

Maritta Koch-Weser, AmazonIEA Program, Instituto de Estudos Avançados, Universidade de São Paulo
Proposal: Rainforest Continent Business School

The clearing of tropical rainforests in Central & South America, Africa, and Asia negatively impacts climate, biodiversity, and the world's largest freshwater systems. More successfully capping Co2 emissions from burning rainforests – causing some 12-17% of all annual global CO2 emissions - may currently well be the single largest - and lowest cost - opportunity for short term reductions in emissions. Deforestation is a well recognized problem, already addressed globally to varying degrees through environmental policies, legally enforced nature conservation, controls, and enforcement systems.

Yet significant other opportunities remain to be brought to scale. Especially *adding economic value to standing forests* is an underutilized strategic option in fighting deforestation. Greater gain from sustainably managed *standing*, rather than cleared rainforest could weigh in as an economic “counterbalance”, saving more forests from destruction, and improving incomes among local communities.

The Rainforest Continent Business School (RCBS)

The objective of the world's first specialized rainforest business school will be to train a new generation of business experts - professionals able to realize the *sui generis*, unique economic potential within “standing forests”, sustainably, with all due respect for environmental safeguards, intellectual property, and local community rights and cultures.

The Rainforest Business School will systematize learning from rainforest business experiences to date, by way of case studies. In cooperation with the world's premier business schools, and with centers of expertise in natural sciences, public policy, social sciences, and finance, it will promote social, technological, and market innovations. It will assist science-based product and business development, and understanding of social, environmental, legal, administrative, and value chain related underpinnings.

To achieve scale and impact soon in priority regions globally, the proposal aims at integrating RCBS Rainforest Business curriculums into existing expert training programs worldwide, in a franchise system among licensed participating academic centers/business schools. State-of-the art use will be made of internet-based distance education and collaborative research opportunities. During build-up, quick start Executive Training modules are to be followed by international level Masters' programs.

For a 3-5 year “incubation period”, the AmazonIEA/USP program has recently initiated work on curriculum development, academic partnerships, and plans for independent private sector RCBS governance and finance. The objective is to center the “Rainforest Continent” Business School in Brazil, as a global curriculum developer and provider. Initial proposals call for governance as a private sector institution, co-owned and chaired by a small set of outstanding academic centers and business schools in Brazil and beyond.

The world's major tropical rainforests add up to an area equivalent to a
“Rainforest Continent” three times as large as Europe (EU).
Time has come for its science based business development