

Equator
Initiative



A Partnership for
Sustainable
Communities in the
Tropics

Equator Initiative Partners



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



FORDHAM
The Jesuit University of New York

IDRC



CRDI



The Nature
Conservancy 
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Equator Initiative

- Recognition that the greatest concentrations of biological wealth and poverty are found in the Equatorial Region
- Local leadership is advancing innovative projects in biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction
- Need for knowledge about success in community-based action on the ground

Equator Initiative Action Areas

Equator Prize

- Celebrate successful local initiatives

Equator Dialogues

- Create opportunities for sharing experiences and best practice
- Inform policy and foster an enabling environment for local action

Equator Knowledge

- Build the capacity of grassroots organizations to document results and scale-up impact

Equator Prize

- Honors outstanding community initiatives that effectively reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- Shines an international spotlight on local successes
- Four prize cycles
 - Equator Prize 2010 will be awarded at UN General Assembly
- US 1.34 million awarded to 103 local and indigenous communities in 55 countries

Equator Dialogues

- Create opportunities for local voices to inform international policy-making
- Foster peer-to-peer exchange and learning
- Provide access to policy dialogues and decision-making
- Hold community-focused meetings in conjunction with national and international policy-making fora

Equator Knowledge

- Understand and **communicate** ways in which communities can contribute to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction
- Build public and **political support** for local initiatives and grassroots action
- Work with partners to **research** the success variables of local and indigenous communities active in biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction
- Work with community networks to promote **peer-to-peer exchange** and disseminate lessons learned

Community Knowledge Service

- Catalyze **regional networks** for knowledge-sharing
- Identify, coordinate and link **local best practices** in biodiversity management and sustainable use
- Facilitate **peer-to-peer learning** and knowledge exchange visits
- Identify and establish “**centres of excellence**” to conduct ongoing peer-to-peer learning
- Develop **web portal** dedicated to local learning, knowledge sharing, and document storage

Research Challenges

- Lack of environmental and socio-economic baselines
- Lack of time-series data to monitor environmental and socio-economic changes
- Wide geographic distribution of Equator Prize winners makes it difficult/expensive to visit sites
- Different units of analysis in different communities
- The usual - \$\$\$\$

Lessons Learned

- **A lot of success on the ground:** Successful biodiversity management and livelihood solutions often originate at the local level
- **Build on local institutions:** Local institutions are adapted to social, economic, and environmental context at the local level
- **Challenge to get quantitative data:** It is often difficult to get quantitative data -- findings are mostly qualitative
- **Demand for best practice:** Demand from national and international policy makers for case studies
- **Demand for learning exchange platforms:** Demand from local and indigenous communities for peer-to-peer exchange opportunities

Recommendations

- Provide help with sharing ideas and knowledge
- Provide more opportunities for networking, more support to attend events, and the elimination of language barriers
- Increase communication efforts to promote the Equator Prize at the local level to reach out to less-connected community groups
- Provide self-evaluation assistance

Groups at IIED

- Patrick Fong and Meli Namasi
 - FLMMA - Fiji
- Donato Bumacas
 - Kamicydi - Philippines
- Dominique Bikaba
 - Pole Pole Foundation - DR Congo
- Zelealem Tefera
 - Guassa Menz - Ethiopia
- Celia Mahung
 - TIDE - Belize
- Laura Diaz
 - MOPAWI - Honduras
- Barbara Schmal
 - AVIVE - Brazil