LEARNING EXCHANGE PROGRAMME: FROM RECOGNITION TO RESULTS

Building on the experiences of the nominated communities, the Equator Initiative has launched a comprehensive learning exchange programme that promotes community-to-community interaction and the sharing of ideas and approaches for biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction.

This learning exchange programme began in 2002 with the invitation of more than 100 representatives from outstanding community projects to participate in the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In Johannesburg, these community representatives shared insights from their own successful experiences. The spirit of inter-community dialogue at the World Summit is the foundation for the Equator Initiative’s wider strategy of learning.

The Equator Initiative’s learning exchange programme will foster community-to-community exchange of knowledge and sharing of good practices. For further information on the learning exchange programme please refer to the Equator Initiative website www.EquatorInitiative.org.

KNOWLEDGE GENERATION, ADVOCACY AND POLICY IMPACT

The Equator Initiative is promoting an extensive outreach programme to inform the world community of the ingenuity and effectiveness of local partnerships throughout the Equator Belt in addressing the challenges of biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. For example, Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), is producing a 27-part, televised exploration of the most outstanding nominations for the Equator Prize as part of their award-winning programme “Hands On.”

The Equator Initiative is working with the network of nominated community projects and is researching emerging trends to create timely and accessible case studies and policy issue papers focusing on the intersection of biodiversity and poverty.

Lessons drawn from a range of outstanding Equator Initiative nominations will be used to impact policy at the local, national and global levels and create an enabling environment for the adaptation and transfer of successful practices. This body of knowledge will also be used to disseminate key messages through advocacy campaigns around the world and to advance the Equator Initiative movement.

PARTNERS OF THE EQUATOR INITIATIVE

The Equator Initiative is a partnership of UNDP, the UN’s global development network, with BrasilConnects, the government of Canada, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), IUCN – The World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), and the United Nations Foundation. The Equator Initiative invites other organizations to become involved in its growing partnership.
The Equator Initiative is a worldwide movement to reduce poverty and sustain biodiversity by identifying and rewarding innovative local partnerships, fostering community-to-community learning, and contributing to knowledge generation for advocacy and policy impact. The Equator Initiative focuses on the region between 23.5 degrees north and 23.5 degrees south of the Equator as this zone holds the world’s greatest concentrations of both human poverty and biological wealth.

The Equator Initiative recognizes that communities in the developing world are a vital driving force for sustainable development. Whether for food, medicine or income generation, indigenous and other local groups are creatively and effectively using biological resources in sustainable ways to improve their livelihoods. The Equator Initiative seeks to recognize, support and promote learning from these largely unrecognized innovations.

The Equator Initiative addresses many of the issues most fundamental to global sustainable development. The programme offers innovative local solutions to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s five priority areas for the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture, and Biodiversity and ecosystem services. This “WEHAB” framework supports achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of universally adopted benchmarks for effecting significant, measurable improvements in people’s lives by 2015. The Equator Initiative is addressing these goals by advancing comprehensive solutions to the environmental and livelihood challenges of the developing world, with a focus on poverty reduction and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In August 2002, the Jury awarded six Equator Prizes of US$ 30,000 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. Five prizes were given to outstanding community initiatives from throughout the tropics, while one was specifically given to a project associated with a World Heritage Site for successfully integrating conservation and local livelihoods.

The next Equator Prize programme is planned for 2004.