



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**



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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