Two important questions that prospective donors ask

biome | International Conservation Fund of Canada

1. Question: Why should I support conservation in other countries? Isn't our responsibility conserving nature here in Canada?

Our Answer: Yes, our primary responsibility is conserving nature at home. But climate change and biodiversity loss are global problems and the responsibility of all. The world has a stake in our polar bears and boreal forest and we have a stake in elephants and rainforests of the Amazon and Congo Basin.

In lower-income countries, dollars go a long way in stemming biodiversity loss and achieving nature-based climate solutions.

We can't reach our climate targets without reducing tropical deforestation (which accounts for 95% of deforestation worldwide). And tropical ecosystems maintain hydrological regimes, productive fisheries, agriculture, and the wintering habitat of Canada's breeding birds.

Nature also has its own intrinsic value. Surely, we should do our best to avoid human-caused extinctions. The tropics, with its rich biodiversity, is where nature is most under threat and where conservation is most underfunded. Canadians can make a difference. Let's do our part!

In view of these considerations:

Biome calls on Canadians to apply at least ten percent of their conservation support internationally.

Not our business?

Canada has earned its wealth as an integrated part of the world economy and not in a vacuum. Canadian mining companies operate in more than 100 countries around the world (notably in Latin America and Africa), with mining assets abroad valued at $241 billion in 2024 – double domestic assets. Their environmental impact is significant. Canadian energy companies are also active globally, with billions of dollars' worth of operations in tropical nations such as Colombia and Mexico. While our forest industry is a large exporter, it also maintains operations in tropical countries. Tropical regions, in other words, have played a big part in Canada's economic success. As well, we are importers of products like palm oil that are linked to tropical deforestation. We should "pay back" globally as well as locally.

2. Question: Isn't it risky to do conservation in developing countries where there is political instability and inadequate law enforcement?

Our Answer: Risk is low in relation to cost and benefits. Key points:

- Laws and their enforcement, while often falling short of needs, play a big role in conservation in developing countries. Above and beyond this, on-the-ground protection by NGOs, Indigenous people and communities is effective and is achieving a lot—and it is readily scalable.
- Biome avoids government corruption and incompetence by working directly with local conservation organizations and communities. At the same time, our field partner organizations are politically savvy and careful in maintaining good relations with governments.
- Biome evaluates project proposals based on conservation gains in relation to cost and risk. Proposals must make clear how success will be secure long term. Biome works with local field partners who have a good track record or (rarely) who are new but promising.
- The problem of "paper parks" derives from inadequate funding of public protected areas. Private reserves protected and managed by Indigenous people and communities are more secure. There are thousands of private reserves that are well protected by local/regional conservation organizations. Biome's projects that protect landscape-scale areas (Indigenous territories; a large conservation concession; community-managed forests) have succeeded over decades (with our ongoing support).
- And, finally, conservation projects in Canada are not without risk.

"Contrary to the impression of some, there is respect for private property in the developing world (where land rights are defended). Malfeasance is most likely to occur in the extractive industries, where the dollar values are large and government contracts and permitting are required. By contrast, Biome works closely with trusted field partners and demands accountability."

- Tom Welch, former CFO