

# Holding a forest hostage

## Stories

Planet Money, NPR, [“Holding a rainforest hostage”](#)

The Guardian, [“Yasuni National Park: We want to give it as a gift to humanity”](#)

Jayant Gandhi, [“Holding trees hostage: Ecuador’s attempt to share costs of preserving the Amazon”](#)

## Questions

You’ve recently joined the Moore Foundation as a Program Officer in their Andes-Amazon Initiative. The Moore Foundation has become concerned that the experience of the Yasuni-ITT demonstrates that the world will be unable to raise enough money to protect tropical forests. You’ve offered to prepare a report documenting the lessons that can be taken from the Yasuni-ITT’s failure. To do so, you need to answer the following questions:

- 1) Using the lens of public goods provisioning, discuss why the Yasuni-ITT project was unable to raise the requested \$3.6 billion.
- 2) The Yasuni-ITT forest is a somewhat unique part of the Amazon in that it stands atop large proven reserves of oil. Using the economic concepts of marginal cost and marginal benefit, discuss why the Yasuni-ITT forest might be expected to have a lower likelihood of conservation than other parts of the Amazon.
- 3) Do you think the payments requested by the Ecuadorian government were perceived as rewards/payments/incentives for good action, or ransom/bribes/extortion to prevent destruction? How might international perceptions change donor countries’ willingness to contribute? How might success of the Yasuni-ITT have changed other developing countries’ willingness to pay for their own conservation initiatives?