



Portfolio for the Planet: Lessons from 10 Years of Impact Investing

Tammy E. Newmark, Michele Anne Pena

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Rapid growth of the global economy has accelerated the degradation of the Earth's most important asset: the environment. Increasing poverty and challenges arising from climate change further threaten the planet's natural systems. With a rising global population, the demand on natural resources to cover even basic human needs is intensifying – supporting businesses that promote the sustainable use of natural resources and help ensure their long-term viability is imperative. As part of a pioneering movement to harness business towards effecting environmental change, The Nature Conservancy launched EcoEnterprises Fund in 2000 to provide investment capital to grow small "eco"-businesses in Latin America. There is a compelling need for financing this niche. Companies of this size truly drive change – creating the engine for economic activity and generating livelihoods for bottom of the pyramid rural peoples which brings about positive social and conservation impacts.

EcoEnterprises Fund's portfolio highlights twenty-three cutting-edge companies, in expanding sectors such as organic agriculture, ecotourism, sustainable forestry, and non-timber forest products which include innovative industry first-movers—from organic shrimp to biodynamic flowers, and ready-to-drink smoothies made from the latest Amazonian berry. With a successful ten-year track record, EcoEnterprises Fund has valuable learning to share – from what pitfalls to avoid when structuring investments to what types of assistance entrepreneurs in these emerging environmental sectors need most. *Portfolio for the Planet* translates a decade of experience into accessible lessons for both veterans and newcomers in the field: for those interested in investing in sustainable businesses, discovering novel approaches to environmental conservation, or seeing entrepreneurs pursue their dreams.

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