



# Planting Empowerment : Panama

Conserving tropical forest while creating investment opportunities in sustainable forestry

## Project description

Planting Empowerment (PE) has worked with rainforest communities since 2007 to create investment opportunities in sustainable forestry. This increases tropical forest conservation and promotes sustainable local governance of natural resources while contributing to climate change mitigation.



## Business model

Through leasing land and profit sharing, local partners become true stakeholders in the conservation and regeneration of their rainforests.

Planting Empowerment (PE) offers forestry investment opportunities that create ecological and social benefits while generating a competitive return on investment.

The investment platforms and the PE website offer sustainable investment products for both small-scale and large institutional investors.

## Scaling up activities

- Expand the operations from the current 20 hectares to 120 hectares
- With local partners, plan suitable plots, land lease contracts, planting and maintenance
- Increase marketing and partnerships within the Socially Responsible Investment platforms
- Increase revenues and customer base to become cash flow positive by the end of 2010
- Team up with ASOADICO on a UNDP- funded project to establish a native species nursery, reforest a plot with valuable native species interspersed with mixed food crops, and carry out a carbon baseline study.

## Immediate needs

- Advice and support with strategic business planning, marketing and Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration to bring the partnership on firm footing with Panamanian communities
- Building relationships with accredited investors and financial service providers to extend the reach of the initiative.





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### Partnership

- **Planting Empowerment**, a Panama-based business, uses financial markets to make investment work for conservation and community development.
- **ASOADICO**, a community-based organisation, promotes agroforestry and fosters sustainable community development in Arimaé through forest conservation.
- **The Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, an international organisation, has supported the project from the inception and emulates lessons learned throughout the region.



### Social, environmental and economic impacts

**Social impact:** By leasing land from local partners and engaging in profit sharing, PE contributes to local income generation. PE also provides scholarships for a small number of local schoolchildren, and is exploring development projects with the local communities.

**Environmental impact:** The business model leverages financial markets to reforest degraded land and promote the conservation of primary forest. The 20 hectares of

mixed species trees already planted have sequestered 180 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> to date.

**Economic impact:** Planting Empowerment provides a reliable source of income to local communities. Timber securities have historically outperformed broad market returns, and the investment products are expected to generate a return on investment between 7.3% and 9.3%.

### Contact

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### SEED Partners

SEED is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other current partners are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.



### About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: [www.seedinit.org](http://www.seedinit.org)

### SEED Secretariat

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