

## **Meeting Indigenous Peoples Expectations Through the Tripartite Dialogue: Lessons Learned from the Oil and Gas Industry in the Amazonian Basin**

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ARPEL – Regional Association of Oil and Natural Gas Companies in Latin America and the Caribbean gathers both state-owned and private oil and gas companies, representing more than 90% of the upstream and downstream production.

In the late 80's, and considering the projections of oil and gas exploration and production development projects in frontier areas dwelled by indigenous peoples, oil and gas companies became aware of the potential future concerns that this issue would represent to their operations. These concerns were accentuated by the fact that Latin America has the richest biodiversity of the world, counting with 46% of the world tropical forests, 40% of tropical animal and vegetal species and 31% of freshwater reserves.

Furthermore, the rapid increase of environmental regulations and legislation, and the increasing international attraction on environmental and social-cultural issues in sensitive areas have made the management of these issues critical to the companies' success. Failing to identify and mitigate these risks has had significant implications, including projects' delays, excessive costs and –eventually- abandonment.

The World Bank and OLADE –Latin American Energy Organization fostered the development of tripartite (indigenous peoples, government and oil industry) regional dialogues. The three parties are represented by COICA –Confederation of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazonian Basin-, OLADE –on behalf of governments- and ARPEL.

This paper describes the experience gathered by ARPEL –and the oil and gas companies- in the last 15 years while exercising their social responsibility in Latin America. The paper presents an analysis of the expectations and viewpoints of the parties of the tripartite dialogue and the activities being presently developed to set the basis for the future social-environmental regulatory framework of oil and gas industry relations with indigenous peoples in Latin America. The outcomes of this tripartite dialogue will define future E&P industry sustainability in the Region.

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