



IWOKRAMA

A Model for the World

Bringing together people, science and business in
rainforest management and investment

Messages



Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma,
Marlborough House, London



His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales,
Iwokrama's Patron, and President Bharrat Jagdeo at
Clarence House (2008)*

Commonwealth Secretary General

I am particularly pleased to see that the Iwokrama International Rainforest Centre has given such careful thought to ways of bringing people, science and business together to solve the challenges of rainforest management and climate change. As we begin our planning to celebrate the 2010 Commonwealth Day theme "Science, Technology and Society", the experience of Iwokrama has much to offer the world.

Earlier this year I was fortunate enough to see for myself the Iwokrama team's continuing work and it seems to me that they bring four key elements to the Commonwealth's sustainability agenda:

- the development of new models of best practice for sustainable management of the world's remaining rainforests;
- a challenging and progressive programme of research into the consequences of climate change at several scales;
- a greater understanding of the ecological services that rainforests offer to humanity; and
- greater recognition and enhancement of benefits for local communities whose livelihoods depend on these unique assets

I admire and warmly welcome the Iwokrama vision. The Centre and its team have the Commonwealth's full support as they work to unlock nature's secrets and find new ways to build a sustainable future for us all.

Kamalesh Sharma
Commonwealth Secretary-General

President of Guyana

We in Guyana applaud the progress the Iwokrama International Centre has made over the past twelve months.

Its new financial stability, its new science programme - with its emphasis on climate change impacts - and its evaluation of the contribution of eco-system services to the Iwokrama forest and the well-being of local communities have all given the Centre a new direction and profile of great relevance and assistance to my Government's initiative for the creation of a low carbon economy.

We look forward to the IIC's continuing work in 2009.

H. E. Bharrat Jagdeo
President of Guyana

A Model for the World

The Challenge

While we hear every day about climate change and what we need to do about it, unfortunately the importance of the world's rainforests in tackling climate change seldom makes the front page. The task confronting the international community today is to:

- communicate and put in place a new approach to rainforest sustainability and
- promote and implement investment in rainforest ecosystem services as an immediate and practical key step to mitigating climate change

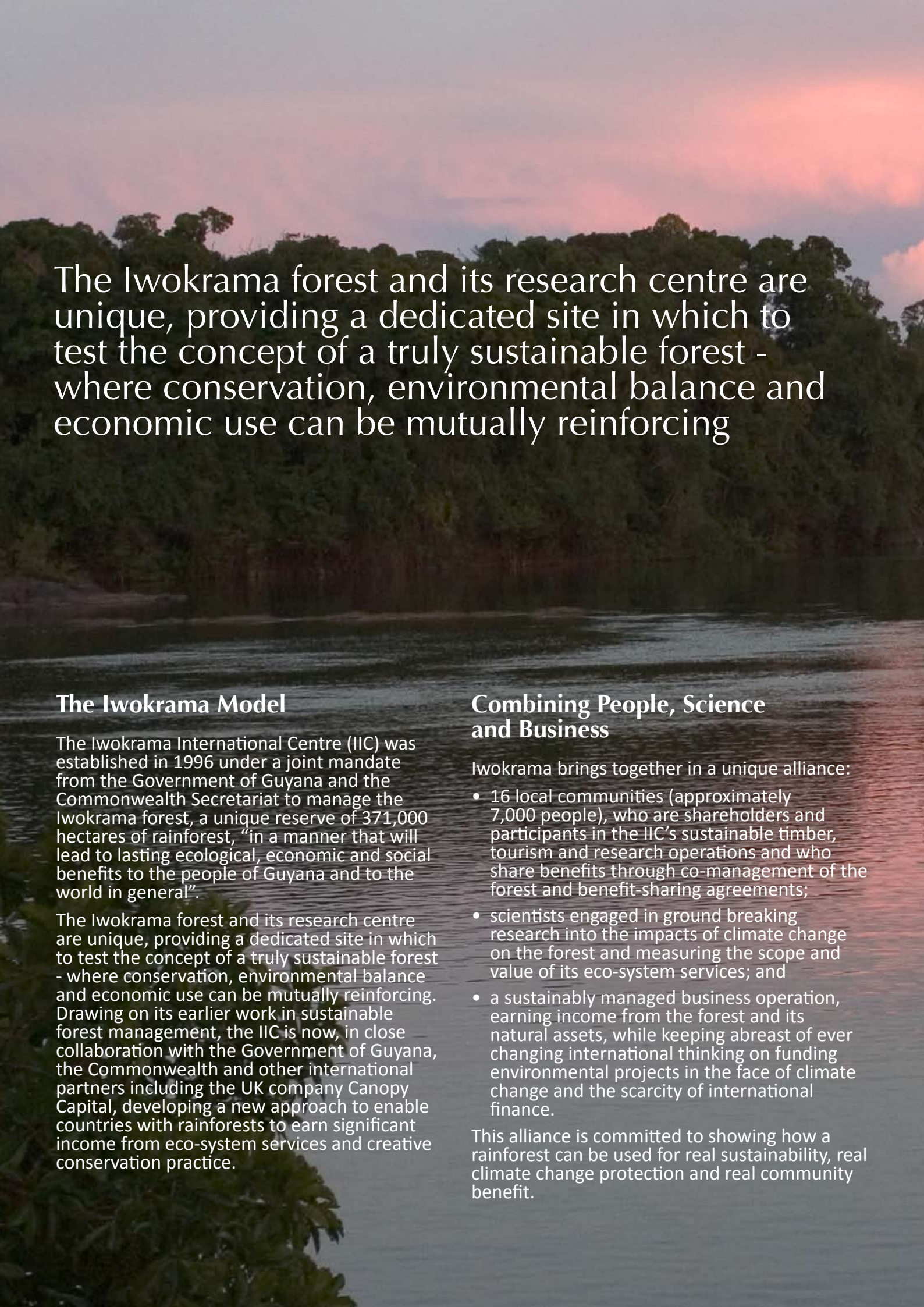
Rainforest destruction is driven by increasing demands for immediate profit - for valuable 'cash crops' such as timber, soya, biofuels and beef. 'Hard' financial values have too often overshadowed the 'softer' and less quantified ecological values. Yet the financial value of a standing forest is real and can be quantified.

The Facts

The world's remaining tropical rainforests account for a huge amount of the world's natural carbon capture and storage (CCS) - an estimated 1.3 billion tonnes of carbon per year. Iwokrama alone captures 1.3 million tonnes of CO₂ annually.

However, rainforests are being destroyed at a rate of 13 million hectares per year. This not only reduces the Earth's natural CCS capacity but directly accounts for around 18% of total annual CO₂ emissions. Under the "business as usual" scenario, we may have only 12-20 years before passing 450 parts per million (parts per million) of atmospheric CO₂ beyond which temperatures may rise beyond 2 degrees and decisive tipping points reached.

A vital part of the global solution to reducing emissions dramatically is therefore to save the remaining rainforests: by understanding the critical eco-system services they deliver and by placing a greater financial value on them through innovative financial mechanisms. We pay for electricity, gas, oil, water and waste services, but nothing for rainforest services on which we all depend.



The Iwokrama forest and its research centre are unique, providing a dedicated site in which to test the concept of a truly sustainable forest - where conservation, environmental balance and economic use can be mutually reinforcing

The Iwokrama Model

The Iwokrama International Centre (IIC) was established in 1996 under a joint mandate from the Government of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretariat to manage the Iwokrama forest, a unique reserve of 371,000 hectares of rainforest, “in a manner that will lead to lasting ecological, economic and social benefits to the people of Guyana and to the world in general”.

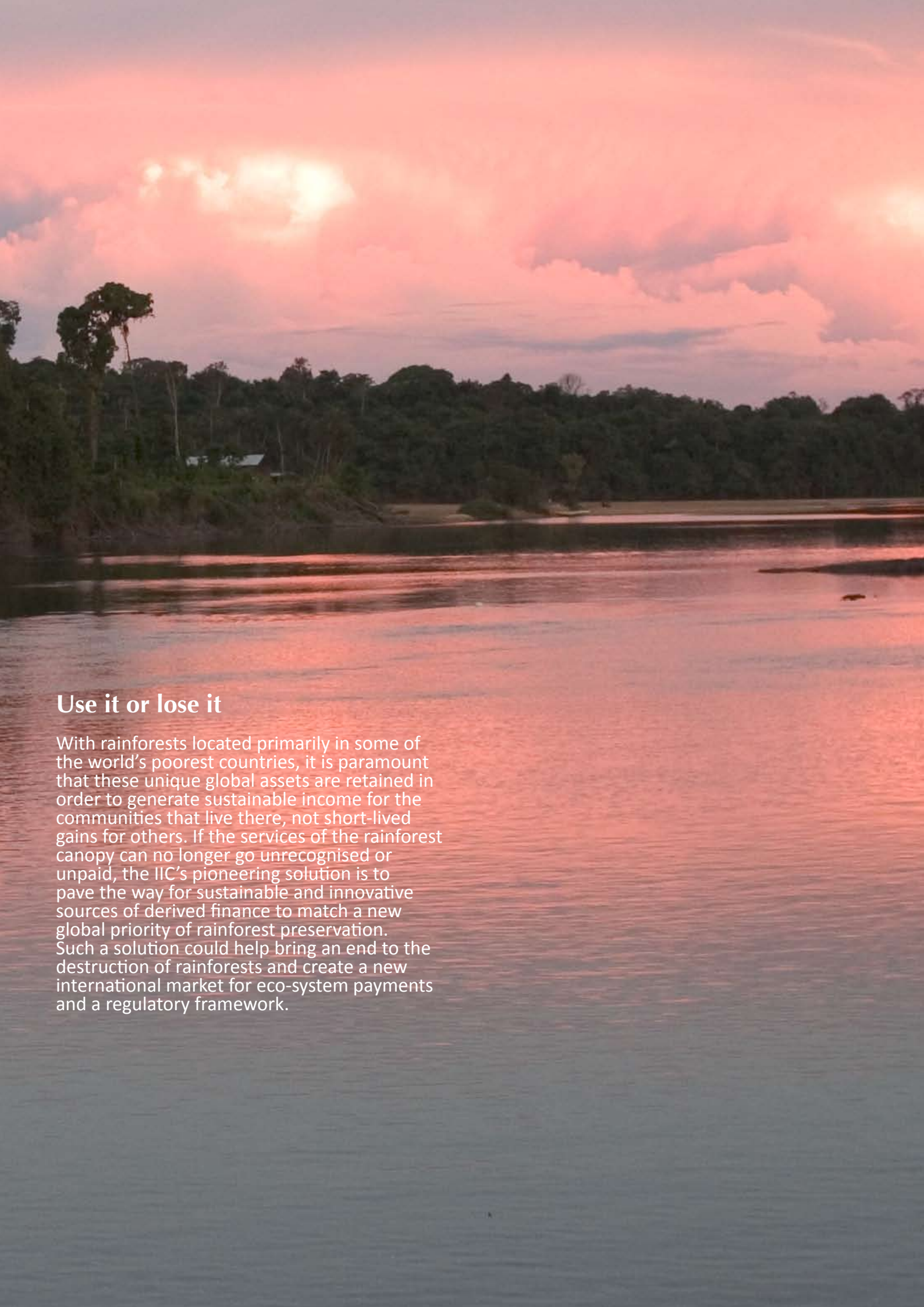
The Iwokrama forest and its research centre are unique, providing a dedicated site in which to test the concept of a truly sustainable forest - where conservation, environmental balance and economic use can be mutually reinforcing. Drawing on its earlier work in sustainable forest management, the IIC is now, in close collaboration with the Government of Guyana, the Commonwealth and other international partners including the UK company Canopy Capital, developing a new approach to enable countries with rainforests to earn significant income from eco-system services and creative conservation practice.

Combining People, Science and Business

Iwokrama brings together in a unique alliance:

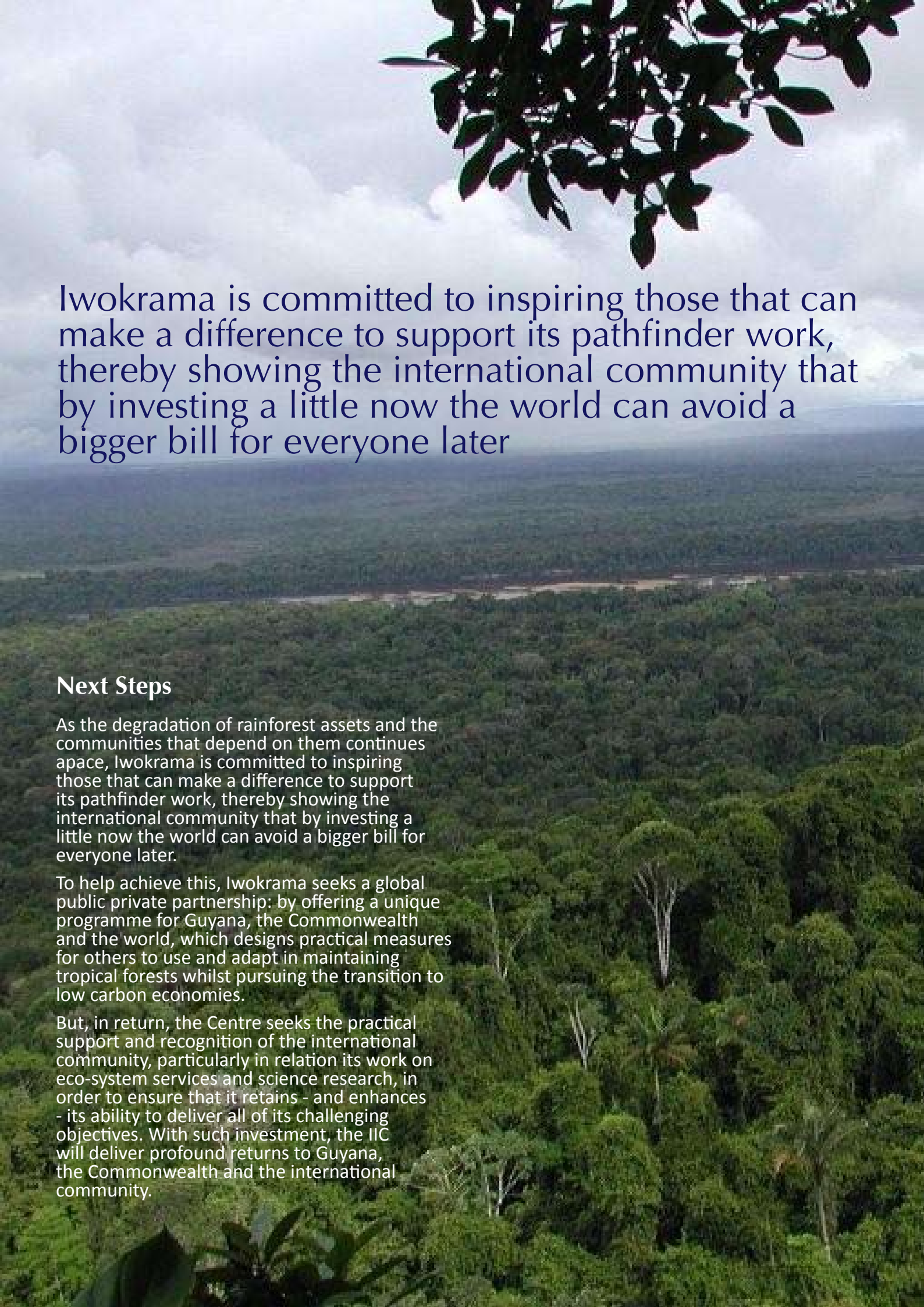
- 16 local communities (approximately 7,000 people), who are shareholders and participants in the IIC’s sustainable timber, tourism and research operations and who share benefits through co-management of the forest and benefit-sharing agreements;
- scientists engaged in ground breaking research into the impacts of climate change on the forest and measuring the scope and value of its eco-system services; and
- a sustainably managed business operation, earning income from the forest and its natural assets, while keeping abreast of ever changing international thinking on funding environmental projects in the face of climate change and the scarcity of international finance.

This alliance is committed to showing how a rainforest can be used for real sustainability, real climate change protection and real community benefit.

A full-page background image showing a sunset over a wide river. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds in shades of orange, pink, and red. The sun is partially obscured by a cloud on the left, creating a bright glow. The river's surface reflects the vibrant colors of the sky. In the background, a dense line of tropical forest stretches across the horizon. On the left side, a small, dark-roofed building is partially visible through the trees.

Use it or lose it

With rainforests located primarily in some of the world's poorest countries, it is paramount that these unique global assets are retained in order to generate sustainable income for the communities that live there, not short-lived gains for others. If the services of the rainforest canopy can no longer go unrecognised or unpaid, the IIC's pioneering solution is to pave the way for sustainable and innovative sources of derived finance to match a new global priority of rainforest preservation. Such a solution could help bring an end to the destruction of rainforests and create a new international market for eco-system payments and a regulatory framework.



Iwokrama is committed to inspiring those that can make a difference to support its pathfinder work, thereby showing the international community that by investing a little now the world can avoid a bigger bill for everyone later

Next Steps

As the degradation of rainforest assets and the communities that depend on them continues apace, Iwokrama is committed to inspiring those that can make a difference to support its pathfinder work, thereby showing the international community that by investing a little now the world can avoid a bigger bill for everyone later.

To help achieve this, Iwokrama seeks a global public private partnership: by offering a unique programme for Guyana, the Commonwealth and the world, which designs practical measures for others to use and adapt in maintaining tropical forests whilst pursuing the transition to low carbon economies.

But, in return, the Centre seeks the practical support and recognition of the international community, particularly in relation its work on eco-system services and science research, in order to ensure that it retains - and enhances - its ability to deliver all of its challenging objectives. With such investment, the IIC will deliver profound returns to Guyana, the Commonwealth and the international community.



The Iwokrama International Centre wishes to send warmest thanks to all its partners and donors for their most generous advice, assistance and support. Without such contributions, Iwokrama would not have made such strong and encouraging progress.

Partners

Canopy Capital
Community and Tourism Services Inc
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Global Canopy Programme (Oxford)
Guyana Trade and Investment Services
and Judy Karwacki
Guyana Forestry Commission

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The University of Guyana
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Photographs:
The Iwokrama International Centre
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on FSC paper



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