

Selection Criteria

Criteria for selection of **Equator Prize** recipients:

Impact: Initiatives that have reduced poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and/or through the equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

Partnerships: Initiatives that have adopted a partnership approach by linking activities with non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, the private sector, governments, research and/or academic institutions, and public or private foundations.

Sustainability: Initiatives that can demonstrate successful and lasting changes in local socio-economic conditions and positive impacts on biodiversity into the future.

Innovation and transferability: Initiatives demonstrating new and adaptable approaches that overcome prevailing constraints and offer relevant knowledge, expertise and lessons learned.

Leadership and community empowerment: Initiatives demonstrating leadership that has inspired action and change consistent with the vision of the Equator Initiative, including policy and/or institutional change and the empowerment of local people, especially that of marginalized groups.

Gender equality and social inclusion: Initiatives that incorporate diverse social and cultural needs and promote equity.

Partners

The Equator Initiative is a partnership of UNDP, the UN's global development network, with BrasilConnects, the government of Canada, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, International Development Research Centre, IUCN—The World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment and the United Nations Foundation.

Success Stories from the Tropics

The seven recipients of the Equator Prize 2002 embody the spirit of the sustainable communities movement in the tropics. Chosen from a field of 27 finalists, these seven communities received their award, along with US \$30,000 each, at a ceremony in Johannesburg on 30 August 2002.

From left to right below: the 2002 Award Ceremony; Suledo Forest Community – *Tanzania*; Fiji Locally-Managed Marine Area Network – *Fiji*; Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) – *Belize*; Green Life Association of Amazônia (AVIVE) – *Brazil*; Uma Bawang Resident's Association (UBRA) – *Malaysia*; Talamanca Initiative - *Costa Rica*; Il Ngwesi Group Ranch – *Kenya*.



A partnership
for sustainable communities
in the tropics.

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Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative is a partnership that brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, business and local groups to build the capacity and raise the profile of sustainable communities in developing countries within the equatorial belt.

A simple fact lies at the heart of the Equator Initiative's work: the world's greatest concentration of biological wealth is found in the tropics, in countries often beset by acute poverty. This biological wealth is under threat as never before.

The good news is that local grassroots and indigenous communities are actively charting a path towards a more sustainable future, using their biological resources in creative and sustainable ways for food, medicine, shelter and improved livelihoods.

The Equator Initiative aims to champion and support community-level development projects that link economic improvement with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. To this end, the Equator Initiative partners are undertaking seven activities:

- Sponsoring the biennial **Equator Prize**, awarded to recognize outstanding communities from developing countries in the tropics that demonstrate in practical terms how efforts to conserve biodiversity can also reduce poverty,
- Offering **learning exchange grants** so that grassroots practitioners can share best practices with other communities in the tropics,
- Facilitating **eco-entrepreneur mentoring** to provide business and financial advice for small sustainable business startups,

- Assisting **people and protected areas** where communities must balance income generation with the conservation of biodiversity in or near World Heritage Sites,
- **Making the community to policy connection** by linking local sustainable development innovators with policies that affect them, and working to ensure communities have the input, political support and funding they deserve,
- Fostering **research and learning** by enlisting networks of experts and practitioners to use community best practices to inform policy and development priorities, and
- Mounting a global **public awareness campaign** to raise the profile of sustainable communities in donor countries and encourage adoption of community best practices in developing regions.

As sustainable community initiatives take root throughout the tropics, they are laying the foundation for a global movement of local successes that are collectively making a substantive contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Biodiversity

The variety of life on earth, including genes, species and ecosystems is known as biological diversity, or biodiversity. In addition to being a source of food, fuel, shelter, medicines and livelihoods, biodiversity also provides the critical 'ecosystem services' of air and water purification, waste treatment, nutrient cycling, disease control and moderation of erosion, floods and drought.



Equator Prize

The Equator Prize honors outstanding community projects that effectively reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Six winners will be selected from a field of finalists to receive the Equator Prize 2004 at a ceremony in early 2004 during the meeting of the Seventh Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity taking place in Malaysia. In addition to international recognition for their work and an opportunity to help shape international policy and practice in the field, winners will each receive a prize of US\$30,000.

One of the six prizes will be specifically awarded to a community working in partnership with a World Heritage Site for the successful integration of conservation and local livelihoods.

To be eligible, initiatives must be located within the equatorial belt (23.5° latitude above and below the Equator) and in a developing country. Community-based organizations, community-based entrepreneurial initiatives, indigenous groups and non-governmental organizations are eligible to be nominated for the Equator Prize.

Complete information on the nomination process is available on the web site: www.EquatorInitiative.org.

"It is sad that there are more than one billion people who are still poor. But we represent the good news. We are showing that it is possible to protect the environment with full minds and full stomachs."

Benson Venegas Robinson
Talamanca Initiative, Costa Rica