APPLICATION PROCEDURES

To apply, please send a letter of interest to Verde Ventures, at verdeventures@conservation.org, that addresses the following:

- Specific location of business operations (refer to map below to ensure your enterprise is located within a CI priority area)
- Amount of investment requested
- Information on how funds will be used
- Description of how your business supports biodiversity
- Information on the background of your key managers
- Summary financials.

CI'S MISSION

Conservation International (CI) believes that the Earth’s natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth’s living heritage—our global biodiversity—and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.

CI PRIORITY AREAS

To date, Verde Ventures partners have helped directly secure the protection and restoration of over 580,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) of key habitat and 95 IUCN Red Listed species, and supported 14 projects that together employ more than 9,000 local people in 7 countries.

To be eligible for support from Verde Ventures, the enterprise must be involved in a business that benefits conservation. Some examples include:

- Agroforestry: Shade-grown and sustainable agriculture that buffers biologically important protected areas
- Ecotourism: Lodges or other ecotourism products that protect biodiversity and also provide conservation-oriented employment for communities living near protected areas
- Wild-harvest products: Businesses that develop and promote oils, nuts, fruit, plants, fibers and other natural materials sustainably harvested near protected areas.

Any income-generating enterprise that provides direct benefits to biodiversity conservation is encouraged to apply.

An applicant/business must meet the following basic criteria:

- Make contributions to conservation in biodiversity hotspots, major high-biodiversity wilderness areas or CI marine project sites (see map on back page)
- Have total assets valued at no more than $5 million
- Employ a strong management team
- Demonstrate viable cash flow for repayment.

Verde Ventures is currently capitalized with $6.75 million raised from public and private sources including the International Finance Corporation/Global Environmental Facility, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Starbucks Coffee Company. To date, just under $4 million of this capital has been invested with a 100 percent repayment rate.

VERDE VENTURES INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Leslie B arous
The Microfinance Management Institute
c/o The Open Society Institute

Patrick Goudey
President, Coady & Co.

Malc C rose
Chief Financial Officer,
Coady & Co.

Steve Graubart
Managing Director, Calvert Ventures

Nicholas Pritzker
Chairman of the Board and CEO,
Equities, LLC

Steve Graubart
Managing Director, Calvert Ventures

John A. May
Managing Partner, New Vantage Group

Nicholas Pritzker
Chairman of the Board and CEO,
Hyett Development Corporation and Hyett Equities, LLC

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Mark Robinson
President and Chief Executive Officer,
The Microfinance Management Institute

Leslie B arous
The Microfinance Management Institute

Niels Crone
Chief Financial Officer,
Conservation International

Patrick Goudey
President and Chief Executive Officer,
Coady & Co.

Leslie Barcus
President, Conservation International

Verde Ventures is a fund designed to strengthen small- and medium-sized enterprises that are strategically important to biodiversity conservation. The fund provides debt and equity financing of $30,000–$500,000 to select businesses in CI’s priority areas. Through a new partnership with the United Nations Development Program’s Equator Initiative, Verde Ventures also will augment its current funding with a Technical Assistance Program.

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While cocoa grown on Wildlife Works, Export Rainforest Expeditions In March of 2005 Verde SM detrimental crops such as oil palm. cocoa, rather than converting to more The incentive to continue growing shade maximum shade in buffer zones border- ing some of Ghana’s most important pro- vides a variety of adventure activities for tourists (www.belizelodge.com). The deal: In December 2002, Verde Ventures invested $100,000 in BIE. The company is using the 5-year loan to complete construction of two ecologues; to reforest 6,800 hectares (17,000 acres) of biologically rich private land; and to patrol the reserve. The benefit: Previously the site of a logging operation and citrus plantations, the area now owned by BLE is home to 500 bird species and five species of wild cats. As the primary employer for the area, BLE provides tourism jobs for 150 local and sawmill operators. Employment with BLE provides tourism jobs for 150 local and sawmill operators. Employment with BLE provides an economic alternative to natural resource extraction. Additionally, BLE provides a variety of adventure activities for tourists (www.belizelodge.com). The deal: In December 2004 Verde Ventures provided a loan of $121,200 to finance REPASA’s purchase and export of wild criollo cocoa and Brazil nuts from local producer associations. The benefit: This investment will support REPASA’s sustainably harvested cocoa and Brazil nut purchases from 550 association members providing a direct economic incentive for the local population to conserve 40,000 hectares of important woodlands between Noel Kempff Mercado National Park and Iibobo Sécura National Park of the Amazon High Bio- diversity Wilderness Area. The benefit: By providing price incentives and affordable credit for local farmers growing conservation-oriented coffee, the program creates a direct incentive for farmers to continue sustainable coffee production. The program has contributed to the protection of key buffer zones around the El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve in Mexico, the Bahualha-Sone National Park and the Tambopata-Candamo Reserve in Southern Peru, and the Comung Lasu Ecosystem in the Sundaland Hotspot. The benefit: While cocoa grown on plantations can be detrimental to biodi- versity, Kuapa farmers working with CI’s Conservation Coffee Program (CCP) in Peru, financing was provided to CECOVASA, a federation of cooperatives consisting of 5,000 primar- ily indigenous producers. In Indonesia, Trimaju has also received funding to purchase coffee from the Gayo Organic Coffee Farmers Association, a cooperative of 1,400 small-scale producers in Aceh. The deal: In May 2001, Verde Ventures approved an investment of $250,000 in Day Chocolate. Day purchases cocoa from Kuapa farmers at “fair-trade” prices, often two times that of the commercial price, while also giving Kuapa 33 percent owner- ship in Day. The benefit: While cocoa grown on plantations can be detrimental to biodi- versity, Kuapa farmers working with CI’s Conservation Coffee Program (CCP) program seek to increase yields of existing crops, reduce pesticide use and diversify farms to ensure maximum shade in buffer zones border- ing some of Ghana’s most important pro- tected areas. Farmers participating with Day Chocolate earn a better living and the incentive to continue growing shade cocoa, rather than converting to more detrimental crops such as oil palm.

A LOOK AT THE BUSINESSES SUPPORTED BY VERDE VENTURES

The Day Chocolate Company
Ghana, West Africa

The enterprise: Day Chocolate Company is a United Kingdom-based fair-trade chocolate company that sources cocoa from CI’s Ghanaian Conservation Cocoa partner Kuapa Kokoo. Day’s products are available throughout the UK and via the SEVRV catalogue in the United States (www.divinechocolate.com).

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