



Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn

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Equal Opportunities: Facilitating Participation by Southern Scientists



At a Glance...

The Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn (ASB) consortium is a key partner in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, or MA. This 5 year project reviews the relationship between human well-being and ecosystem services around the world. The ASB part of the assessment analyzes how these relationships play out at the tropical forest margins, drawing on results from its network of sites throughout the humid tropics. Many of ASB's **key scientific experts** come from developing countries. But for these scientists, full participation in the MA is limited by financial constraints. ASB is seeking funding for **competitive grants** to enhance and broaden participation by developing country scientists, especially as co-authors, and to facilitate their collaboration with world leaders in relevant fields. This project will also **build individual and country capacity** for future ecosystem assessments at a local to global level, supporting a stronger scientific foundation for decision-making in the tropics.

Going Global

For the past decade, ASB partners have been working at large sites throughout the tropics to understand the tradeoffs between rural livelihoods and rainforest conservation. Researchers at these sites have been assessing driving forces of land-use change, ecosystem goods and services, and policy options to balance development and conservation.

These research results are being expanded and analyzed for ASB's contribution to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), a global project to understand conditions and trends of human well-being, ecosystems, and their interactions.

ASB's assessment is drawing together research from sites on 3 continents – in the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon, the Congo Basin of Cameroon, the mountains of northern Thailand, and islands in Indonesia and the Philippines. The ASB-MA results will be used to help identify research priorities, policy options, and land-use strategies to improve natural resource management both locally and globally.

Investing in Expertise and Leadership in the Tropics

In contributing to the MA, ASB is drawing on research results and expertise from partners around the world. This worldwide team is largely made up of scientists from developing countries, but a lack of financing often restricts their ability to participate. Particularly, most national and local research organizations require that expenses (including time of support staff) be covered. In order to facilitate the valuable participation of

southern scientists in the ASB-MA, and to strengthen the partnerships with global partners needed to produce such assessments, ASB is seeking funding to launch a grants programme.

These grants will enable scientists from Brazil, Peru, Cameroon, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines to contribute fully to the assessments being conducted for their own countries, as well as to work with world leaders in their fields. By promoting local consultations and feedback in this way, they will ensure that the assessment responds to local needs, both in its process and in follow-up activities and actions arising from the syntheses.

*strengthen
science,
empower
scientists*

The estimated cost to broaden and deepen developing country scientist participation is **\$100,000 per year, for 2 years of competitive grants**.

A key aim of the MA is to build individual and institutional capacity to undertake integrated ecosystem assessments, and to act on their findings. By facilitating developing country scientist participation in the ASB-MA, these grants will not only improve assessment products and results but also enable and empower these scientists – providing them with leadership skills, training in assessment techniques, international opportunities, and recognition.

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