

Placing Value on Amazonian Rainfall

The Launch of an Amazonian Indigenous Leadership Initiative

In 2020, Gaia Amazonas launched the Amazonian Indigenous Leadership and Innovation Initiative for young men and women with the goal of empowering the new “Amerindian” generations in the management of Amazonian territories shaped by ancestral knowledge and practices and in co-governance with the Central Government of Colombia.

A private agreement has been created between Gaia Amazonas, a Colombian NGO in the Amazon, and Guayaki Yerba Mate, a business operating in the Atlantic Forest 3000 kms south in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, aimed at placing a value on Amazonian rainfall. This agreement acknowledges economic and ecologic interdependence of distant ecosystems and the rainfall that they depend on.



Gaia Amazonas and Guayaki Yerba Mate Co., a B Corp and a Social Purpose Company, have recognized the ecological, social and economic interdependence of humidity and rain and the need to place a financial value on the precious resource. In the South American Atlantic Rainforest rainfall feeds the native species of flora and fauna via "flying rivers". Within the South American Atlantic Rainforest indigenous and "campesino" communities harvest yerba mate leaves. In order to help preserve the precious water that falls on the yerba mate trees, a one-year agreement was signed on April 22nd, of 2020 as a mutual learning collaboration to help support the Amazonian Indigenous Leadership and Innovation Initiative.

[Gaia Amazonas'](#) mission is to protect the cultural and biological diversity of the Colombian Amazon Rainforest. They secure legal titles for indigenous ancestral territories which empowers their own local governments to support the implementation of social and environmental policies and programs based on indigenous values, principles and cultures.

[Guayakí Yerba Mate's](#) vision holds that yerba mate culture will power their Market Driven Regeneration™ business model to regenerate ecosystems and create vibrant communities.

The yerba mate grown in the South American Atlantic rainforest is the key ingredient in Guayakí's organic, fair trade beverages. The yerba mate trees depend on at least 15% of the rainfall from the Amazon Basin that "navigates" thousands of miles south via "flying rivers" (sic. Carlos Nobre). The recognition of this interdependence between two major ecosystems and its cultures is expressed by placing a financial value on the rainfall originally generated in the Amazon where indigenous peoples maintain the forest and its ecosystems. As a response, Guayakí financially supports indigenous cultures in the Amazon in their struggle to keep a healthy rainforest standing. This also enables other market actors with which the company is commercially connected to participate in the same purpose, specifically in their procurement, sales, investments, hiring, market positioning and communication strategies.

Video: Why is the Amazon so Important? Watch & learn [here](#).

In conclusion, the general purpose of this agreement is to learn, share and, hopefully, inspire others in search of their own recognition of interdependence with indigenous cultures and ecosystems for the common good. Corporate boards, senior management, civil society leaders, students, investors, and government officials from all over the world are invited to help us on the journey toward recognition of global interdependence between ecosystems and cultures.

The Agreement was signed by Martin von Hildebrand, from Gaia Amazonas, and Alejandro Pryor from Guayakí Yerba Mate SPC with the participation of Carlos Nobre, a climate scientist studying the Amazon for 40 years, Daniel Wahl, author, educator, regenerative practitioner, and Pedro Tarak from Sistema B.

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To learn more about The Agreement in Spanish, click [here](#).

Para obtener más información sobre El Acuerdo en español, haga clic [aquí](#).