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The greatest challenge facing the tropical biodiversity community is to stop intellectualizing and start doing. We now know how to conserve tropical biodiversity, and there are viable and growing conservation projects in motion throughout the tropics. Now we need to tell the world what the biodiversity is in those projects (and around them), and simultaneously begin to use it. Both are highly pragmatic activities. The time has arrived for country-level pilot projects.

The world of international funding, and hence planning, eagerly waits for a tropical country to step forward with a practical and site-specific action plan. In addition to adequate time and funding, this action plan requires a willing tropical society that has a working relationship with the international biodiversity community. This society must be willing to become a pilot project, a real-world case history that will keep the feet of the world's planners on the ground as they deal with the bulk of tropical biodiversity. Ideally, there will be several such pilot projects functioning simultaneously.

What resources are necessary to fuel such a pilot country? National willingness to step away from the turf battles so characteristic of humans starving for funding. Home-grown parataxonomists, trained by the international community to work in the pilot project country. Home-grown project management personnel, trained in management by the national commercial community and trained in science by scientists. International willingness to step away from taxon-focused work in favor of region-based work. A national biodiversity collection, firmly linked with the international major collection centers. All of these needs can be met by moderate targeted funding. And all are presently being successfully confronted on a very small scale somewhere in the tropics.

How long and how much? A safe estimate for a small country, such as Costa Rica, would be ten years to do its one million species, at a cost of \$50 per species. This budget guarantees a permanent and endowed national biodiversity reference and research collection. This would be five percent of the world's terrestrial species.

Costa Rica is a promising country. The country is 55,000 square kilometers — roughly the size of West Virginia — and it has five percent of the world's species. Costa Rica has already taken the first step. Twenty-five percent of the country has conservation status. This status is solidifying daily and is well on the way to being permanent; it is time to move on to the second step.