In the small community of Andoas, nestled among cloud forests three hours northwest of Quito, Ecuador, husband and wife, German Villarreal and Nelly run a sustainable business called Allpabambu. Allpabambu exports native bamboo (*Guadua Angustafolia*) to the USA for the green construction sector. Nelly and German founded Allpabambu in early 2015.

When Nelly and German founded Allpabambu, they decided to invest in their own processing facility, including new types of machinery to make labor more efficient, and to have bamboo from smallholders delivered to them, instead of paying to transport the materials. This was a series of decisions they were able to make in an informed and thoughtful way using the Green Value Tool for simplified financial analysis of forest-based initiatives.

Nelly was first introduced to the Green Value tool at a 2014 workshop in Quito, Ecuador. This workshop was part of the Earth Innovation Institute’s (EII) *Strengthening Community-based Forest Enterprises in the Amazon Region*, a program supported by the US Agency for International Development and the US Forest Service. At this training, Nelly and other participants used the Green Value User’s Guide and worksheets to organize and analyze costs and income for the company’s bamboo export line. While the line was found to be quite profitable, Nelly was concerned about high labor and transport costs. Using the Green Value tool to monitor costs and profit, Nelly found that these measures helped Allpabambu cut costs by 30% and increase profitability from -1% for the first container of bamboo it exported to 42% for the most recent. The enterprise now manages 55 ha of bamboo plantations, and runs a small processing facility where bamboo stems are prepared, treated, and loaded into containers for export. Additionally, demand is great enough that to supplement supply, Allpabambu buys bamboo from other smallholders, and offers services in technical assistance on bamboo management and construction of “green” buildings with bamboo.

“With the tool we discovered that we have two high costs, which are labor and transport… This led us to acquire saws, which make the work less labor-intensive. I will continue using the [Green Value Tool]. It helps me analyze costs and how costs are high.”

_Nelly Arroyo_