in the Amazon, this increase in awareness about the brew is now fed by major media stories that either explain why people take ayahuasca, explore the emerging scientific research on potential therapeutic benefits, or scandalize the cases of ayahuasca seekers who meet harm through accidents or ill treatment.

Our potential for action is pivotal. The actions of ayahuasca’s allies can and will determine whether ayahuasca survives beyond the current generation as a valuable aspect of humanity’s collective patrimony.

This report was prepared by the Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council (ESC), an international nonprofit registered in the United States.

The research findings are based on over one year of collaborative research and engagement with hundreds of people, along with recent field research across the Amazon interviewing over 90 center owners, healers, government officials, indigenous leaders, and others.

We ask you to join us in the Ayahuasca Dialogues.

“Ayahuasca has exploded in terms of its new cultural context. How are we as members of the ayahuasca community taking responsibility, if within our ranks we don’t feel like talking about the tragedies just because they didn’t happen in our ceremonies? We need to get our house in order, as the irresponsible actions of others are a reflection of all of us.”

Foreign academic, Colombia (Marks, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
Ayahuasca culture is at a turning point. We need to seize the opportunity to further protect and revitalize ayahuasca cultures, increase environmental conservation, and bring benefits to traditional knowledge holders in the Amazon.

Amazonian cultures face serious threats to their survival. Unsustainable industrial development, village assimilation policies, and lures of modern life are tearing apart the ecosystems and cultures of the Amazon and imperiling the medicine traditions that have evolved there.

We must address direct threats to ayahuasca’s legitimacy. The rapid growth of new types of ayahuasca activity, changes in international drug policy, and reports of charlatanism, sexual assault, or even death threaten ayahuasca’s reputation, its stewards, and its vaunted place in Amazonian culture. These threats, then, also present opportunities to recognize established good practices that can protect ayahuasca’s legal, cultural, and medical status.

Ayahuasca can help protect the Amazon. When used with other sustainable development approaches like sustainable tourism, carbon offsetting, sustainable forestry management, medicinal plant cultivation, and/or the development and certification of other sustainable non-timber forest products (NTFP), the planting and harvest of ayahuasca and admixture plants can compete economically and culturally with industrial development to be part of the solution to protecting the Amazon and improving the lives of Amazonian peoples.

Cultural misunderstandings are often at the heart of safety and sustainability issues. During encounters between indigenous/local and foreign/non-local peoples, both sides have the potential for misunderstanding. Many indigenous interviewees said this stems from a lack of respect for and implementation of indigenous beliefs, as outside seekers often lack context or knowledge. This dynamic has practical impacts on the efficacy of treatment, safety, and reciprocity of ayahuasca exchanges, which all impact the future of ayahuasca and its traditions.

More must be done to improve ayahuasca cultivation. More can and should be done to enhance and preserve ayahuasca’s genetic diversity, knowledge of its cultivation, and benefits to people who grow the plants. Ayahuasca churches have become pioneers in ensuring sufficient supply of sustainably grown ayahuasca and admixture plants, and we have much to learn from their efforts.

Ayahuasca’s preservation depends on our cooperation beyond the ayahuasca community. Ayahuasca cultures’ continued vibrancy depends on forging and strengthening connections to wider communities and professionals focused not on ayahuasca alone, but on environmental protection, cultural revitalization, indigenous rights, Fair Trade practices, traditional medicine, sustainable economic relations, and other issues that will determine the future of the Amazon and ayahuasca.

Ayahuasca “tourism” can be part of the solution. Shifting from “ayahuasca tourism” to “sustainable ayahuasca tourism” or “ayahuasca eco-tourism” – with an emphasis on positive social, environmental, and economic benefits – promises to add further resilience to the cultures, economies, and forests where ayahuasca is esteemed.

Learning from and respecting traditional knowledge is crucial. The ESC’s governance, outreach, and consensus-building approaches are designed to learn from and respect traditional knowledge holders.

We must act together. Rapid changes in ayahuasca cultures call for a formalization of safety protocols and best practices – and an ongoing partnership between Amazonian and western stakeholders – to help protect and preserve the medicinal treasures of the Amazon. (Note: We refer to a stakeholder as anyone who could affect or be affected by the ESC’s activities.)

We aim to facilitate dialogue to achieve agreement and adoption, and to monitor the impacts of our work over time, to demonstrate replicable results.

Our success in building a global community of knowledge exchange and best practices also depends on you. The ESC is already becoming part of the community of knowledge and exchange that is a crucial part of the solution, but our success depends on collective and individual efforts—from donors to volunteers, from policy makers to cultivators, from indigenous leaders to ayahuasca seekers, and beyond.
The ESC's Ayahuasca Dialogues team is engaging with concerned stakeholders to prioritize and find solutions to key safety and sustainability issues affecting the ayahuasca community.

**From Dialogue to Agreement**

The Ayahuasca Dialogues will produce the Ayahuasca Agreement, which will establish global consensus on principles and criteria for implementing and recognizing safer and more sustainable ayahuasca cultivation and use. These principles and criteria will be developed from the ground up using globally recognized best practices established by the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance (ISEAL).

**Key stakeholders interests**

- **Building knowledge networks**: helping stakeholders learn from one another.
- **Leveraging other resources**: helping academics, government officials, center owners, and others engage in other important initiatives they would not have otherwise known about.
- **Addressing risks to ayahuasca’s future**: managing resources to help ensure that the next generations of ayahuasca healers are valued and their cultures and gifts are respected.
- **Revitalizing communities**: helping obtain funding and/or technical assistance for community development projects related to health care, training of young healers, resources to build malocas (ceremonial and meeting buildings), health insurance, sanitation, and other needs.
- **Recognizing centers and communities that adopt sustainable and safe practices**: assuring centers, communities and cultivation sites that want to be formally recognized for their sustainability and safety performance, using the proposed Ayahuasca Agreement as a basis.

We invite you to join the ESC in the Ayahuasca Dialogues and enhance this global conversation and network to protect ayahuasca. Please give us feedback at: ayafeedback[at]ethnobotanicalcouncil.org
About the Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council

“The formation of the ESC and start of the Ayahuasca Dialogues is a much needed effort to wisely and safely guide the expansion of the use of ayahuasca both where it was created in the Amazon and to the rest of the world”

ESC board member Dr. Rick Doblin, Founder and Executive Director of MAPS
The Ethnobotanical Stewardship Council (ESC) is a non-profit organization launched in October 2013 that grew as a response to calls from ayahuasca community members to protect people who work with this plant.

1.1 Overview

Mission and vision

The ESC’s mission is to transform lives by assuring the sustainability and safe use of traditional plants and enriching the peoples and communities who work with them.

The ESC’s vision is a world where plants, their traditions, and the people who work with them are respected and empowered culturally, legally, economically, and religiously.

“I would like it if there were an organization, for those of us who are prepared, to make us recognized, and also that there would be a document that says this person is authorized to work with medicinal plants. I want the people to know this medicine.”

Peruvian mestizo ayahuasca center owner (Keller, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)

Principles and values

- Transparency;
- Stakeholder engagement, characterized by being inclusive, listening, and being responsive to feedback;
- Consensus (characterized by the lack of sustained opposition by any stakeholder group);
- Respect for traditional knowledge holders;
- Preservation of biological and cultural diversity;
- Personal and professional growth;
- Accountability to the stakeholders we serve.

See section 5.1 for the ESC’s principles in building consensus on sustainability and safety issues.

Strategy

The ESC’s strategy is to facilitate transparent dialogue between all people who care about the future of specific traditional plants by holding a space where all stakeholders can collaborate as equals to identify best practices for safer and more sustainable ethnobotanical cultivation, trade, and use.

ESC Origins

The ESC and the Ayahuasca Dialogues grew in response to calls from ayahuasca community members to protect people who work with this medicine. The ESC’s first engagement with members of the ayahuasca community took place in a crowded room at the Convention Center in Oakland, California during the Psychedelic Science 2013 conference. One after another, hundreds of stakeholders spoke about issues like the recent death of an American teenager in Peru at an ayahuasca center, the reputation of ayahuasca, and other concerns—along with what could be done. From this meeting, the first mailing lists and coalitions of experts were formed. At that same conference, the founder and executive director of the International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research, and Service (ICEERS), Benjamin DeLoenen (now an ESC board member), pledged his organization’s support to incubate the idea that grew into the ESC. During side meetings at Breaking Convention in July 2013, Rick Doblin, the founder and director of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) (also now an ESC board member), suggested that we focus not only on ayahuasca, but on other plants as well. These might include iboga and peyote, amongst other medicinal plants. Many others contributed ideas either directly to the ESC or publicly to the community.

See Acknowledgements at the end of this report.
1.2 Work areas

1. Consensus building:
Convening stakeholders to develop Plant Agreements on best practices for the safe use and sustainability of traditional plants (for example: the Ayahuasca Agreement);

2. Capacity Building:
Providing training and other resources to better implement Plant Agreements;

3. Assurance:
Developing transparent, accessible, and credible mechanisms for recognizing consistent implementation of Plant Agreements (such as the Ayahuasca Agreement);

4. Impacts monitoring, advocacy, and reform:
Collection of and communication about evidence of harm reduction, sustainable development, and other impacts stemming from the implementation of Plant Agreements;

5. Innovations:
Researching and developing new approaches to improve the sustainability and safety of ethnobotanical value chains, focusing on ecosystems, recognition of traditional plant stewardship methods, access and benefit sharing (ABS) implementation, and other approaches.

1.3 Engagement model

The ESC takes the following engagement approach to all of our work, especially in establishing Plants Agreements like the Ayahuasca Agreement.

This approach is key to establishing trust amongst stakeholders and gives the ESC a process to reach consensus on key safety and sustainability issues related to plant traditions like ayahuasca.

THE ESC’S GENERAL APPROACH

1. Communicate strategy
Release information about our mission, approach, and activities so that all stakeholders can know what we are working toward and offer suggestions.

2. Availability
We make ourselves available to receive feedback, for example through local representatives whenever possible (such as our researchers in the Amazon) and at the least via our website.

3. Stakeholder mapping
We map the stakeholder groups we are working with to ensure an inclusive and proactive stakeholder outreach and consultation process.

4. Outreach
We proactively ask questions about the needs and priorities of stakeholder groups.

5. Responsiveness
We address stakeholder concerns and recommendations to the best of our ability to achieve consensus on best practices for the safe and sustainable use of specific plants and their traditions.
1.4 ESC commitments

Commitment to dialogue

The ESC’s commitment is to grow the Ayahuasca Dialogues from the ground up based on best practices for establishing consensus with a balance of stakeholder interests and economic, social and environmental sustainability issues (see Section 5.1). We commit to mutual accountability—the promise that key stakeholders will have reputational authority over the ESC through representation on the Stakeholder Council with the power to review the ESC’s work. In return, the ESC will work transparently to meet the needs of communities to minimize corruption and maximize intended sustainability outcomes in implementing projects they prioritize and we jointly decide to work on.

We do not know what the content of the Ayahuasca Agreement will be, but we do know that the process to get there will follow widely accepted good practices (ISEAL Codes).

See Chapter 5: From Dialogue to Agreement

Commitment to sustainability

The ESC’s commitment to sustainability is based on widely accepted definitions, such as the authoritative Brundtland Commission definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1987). We also use the commonly known three inter-related dimensions of sustainability - economic, social, and environmental, or:

- **Prosperity**: sustainable economic development and relations.
- **People**: social issues defined by the people affected.
- **Planet**: environmental sustainability.

Access and benefit sharing (ABS) is a key issue with respect to the prosperity and people dimensions. It signifies that traditional knowledge holders’ rights to access and use local plant resources should be protected, and that care should be taken to avoid significant inequities in the distribution of benefits between and within stakeholder groups. Defining what constitutes “equitable” access and benefit sharing arrangements is highly subjective and requires extensive stakeholder consultation and clearly defined processes.

Commitment to safety

Ethnobotanical safety means different things to different people in different contexts. For some, it means first aid or emergency preparedness in the jungle. Sometimes safety means safe products that are correctly identified, processed, and packaged. Indigenous ideas of emergency safety protocols could include observing, singing and praying, which does not need to be at odds with consideration of safety protocols that require a plan for westernized medical intervention.

Safety in the ayahuasca context means a combination of physical safety in the jungle and physical, psychological and metaphysical safety during ceremonies, blending the best of scientific, indigenous, and common sense understandings of the medicines and the contexts in which they are taken.
Ayahuasca on the global stage

“Whereas much depends on humanity being neurotic consumers and not producers, the shamanic world sees that as something that needs to go, a vice of the spirit, that humanity is in danger, and that knowledge needs to be diffused... So I think, in all parts of the world, and especially in Latin America, something similar is happening, in that the magical world—the shamanic world—is becoming a necessity to many different types of people. This is something to be hopeful about. We have to go through a process.”

Ecuadorean mestizo social activist and yachá (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview)
Ayahuasca is entering mainstream consciousness. This section gives a brief overview of the medicine and its evolution in recent decades to the present day, as well as its legal status, and the dynamics of ayahuasca’s globalization.

2.1 Traditional significance of Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca is a beverage traditionally made by boiling stems of the ayahuasca vine *Banisteriopsis caapi*. Other plants are added to the brew, most frequently the leaves of the chacruna bush *Psychotria viridis*, which contain *N,N*-dimethyltryptamine (DMT). The word “ayahuasca” is a Quechua term often translated as “vine of the soul” or “vine of the dead.”

Ayahuasca’s deep-rooted, complex, and varied culture

Amazonian medicine traditions have evolved ever since humans first arrived in South America, roughly 10,000 years ago, and from this base ayahuasca cultures have emerged over the centuries. Archeological evidence of the earliest usage is widely disputed, although the use of *B. caapi* alone is likely to predate its combination with *P. viridis* (for more details see Taylor, 2013; Homan, 2011 and Highpine, 2012). Over the last few hundred years, ayahuasca has emerged as one of the most important Amazonian plant medicines. It is used by healers to heal physically and psychologically, to expel parasites, to learn (particularly about other medicinal plants), to locate and treat the source of medical and spiritual problems, and to help maintain balance in society. Ayahuasca is drunk by at least 72 different tribes throughout the Amazon, and goes by at least 42 other names, including hoasca, *yajé* and caapi (Corrêa, 2013). Hundreds or even thousands of lineages and traditions exist, including several churches that use ayahuasca as their sacrament (Luna, 1986; ICEERS, 2013).

Opinions about ayahuasca

To some, ayahuasca is medicine capable of healing psychological issues or physical ailments. Others consider ayahuasca an integral part of traditional cultural practices. To others, ayahuasca is a drug whose consumers should be subject to criminal penalties. To most people outside the Amazon, ayahuasca is still something unknown.
2. AYAHUASCA ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Recognition as cultural patrimony

The 2008 declaration of ayahuasca as Peruvian national patrimony by the Institute of National Culture described ayahuasca rituals as “one of the basic pillars of the identity of the Amazon peoples,” central to indigenous worldviews, with “religious, therapeutic, and culturally affirmative purposes.” (Villacorta, 2008). The Peruvian declaration also says that “the effects produced by ayahuasca... are different from those produced by hallucinogens. A part of this difference consists in the ritual that accompanies its consumption, leading to diverse effects, but always within the confines of a culturally determined boundary, with religious, therapeutic and culturally affirmative purposes.” (Ibid., 2008).

Religious and spiritual significance

Time and again, the ayahuasca experience has proven itself capable of giving people—even avowed atheists and scientific materialists—an experience of “beyond,” which Rudolph Otto called the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. While the proceedings of an ayahuasca ceremony may not look like a religious service to a Roman Catholic, Hindu, or Buddhist religious ceremony, the experience occurring for participants is at the very core of what it means for many to be religious or spiritual (although the terms “religious” or “spiritual” etymologically do not adequately summarize indigenous cosmovisions, given the words’ Platonic and Christian origins).

2.2 Traditional ayahuasca cultures

Other than the Brazilian church contexts, ayahuasca is almost always used in rituals led by trained medicine workers, often called shamans in English, and ayahuasqueros, or curanderos in Spanish.

In traditional village culture, ayahuasca is often drunk only by the shaman to cure diseases, although traditions of group drinking during ceremonies also exist. (Shepard, 1998; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1996; Luna, 2003; Callicott, personal interviews). Payment would have been in the form of food or local trade goods such as livestock (Narby, 2013). *Curandero* traditions grew out of a culture of inter-tribal warfare, evidence of the *curandero’s* ability to harm as well as heal (Beyer, 2009).

“In a conservation context, we stand at the edge of a precipice. We are scrambling to find ways to save the rain forest, yet thousands of years of accumulated human wisdom—the knowledge of how to use the forest, without destroying it, to benefit humankind—is going to vanish over the next generation. Throughout the tropics species are disappearing, but the knowledge of how to use those species is disappearing at an even faster rate.”

Mark Plotkin, The Shaman’s Apprentice
2.3 Motivations of outside seekers

While no global survey of ayahuasca seekers’ intentions has as yet been conducted, some research and anecdotal evidence indicates that people have a variety of motivations for drinking ayahuasca (Winkelman, 2005). These include:

Mental health benefits
Scientific studies have found evidence of reductions in depression, anxiety and minor psychiatric symptoms after ayahuasca intake (Anderson 2012; Grob et al. 1996; Barbosa et al. 2009; Rodd 2008; Fortunato et al. 2010; Da Silveira et al. 2005; Halpern et al. 2008), as well as a beneficial role in overcoming trauma, panic, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Barbosa et al. 2012). It can also provide assistance in overcoming drug addictions (de Rios et al. 2002; Liester & Prickett 2012; Halpern et al. 2008; Fábregas et al. 2010, Thomas et al., 2013) and has been found to increase confidence, optimism and independence (Barbosa et al. 2009).

Physical health
Ayahuasca is considered to be a way of diagnosing and treating physical health issues, recognizing that physical and mental conditions are often interlinked. Case reports also exist of ayahuasca leading to a full recovery from a range of physical illnesses (Schmid et al. 2010). During interviews, stakeholders have noted resolution of effects from strokes, alleviation of physical pain, self-identification of physical ailments, and identification of ailments by shamans. As noted by one of the curanderos interviewed during the first phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues,

“With ayahuasca, you can give so much energy, and you can know what plants are needed to cure this person who is sick. It is like an analysis. When I take ayahuasca, I concentrate on the person and I can see their heart, their kidneys… I see their circulatory system, or their blood or their heart is working really hard… we do a psychological assessment and of the whole body, an analysis. And then we say, oha! You have a problem with your heart, or with urination. I look this way because if you need one plant, you can’t give another.” – Peruvian mestizo curandero

Religious or spiritual experiences
Ayahuasca provides shamanic (foundational) religious experience; for example, as defined by Walter Houston Smith and expressed by Robert Jesse (2013): “Religion is a person’s experience of a Beyond, as evidenced by his or her efforts to harmonize their life with that Beyond, especially when this is done in community, or in the presence of other people” (Jesse, 2013).

Curiosity
Some seekers are interested in experiencing other cultures and other modes of consciousness, their inspirations including the ever-increasing number of works discussing ayahuasca (see Homan, 2011 for historical overview and analysis of the phenomenon of ‘ayahuasca tourism’).

Community bonding, interpersonal issues, and personal growth
Ayahuasca churches have long bonded around the drinking of the ayahuasca sacrament during religious ceremonies. Increasingly, teams from companies or organizations are exploring the use of ayahuasca for building stronger team dynamics, improving leadership, and increasing creativity (Fadiman, 2011; Shanon, 2010).

“With ayahuasca you can give so much energy, and you can know what plants are needed to cure this person who is sick.”
Peruvian mestizo curandero
### 2.4 Ayahuasca’s legal status

One of the key chemical constituents in ayahuasca preparations, DMT, is a chemical naturally occurring in the human body and throughout organic nature, including in many plants and animals. Nevertheless, DMT is illegal under international conventions (notably, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances), a situation that at face value makes human biochemistry itself illegal. However, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), a quasi-judicial body of the United Nations’ drug control system, affirmed in a fax sent in 2001 to the Netherlands Ministry of Public Health that ayahuasca brews are considered preparations of plant material containing DMT and thus not subject to “any of the articles of the 1971 Convention” (Chaepe, 2001).

Despite this affirmation, in its 2010 Annual Report, the Board recommended that governments consider controlling (i.e. criminalizing) ayahuasca at the national level.

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**Legal to use in all culturally recognized contexts**

Ayahuasca is recognized as legal for all uses in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, and Uruguay. South Africa recognizes traditional use of plants, which may include ayahuasca.

**Legal in religious contexts**

In Brazil, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States, ayahuasca is legal in the religious contexts of recognized ayahuasca churches (such as Santo Daime or the UDV), but is not legal in shamanic or non-recognized religious or ceremonial contexts.

**Gray areas**

Chile and Spain are in legal gray zones where court cases of late have largely been in favor of the traditional ceremonial use of ayahuasca. Meanwhile, Australia, Canada, and Germany seem to be moving toward illegality.

**Clearly illegal**

France has expressly made ayahuasca illegal, while judicial precedent in the UK implies that ayahuasca stands a strong chance of being treated as illegal. Ayahuasca’s global legality and use beyond the countries that have court cases is not known.
2.5 Global meets local

**The ayahuasca boom.** As ideas, people, and goods increasingly spread around the planet, ayahuasca too has grown beyond its roots in village culture. Comprehensive data on the numbers of visitors traveling to the Amazon to drink ayahuasca do not exist. Collecting this data will require deeper engagement and collaboration with numerous ayahuasca centers, indigenous communities, government statisticians, and epidemiological researchers. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that every year, tens if not hundreds of thousands of spiritual pilgrims or seekers are traveling to the Amazon to experience ayahuasca in ceremony (ESC estimate), and as many or more are drinking ayahuasca in their home countries under the auspices of churches or shamans.

**Global and local inter-cultural dynamics** like over-commercialization and cultural misunderstandings have given rise to a number of issues that threaten the future of ayahuasca and its culture holders, including the safety of visitors, economic exploitation, and the survival of traditional cultures. Other threats are explored in the next section.

“Before, [ayahuasca] was just between the maestro and the disciple, but now it has been opened up... because this is already a world that people have encountered, and they won’t allow themselves to be blinded anymore. But how beautiful it is that [ayahuasca] has opened to be available to everyone.”

Ecuadorean mestizo social activist and yachak (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues interviews, July 2014)
Research findings: Ayahuasca issues and threats

“If we secure our wild fruits, medicinal and ritualistic plants, and timber trees in a more autonomous vision, not depending on the market [to obtain them], the indigenous pueblos will continue to exist…but if we don’t [secure our own plants], our communities will be led by the rope of poverty in the long term. And to be led by the rope of poverty means that [the pueblos] would sell their natural resources, exploit wood and petroleum, and mine workers would enter. It would be the end of the pueblos.”

Ecuadorean indigenous leader (curaco) (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
Based on desk and field research, this section outlines the multi-faceted risks to ayahuasca cultures.

3.1 Human health and safety issues

Ayahuasca is overall very safe. The enduring history of the traditional use of ayahuasca, alongside a wide array of scientific research into its toxicology and pharmacology, attests to ayahuasca’s fundamental safety.

The International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research & Service (ICEERS) notes that:

“The effects of ayahuasca in humans have not been studied in their entirety, which underscores the need for more clinical research and follow up studies. Present scientific research indicates that the use of ayahuasca by healthy individuals is relatively safe from the physiological health perspective. However, it should be taken into account that no clinical trials have been done in relation to the safety profile of ayahuasca in people who suffer health problems” (ICEERS, 2012).

The main safety issues associated with ayahuasca are:

- Ayahuasca’s unsuitability for use by people with serious cardiovascular problems;
- Interactions between the monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors in the brew and certain medicines, especially anti-depressants;
- The risk of psychosis for those with a personal or family history of psychosis;
- The addition of potentially dangerous quantities of admixture plants to the brew, such as Brugmansia species (toe);
- The risk of accidents while under the influence;
- The risk of sexual, psychological, energetic (“black magic”), or physical assault or attack while in ceremony.

These risks are heightened when the shaman is not qualified (sufficiently trained) and/or is not committed to operating only in the best interests of clients. From many indigenous or traditional interviewees’ perspectives, ayahuasca is being used without respect for ancestral ways.

Despite ayahuasca’s relative safety, recent years have seen several accidents, including deaths, during or surrounding ayahuasca ceremonies, a number of which have been scandalized by the media. These reports often sensationalize ayahuasca as dangerous and play into stereotypes of the Amazon and its traditional medicinal practices as being ‘exotic’, ‘primitive’ or ‘witchcraft’, while portraying ayahuasca-drinking westerners as thrill seekers. These representations are inaccurate and damage ayahuasca’s reputation.

The ESC is working to actively reduce the likelihood of future tragedies attributed to ayahuasca-related activities, which are entirely preventable. We are working to develop consensus around specific practices that promote the health and safety of all involved in ayahuasca ceremonies and educate centers, seekers, and others so as to significantly reduce risks.

“It is important to plant…and take care of [the plants]. What is worrying is the fumigation, and many medicines have been lost. The chemical fertilizers also affect the medicines. We think that our territory can be lost. People invade our land and come from many places, for example displaced people, and they take our land. It is necessary to protect our culture, to protect the medicines. And it is important to teach the children.”

Colombian indigenous healer (taita) (Marks, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
3.2 Sustainability issues

The sustainability of ayahuasca practices has three facets:

- **Cultural sustainability**: Whether sufficient numbers of young people have an interest in becoming ayahuasqueros and adequate apprenticeships and support exist to carry on traditional practices;
- **Environmental sustainability**: Whether the admixture plants are harvested on a sustainable basis and the forest ecosystem in which they grow is managed sustainably;
- **Economic viability and equity**: Whether participants are willing to pay a price that adequately compensates ayahuasqueros for their skills and knowledge and ayahuasca tourism generates economic benefits for local communities.

Following is a more detailed discussion of sustainability threats and concerns.

**Cultural sustainability**

**Is ayahuasca “tourism” positive or negative?** The growing interest in ayahuasca tourism (or what might more aptly be called “ayahuasca pilgrimages”) represents a desire to participate in and learn from local traditions. The resulting influx of money and attention can (but does not always) benefit local communities and shamans. As one Ecuadorian shaman put it:

“Dialogue with foreigners (travelers) has greatly motivated us. It makes us value, it makes us feel how important our science is... that these kids that come from the ‘developed’ world are not happy and they come in the search for the true science to find life, tranquility, and peace. This has strengthened us greatly.” — Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues Interview, Ecuador, July 2014

At the same time, ayahuasca traditions are changing as a result of growing commercialization. For example, in many cultures, ayahuasca has traditionally been drunk only by healers. Nowadays, ceremony participants often seek a direct experience of an ayahuasca journey, rather than having the shaman journey on their behalf, so they also drink. Similarly, shamanic apprentices are reportedly focusing on perfecting the visionary experience of ayahuasca, which may result in less emphasis on traditional healing skills and reduced access by communities to shamans’ healing services (Brabec de Mori, 2011). Thus, many young healers don’t know how to cure diseases. As Brabec de Mori notes, “[Healers] are trying to bring to perfection the visionary experience of ayahuasca but no longer study the whole system of Amazonian medicine in order to cure the virulent illnesses among local people.” (Ibid, 2011)

Local interviewees the ESC’s field researchers spoke with in mid-2014 reported the following concerns:

- **Lack of information on curanderos’ qualifications.** There is no agreed standard, process, or oversight body by which a curandero is deemed qualified to practice.
- **Loss of traditions and knowledge.** The younger generation is not interested in apprenticing to be a traditional healer because it often lacks status and cultural understanding and respect. There is a need to increase the perceived value of and respect for traditional medicine and healers and to make them more accessible.
- **Lack of participant awareness and cultural sensitivity.** Many participants have unclear intentions, do not educate themselves on safety issues, and/or do not conduct themselves in culturally appropriate ways. Consequently, shamans risk being blamed for reckless or insensitive behavior on the part of participants.
Environmental sustainability

There are two types of environmental sustainability issues affecting ayahuasca:

- **Direct environmental issues** related to ayahuasca activity.
- **External (indirect) environmental threats** from industrial development or other unsustainable forms of resource use.

**Direct environmental issues**

- **Overharvesting and shortages:** Interviewees during the first phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues reported that some locations are experiencing shortages of ayahuasca admixture plants, suggesting that the plants are being over-harvested to meet growing demand in local and export markets. These plants take years to grow under natural conditions, and some shamans are not cultivating their own supply.

- **Lack of botanical and agronomical knowledge of the plants brewed to make ayahuasca:** Botanically speaking, very little has been published regarding *Banisteriopsis caapi* (ayahuasca) and *Psychotria viridis* (chacruna). However, there is a great deal of orally transmitted and personally held knowledge. For instance, many indigenous and mestizo groups who use ayahuasca distinguish between numerous varieties and growth stages of *Banisteriopsis caapi*, all of which have different names and different applications. This profusion of forms and varieties is reflected in the extremely high level of morphological diversity found in *B. caapi*. *Banisteriopsis muricata* is also used in ayahuasca preparations, yet even less is known about this species. Scientists know little about how ayahuasca plants grow best in their natural habitats. Little is known about:
  - species behavior;
  - their centers of origin;
  - the history of their dispersal throughout the Amazon;
  - their diversity within the Amazon;
  - the other plant species with which they form communities;
  - the history of their (semi-)domestication;
  - their cultivation processes;
  - their regeneration patterns after harvesting;
  - genetic variations;
  - natural hybridization; or

- methods of potential conservation of genetic material (and thus of protection of biodiversity).

People with close personal relationships to the plants will know some of these details, while other details cannot be known without scientific study. Thus, all of these areas are ripe for further investigation to find ways to protect the plants and the traditional healing practices they make possible.

**Despite a shortage of scientific or academic knowledge, we know that ayahuasca plants are friends of the forest that encourage sustainable practices:** Anecdotal evidence from the Ayahuasca Dialogues research suggests that ayahuasca grows best in the soils and on hardwood trees of primary forests.

**Ayahuasca may encourage biodiversity:** The ayahuasca vine grows on a variety of host trees and creates a network between trees. This network creates microhabitats for animals in the rainforest canopy and promotes connectivity within and between plant and animal communities. In addition, the flavor and medicinal properties of ayahuasca seem to be influenced by the host plants on which they grow and vice versa. This biochemical exchange suggests a complex relationship that may have significant impacts on forest health.
External (indirect) environmental threats

Shamanic plants are also threatened by industrial development and agricultural practices that undermine the forest ecosystem in which they grow.

Large-scale palm oil plantations destroy genetic diversity through mono-cropping.

Extractive industries like mining, oil, and gas are resulting in oil spill contamination, mercury pollution, and loss of biodiversity.

To date, insufficient research has been conducted to gauge the ecological status of ayahuasca admixture plants. Further research is required to assess the level of threat.

Economic sustainability

Local stakeholders interviewed by the ESC’s field researchers reported the following economic concerns:

· Viability of shamanism as an occupation: How can traditional healers earn sufficient income to support their families and be protected from legal and/or reputational risks?

· Community benefits: How can local communities benefit from ayahuasca tourism and cultivation or wild collection activities?

· Value of plant resources: What can be done to recognize or even increase the economic value of plants for those growing or harvesting medicinal plants sustainably, while still ensuring that local people have access to plant materials at affordable prices?

Closely related to the third point is the issue of intellectual property rights. The signing of the Nagoya Protocol in 2010 by over 90 countries, and the ratification of this protocol by dozens in 2014, has focused attention on traditional knowledge holders’ rights to benefit from the sale and use of traditional medicines like ayahuasca. Intellectual property rights establish who can claim ownership of genetic resources. To date, multinational pharmaceutical companies that engage in bio-prospecting, guided by local knowledge, have been adept at garnering the majority of economic benefits associated with ethnobotanicals. The Nagoya Protocol is one potential model that requires companies to:

1) get prior and informed consent (approval) from governments and traditional knowledge holders before taking new ethnobotanicals to market; and

2) help ensure access and share part of their profits with traditional knowledge holders (ABS - Access and Benefit Sharing).
3.3 Legal threats

As noted under the Legal Status section, France and the U.K. have criminalized the use of ayahuasca or its admixtures and other countries have restricted its use to members of recognized ayahuasca churches.

At the international level, DMT, a key psychoactive constituent in ayahuasca, is a controlled substance under the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. However, ayahuasca admixtures (plant ingredients) and preparations are not under international control:

"At present, no plants, including the ones containing psychoactive ingredients, are controlled under the 1971 Convention, although the active ingredients they contain are sometimes subject to international control. The plants and plant-based preparations that contain them, namely khat and ayahuasca, respectively, are not subject to any restrictions or control measures" (INCB, 2012).

In spite of the INCB clarification, ICEERS notes that various arrests related to the importation and distribution of ayahuasca have taken place in some countries, as the police and courts presume that these are crimes. Moreover, the INCB report raises concerns about the safety of ayahuasca:

"The Board notes with concern that the use of those substances has been associated with various serious health risks (both physical and psychological) and even with death. The Board therefore wishes to draw the attention of Governments to the fact that the use of such plant materials for whatever purpose could be unsafe practice (ibid., 2012)."

Each new headline about an ayahuasca-related injury or death increases the risk that national governments will seek to ban the use of ayahuasca. This is more likely in the absence of a clearly defined international agreement on safe practices (see Kleiman and Teles, 2006). Indeed, many national governments already specifically prohibit plants containing DMT.

"Ayahuasca has long been revered as a traditional therapeutic agent over a large geographical region and throughout a wide variety of cultures, and it arguably deserves more attention from modern medical researchers and clinical practitioners."

Callaway, Grob, McKenna, Nichols, Shulgin, and Tupper, 2006
The Ayahuasca Dialogues

“Through these Dialogues, the ESC will identify the wise men... There are many who are very reserved and when they are reserved they are the ones who have much wisdom and the [ESC], as it is [doing this work], it would be very important to make the necessary intent to put themselves in contact with these types of people, and I congratulate them for this type of dialogue work.”

Ecuadorian yachak (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues Interview, July, 2014)
The ESC is convening the Ayahuasca Dialogues as a voluntary, multi-year project to increase communication between all stakeholders who have a role and a stake in the future of ayahuasca, from the grassroots up, responding to stakeholder needs and concerns at every stage.

4.1 Goals and envisioned outcomes

The Ayahuasca Dialogues is a process that aims to:
- Articulate the key needs of all concerned ayahuasca stakeholder groups;
- Recognize common core principles and practices for ayahuasca’s safe use and sustainability.
- Develop the mechanisms to recognize and communicate consistent implementation of these safer and more sustainable practices by any entity that voluntarily asks to be recognized, such as ayahuasca practitioners, communities, ceremony centers, growers, harvesters, and others (“assurance”).
- Find other ways to meet the needs of others, such as leveraging existing or additional resources; developing means of funding community development projects; educating seekers about safety, sustainability, and cultural preservation issues, and building capacity to implement these principles and practices, such as training programs.

Key envisioned outcomes for the Ayahuasca Dialogues include:
- The development of a safe space for knowledge exchange and network building.
- Increased use of community-defined safety and sustainability practices.
- Alleviating pressing sustainability and safety issues threatening ayahuasca.

4.2 Stakeholders’ key concerns

The ESC is convening the Ayahuasca Dialogues to listen to all stakeholders’ concerns, and proactively reach out to key stakeholder groups, in a constructive dialogue that is already beginning to lead to action.

We are working hard to ensure that these efforts lead to safer practices and positive social, environmental, and economic changes on the ground.

Research and outreach summary

Our researchers traveled in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru; contacted over 200 people; and conducted over 90 interviews. Each interview averaged 1.5 hours. Collectively, we wrote, reviewed, and summarized over 600 pages of interview notes.
Researchers targeted key stakeholder groups and prioritized interviews more or less in this order: curanderos, ayahuasca center owners, indigenous leaders, cultivators, environmental activists, ayahuasca churches, and government officials. We note that there can be considerable overlap between these stakeholder categories and differences between, and even within them. Nevertheless, the following issues represent some initial areas to explore for the purpose of building consensus on best practices. Listed below are the key concerns expressed by interviewees.

- **Indigenous leaders**: Continuity of traditions, community benefits, land issues, problems with industrial development;
- **Ayahuasca center owners**: Access to supply of ayahuasca, safety of visitors, how to work effectively with local communities, efficacy of treatment, and market differentiation;
- **Cultivators**: Genetic diversity, cultivation and agronomy techniques, good practices to ensure strong active ingredient content, meeting market demand, preventing plant theft;
- **Ayahuasca center employees and local communities**: Wages, job security, and other issues;
- **Environmental activists**: External threats, policy issues, industrial development;
- **Wild plant collectors**: We were unable to connect with wild collectors;
- **Ayahuasca churches**: For a summary of the ayahuasca churches, see the section on Brazil.
- **Researchers**: Agronomy, botany, biodiversity, product manufacturing;
- **Government officials**: Ensuring effective working relationships and increased economic value, and effective ways of recognizing traditional practices.

**Stakeholder breakdown**

Over 90 people were formally interviewed in these stakeholder categories:

- 25 indigenous yachaks / taitas / curanderos (8 are center owners, 4 are women)
- 12 mestizo academics / researchers / experts
- 10 foreign center owners
- 9 mestizo curanderos (5 are center owners)
- 9 mestizo healers
- 7 foreign academics / researchers / experts
- 4 mestizo NGO directors / community leaders
- 4 mestizo patient advocates
- 3 church ceremony leaders
- 3 foreign NGO directors
- 2 indigenous center owners (1 is community leader)
- 2 indigenous administrators (1 is school director)
- 2 mestizo government officials
- 1 indigenous secretary
- 1 indigenous community leader

94 people interviewed
While this research is not a comprehensive mapping of stakeholders and concerns, we have learned a great deal about the key factors affecting ayahuasca’s sustainability and safe use. While ESC researchers contacted numerous types of stakeholders during this first phase of the Dialogues, the voices of the healers (curanderos/yachaks/sabios/taitas) carry substantially more weight, and appropriately so, as it is their cosmovision that has for centuries defined how ayahuasca has been used safely and sustainably.

The predominant stakeholder concerns revolved around cultural preservation, respectful cooperation, and benefits from intercultural exchange. Most stakeholders expressed the greatest concern for the preservation of ayahuasca as a medicine tradition. Modern life attracts youth away from their local cultures. Globalization, however, appears to be a double-edged sword: while the pull of attention and valuation is often away from the indigenous cosmovision, interviews demonstrate that the recent interest of foreigners in the traditional indigenous healing practices often restores a sense of value to ancestral knowledge. Globalization is thus also a road traveling in both directions: many indigenous stakeholders expressed a desire for a more reciprocal cultural exchange, in which their communities received benefits from exposure to outside cultures (i.e. training in technology, English education, etc.). On the other side, several stakeholders said that outsiders came to their communities only to take; their experiences with various NGOs and other foreign influences have been that people come, ask questions, make vague promises, and then don’t return. Interviewees in every geography and stakeholder category recognize imminent change in their lives and would welcome new relationships with cultural outsiders that are based on trust and long-term mutual benefit, but are concerned about preservation and retention of their cosmovisions and maintaining long-term relationships.

Regarding safety factors, interviewees more frequently cited the credentials, knowledge, and abilities of the shamans in managing the medicine, along with the intention and education of the ayahuasca seeker, rather than preexisting health conditions. Many practitioners and healers interviewed expressed that their primary mode of determining whether or not someone could take the medicine is an interview. If prompted to provide more detail, they mentioned contraindicated conditions. These are traditionally managed by adjusting the dose of the medicine given, which can only be determined by an experienced healer or an apprentice. Many healers mentioned the need for some kind of recognition of the ability of the shaman, but noted that these approaches are fraught with danger and in-fighting. Under all circumstances, the duration of ayahuasca training, study, and dietas (undertaking a strict diet with a plant medicine) should not be less than four to five years to achieve adequate knowledge of ayahuasca, much less master other medicinal plants. Healers and teachers in all areas expressed a need for collective development of training approaches and increased recognition of traditional healing practices.

Sustainability of Banisteriopsis caapi and Psychotria viridis is threatened in many areas due to large-scale resource extraction and ecological devastation. In Peru, high demand is driving up prices and reducing available supplies of vines and admixture plants. Most of the interviewees expressed concern for general forest sustainability, and many have had to travel farther to find the plants that they need. Their recommended solutions spanned the establishment of field schools, medicinal botanical gardens, land stewardship and conservation programs, securing land tenure for healers to grow their own supplies of crops, and recognition of good cultivation and wild collection practices. Many of the most forward-thinking healers and indigenous or community leaders are involved in sustainability projects with these components and many expressed interest in further collaboration to develop such projects.

“*My research shows that with the guidance of yachaks and other wise elders in Ecuador, the ‘how’ of ESC work will further unfold in dialogue with these local geniuses of community organization.*”

Christina Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues Researcher in Ecuador
AREAS WHERE AYAHUASCA DIALOGUES INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED

Researchers
- Christina Chaya
- Howard Marks
- Kate Keller
- Mariella Noriega
- Maya Corminboeuf
- Nicholas Canby, Juliana Martins
4.3 Country profiles

In addition to the above issues, some countries face specific political, social, cultural, economic or other conditions, including some that surprised the ESC’s Ayahuasca Dialogues researchers. This section summarizes key country-specific research findings and their implications for our approach to future Ayahuasca Dialogues efforts in each country.

**Bolivia**

Ayahuasca activity in Bolivia is much less compared to neighboring Peru. Ayahuasca is not under legal pressure in Bolivia. The ESC’s general approach to the Ayahuasca Dialogues in Bolivia will be similar to Peru, but more resources will be spent in Peru given the relatively low level of ayahuasca activity in Bolivia compared to other countries.

**Brazil**

The Brazilian use of ayahuasca and its traditions are very different from elsewhere in South America. In Brazil, ayahuasca is used almost exclusively in churches by people who drink it as a sacrament in ceremonies, usually once or twice a month.

The majority of ayahuasca churches still come from three major lineages that incorporate elements of Christianity: Santo Daime, A Barquinha, and União do Vegetal. However, in the last decade there has been an increase in neo-shamanic and mixed traditions in urban centers that do not have a strong Christian element (Labate, Santana de Rose & Guimarães dos Santos, 2009). These centers operate like churches and are not tourist retreats – factors that strengthen the case for their ayahuasca sacrament being considered “religious use” under Brazilian law (Labate & Feeney, 2011).

The legality of ayahuasca in Brazil is complex, with considerable grey areas. Ayahuasca use is permitted for “religious use”, but “religion” in not defined in the federal constitution. This introduces some degree of interpretation into what is a “religious use” and what is not (Labate, 2011). Moreover, despite ayahuasca being taken off the list of prohibited substances in the mid-1980s – which should render it legal – Brazil’s National Drug Policy Council (CONAD) prohibits commercial distribution of ayahuasca, therapeutic uses, tourism, advertisement, use outside of religious rituals, and association with illicit drugs (Labate, 2011; Multidisciplinary Group Report).

The ESC’s mission and goals may not be applicable or necessary in Brazil. Instead, the ESC can collaborate with the churches. Non-church ayahuasca activity is illegal, and although many report that general ayahuasca prohibition is not enforced, commercial ayahuasca centers are not common, or at least do not publicize their presence. Brazilian ayahuasca use by churches appears relatively safe and sustainable. Additionally, the differences between ayahuasca traditions in Brazil and shamanic practices elsewhere make reaching agreement on safety practices substantially more challenging. The ESC’s focus in Brazil is to learn from existing structures and practices that can be applied in other countries (especially the UDV’s highly developed plant cultivation and conservation work), and identify opportunities for collaboration related to local capacity building.

By Nicholas Canby and Juliana Martins, Ayahuasca Dialogues researchers in Brazil
Tourism and commercial ayahuasca activities are legal, but not well developed compared to Peru or even Ecuador. Colombia’s protracted civil war is an inescapable influence, which brings both real and perceived dangers. The increasingly likely prospect of a peace process ratification could bring new development pressures and more commercial ayahuasca activity. Therefore, designing flexible ESC approaches to collaborating on ayahuasca safety and sustainability approaches in Colombia should be a high priority over the next five years.

Colombia has a unique and highly developed ayahuasca culture. Many taitas (Colombian healers) regularly travel around the country to hold yagé (the most common Colombian term for ayahuasca) ceremonies in cities and suburbs, in residences or eco-village style settings. These ceremonies are frequented mostly by Colombians, not foreign tourists. The rapid growth in ayahuasca use has also created many more neo-shamanic ceremonies. In the surrounding areas of one city, neo-shamanic groups combine traditions and mix numerous plants in ways that depart from traditional ayahuasca uses.

The unique threats of ongoing political violence and coca fumigation, along with pan-Amazonian threats like poverty and modernity threaten the traditions and the future of yagé knowledge holders in Colombia.

Stakeholders and their main concerns

This first phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues research in Colombia has centered around taitas and their secretaries, along with many other interviewees in traditional Camas and Cofán communities in the upper and lower Putumayo region. “Neo-shamans”, academics, and frequent drinkers who mostly live in cities were also interviewed formally and informally.

Environmental destruction: All of the interviewees spoke about the devastating environmental issues affecting the sustainability of ayahuasca. Whereas Colombia is comparably shielded from many industrial development projects, coca fumigation is a pronounced problem, leading to polluted rivers, destruction of productive crops, and human health issues. In the Putumayo, where yagé is used traditionally and produced, fumigation, the petroleum and mining industries, deforestation, migrations of displaced peoples, and other industrial development pose serious threats.

Indigenous interviewees prioritized the need to preserve their territory and also the need for good cultural education and health care in their communities. Many stakeholders and community members told stories about these pressures, and noted that their land is infertile and their rivers are polluted. The water and the fish are toxic and taste like chemicals and nothing can grow anymore. Their traditional way of life, which depended on farming and fishing, is no longer possible.

Community development: Many interviewees suggested the ESC focus on issues of cultural sustainability and community development, prioritizing traditional education to support and encourage the youth to learn traditional practices. In villages, many taitas shared that, instead of having to travel so often and far to treat the people, they would like to work in community malocas (ceremonial buildings) close to home, but they lack the resources to build them.

Breakdown of traditional accountability mechanisms: Colombia’s taitas, who now travel on their own, lack mechanisms of accountability to village leaders. This issue is perhaps even more pronounced in Colombia than in Peru or Ecuador, where many healers practice at centers and have the reputation of their center to uphold. Colombian taitas have only their own personal reputations.

Improper healer training: Every interviewee was concerned about shamans without proper training abusing the medicine through bad practices and impure yagé. The reputation of ayahuasca is threatened by practitioners who have not undergone the extensive training traditionally required of taitas.

Commercialization: Several of the more westernized people interviewed expressed concern regarding the commercialization of yagé, and the lack of safety information, intention, and understanding of traditional practices. Interviewees consider ayahuasca an important medicine that should not be thought of as a drug. The majority expressed concerns that yagé is being sold as a recreational product in city markets and even in Bogota nightclubs, thus damaging the reputation of the medicine.

Lack of understanding or recognition of yagé as medicine: The academics interviewed differed slightly...
in their recommendations and emphasized the lack of intercultural dialogue and ignorance of traditions as key factors that jeopardize the future of yagé. Scientific research would do much to support the future sustainability of ayahuasca, legitimize the medicine, and strengthen its reputation. Currently this research is severely lacking but if and when the appropriate studies are undertaken, the public health systems could then better recognize the value of this medicine.

Comments on the Ayahuasca Dialogues and ESC’s role: The ESC’s mission and goals were little understood by many traditional people interviewed, but they expressed an interest to participate in an international dialogue on the future development and sustainability of ayahuasca. Supporting and protecting the cultures and reputations of healers will require significant intercultural dialogue and understanding. The majority of interviewees, but not all of them, believe there is a growing need to educate ayahuasca drinkers in regards to safety and cultural understanding. This could help minimize concerns related to its use by those outside of traditional cultures.

Ensuring trust and collaboration: Many Cofán people (along with groups like UMIYAC (Unión de Médicos Indígenas Yageceros de la Amazonia Colombiana, or Union of Yagé Healers of the Columbian Amazon), which has instituted a system of recognizing taitas) have expressed that they are no longer willing to share their traditions or work with outsiders due to a history of empty promises and lack of reciprocity. However, there were strong indications from many communities that with continued relationship building, the ESC can increase the participation and potential collaboration of stakeholders who are currently skeptical.

Continuity of research: In the second phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues, more research must be done regarding past and ongoing initiatives to work with and recognize ayahuasca knowledge holders, especially to address the future of ayahuasca in Colombia on both the local and national levels. (See Section 5.7 “Lessons learned from efforts to recognize shamans”.)

By Howard Marks,
ESC Ayahuasca Dialogues researcher in Colombia

“On the theme of ayahuasca, we have to start from the essence of the traditional culture, because if we abandon this appreciation, it will not be beneficial for those who seek ayahuasca, nor for the culture, nor for the plants... [The Ayahuasca Dialogues] is a good initiative, but we must initiate it from its essence, because therein lies the problem.”

Indigenous academic and community leader, Peru (Corminboeuf, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
Ecuador

Ayahuasca activity in Ecuador is varied in form and geography. There is growing and significant commercial activity and a long history of traditional uses that are increasingly threatened by dynamics observed elsewhere in the Amazon.

Ayahuasca ceremonies are found in all three Ecuadorian regions, the coast, mountains (sierra) and Amazon (oriente), with generally less activity the further one travels from the Amazon. Based on interviews, Ecuadorian activity using ancestral medicinal practices currently appears more widespread than commercial ayahuasca activity. All interviewees are concerned with the abuses of ayahuasca and wanted to avoid what they see as problems associated with over-commercialization or lack of respect for traditions.

Ecuadorian efforts to protect indigenous and ayahuasca traditions: Domestic and international civil society groups are active in defending the rights and interests of native Ecuadorian peoples, with many actively working to strengthen their villages. During the current president Correa’s first term, the constitution was rewritten to acknowledge indigenous nations by recognizing their own distinct nationalities and governance. The Ecuadorian government has made attempts to strengthen ancestral medicinal practices, but interviewees expressed disappointment with these initiatives, and most remain skeptical of government intentions. Some universities have attempted to incorporate ancestral medicine into curriculums. Some government officials and others interviewed want to avoid having ayahuasca become illegal the way San Pedro (Trichocereus pachanoi) did because of abuses.

The need to focus on traditional usage: Ecuadorian interviewees generally emphasized that their deepest concerns are the abuse of sacred plants stemming from lack of sincerity and lack of connection to ancestral spiritual beliefs. Ayahuasca’s sustainability in Ecuador is inseparable from indigenous cosmovisions, where ayahuasca is a master plant for guidance, healing, and other uses. Respect and understanding is what supports its safe and sustainable use and helps avoid some of the most grievous side effects of increased intercultural exchanges and commercial activity. In developing a multi-cultural approach to these issues, western approaches that focus on establishing formal criteria for safe use and sustainability use cannot overlook the spiritual aspects.

The ESC’s approach in Ecuador, like elsewhere, requires continuously working from the heart of the indigenous Amazonian cosmovision to support local people in defining their own vision of a safer and more sustainable ayahuasca future. Practically speaking, this means respecting local and indigenous processes for reaching consensus, with the ESC in the background supporting the advancement of this vision and integrating this into wider stakeholder concerns.

Success in the second phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues depends greatly on working with respected and knowledgeable indigenous representatives, making concerted efforts to include all voices while not letting famous personalities dissuade authentic ayahuasqueros from participating. While identifying true knowledge holders (sabios) is not easy, working with local, regional and national leaders can help. These sabios also understand the contexts of different cultures in our world today and can help build trust in the ESC’s activities and its potential impacts. Depending on resources and progress in relationship-building, many stakeholders advised that the second phase should include regional group encounters (meetings) led in the style of that region, guided by local peoples, followed by a national encounter and a general South American encounter. The ESC has already begun participating in local encounters among tribal leaders in Ecuador.

By Christina Chaya, ESC Ayahuasca Dialogues researcher in Ecuador
Peru

Peru is the epicenter of global ayahuasca pilgrimage activity. Peru has hundreds of ayahuasca centers offering ayahuasca ceremonies. The government recognizes ayahuasca as part of national cultural patrimony.

Ayahuasca is increasingly regarded as an important driver of the Peruvian economy. Peru is also home to dozens of indigenous groups with their own concerns about the future of ayahuasca. Numerous environmental, social, and economic issues are affecting ayahuasca’s future in Peru.

ESC success in Peru is crucial: Because of Peru’s importance, the ESC has focused more field research resources there than anywhere else. Over the last year, three ESC researchers and the Executive Director have collectively spent close to one year in total formally interviewing dozens of stakeholders and speaking with hundreds more. Because of our strong engagement on the ground and commitment to building relationships, the first ESC projects are taking shape there.

The Iquitos roundtable: The ESC’s first cooperation with the Peruvian government: In August 2014, the ESC organized the first Ayahuasca Dialogues roundtable in Iquitos in cooperation with the Loreto regional government’s department of External Commerce, Tourism, and Arts at their office. The meeting was organized at the request of ayahuasca centers who are experiencing shortages of chacruna. The roundtable theme focused on models for trading sustainably grown chacruna and finding ways to grow chacruna in the unfavorable Iquitos climate. At the meeting, stakeholders like university professors, ayahuasca centers, and curanderos agreed to explore working together to collect and preserve ayahuasca’s genetic diversity, discussed means of disseminating plants for communities to grow, and urged the ESC help develop models to ensure that communities are benefiting economically, culturally, and socially from increased trade of sustainably grown medicinal plants like ayahuasca. The ESC agreed to explore fundraising for these research efforts. Another suggestion that emerged from the roundtable discussions involved establishment of courses in traditional plant use at relevant post-secondary institutions in faculties of biology, agronomy, and medicine.

The earliest interest from centers in safety and sustainability: Many Peruvian ayahuasca centers and healers have expressed their willingness to collaborate with the ESC on the Ayahuasca Dialogues, principally because the ESC is one of the first organizations that has expressed interest in supporting safer and more sustainable traditional uses of ayahuasca. Many centers and healers interviewed also expressed interest in eventually being recognized for implementing the Ayahuasca Agreement.

Pilot testing the Ayahuasca Health Guide and Ayahuasca Agreement: In cooperation with the Living Amazon Foundation (Fundación Amazonía Viva) in San Martín, Peru, the ESC will begin pilot testing safety and sustainability projects at a cacao cooperative that has recently rekindled their local ayahuasca culture by building a ceremonial maloca and inviting visitors. This community wishes to keep visitors safe, ensure that the visitors are aware and respectful of the local culture, and also grow ayahuasca and chacruna that will eventually be recognized to the Ayahuasca Agreement and sold to ayahuasca centers in Peru.

Given the level of activity in Peru, the ESC will continue to prioritize the development of the Ayahuasca Agreement and related activities here while also engaging with stakeholders from surrounding countries.
“In our work to protect Peru’s rainforests, people are the solution. We fully support the establishment of the ESC. Market recognition for sustainable and responsible cultivation of traditional medicinal plants like ayahuasca can help empower people and protect our forests and our traditions.”

Roldán Rojas Paredes, Executive Director of the Fundación Amazonía Viva, at launch of the Ayahuasca Dialogues, October 2013
The Ayahuasca Agreement is the major intended outcome of the Ayahuasca Dialogues. The Ayahuasca Agreement will represent broad consensus on the major safe use and sustainability issues affecting ayahuasca. It should appeal to varied groups of stakeholders because it will be developed balancing these stakeholders’ interests and addressing their common needs.

Principles for the Ayahuasca Dialogues Process to reach an Ayahuasca Agreement

These principles are based on ESC stakeholder feedback and ISEAL Alliance good practices:

- **Transparency**: Transparency about background, scope, and who is involved;
- **Responsiveness**: Responding as well as possible to all other stakeholder concerns during the course of ESC work;
- **Objectivity**: Decisions are informed by evidence coming from research conclusions and informed dialogue;
- **Inclusivity**: Anyone can participate;
- **Balance of stakeholder interests**: Key stakeholder groups are represented so that no single stakeholder group can dominate;
- **Global agreement (consistency) and locally applicability**: Global principles and local indicators, as well as local recognition of lineages and qualifications to be vetted by safety records and ceremony participant feedback;
- **Additionality**: This term is often used in areas of ecotourism, where the sustainability claim being made is adding a net positive impact to the community, environment, and/or economy;
- **Sustainability**: The language of the Agreement should be about improving social, economic, environmental sustainability and safety concerns and not about other things;
- **Improvement**: Seeking to understand sustainability impacts of the ESC’s work and improve it over time, regularly integrating learning from the field into our work;
- **Relevance**: The Agreement shall only contain measures necessary to achieve desired outcomes. Any criteria for determining alignment to principles of the Ayahuasca Agreement shall be included, such as addressing all of the defined social, economic, environmental, and safety outcomes;
- **Rigor**: The ESC will measure progress toward desired outcomes and that information about the ways of determining implementation of principles and criteria will be accurate and consistent;
- **Accessibility**: The ESC will reduce barriers to entry to become part of Dialogue and the eventual Agreement by facilitating capacity building or other means of engagement whenever possible, including minimizing costs or overly burdensome requirements, as facilitating access to information about how to implement the Agreement, such as training, as well as translating into relevant languages and providing support for travel whenever possible.
5.1 Process and approach

The path to achieving consensus rests on an agreed-upon approach.

The ESC’s approach to the proposed Ayahuasca Agreement consultation and engagement is outlined in Sections 5.9 and 6.1 and Appendix II; and is consistent with ISEAL requirements for a Terms of Reference (ToR). These sections constitute a rough draft of the ToR and reflect the ESC’s commitment to an iterative, transparent, and clearly defined process.

The ToR defines the following elements of the Ayahuasca Agreement consensus building process:

- **Scope of the agreement** (geographic, legal, etc);
- **Expected outcomes of the Agreement** based on community needs assessment and stakeholder concerns;
- **Mitigation of risks and unintended consequences** (see Section 5.8);
- **Mapping all stakeholders**;
- **Public summary of how to engage with the ESC** (including translations of key documents into important languages like Spanish);
- **Public consultations** (at least one 60-day public comment period with public responses to all stakeholder concerns, and at least one more 30-day public comment period with responses);
- **Balance of stakeholder interests**;
- **Clear decision-making process** for how the Ayahuasca Agreement will be determined;
- **Public availability** of the final version of the Ayahuasca Agreement;
- **Revisions** at least every five years or sooner as determined by stakeholder feedback;
- **Record keeping** of Ayahuasca Agreement engagement processes for at least five years;
- **Clear complaints resolution mechanism** during the Ayahuasca Dialogues and Agreement consultation period;
- **Consistency in recognition/assurance** of the Ayahuasca Agreement shall be clear and objective.

5.2 Drafting the Ayahuasca Agreement

The draft Ayahuasca Agreement will be the result of extensive stakeholder consultation, and will represent community-recognized good practices in the safety and sustainability of ayahuasca.

This process includes a public consultation period as defined in ISEAL codes of good practice. The Ayahuasca Agreement draft will be written by the ESC secretariat with support of the Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee (described in Appendix I).

Some Ayahuasca Agreement content areas can already be envisioned based on stakeholder feedback thus far. The following are only initial ideas to be developed more fully (along with other ideas) based on the Ayahuasca Agreement stakeholder consultation process in late 2015.

Sample environmental sustainability-related principles:

- Sustainable collection of wild vines/chacruna (including providence of vines, sustainable use of materials, organic, etc);
- Propagation/cultivation and harvest of new plants based on harvest;
- Premiums or preference for ayahuasca vine and admixture plant materials grown in ways that maximize sustainability impacts, such as forest coverage (spacing, preservation of forest, etc).

Sample social and economic sustainability-related principles:

- Expanding economic benefits for communities and workers, with recognition of minimum wage laws, and special recognition of locations offering higher “living wages”;

These ideas will be developed further through the public consultation process leads to a final agreement that is signed by the ESC and all stakeholders.
· Development of FairTrade premiums for ayahuasca cultivation ceremony locations when managed by and for communities, with some premiums coming from ayahuasca seekers willing to pay more to empower communities serving ayahuasca or ayahuasca centers engaging closely with communities to bring them benefits;

· Access for local/traditional ayahuasca drinkers at affordable prices at centers and in communities;

Sample quality-related principles:
· Proper identification of ayahuasca admixture plants (such as color of vine, chacruna, origin, etc);
· Maximizing yields in chacruna and ayahuasca (such as picking at optimal time, working to understand and spread knowledge of good cultivation techniques;

Sample safety-related principles:
· Development of the Ayahuasca Health Guide (www.AyahuascaHealthGuide.com) with information for ayahuasca seekers, centers, and healers, including developing consistent safety records for ayahuasca brews for participating ceremony locations;
· Outreach, education, and capacity building to help centers and communities implement the Health Guide.

“The ESC model can help raise awareness of risks with its community-supported approach. The fact is that certified ayahuasca is not the same as fair-trade papayas, and the ESC seems a promising approach.”

Anthropologist Jeremy Narby

AYAHUASCA ADMIXTURE PLANTS GROW BEST IN MATURE FORESTS

TIME

Pioneer Plants (Annual)
Perennial Plants and Grasses
Shrubs (Woody Pioneers)
Short-lived Pioneer Trees (Young Forests)
Climax Forest (Mature Forest)
5.3 The Ayahuasca Health Guide

The Ayahuasca Health Guide will form the basis for safety discussions during the Ayahuasca Dialogues.

The Guide is a free, easy-to-use, open resource for ayahuasca and health. It is being developed with community participation and consultation, starting with a 60-day public consultation process following ISEAL practices. The Health Guide includes sections tailored to seekers, and to those holding ceremonies, in order to make best practices available to all. The ESC is developing this by reaching out to and referencing materials from Plantaforma, UMIYAC, ICEERS, and others who have already done much to lead the way to safer ayahuasca use.

The Guide is hosted at www.AyahuascaHealthGuide.com for all interested persons to make suggestions and comments. The ESC commits to read and respond to all suggestions and comments, and to integrate them wherever feasible. Public consultation periods will last until general agreement (the absence of sustained dissent by any one stakeholder group) is achieved.

The document can be publicly shared and used by anyone provided they link to the Guide’s website. The ESC will work to communicate the Guide’s content to improve ayahuasca seeker safety and ensure that interested ayahuasca centers and communities are able to implement these recommendations.

The results from pilot projects and implementation will be used to improve the Guide and ensure that its most important components are integrated into the Ayahuasca Agreement and fully utilized by all centers or communities implementing the Agreement.

The scientific facts in the final version of the Ayahuasca Health Guide will be kept updated by ICEERS every six months.

Learn from and contribute to the Ayahuasca Health Guide at: www.AyahuascaHealthGuide.com

5.4 Forming the ESC Stakeholder Council

The Stakeholder Council is one key way for the community to govern the ESC and the Ayahuasca Agreement.

The Stakeholder Council will have final approval of the Ayahuasca Agreement, along with other roles noted in Appendix I.

Following is a proposed approach for forming the Stakeholder Council. It will be revised based on stakeholder feedback:

- **Nominations**: Anyone can nominate members of the Stakeholder Council. These suggestions can be sent to nominations [at] ethnobotanicalcouncil [dot] org. Nominees will be contacted before information is released publicly;
- **Public consultation on nominees**: Beginning in January 2015, the public nominee list will be updated monthly on the ESC website for public comment;
- **Nominee profile**: Any person considered to have a role in shaping the future of the Ayahuasca Dialogues, or who could be affected by the Ayahuasca Dialogues, can be nominated;
- **Local bodies**: Where possible, it is suggested that local Stakeholder Councils be formed, such as in Iquitos, where ayahuasca activity is especially important to the local culture and economy;
- **Decision-making (parliamentary) procedures** will be defined by the Stakeholder Council itself;
- **Timeline**: Nominations should be submitted before March 2015 and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis;
- **There is no limit on the number of Stakeholder Council members or nominees.**
5.5 Implementing the Ayahuasca Agreement

The sustainability and safety impacts coming from an agreement about good practices are only as good as the implementation of its principles and criteria.

The Ayahuasca Agreement will be entirely voluntary and open to use by anyone who wants to use it. To date, considerable numbers of ayahuasca centers, plant growers, indigenous practitioners, and other stakeholders have expressed their desire for formal recognition of their effective and consistent implementation of the principles and criteria that will be defined in the Agreement. These stakeholders are asking for credible differentiation in the eyes of seekers, governments, and other stakeholders.

In order to achieve recognition of effective use of the Ayahuasca Agreement, several factors must be maintained: First is the accessibility of the mechanism by which consistent use of the Agreement is assessed, which means keeping the costs low and any practices as simple as possible to effectively increase safety and positive sustainability impacts. Second is the use of the Agreement itself so that a large enough number of centers, farms, and communities are involved and the Agreement achieves a high level of recognition among those looking for safe and mutually beneficial ayahuasca ceremonies. The Agreement will only be useful if it is used. We believe that the best way for good practices to be implemented is for those practices to be recognized in society and in the marketplace so that more people choose to go to the practitioners who are implementing the Agreement.

Assurance is important to ensure the safety of visitors and the positive sustainability impacts of ayahuasca use. While the Ayahuasca Health Guide and the Ayahuasca Agreement are both “public goods” that can improve practices generally, without means of determining which ayahuasca centers or communities have implemented which parts of the agreement, there will be less ability for ayahuasca seekers to know which sites are safer or more sustainable. Ayahuasca drinkers are not necessarily familiar with all of the aspects of ayahuasca safety. They have not necessarily done their homework about the sites they wish to visit. They have little way of knowing about the safety records of these sites.

To encourage use and rewards for implementation of and adherence to the Agreement, the ESC is exploring “assurance mechanisms” to recognize use of the Ayahuasca Agreement. We want that whatever form of assurance we use to be accessible (lower cost, as easy as possible to assess) and at the same time credible.

The credibility of the assurance mechanism must be maintained so that only those who are actually implementing the Agreement are being recognized. In some cases, a claim by a center or practitioner may be credible, but for most people seeking sustainable or safe services, some form of credible assurance mechanism based on independent evaluation and/or information transparency is more necessary.

“Relationships between cultures have been getting progressively stronger and more open. Rituals have allowed the reconstruction of this relationship through knowledge and the reconstruction of the indigenous world that is now beginning to open and to gain significant attention due to the wisdom of their traditions.”

Colombian academic (Marks, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
5.6 Theory of change and envisioned impacts from the Ayahuasca Agreement

This is a brief overview of the ESC’s “Theory of Change” for the Ayahuasca Dialogues. It comprises a list of key activities, outputs, and outcomes, including the incentives or rewards for participation.

Enabling activities (Buy-in)
1. Field research and surveys to assess current conditions, trends, risks and opportunities.
2. Dialogue to understand stakeholder’s concerns and facilitate participation in crafting Agreement.
3. Agreement on objectives, principles, criteria & indicators.
4. Guidance on safe use and sustainable practices.
5. Promotion to raise awareness.
6. Capacity building to implement the Agreement.

Adoption of Agreement
7. Voluntary participation by those in the supply chain, such as ayahuasca brewers (i.e., product suppliers) and ceremony leaders (i.e., service providers), who want to distinguish themselves in the market or are simply committed to enhancing the quality of services provided.
8. Recognition (or “assurance”) at community, center and/or cultivation levels that the Ayahuasca Agreement is being properly implemented so that seekers can make decisions based on credible information.

Short to midterm outcomes
9. Improved seeker experience results in increased demand for safe and sustainable products and services.
10. Increased demand results in potential price premiums, greater demand for quality healing services, more respect of traditional ancestral practices, greater market share, or other rewards for participating stakeholders, including possible FairTrade premiums for community-determined development projects.
11. Early adopters have a “demonstration effect” that drives transformation (which will require research to verify benefits).

Long-term Impacts
12. Transformation: growing awareness and rewards drive uptake of use of the Ayahuasca Agreement (measured by number of participating places) and associated practices.
13. Environmental and social sustainability: Sustainable harvesting protects ecosystems, plant populations, and ethnobotanical-based cultural practices.
14. Policy changes: If the Ayahuasca Agreement leads to credible recognition of good practices and evidence of reduced harm and increased social and environmental good, this can provide evidence for policy makers of the efficacy of a community-centric approach rather than prohibitionist approach to managing ayahuasca.
15. Cultural recognition and protection of ayahuasca’s reputation: Heightened awareness towards indigenous wisdom and ayahuasca.
5.7 Lessons learned from efforts to recognize shamans

“Ayahuasca is commercial now, but curanderos are doctors. They don’t study for just three years. They study for many years so they can diagnose health problems through an initial consultation.”
— Iquitos based traditional healer, from ESC organized roundtable with the Loreto regional government in Peru, August 2014

“I have done several dietas, fasts, retreats, dietas in the jungle, but they are not recognized. They should be recognized, because it’s an authentic way to educate/prepare oneself... There should be a recognition that can vouch for [shamans] because it serves within a curriculum of a field of work... The worst is that there are too many charlatans in all of this, with more economic interests. There are many curanderos that aren’t really curanderos... so there should be an entity that sees all these things to recognize the people who are doing the things in a good way.” — Ayahuasca center owner in Ecuador (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues interviews, July 2014)

Some have suggested that the ESC encourage, create, or recognize associations or guilds of healers. Many have attempted this before and failed. Some associations of healers have grown within existing political, cultural or indigenous groups. This section attempts to inform any possible work in this direction so we can learn from and avoid mistakes of past efforts to build networks of healers. The evidence suggests that the ESC should not be directly involved in forming associations of healers, nor should the ESC recognize their healing abilities except where there is the possibility that recognizing existing ayahuasca healer associations can improve seeker safety or increase positive sustainability impacts.

To date, the ESC has gathered the following information about previous efforts to organize or recognize healers:

**UMIYAC** is an association of shamans in Colombia that has defined good practices through its Pensamientos de los Mayores (Thoughts of the Elders), a document outlining some of the key criteria for being a taita in Colombia. UMIYAC has also developed mechanisms for recognizing qualified tatacs. The main challenges in UMIYAC seem to have been related to lack of agreement on membership or accreditation criteria (Marks, Wickerham, Ayahuasca Dialogues interviews, July 2014).

**The Shuar Federation’s Ubishin Elders’ Council** in Ecuador is a group of shamans (called ubishin sometimes spelled uwishin, or wise masters) of the Shuar Federation’s Elders Council, who are responsible for caring for and guarding the tribe’s traditional medicine (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, September 2014).

**The Consejo de Yachak Runa Amazónico del Ecuador** (the Amazonian Yachak Runa Council of Ecuador) is a shamanism certification program currently recognizing over 800 curanderos. It accredits ayahuasca healers to work inside and outside Ecuador. President Correa recently recognized this association. Interviewees told the ESC that healers without recognition are not allowed to practice in Ecuador. These same interviewees said that the mechanism for accrediting healers is to ask them to heal someone who comes to a ceremony held by the Council. If the person is cured within two to three days, then the candidate receives their accreditation at the next council meeting (Chaya, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, September 2014).

**Peruvian shamanism certification system:** One ayahuasca center owner in Iquitos, Peru mentioned in an Ayahuasca Dialogues interview that one Peruvian government certification system for shamans existed in the 1970s and one of the curanderos he works with still has this certification, which was based on a training course (Wickerham, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, August 2014). At the time of publication, not enough was known about this program, but the interviewee suggested that it faded with the changing political winds or some combination of lack of support, interest, or acceptance.

**UNICEF certification program:** One shaman interviewed in Iquitos reported that the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in the early 1990s had a health practitioner recognition program for shamans. UNICEF recognized shamans who could demonstrate healing capacity by giving them internationally recognized credentials. When jealousies arose between shamans, some shamans attacked others, resulting in one death and the discontinuation of this program (Wickerham, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, August 2014).
5. FROM DIALOGUE TO AGREEMENT

5.8 Other useful tools and initiatives

In order to help generate ideas and discussions during the Ayahuasca Dialogues and forge the eventual Ayahuasca Agreement, this section describes other tools that may be useful for the ESC to reference, promote, or collaborate with.

These also represent concrete ways to strengthen the ESC’s knowledge network and help overcome constraints of trying to act alone when many other initiatives are also positively impacting lives and cultures.

Ceremony and site safety

For ceremony and site safety objectives, other potentially useful initiatives include:

- The Ayahuasca Health Guide (with a public consultation led by the ESC and partners from October-December 2014 and eventual incorporation in the Ayahuasca Agreement at AyahuascaHealthGuide.com);
- The Hippocratic-Ibiza Psychoactive Practitioner Oath: Being developed in late 2014 and early 2015 parallel to the Health Guide, this Oath is useful for any facilitators of sessions involving psychoactive plants;
- Feedback from informed visitors to centers such as surveys, grievance reports, or social media sites such as OpenMindTrips.com, Retreat.guru, AyaGuide.com, Ayadvisor.com, Erowid.org, the Ayahuasca.com discussion forums, and Alan Shoemaker’s Facebook list of civil or criminal cases in Peru, etc.;
- Risk/hazard management systems at the site level, as referenced in the draft Ayahuasca Health Guide;
- Government regulations such as registration of centers as businesses;
- Recognition of local good practices, such as guilds, lineages, local practices, local committees (like UMIYAC);

Communities and centers

For cultural and environmental issues stemming from communities and centers offering ayahuasca, these initiatives can be useful:

- FairTrade (as defined and implemented by FairTrade International’s globally-recognized approach, www.fairtrade.net/standards.html);
- International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and core labor standards, as well as ILO Article 179 recognizing indigenous knowledge;
- Carbon offsetting standards such as the widely recognized Verified Carbon Standard (VCS);
- Global sustainable tourism/ecotourism principles, such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s principles (which includes principles around effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for local communities, minimizing negative impacts, enhancing cultural heritage, and reducing negative impacts to the environment, as well as the principle of additionality, which means that tourist activity has net positive sustainability impacts);
- Rainforest Alliance and the Sustainable Agriculture Network and similar standards addressing agricultural sustainability.

Association of Healers in Iquitos, Peru: The biologist Elsa Rengifo, of the Peruvian Amazon Research Institute (IIAP), has created an initiative to form an Association of Healers in order to recognize healers who are working for the good reputation of ayahuasca. This initiative is in its early stages.

Some of the implications of these efforts for the ESC are that the Ayahuasca Dialogues process can be improved through transparent and proactive stakeholder engagement, so that initial participants do not dominate the process. It is also clear that a training or exchange program for shamans/ceremony leaders can be useful and important. Respecting and learning from local knowledge (especially indigenous) is vital and the ESC is committed to recognizing local definitions of good practice in the implementation of the Ayahuasca Dialogues as part of its commitment to global consistency and local applicability, as well as improving safety. The ESC will do everything possible to avoid creating jealousies between curanderos and be careful to organize roundtables or meetings according to clear principles and in ways that maximize the potential for constructive engagement, and avoid personal conflicts or rivalries. More research is required to better understand, engage with, learn from, and recognize these and other past efforts.
Farm and Forest cultivation

For Farm and Forest wild collection or cultivation of ayahuasca admixture plants:

- **Organic**: Many organic standards encourage farms to inspect one another rather than relying only on third party certification alone;
- **The Nagoya Protocol’s Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) tools** (from the Convention on Biological Diversity), which encourage more equitable economic relations between producers and companies or individuals who take products to market;
- **FairWild** standard (a type of FairTrade standard and method for wild collected plant sustainability);
- **Principles for Ethical BioTrade** (for example, as defined and implemented by the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT));
- **The Forest Stewardship Council** (FSC) for sustainable timber, or other standards and good practices related to sustainable non-forest timber products (NFTP);
- **Kosher is a system that requires prayer**, which has parallels to the prayer or singing to ayahuasca while cutting and preparing that some say is required;
- **Botanical gardens and parks**: Many practitioners are keeping medicinal plant traditions alive with gardens and healing centers.
5.9 Ayahuasca Dialogues work to date

The ESC’s work to understand ayahuasca safe use and sustainability issues began in late 2012. In July and August 2013, we conducted a 45-day field research trip in Peru. We established the ESC brand and house style, ongoing communications with stakeholders via an email list and social media, and the public launch of the Ayahuasca Dialogues in October 2013. We established a timeline for the scoping phase (year one) of the Ayahuasca Dialogues and implemented this plan as specified. In early 2014, we established the Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee (ADRC) to design field research approaches and address overarching issues. From June to September 2014, ESC field researchers conducted pre-
liminary stakeholder outreach and interviews in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

We began our first fundraising via the ESC website and connecting to individual donors and fiscal sponsors in the United States and Europe. We registered the first legal entities in the United States and formed a full time core ESC team, consultants, and the ESC board, along with a volunteer network. The ESC appeared in media and at conferences nearly every month. We organized the first Ayahuasca Dialogues roundtable in Iquitos, Peru in August 2014. In August 2014, we added more Spanish speakers to the ADRC and in November held the first Spanish-only parallel ADRC meeting.

For a detailed description of ESC work to date, see Appendix IV
The ESC’s work ahead

“It is not uncommon among mestizo shamans to follow the ayahuasca path as a personal quest for learning and understanding. Indeed, mestizo shamans may periodically gather just to share their visions, trade magical knowledge, and renew their strength.”

Stephan Beyer, Singing to the Plants: A guide to mestizo shamanism in the upper Amazon (Beyer, 2009)
Since the ESC’s official launch in October 2013, we have been working very hard to develop an organization that can grow steadily and at scale with strongly articulated values, mission, and clear areas of work. We are growing a stable organization with a core staff that can grow proportionally as we gain increasing financial support from the global ayahuasca community and organizations engaged in environmental issues, policy advocacy, community revitalization, health promotion, and harm reduction, amongst others.

6.1 The ESC’s work now and in the future

ESC team

As of the date of this publication, ESC has two directors (Executive Director and Operations Director), and three independent contractors working close to full time - largely as volunteers with minimal remuneration (small stipends), along with over a dozen part-time consultants and volunteers.

The hope is that the ESC will be able to raise funds to pay reasonable salaries within the next nine months. The ESC also has contracts with eight researchers who conducted the field research that forms much of the basis for the findings of this report, who were paid small stipends and had some travel expenses covered, along with two non-contracted volunteer researchers (the Executive Director and the wife of our Colombian researcher).

Building on the ESC’s work to date (Section 5.9), the second year of the Ayahuasca Dialogues will move us toward the Ayahuasca Agreement. This work will center on:

- First developing the Ayahuasca Health Guide in consultation with the ayahuasca community;
- Hiring the first full-time ESC capacity building staff and managers in the Amazon;
- Receiving and evaluating public nominations to establish the Stakeholder Council;
- Establishing the Stakeholder Council;
- Pilot testing the Ayahuasca Health Guide in Peru and elsewhere;
- Developing outreach and education materials to help ayahuasca seekers stay safe;
- Drafting the Ayahuasca Agreement;
- Holding in-person roundtables and online consultations to get feedback on the Agreement;
- Pilot testing the Ayahuasca Agreement;
- Developing guidance and capacity building materials and activities to help stakeholders understand and implement the Ayahuasca Agreement;
- Pilot testing assurance mechanisms to recognize centers and communities that want to implement the Ayahuasca Agreement;
- Developing national and local interpretation of the Ayahuasca Agreement, and
- Announcing the first sites (centers, communities, cultivation sites) that have demonstrated implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement’s principles and criteria.

For more details, see Appendix V.
6.2 Budgets and fundraising targets

Achieving our collective goals requires financial resources for facilitating the Ayahuasca Dialogues and supporting the implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement.

This report represents the collective efforts of a five-member core ESC team, nearly a dozen researchers in the Amazon, and dozens of advisors and research committee members representing the fields of economics, ethnobotany, anthropology, sustainable development, indigenous rights, sustainability standards, drug policy, public health, sustainable horticulture, community revitalization, and others.

The Ayahuasca Dialogues cannot continue without adequate funds. The ESC has reached the limits of what can be expected from volunteers. If the Ayahuasca Dialogues are to be successful, the ESC needs to raise funds to cover team members’ time and expenses. Currently all of the ESC’s team members are working other jobs and are devoting themselves to the cause full time at the expense of sleep, time with family and friends, and even personal health.

Phase 1

Phase one activities to date related to Ayahuasca Dialogues research (July 2013 - October 2014) have required over $150,000 USD, which has come from: 1) over $36,000 in donations from outside donors, and $20,000 for travel and other expenses from the ESC Co-Founders, and 2) in-kind donations from ICEERS, ESC Co-Founders, and other core ESC team members worth over $100,000. Accounting for all additional ESC researchers’, designers’ and advisors’ time at conservative market rates would bring total costs of the first phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues to above $250,000.

Phase 2

The second phase (year two, from December 2014-December 2015) can only continue if we raise a minimum of $198,800 for the next 12 months of work. To maximize the likelihood of success, we have developed three budgets (fund-raising targets):

A MINIMUM BUDGET

The year two “minimum budget” ($198,800 USD) covers the costs of the ESC Directors to manage the bare minimum required to continue the Ayahuasca Dialogues. We cut the costs of every other position to a bare minimum, leaving only tiny budgets for travel, field researchers, a communications intern, desk research, a coordinator for ADRC coordination and research, website updates, and meetings for the Stakeholder Council (3.75 full time equivalent people).

B MEDIUM IMPACT BUDGET

The year two “medium impact budget” ($471,500USD) allocates more funding for carbon offsetting of ESC travel, agronomical research, more budget for Stakeholder Council travel, remuneration for ADRC members, more money for part-time researchers, and roundtable meeting support, along with full-time director level time to the Ayahuasca Dialogues, and more time for positions (8.75 full time equivalent people) responsible for finances, communications, research, and outreach, namely:

1. A part-time Accounting and Database Manager responsible for overseeing stakeholder database management and finances;
2. A part-time Communications and Development Manager responsible for communications and fundraising;
3. One part-time Research and Outreach Coordinator responsible for desk research, ADRC coordination, and the drafting of the English versions the Ayahuasca Health Guide and Ayahuasca Agreement with the ADRC and during stakeholder consultations;
4. One full-time Ayahuasca Dialogues Manager, to be based in the Amazon, responsible for the overall Ayahuasca Dialogues process, including ADRC coordination, field researcher management, safety and sustainability capacity building and training, and monitoring and evaluation;
5. One Research and Field Training Coordinator (Amazon based) responsible for capacity building and research coordination to build awareness and participation in the Ayahuasca Dialogues;
6. One Technical Lead (Amazon based) responsible for working with sites that are pilot testing safety and sustainability approaches and assurance mechanisms.
6. THE ESC’S WORK AHEAD

MAXIMUM IMPACT BUDGET

The year two “maximum impact budget” ($821,000 USD) increases the travel budget; adds more time for the Accounting and Database Manager; helps the ESC design a highly functional website to manage stakeholder feedback, comments, etc.; gives researchers more budget to reach more stakeholders to gather more opinions; gives the Stakeholder Council considerably more resources for meetings, seminars, and conferences; increases budgets for monitoring and evaluation, ADRC work, part time field researchers, and in-person roundtable meetings; and funds a larger project to improve the agronomy, genetics, and cultivation of ayahuasca and admixture plants through a collaborative research and germplasm bank project (12.5 full time equivalent people).

AYAHUASCA DIALOGUES PHASE 2 BUDGET SCENARIOS AND NUMBER OF FULL TIME POSITION EQUIVALENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>A MINIMUM IMPACT BUDGET</th>
<th>B MEDIUM IMPACT BUDGET</th>
<th>C MAXIMUM IMPACT BUDGET</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>$1,000s USD (people)</td>
<td>$1,000s USD (people)</td>
<td>$1,000s USD (people)</td>
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<td>PROJECT DIRECTORS &amp; MANAGEMENT</td>
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<td>TRANSLATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAKEHOLDER COUNCIL</td>
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<td>Travel and communications technology for Stakeholder Council to be able to meet, attend conferences</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$471.5</td>
<td>$821</td>
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</table>

For a budget breakdown, see Appendix VI
Phase 3

The third phase (roughly year three, from January 2016-January 2017) will be a smaller budget than year two. This budget allows the ESC to complete pilot testing and public consultations to achieve consensus on the Ayahuasca Agreement and then build capacity, promote, and recognize implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement.

A MINIMUM BUDGET

The minimum budget ($168,000 over 12 months) will allow the ESC Directors to spend 2/3 of their time on ayahuasca-related work with travel, minimal communications support through an intern, maintaining a full-time Ayahuasca Agreements Manager to manage implementation of the Agreement on the ground (likely from Peru), with minimal financial support for the Stakeholder Council.

B MEDIUM IMPACT BUDGET

The year three medium impact budget ($242,000 USD over 12 months) will allow ESC Directors more time for other projects while devoting 1/3 of their time to ayahuasca work and maintaining the Ayahuasca Dialogues Manager position in the Amazon to outreach, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and other work, including more in-person meetings; a full-time trainer and capacity builder; and more support for the Stakeholder Council, while maintaining the part-time Finance and Database Manager, and the Research and Field Training Coordinator.

C MAXIMUM BUDGET

The year three maximum impact budget ($385,000 USD over 12 months) allows us to keep our accounting and database coordinator; hire a full-time bilingual communications coordinator in the Amazon; better support our Stakeholder Council; hire a full-time manager who will develop evidence and advocate for implementation and assurance of the Ayahuasca Agreement with centers, communities, and others; along with maintaining more Communications and Development Manager time; funding further website enhancements; and allowing more travel and communications support for the ESC team and Stakeholder Council.

We expect that the costs of implementing the Ayahuasca Dialogues and Ayahuasca Agreement relative to the impacts will decrease over time. The second year is the most expensive year because we need to ensure proper stakeholder engagement and representation, along with enough ESC time and resources to build capacity, communicate, research, and begin monitoring and evaluation. After the initial startup costs, the third year (phase three) costs will begin to level off and decrease in some budget lines. We expect that costs relative to impact will continue to decrease as the ESC diversifies into other Plant Dialogues. Also, the ESC will research possible revenue models from assurance-related activities during year two to be developed during subsequent years. Another reason for lower costs is that successful awareness building, partnerships, and programs during the first three years can mean that future phases will require fewer resources, such as for future rounds of Ayahuasca Dialogues to revise the Ayahuasca Agreement. Lastly, because of the evidence-based nature of Ayahuasca Dialogues activities, the ESC hopes to begin to demonstrate positive safety and sustainability impacts and thus begin to raise funds for activities specifically related to more mainstream environmental protection, community development, indigenous rights, and activities related to the ESC’s other areas of work (as noted in Section 1.2 “Work areas”).

Without enough money for even the minimum budgets, the Ayahuasca Dialogues cannot continue at the pace required to deliver an Ayahuasca Agreement that maximizes positive safety and sustainability impacts.
### AYAHUASCA DIALOGUES PHASE 3 BUDGET SCENARIOS AND NUMBER OF FULL TIME POSITION EQUIVALENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>A: MINIMUM BUDGET</th>
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<th>C: MAXIMUM IMPACT BUDGET</th>
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<td>(people)</td>
<td>(people)</td>
<td>(people)</td>
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<td>(includes budget for travel)</td>
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<td>TOTAL (THOUSANDS USD)</td>
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<td>$461.5</td>
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*For a budget breakdown, see Appendix VI*
If we do not raise enough money for even the minimum budgets, the Ayahuasca Dialogues cannot continue at the pace required to deliver an Ayahuasca Agreement that maximizes positive safety and sustainability impacts.

**Reaching only the “minimum budget” levels means** that, at the very least, ESC Directors will be able to devote their time fully to this work, but communications and Amazonian engagement will be minimal and may even suffer, and the original timeline cannot be easily maintained. This minimum budget allows the ESC to at least build on the momentum established thus far. This will be a riskier approach and if we do not have resources to build full consensus on the Ayahuasca Agreement, we may need to stop the project rather than try to push for a non-representative Agreement.

**Reaching the “medium impact budget” levels means** we can develop an organization that deeply reflects the needs of the global ayahuasca community, with educational support for seekers, robust communications in English and Spanish, and responsive and locally-appropriate teams doing outreach, engagement, and capacity building. This ideal budget can protect ayahuasca seekers and achieve many of the ESC’s stated goals.

**Reaching the “maximum impact budget” levels means** that the ESC will have more resources to fully map stakeholder concerns, reach out farther and wider, and implement some of our maximum impact projects, such as work to preserve and enhance ayahuasca biology, genetics, and cultivation knowledge; a website with robust data management capabilities linked to feedback and discussions from drinkers that integrate cutting edge assurance mechanisms and surveys; and even special projects like “FairTrade” ayahuasca centers.

### 6.3 Exploring other possible ESC roles or activities

Based on feedback thus far and dependent on achieving fundraising targets, the following activities can help achieve the ESC’s mission, fit within the ESC’s stated work areas, and help make the Ayahuasca Agreement successful in the larger contexts of policy, sustainable development, sustainability standards, etc.

These can also serve as means of fundraising for Ayahuasca Dialogues-related activities without an explicit focus on Ayahuasca and thus further supplement the budget targets above.

**Leveraging resources**

The ESC plays a connecting role between stakeholders who may not otherwise speak to one another. We can help leverage resources from existing projects such as carbon offsetting, community development, medicinal plant research, or sustainability standards to achieve greater sustainability impacts.

**Network and knowledge building**

Raising awareness of other new or existing initiatives and networks.

**Assurance (recognition) of safe and sustainable practices**

Developing models that are accessible, credible, transparent, and fit for scale and purpose.

**Intentionality and outcomes surveys**

Understanding intentions of ayahuasca seekers and outcomes of their experiences (such as health) will be important for Ayahuasca center assurance and for policy advocacy to counter INCB claims of Ayahuasca’s “recreational” nature. For example, working with the Global Drug Survey (globaldrugsurvey.com), the Ayahuasca Exploration Project (ayahuascax.com), Erowid (erowid.org), and others to get more data.

**Working with international NGOs**

Amazon Conservation Team, Amazon Watch, The
World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and other groups like COICA that work with indigenous leaders, policy makers, and others could be good partners as long as they are comfortable with themes related to ayahuasca. Smaller NGOs are also to work with to understand local contexts and explore joint capacity building projects.

**Working with local NGOs**

We already know that Peruvian NGOs like Fundación Amazonia Viva are playing important roles in helping local peoples increase income from activities that protect the environment. More work needs to be done to help replicate these models and work with other NGOs.

**Advocacy**

Working with drug policy groups to provide evidence for their participation in the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs or other policy discussions and approaches.

**Climate change**

Advocating for the planting of medicinal plants and other market-based tools for combating climate change.

**Spurring sustainable agriculture**

Tree planting; carbon offsetting; providing training; working with permaculture organizations such as the Chaikuni Institute or Paititi Institute; utilizing permaculture, agroforestry and other sustainable models to create flourishing, biodiverse gardens.

**Recognition of ayahuasca**

Working with UNESCO and other stakeholders to recognize ayahuasca as part of intangible cultural patrimony of humanity.

**Education**

Working with partners to establish “shamanic universities” or capacity building or training programs (a suggestion that is consistently raised in the Dialogues); encouraging mentorship programs for people to learn in centers so they are versed in both western and traditional medical contexts; encouraging or working with shamanic apprenticeship programs; encouraging intercultural exchange between traditional medicine systems, such as North American, Chinese, Indian, and other systems.

**Genetic preservation**

Developing genetic banks for *Banisteriopsis caapi*, *Psychotria viridis*, and other plants. These can be in situ or ex situ, i.e. preserving biodiversity where it is found, or storing germplasm samples elsewhere, or both.

**Agronomical/botanical research**

Working with universities, centers, and others to better understand ayahuasca plants’ ideal growing environments, etc. This can include components on encouraging the trade of sustainably grown ayahuasca admixture plants, with benefits to communities.

**Community Development**

Many stakeholders have asked the ESC to support community development projects. This could be an area of interest for funders and could be attractive to seekers of ayahuasca experiences who might be willing to pay a kind of “Fair Trade premium” to know that their visit is helping to contribute to improving local conditions.

**Working with Amazonian governments**

The Peruvian, Colombian and Ecuadorian governments are eager to encourage sustainable tourism, so working with the relevant departments to encourage safe and sustainable ayahuasca tourism can be mutually beneficial. At the same time, our work can help inform government officials of previous attempts to regulate or organize shamanic activity and thus hopefully help prevent overly restrictive government policy.

“*The use of the sacred plants implies a responsibility to the community. It implies that part of the knowledge and the teachings about the good use of the plant teacher leads us to attend to the needs of the communities in which we live*”

Mestizo ayahuasquero, Peru (Corminboeuf, Ayahuasca Dialogues interview, July 2014)
6.4 What the future holds

While the ESC and its many advisors, volunteers, friends, and supporters have achieved a lot in the last year since the official launch of the Ayahuasca Dialogues, much more still needs to be done. We are at the beginning of work that will take years, if not decades. While much of our focus is on achieving fundraising targets for the next quarter or a work plan for the next year, we hope that the outcomes of this work will span generations.

The Amazon is in some ways “the last stand” against unsustainable development of the world’s natural resources. We have the chance to further integrate ayahuasca into models for the successful stewardship of Amazonian resources, and to help ensure that ayahuasca cultures are sustained for the benefit of future generations.

We have the chance to help ensure that ayahuasca culture is strong at its base and sustainable in the long term as it impacts people and the planet in ways we have only begun to imagine.

We hope you will join us.
Onward!

The ESC team

Future activities

2015

Stakeholder Council
- Begins public nominations

Ayahuasca Dialogues
- Phase 2: Research/stakeholder engagement *funding dependent

Ayahuasca Health Guide
- Draft 2nd online consultation period

Hiring capacity building staff in the Amazon *funding dependent

Outreach, education materials developed and communicated based on Health Guide

Ayahuasca Agreement
- Develop Terms of Reference

Ayahuasca Agreement Draft
- ADRC writes a draft for consultation

Stakeholder Council
- Public comment period and approval of members

Stakeholder Council
- Begins public nominations

Ayahuasca Agreement Draft
- Launched for public consultation

Ayahuasca Agreement Draft
- First pilot testing
6. THE ESC’S WORK AHEAD

2016

**OCT**  **NOV**  **DEC**  **JAN**  **FEB**  **MAR**  **APR**  **MAY**  **JUN**  **JUL**

- **Ayahuasca Agreement Draft**
  roundtables, consultations, and online comment periods

- **Launch of Ayahuasca Agreement**
  pending consensus, and Stakeholder Council approval

- **Approved Ayahuasca Agreement**
  Pilot testing

- **Assurance mechanisms**
  Pilot testing

- **Guidance and capacity building activities**
  to help implement the Ayahuasca Agreement

- **First assured ayahuasca centers**
  publicly announced

- **Ayahuasca Agreement**
  Developing national and local interpretations
Appendices
Appendix I: ESC governance structure

The ESC is structured to be both legally compliant and responsive to community needs.

The ESC is registered in the United States as a limited liability corporation pending approval of its 501(c)3 (not for profit) status by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which is the process by which not for profit organizations are registered in the United States. For its first year, the ESC was registered under a social enterprise charter (low profit limited liability corporation), which allowed the ESC to receive donations from our fiscal sponsors, MAPS and ICEERS, while working under their oversight of the ESC budget and expenditures. IRS approval is expected within 3-12 months.

The ESC organization

The ESC organization (secretariat) has three teams:

- Research
- Communications and development
- Human resources and accounting

The ESC Board of Directors

The ESC Board of Directors has strategic and fiduciary responsibility for the organization. It is comprised of Joshua Wickerham (ESC Executive Director), Jonathan Thompson (ESC Operations Director), Rick Doblin (MAPS Executive Director), Benjamin De Loenen (ICEERS Executive Director), and Jag Davies (Drug Policy Alliance Publications Manager). It is expected that the board will be expanded to include other stakeholders and donors.

The Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee (ADRC)

The Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee (ADRC) helps to inform, guide, and provide feedback on the Ayahuasca Dialogues. The ADRC was formed between February and March 2014, with the aim of helping to provide feedback and guidance over the course of the Ayahuasca Dialogues research process and report writing. In 2015, its emphasis will shift towards helping to draft the Ayahuasca Agreement. This draft document will then be shared with the wider community for their feedback, via consultation meetings, both in-person and online. Although the ADRC itself is not a representative body (whereas the Stakeholder Council will be) the ESC strives for diversity and for the inclusion of as many voices as possible. Consequently, we are considering nominees for the ADRC on a rolling basis, especially Spanish speakers. Our ADRC team of about a dozen researchers, advisors, and six full-time professionals brings personal passion and professional experience from the fields of ethnobotany, anthropology, qualitative research, economics, sustainable development, drug policy, sustainable tourism, agronomy, horticulture, safety protocols, indigenous rights, religious studies, and access and benefit sharing, among others. These qualifications can help us deal with any challenge and seize the most important opportunities. (See the ESC website for ADRC members).
The Stakeholder Council

The Stakeholder Council is one key to the ESC’s commitment of accountability to the plant communities it serves. The Stakeholder Council is being formed from key stakeholders involved in medicinal plants, ayahuasca, peyote, and iboga traditions.

Roles and Rights of the Stakeholder Council as defined in the ESC’s bylaws include:

1. **Protecting the reputation of the ESC** by ensuring that the ESC is working according to its stated principles and stakeholder groups. If the Stakeholder Council feels that the ESC Board, its directors, or consultants are not acting in accord with community interests or the ESC’s principles, it can compel the Board to respond to those concerns, including possibly initiating third party evaluations, the results of which will be issued to any interested party upon request.

2. **Approving final drafts of any Plant Agreements:** The Stakeholder Council has the power to veto or approve the Ayahuasca Agreement or any Plant Agreement after consultations (“Plant Dialogues”) based on the ISEAL Standard Setting Code and compel the ESC to continue stakeholder engagement until acceptable consensus can be reached. The Council also has the power to request revisions of existing Plant Agreements at least every 5 years based on ISEAL Codes, or sooner if important concerns arise about the implementation, consequences, or content of these Plant Agreements;

3. **Understanding grave sustainability or safety issues** affecting formal ESC community members who are recognized (“assured”) by the ESC as implementing the Ayahuasca Agreement, such as centers, communities, or cultivation sites. The Stakeholder Council shall have the power to issue public statements about why the issues arose and make suggestions to the ESC Board and other ESC assured places about how to prevent such occurrences in the future.

The ESC Community

ESC membership is currently in the process of being defined through engagement with stakeholders who want to be part of the ESC learning community and agree to the principles of the ESC.

See Section 5.5 on membership, nomination and approval procedures for the Stakeholder Council
Appendix II: Requirements for the Ayahuasca Agreement Terms of Reference

A key requirement of the ISEAL approach is developing a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the development of the consensus building process.

See Section 5.1

Here follows a summary of some initial thinking about the requirements for using an ISEAL process to develop consensus on the Ayahuasca Agreement:

Proposed scope

The proposed scope of activity for the Ayahuasca Agreement is for all legal aspects of ayahuasca’s value chain with a focus on ayahuasca’s home in the Amazon. This report provides in previous sections an assessment of the justification of the need for the Ayahuasca Agreement and a summary of the most important sustainability and safety issues affecting this plant medicine, which will be formalized and expanded in the final ToR before beginning formal community engagement on the Ayahuasca Agreement. At the minimum, the scope of the Ayahuasca Dialogues includes all legal activities related to the cultivation and trade of ayahuasca admixture plants, the safe use in ceremonial contexts, and the safety practices and sustainability impacts of centers, communities, or locations where ayahuasca is used in ceremony. The intended Ayahuasca Agreement will always be entirely voluntary.

It is expected that the Agreement will meet many of the expressed needs of the ayahuasca community, including clear social, economic, and environmental outcomes that are linked to the ESC’s theory of change. This can be achieved through the ESC’s assessment of the status quo through the Ayahuasca Dialogues and the eventual evaluation of the intended sustainability and safety impacts of the Agreement (monitoring and evaluation activities).

See Section 5.6

Mitigating risks of unintended consequences

Possible unintended consequences and what to do to mitigate them, such as identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the Agreement to achieve its outcomes, unintended consequences in its implementation, and potential corrective actions (as per the ISEAL Impacts Code sections 7.6 and 7.4) are initially described in Annex VII of this report.

Mapping of Stakeholders

During the initial drafting of the Ayahuasca Agreement by the ADRC, which is intended to take place in mid-2015, all potential stakeholders who may have an interest in the Agreement will be further mapped out and key stakeholder groups identified based on the intended social, environmental and economic outcomes of the Agreement.

Public Summary

Before the Ayahuasca Agreement public consultation period, tools will be produced in English and Spanish (and possibly Portuguese) so that all stakeholders know how to participate, including more detailed timelines and clear opportunities for how stakeholders can contribute and participate in the decision-making procedures, including how decisions will be made and who will make them.

Explained in Section 5

Public Consultations

During the second half of 2015, there will be at least one 60 day public comment period with revisions and summaries of those revisions made public, along with at least one additional 30 day public consultation period. If substantive and unresolved issues remain, the Stakeholder Council will have the power to ask for more public consultations before approving the Ayahuasca Agreement.

Balancing Stakeholder Interests

The ESC will endeavor to strike a balance of stakeholders so that no single stakeholder group can dominate the Dialogues and the eventual Agreement. The ESC will also identify groups of stakeholders that are not adequately represented in the Dialogues and proactively reach out to them, including addressing constraints that disadvantaged stakeholders may face, such as technological, linguistic, or other barriers.
Clear decision-making process

The Stakeholder Council will have final decision-making power about whether or not to approve the Ayahuasca Agreement.

See Section 5.4 and Appendix I for more information

Final version of the Ayahuasca Agreement

The final version of the Ayahuasca Agreement will be publicly available electronically in English and Spanish (possibly Portuguese as well) and also in paper at a reasonable cost. Draft and final versions of the Agreement shall be made available in the official language (English) as well as additional languages (Spanish and possibly Portuguese).

Revisions

The Ayahuasca Agreement will be reviewed at least every five years to ensure that it is still relevant and effective at meeting its stated objectives. The ESC will set up mechanisms for receiving suggestions about revising or clarifying any aspect of the Agreement after the final version is approved. The ESC will document and consider these suggestions. In the case of substantive issues that need to be addressed, the Stakeholder Council and its Ayahuasca chamber shall be primarily involved in calling for this revision, as they are authorized by the ESC board to do so.

Records

The ESC will keep records on file for at least five years related to every Plant Agreement and make these available to stakeholders upon request, including policies and procedures for guiding the Ayahuasca Dialogues work to build consensus on the Agreement, including lists of stakeholders contacted, the stakeholders involved at each stage of the process, comments received and a synopsis of how these comments were addressed, as well as all draft versions of the Agreement.

Resolving complaints

The ESC will also set up a transparent and publicly documented complaints mechanism for raising concerns about the Ayahuasca Dialogues and Ayahuasca Agreement consultation process and having those complaints resolved (via the email address ayafeedback[at]ethnobotanicalcouncil.org). The proposed mechanism shall be developed and made available for public comment by January 2015 and voted upon by the ESC board by March 2015 so as to be in place during the second phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues in the first half of 2015. During the period before the Stakeholder Council is established, the ESC secretariat will address and respond to any concerns. If stakeholders feel that complaints are not adequately resolved, the Stakeholder Council will respond to those complaints (with the ADRC responsible for responding in the interim before the Stakeholder Council is formed in June 2015). The resolutions of any complaints will be disclosed to at least the affected parties and anonymized for public release. This function of responding to escalated complaints shall later be the responsibility of the Stakeholder Council or its committees/chambers.

Consistent interpretation of the Agreement

The means of assuring recognition of consistent implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement (“assurance”) shall be made in language that is clear, specific, objective, and verifiable and be expressed in terms of process, management, and performance criteria, rather than design or descriptive characteristics and shall not favor a specific technology or patented item and include definitions of the scope to which the Agreement applies, and present all aspects of how assurance and claims of alignment to the Agreement will be made. (Assurance requirements could mean scoring or evaluation mechanisms, as well as definitions of required aspects or areas where an ESC member, or participating organization, would need to show improvement over time.)
Appendix III: Assurance mechanisms being considered

What is Assurance?

Traditionally, assurance has meant “certification”. For much of the last several decades, a credible assurance mechanism has meant third party assurance from other groups such as professional certification bodies (CB) like those that certify organic farms.

Certification is a concept codified by the Organisation for International Standardization (ISO) over 30 years ago. It means usually that a financially independent CB (usually a company) sends an auditor to inspect a farm or factory. The costs are high and the results are not always credible. Traditional certification may still have its place in some aspects of agriculture or safety, but this expensive “snapshot” approach of understanding a complex system through a visit only once per year is not fit for purpose in the ayahuasca world. Certification as defined by the ISO does not allow auditors to teach certified entities about better practices, thus losing an opportunity to learn from experts. Usually the CBs are overseen by accreditation bodies, an added expense. Chain of custody certification (CoC) is a robust means of monitoring a product as it goes to a consumer with a label, but it also adds expense. One model that could be considered is that of working with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to act as auditing bodies and experts who could also engage in capacity building, along with a series of other mechanisms discussed below.

In many assurance models, a second party assurance mechanism from peers is used. In the case of ayahuasca this could take the form of two ayahuasca centers who visit one another to ensure proper implementation of safety protocols, or community engagement and impacts, and whose reputations both depend on the other implementing in order to be credible.

Demand for assurance

Preliminary engagement during the Ayahuasca Dialogues confirms that there is a market interest in mechanisms for assuring implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement. The recognition that can come with the use of a trusted seal promising increased safety to visitors and improved social, economic, and economic impacts on local communities can be a potential driver of uptake of the Ayahuasca Agreement.

Assurance can create a ladder of performance and incentive for centers and communities to improve their practices and gain market rewards and a positive reputation in the process.

At this preliminary stage, the ESC proposes an innovative, non-traditional assurance model for the ayahuasca world that involves more actors, such as NGOs, visitors, and others. This model could hopefully reduce costs, increase access to the system, and promote community learning.

Determining the ESC’s assurance model

The ESC’s assurance model of recognizing good practices aligned to the Ayahuasca Agreement will be discussed as part of the Ayahuasca Dialogues. The ESC will endeavor to keep the costs of assuring the consistent and dependable implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement to a minimum through innovative approaches.

Here are some ideas of what an ESC assurance model could contain:

1. Working with local NGOs as both capacity building organizations and evaluators of implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreements: For a reasonable fee, NGOs could act as bodies to evaluate the performance of ayahuasca centers or communities in implementing the Ayahuasca Agreement. ISO rules limit certification bodies from giving advice about how to improve to entities that they are auditing. The antidote to this perceived conflict of interest is transparency. NGOs could publish findings of their visits to inspect Ayahuasca centers that wish to be assured (NGOs could also include recognized indigenous governance bodies);

2. Visitors too can improve assurance by offering feedback or grievances to the ESC or to third party websites. Some have proposed that one criteria for implementing the Ayahuasca Agreement would be providing visitors with ESC information, as well as
sending visitors’ contact information to the ESC so they could be administered a short survey (the results of which would be used for internal review and risk management rather than released publicly, excepting in the case of a grave problem requiring attention of the Stakeholder Council).

- **Workers**: workers at centers or other places have become important sources of feedback about good management practices and are especially empowered given the proliferation of mobile phones and smart phones;

- **Public information disclosure** about community engagement through reporting is one way that centers can demonstrate continuous improvement. This can encourage leading centers to be role models for other sites. This can increase knowledge and spur innovation about sustainability and safety issues, especially about best practices in engaging with local communities. Lastly, public information disclosure such as reporting can help distinguish centers, especially since the first phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues resulted in the ESC abandoning the idea of publicly recognizing different levels of sustainability performance with a five star rating because interviewees thought this could be confused with a rating for shamanic abilities;

- **Written records of safety hazard evaluations and risk mitigation** could be made available to visitors, the ESC Stakeholder Council or others, although some have suggested that written records are too “western” and that local knowledge about risk mitigation is enough;

- **Mystery shoppers** who are well-trained and versed in sustainability and safety issues can go to assured centers and evaluate them, thus increasing the likelihood that assured centers are consistently implementing safety and sustainability practices that may be hard for casual visitors to understand;

- **Educated and experienced ayahuasca seekers** who have the ability to evaluate aspects of the Ayahuasca Agreement could also visit sites and could even have “badges” that are tied to an online information management system;

- **Chain of custody (CoC) certification** for sustainably produced ayahuasca admixture plants could allow these plants to be accurately tracked from growing sites to ayahuasca centers;

- **Working with emerging online platforms** to both gather information about seeker experiences as well as display lists of ESC-assured centers or communities;

- **Surveys** could provide information not only about seekers’ reasons for drinking ayahuasca and medical efficacy, but also additional sources of data about their self-perceived safety;

- **Labeling**: Some ayahuasca centers may wish to use the ESC logo to demonstrate their implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement. The ESC will work to maintain a high level of trust by making sure that only products or services that have actually achieved sustainability and safety objectives can use the ESC logo. When the ESC “assures” ayahuasca centers, it will be important that only credible implementation of the Ayahuasca Agreement is recognized so that false claims are not recognized.

- **Self claims**: More research needs to be done to understand the possible risks and benefits of allowing Ayahuasca Agreement implementation to be claimed by assured entities themselves.

The ESC will never “police” the Ayahuasca community. Instead, we welcome centers, communities, or cultivation/collection sites to voluntarily join the ESC and our community so that claims of sustainability or safety can be fully evaluated. These evaluations will always be made with the goals of increasing seekers’ safety and the positive impact of practitioners, the ESC, and ayahuasca.
Appendix IV: ESC activities to date

Conducted preliminary field research
In July 2013, the ESC founders began doing initial stakeholder engagement by donating their own time and money to conduct an initial 45-day field research trip to Peru, investigating models of community-supported agriculture cooperatives to plant ayahuasca and chacruna and engaging with ayahuasca centers and curanderos. The desire for agreement on good practices and an initial market demand for recognition of alignment to those good practices became clear.

Developed a recognizable ESC brand and communications style
We have created a professional brand that can appeal to a wide range of stakeholders who work with many types of plants.

Established ongoing communications with stakeholders
We have over 800 Twitter followers, 1,000 email list subscribers, 1,000 Facebook “likes”, and an average of 4,500 unique visitors to our website every month.

Developed a clear timeline and action plan, and stuck to it
In January, we hosted a webinar with ESC board members Ben DeLoenen of ICEERS and Rick Doblin of MAPS, along with ESC Special Advisor Dennis McKenna, where we laid out a vision and plan of work for the Ayahuasca Dialogues over the next year, which we have followed closely in the lead-up to the launch of this report.

Formed the Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee (ADRC)
The ADRC helps to provide guidance during the ESC’s research and reporting, which as groundwork for the Ayahuasca Dialogues is working to ensure that the process is as effective and inclusive as possible. The first phase of the Ayahuasca Dialogues sets the stage for the multi-stakeholder consensus building process that will lead to the eventual drafting and public consultations of the Ayahuasca Agreement. The ADRC will help to draft the Ayahuasca Agreement in 2015.

Initiated Phase I of the Ayahuasca Dialogues
Following some initial seed donation money (see acknowledgements), the ESC advertised field researcher positions in South America to conduct initial engagement in key regions, hiring eight researchers in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. (See Section 4 for more details).

Conducted fundraising
The ESC is developing relationships with individuals, foundations, and governments that could offer funding. Generous support from David Bronner allowed us to hire our field researchers. Robert Barnhart funded the ESC’s participation in the World Ayahuasca Conference in Ibiza. We formed fiscal sponsorship relationships with MAPS in the US and ICEERS in Europe to take tax-deductible donations.

Registered necessary legal entities, including a social enterprise
We registered a US-based social enterprise as the fastest way to establish a legal entity to protect the ESC founders while being able to take foundation donations and avoid legal entanglements that would make us beholden to money over principles. Also, an LLC registering as a nonprofit.
Registered a US-based company that is awaiting IRS nonprofit status approval (which all nonprofits must do).

Formed a core ESC team, consultants, board, and advisors
While none of the ESC’s five full-time contractors or researchers are currently able to receive salaries commensurate with their level of work, we are confident that fundraising efforts will allow us to pay our staff market rates. We also hope to be able to compensate some ADRC members who have contributed significant time and professional expertise.

Formed a volunteer network
This includes translators, a web advisor, pro bono legal advice, and copy editor.
Made media appearances

Podcasts
Amber Lyon’s podcast on Reset.me; Joe Rogan podcast; Rak Razam’s A Perfect World; SoundArt Radio in Totnes, UK; C-Realm Podcast; Psychonautica podcast.

Articles
Quoted in BBC article “Why do People Take ayahuasca?”; quoted in US alternative weekly story about the therapeutic potential of ayahuasca that ran in the Village Voice; named in a CNN article as “one of six things to know about ayahuasca”.

Spoken at conferences

Drug Policy Alliance (Colorado, USA, October 2013): We launched the Ayahuasca Dialogues concept at the Drug Policy Alliance-hosted Reform conference in Denver Colorado with scholarship travel support from the Open Society Foundation;

Psymposium (Amherst, Massachusetts, USA. April 2014): Spoke about the Ayahuasca Dialogues;

Amazonian Shamanism Conference (Iquitos, Peru, July 2014): Invited to speak at this important conference (had to change plans because of illness);

Burning Man (US, August 2014): Invited to engage audiences about the Ayahuasca Dialogues at FauxMirage;

Spirit Plant Medicine Conference (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, October 2014): Speaking about generational change to protect traditional plant medicines;

10th annual Chinese Ethnobotany Conference (Guilin, Guanxi, China, October 2014): Speaking about case studies on beyond-government models of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and beyond-Nagoya models of benefiting traditional knowledge holders from commercialization of plant remedies.

Horizons (New York City, October 2014): ESC Co-Founder and Operations Director speaking about community and family values.

Co-organized the first Ayahuasca Dialogues Roundtable in Peru
With support from the department of tourism, external commerce, and arts (Direcetur) of the Loreto Region government of Peru. See section 4.3.5 for a summary of the roundtable.

Launched Crowdfunding Campaign to #ProtectAya
Worked with over two dozen partners to develop a campaign to raise money to expand the Ayahuasca Dialogues to more stakeholders.

See timeline graphic in Section 5.9
Appendix V: Future ESC activities

Funding dependent, year 2 and 3 activities include the following:

**During the first half of 2015, we will be:**

**Developing and testing tools and guides:**
- Finalizing the first version of the Ayahuasca Health Guide and rolling this out with partners to educate seekers around the world, including in communities outside of the Amazon as well as within knowledge networks in the Amazon, such as tourist agencies, etc;
- Pilot testing the Ayahuasca Health Guide with centers and communities;
- Pilot testing sustainable ayahuasca growing methods and assurance;
- Drafting the Ayahuasca Agreement based on field research results.

**Deepening and broadening engagement and relationships:**
- Working with existing and new part time researchers to deepen and broaden relationships;
- Finalizing ESC governance structure based on feedback and dialogue;
- Creating new ESC website;
- Holding roundtables on issues of interest based on interviews and feedback.

**Strengthening ESC presence in the Amazon:**
- Hiring Ayahuasca Dialogues Manager responsible for leading the Ayahuasca Dialogues research team, stakeholder engagement, managing the ESC presence on the ground, and overseeing monitoring and evaluation work;
- Hiring Safety and Sustainability Capacity Building Officer responsible for learning about and training based on knowledge of safe and sustainable ayahuasca use; oversees Health Guide pilot testing and revision.

- Technical Officer to work on drafting and revising the Ayahuasca Agreement’s key principles, criteria, and assurance; oversees sustainable ayahuasca growing pilot projects and technical criteria.
- Building ESC capacity to conduct Monitoring and Evaluation work and integrate lessons learned into our work.

**During the second half of 2015, we will be continuing much of the above work while building consensus toward the Ayahuasca Agreement and proposed assurance mechanisms, including building upon and extending pilot tests, conducting roundtables, individual consultations, and public online comment periods, and seeking Stakeholder Council approval of the Agreement.**

**In 2016, we will be continuing the above work while also:**
- Providing guidance and support activities for centers, communities, and agroforestry sites that want to implement the Agreement;
- Implementing assurance mechanisms and recognizing assured centers, communities and farms/forests;
- Developing national and local interpretations of the Agreement;
- Announcing the first assured centers;
- Extending communications capacity to and from the Amazon, including educating seekers and others about the Ayahuasca Agreement and other aspects of our work.

See timeline graphic in Section 6.4
Appendix VI: Detailed fundraising targets

Complete budgets are available to potential donors upon request. These budgets do not include other ESC activities, including ongoing activities, such as a potential ethnobotanical conference or other aspects of the ESC’s five-year objectives (available upon request).

### Phase 2 fundraising targets

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<th>CATEGORY</th>
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<th>B: MEDIUM BUDGET</th>
<th>C: MAXIMUM BUDGET</th>
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<td>Communications and Development salaries and benefits</td>
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<td>Website updates-technical, design</td>
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<td>Amazon field team research coordination &amp; management, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>Travel in and from Amazon</td>
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<td>Travel and communication technology for stakeholder council to be able to meet, attend conferences</td>
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<td>Project to preserve ayahuasca diversity, improve cultivation practices (2-3 year upfront funding)</td>
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### Phase 3 fundraising targets

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<td>Travel</td>
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<td>$166,000</td>
<td>$230,000</td>
<td>Amazon field team research coordination &amp; management, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, travel. Positions: Research/Outreach coordinator, Ayahuasca Dialogues Manager; Ayahuasca Agreement community engagement officer; membership/markets outreach manager; monitoring and evaluation researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel in and from Amazon</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$19,000</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>Travel support for Aya Dialogues Manager, and research and support teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding for training and capacity building meetings</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>Also can be used to allow disadvantaged stakeholders access to meetings and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translations</strong></td>
<td>Translations of key documents</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>Translations of key documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insurance</strong></td>
<td>Insurance for board, organization</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>Insurance for the ESC and board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder Council</strong></td>
<td>Communications technology and travel stipends for stakeholder council members</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>Travel and communications support for stakeholder council members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional research projects</strong></td>
<td>Research project(s) as prioritized by stakeholders</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>Special research projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional memberships</strong></td>
<td>ESC membership in IDPC, ISEAL</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>Membership in key standards and policy organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental stewardship</strong></td>
<td>Carbon offsetting (in-setting)</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>Planting trees with partners to offset project-related travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$233,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$461,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$791,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix VII: Mitigating risks and unintended consequences

Good intentions can lead to risks and unintended consequences. The tables below illustrate some of the risks or possible unintended consequences and possible mitigation measures of the ESC’s proposed ayahuasca activities.

The first table focuses on Ayahuasca Dialogue risks (the Agreement drafting and public consultation phase), while the second table focuses on Agreement implementation and assurance activities. These will be revised in consultation with stakeholders to prioritize risks and identify feasible mitigation measures.

Mitigating risks and unintended consequences of the Ayahuasca Dialogues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk / Unintended consequence</th>
<th>Indicative Mitigation Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ESC and Ayahuasca Dialogues seen as being imposed from outside | · Adherence to the ISEAL Codes supports meaningful and effective stakeholder participation.  
· Facilitators will discuss this concern with stakeholders early in the dialogue process to identify an acceptable approach. For example, Ecuadoran interviewees recommended that consultations (encounters) be led in the style of the local region, guided by local peoples.  
· ESC will clearly communicate that stakeholder buy-in is essential to success. It is not in the ESC’s interest to push for an Agreement that practitioners won’t adopt. |
| Lack of consensus emerges in the first round of stakeholder consultations | · Emphasize global nature of Agreement and work to recognize local practices and criteria that are aligned to Agreement’s principles;  
· Engage in further rounds of consultation and revisions until consensus is achieved. Ayahuasca Agreement regularly revised; |
| Jealousy from nonparticipants | · Expand outreach and dialogue to include additional stakeholders as needed. |
## Mitigating risks and unintended consequences of implementing the Ayahuasca Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk / Unintended consequence</th>
<th>Indicative Mitigation Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>False denunciations of centers, shamans, or the ESC</td>
<td>• Mechanisms for investigation and reporting to be determined in consultation with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious sustainability or safety issues in participating centers or communities threatens the credibility of ESC’s assurance mechanisms</td>
<td>• Process for addressing reputational threats will be identified in consultation with stakeholders and specified in the Agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Only a relatively small number of centers or communities choose to participate in the Ayahuasca Agreement | • Communicate potential benefits of participation related to improved quality of service and reputation.  
• Create incentive for “early adopters”; for example, a special designation.  
• Solicit feedback on concerns and seek to address where appropriate and feasible. Revise Ayahuasca Agreement on a regular basis to strengthen content and stakeholder buy-in.  
• Hire experts in the field to train and articulate benefits of implementing the Agreement. |
| Metaphysical safety issues (akin to witchcraft or black magic) prove difficult to recognize and address | • Engage with indigenous and other groups to understand these dynamics and how to mitigate these risks.  
• Educate seekers that ayahuasca carries some risk of metaphysical safety issues; hence the importance of choosing a reputable practitioner. |
| High value crops could be stolen | • Protect the locations of growing sites.  
• Work to distribute the plants more widely to further protect biodiversity and plant resources. |
| Centers or communities falsely claim to implement Ayahuasca Agreement | • Allow possibility for system of “self claims” and “assured” claims, make the participant lists publicly available through Internet searches, and educate seekers to know the difference. |
| Serious sustainability or safety issues come to light in centers or communities who are part of the Ayahuasca Agreement | • Stakeholder Council reviews the case to understand underlying cause;  
• ESC (through Stakeholder Council) issues public statement of known facts as quickly as possible to protect the reputation of assured entities and validate the ESC function;  
• Discuss and publicize means to avoid same future safety or sustainability issues and integrate into all relevant ESC work. |
| Too much focus on “FairTrade” or community benefits has economic limits that can scare away potential partners | • Develop segmented system for recognizing participants in areas like safety, environmental sustainability, and “FairTrade”. |
| Process favors foreign-owned centers due to their access to resources | • Special attention paid to reaching out to locally-owned centers and working with communities to help implement Ayahuasca Agreement; |
Works referenced


Fortunato, J. et al. (2010) Chronic administration of harmine elicits antidepressant-like effects and increases BDNF levels in rat hippocampus. Journal of neural transmission, 117(10), 1131-1137.


Acknowledgements

It would be impossible for the ESC to possibly thank all of the hundreds of people and organizations that have helped us during our start-up first year of the Ayahuasca Dialogues. Around the world, countless volunteers, advisors, and friends have given wise council and support. Initial donors like the RiverStyx Foundation ($10,000), David Bronner ($10,000), and Robert Barnhart ($10,000 for the Ayahuasca Dialogues and $5,000 for peyote research), along with dozens of other donors, have given us hope and funds to get started. Our board members Jag Davies, Rick Doblin, and Benjamin De Loenen have helped put us on sound strategic and better financial trajectories. Our ESC colleagues, including our Ayahuasca Dialogues Research Committee members, and the Ayahuasca Dialogues researchers in the field, have gone far beyond the call of duty time and time again for very little pay (or even no pay). The ESC’s “Special Advisor”, Dennis McKenna, has opened almost as many doors as he has opened minds. ICEERS has been especially supportive, helping us establish our brand and incubating us as their “sustainability department”. We owe thanks to the organizers of numerous conferences, especially those where the ESC first started discussing these ideas, such as Psychedemia, MAPS, the Drug Policy Alliance, Breaking Convention, and the World Ayahuasca Conference. We would not have been able to get started without James Fadiman and Bia Labate, who helped us make important initial introductions. Dozens of others engaged in early debates and lent good advice, notably Matt Mellen, Amy Galland, Gillian Caldwell, Karin Kreider, Patrick Mallet, Simon Wan, Pei Shengji, Daniel Katz, and Mark Plotkin.

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Available from: www.ethnobotanicalcouncil.org
Thanks to our partners on the Ayahuasca Dialogues Indiegogo campaign to #ProtectAya!
We have the chance to help ensure that ayahuasca culture is strong at its base and sustainable in the long term as it impacts people and the planet in ways we have only begun to imagine.

We hope you will join us.
Onward!

The ESC team
A sensible approach to paper consumption, procurement and recycling is a vital part of ESC’s care for the environment. Printed on recycled paper using earth-friendly inks.