

CanopyBridge – EcoDecision



Ecosystem: Forest

Area Impacted: 0.5-4 ha farming plots embedded in a landscape of hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest

Production Quantity: Paiche: 203kg.
Chakra products: 67kg annually

People Employed: 7 Ai-Kofan and 7 Kichwa indigenous people

Population Impacted: 130 families, 650 people

The Situation

Covering just 0.2% of the Earth's surface, Ecuador is one of its most biologically diverse countries. Its Amazon lowlands are exceptionally rich, but also highly threatened. Of the Amazon countries, Ecuador has lost the largest share of its original Amazon forests; expansion of crops and pastures drives over 90% of this deforestation. Indigenous peoples are the stewards of 50% of the Ecuadorian Amazon and their lands maintain most of the original natural forest cover. Farms are a diversified combination of fruit trees, palms, timber species, herbs, and root crops that act as "connective tissue" for surrounding rainforests. With the shift to a market economy, this mosaic of indigenous forests and farms is at risk of disappearing or being radically simplified to meet the need for income, but sacrifice biodiversity, food security and culture. While the Amazon region comprises almost half of Ecuador's territory, its rich cultural and biological diversity is poorly known and undervalued in the country's centers of economic and political power.

The Solution

Canopybridge – EcoDecision uses gastronomy as an agent of change by connecting indigenous producers of specialty ingredients with leading chefs and restaurants. Extraordinarily well-tuned traditional farming systems have long been in place. Indigenous forest stewards partner with conservation NGOs and the most renowned chefs in Ecuador to place unique products and ingredients of the Amazon at the dinner tables of South America's burgeoning food movement. Smallholder producers and top chefs join forces to incubate new products with culinary potential, driving revenue directly to communities and providing new incentives for conservation. The restaurants and chefs are on the hunt for innovative ingredients, unique to the country and rooted in its many cultures. This creates new space for traditional crops, farming methods and local communities. Canopybridge – EcoDecision has provided practical solutions to the logistics problems, ensuring that fresh products reach restaurants and specialty food markets on a weekly basis. Initially a small initiative, the network now aims is to scale up this delivery system through sustainable sourcing from producer associations. Bringing the solution to scale will help diversify producers to avoid over-exploitation of production units and diversify sales to ensure biodiversity in production units is not compromised.





Farming for Biodiversity

Unsustainable agricultural practices remain one of the greatest threats to ecosystems and biodiversity. As the world population is expected to reach nine billion by 2050 and climate change further threatens livelihoods, we have to find ways of agricultural production that support farmers and the environment we all rely on.

The good news is these solutions already exist: From modern beekeepers who work on reviving ancient local wisdom to phone apps connecting rural farmers with urban consumers.

With Farming for Biodiversity, we are on a global mission to surface these local solutions, celebrate them and bring them to scale.

Our vision is to make these community-led initiatives shine and reach:

- Over 200 million globally through media impressions and publications
- Over 100,000 active website participants and readers of online publications
- 200 selected agriculture & biodiversity pioneers through eight technical and campaign trainings, hosted across the globe
- 800,000 farmers, conservationists and other land users at the community-level



Through our crowd-sourcing contest Solution Search, we have identified over 300 innovative and replicable ideas that connect agriculture, livelihood and the environment. These selections were assessed by our renowned panel of expert judges from leading organizations around the world.

Based on the solutions surfaced, we will host eight in-country workshops to introduce the most promising approaches to local influencers. Trainings will equip participants with the skills to implement locally driven solutions in their own communities. Longer term grants will provide an additional incentive to continue their work. These efforts will expand these approaches globally, reaching 800,000 people!

Throughout the project, we will gather, analyze and publish lessons learned. An online peer-to-peer network will connect all solution providers and facilitate interactive exchange across countries and themes. We will actively engage in global environment and agriculture policy processes – such as the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) meetings, drawing attention to community leaders and local champions.