

Update on the Green Development Initiative

Prepared by Earthmind in response to notification SCBD/ITS/YX/75558 regarding submission of information concerning innovative financial mechanisms, pursuant to CBD COP decision X/3, A, paragraph 8(c)

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In 2008, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) agreed to “improve actions... for enhancing the engagement of the business community” and to “come forward with new and innovative financing mechanisms.” In 2010, the Parties agreed that “by 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources... should increase substantially.”

In response, the Green Development Initiative (GDI) intends to establish a biodiversity standard and certification scheme for land management, not land ownership transfer. Through independent third-party certification, land managers can be recognised for their efforts to conserve biodiversity and to use biological resources sustainably and equitably. In so doing, the GDI aims to facilitate private financing for biodiversity.

The GDI biodiversity standard will apply CBD objectives, approaches and guidance to land management. Where appropriate, the approaches and guidance of biodiversity-related conventions and voluntary environmental and social certification schemes will also be referenced. In particular, the GDI standard will build on the CBD Ecosystem Approach. A prototype reference guide for a biodiversity certification system for land management is currently being drafted.

Regarding the potential demand for GDI certification and associated financial support for biodiversity management, research is also underway on the drivers and modalities for engaging businesses, investors and consumers. Private companies may seek certification for the biodiversity-responsible management of their own lands or as a tool for channelling support to the management of other areas.

To further understand the potential supply of GDI certified areas and the potential funding of these areas, a pilot programme is under way. This programme is exploring how a GDI standard could be applied to the management of a range of landscapes such as soy farms in Brazil and India, protected areas in Africa and Europe, cocoa plantations in Ghana, agro-forestry in Mozambique, and community-based natural resource management in Namibia.

Next steps include an international expert and stakeholder meeting planned for mid-October 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya, and securing additional financing to continue the programme of work. This work is focusing on piloting the design, implementation and financing of GDI-certified land management plans. If successful, a first formal phase of the GDI will be launched in 2012, either at CBD COP11, Rio+20, or IUCN WCC5.

Current support for the GDI comes from the inter-ministerial Biodiversity Policy Programme of the Government of the Netherlands. Earthmind serves as its secretariat. More information is available on the GDI website or by emailing Earthmind.