



Skoll Foundation Awards \$2.2 million to avoided deforestation and the ecosystem services market
By Grace Augustine, special to mongabay.com
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This week the Skoll Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship awarded its annual Awards for Social Entrepreneurship and three of the seven prizes went to individuals and organizations focused on tropical forests and ecosystem services, including Forest Trends, Imazon, and Telapak. Each award is worth \$765,000, which amounts to over \$2.2 million for this space. The awards were presented at the Skoll World Forum in Oxford, United Kingdom.

"As we've grown the cadre of global social entrepreneurial leaders in the Skoll Foundation family, we're seeing increasing opportunities for cooperation and leverage among groups tackling similar challenges," said Sally Osberg, President and CEO of the Skoll Foundation. "The addition of three organizations working on forest conservation strengthens an already strong group of environmental social entrepreneurs within the portfolio, increasing the potential for impact in this critical realm."

While past recipients have included organization such as the Global Footprint Network, the Marine Stewardship Council, and Water.org, a quick count of those who received a Skoll award from 2005-2009 reveals that only 8 of the past 59 awardees (13%) have been environmentally-focused organizations, making this year's awardees an extraordinary bunch and a testament to the fact that the social entrepreneurship world has turned a vital corner in its commitment to environmental issues.

The first recipient, Forest Trends, works to understand the market potential of forests and avoided deforestation. It conducts research, partners with corporate and community projects, and is steering a movement towards the re-conceptualization of the value of forests. Forest Trends publishes the newsource and Website Ecosystem Marketplace and organizes The Katoomba Group, both influential pieces of the development of an ecosystem services market. The award was presented to founder Michael Jenkins, who told the audience, comprised of social investors and entrepreneurs, "We need to think about building the natural infrastructure of the planet."

The second award winner, Imazon, is a Brazilian-based organization run by Adalberto (Beto) Verissimo and Carlos Souza, Jr. The recognized leaders in rainforest conservation have built an invaluable technology based on mapping and satellite imagery for monitoring deforestation in Brazil. Their system helped the Brazilian government launch a new policy to identify and stop illegal deforestation, focusing on "hot spot" areas identified by Imazon. At the ceremony, the Verissimo said that they plan to use the funds from Skoll to take their solution to other geographies, saying "We have a stronger motivation to continue our work and increase our sense of mission to help create not only a sustainable Amazon but to go beyond and help those in Africa and Southeast Asia to create a global monitoring system to cover a billion hectares of tropical forests."

The third recipient of this year's award, Telapak, organizes community-based sustainable logging cooperatives in Indonesia, a nation that is often cited as the world's 3rd largest contributor to greenhouse gases due to its rates of deforestation. Telepak is run by Ambrosius Ruwindrijarto and Silverius Oscar Unggul. They work at the grassroots level to enable locals to curb deforestation through sustainable land management and are the first organization in Southeast Asia to achieve group forestry certification for logging cooperatives.



2010 Skoll Awardees: Michael Jenkins of Forest Trends (top); Beto Verissimo and Carlos Souza of Imazon (middle); and Ambrosius Ruwindrijarto (Ruwi) and Silverius Oscar Unggul (Onte) of Telapak (bottom).

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