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EMPOWERING CHANGE: A YEAR OF BIG WINS FOR THE AMAZON FOREST AND BEYOND

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Transformative solutions to complex problems like Amazon deforestation don't materialize overnight. Our successes for the forest this year are not just triumphs of the moment; they are the fruits of years dedicated to building relationships, supporting public policy processes, and encouraging the growth of a high-integrity carbon market to deliver funding to tropical forest strategies at the scale and speed that is needed. Our expert teams are on the ground, working tirelessly to turn vision into reality.

To protect and restore tropical forests and make tropical food systems more sustainable, much more funding is needed. Earth Innovation Institute has been unwavering in its pursuit of this audacious goal.

In 2003, our journey began with a bold ambition: to devise a mechanism channeling essential funds to tropical regions transitioning toward forest-positive, socially-inclusive rural development. Collaborating with partners, we introduced an innovative concept to the United Nations climate negotiations - a concept that aimed to reward nations for their success in reducing carbon emissions caused by deforestation. The idea took hold. Dubbed "Jurisdictional REDD+" (JREDD), as the concept/mechanism is known, has since funneled hundreds of millions of dollars in support to states, provinces and nations that are making these rural development shifts.

Today, this visionary concept stands on the precipice of an even greater breakthrough. JREDD funding is poised to surpass billions of dollars annually, benefitting indigenous peoples, traditional communities, farmers, timber sectors, bioeconomies and governments crucial in protecting and restoring forests, while simultaneously building low-carbon rural economies and food systems.

Here are snapshots of how Earth Innovation Institute is turning these dreams into reality:

The Brazilian Amazon

- **Landmark sub-national JREDD deal:** Earth Innovation's five-year partnership with the state of Tocantins, which straddles the Amazon forest and Cerrado woodland, delivered an historic JREDD purchase agreement with Swiss energy trader Mercuria set to reward the state's success in reducing emissions from deforestation with hundreds of millions of dollars.
- **First Tocantins Forum of Traditional Peoples and Family Agriculture:** We helped Tocantins launch the state's inaugural JREDD Forum where two hundred and fifty community leaders--representing indigenous peoples, *quilombola* communities, and family farmers--began to decide how to use their

share of the carbon revenues.

- **Reshaping the role of farmers in protecting and restoring forests:** Soy farmers and cattle producers are critical players in any Brazilian strategy to conserve and regenerate forests, but are usually involved only through punitive measures. That changed this year with a new EII initiative to create a state-wide system of positive incentives for protecting and restoring forests on farms in Tocantins.

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Photo: Marcel de Paula

- **Protecting and regenerating forests on cattle ranches:** In the giant Amazon state of Pará, host of the UN COP30 climate summit in 2025, we launched a three-year initiative with the powerful cattle sector and the state government to create positive incentives to protect and regenerate forests on cattle farms and ranches with revenues from the state's JREDD carbon credit sales.
- **Public policy support for community-based fisheries management:** Pará Governor Helder Barbalho issued a decree to recognize and support community-based fisheries management, a vital step toward a comprehensive policy framework for these communities. EII and local partner Sapopema played a pivotal role in this achievement, building on decades-long work.
- **Pathways to a carbon neutral economy:** In Brazil's agricultural giant state–Mato Grosso–our nineteen-year-old partnership delivered a crucial breakthrough to fund the state's transition to a carbon neutral economy: a legal analysis to aid the government in choosing the most effective path forward to sell state-wide carbon credits. In 2024, it will be full steam ahead to translate emissions reductions into significant carbon revenues.
- **Enduring support for Acre's forest economy:** In Acre state, a partner of twenty-three years, we supported the evaluation and monitoring of the state's award-winning "REDD+ for Early Movers" program that has received $50 million in JREDD funding, as we worked quietly behind the scenes helping the state prepare to sell a much larger volume of JREDD carbon credits.

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The Peruvian Amazon

- **Implementing low-emission development strategies:** Our seven-year history supporting regional governments in Peru to create and formalize their low-emission development strategies is also coming to fruition. San Martin and Ucayali regions created regulations to implement their strategies and new commercial partnerships were established between smallholder farmers and food companies. We also began to develop low-emission rural development strategies in four districts (Neshuya, Tocache, Moyobamba, Rioja),and we initiated support to two regional governments to prepare to sell emissions reductions as JREDD carbon credits.

The Colombian Amazon

- **Defining targets for low emissions development in Caquetá:** The multi-stakeholder Climate Change Subnode made significant strides in implementing Caquetá's Strategy for Low Emissions Rural Development. With EII's support, a work plan with clear targets was developed and approved by the Subnode, for ensuring that at least 1,200 family units have clean and/or renewable energy sources in non-interconnected rural areas and 350,000 hectares of silvopastoral systems are implemented by 2035.

Indonesia

- **Assessing the impacts of potential development pathways:** In partnership with LTKL *(Lingkar Temu Kabupaten Lestari*, the Sustainable Districts Network), we supported two Indonesian districts (Sigi and Bone Bolango, Sulawesi) to explore potential sustainable development strategies, uncovering substantial economic and indirect values in standing forests. Data gathered for each district were compiled in Earth Innovation's Green Jurisdictions Database, the most comprehensive source for information on progress toward low-carbon development in tropical forest jurisdictions around the world.

Digital Innovation

- **Developing dynamic platforms to spotlight landscape-wide and jurisdictional transitions:** Collaborating with Rainforest Alliance and Conservation International, our digital innovation team developed the website for the new LandScale Assessment tool, which is already fostering landscape-wide transitions to sustainable development. We also supported Caquetá and Acre in creating regional platforms to showcase their progress in policy and program implementation.

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