# Abstract

Tackling climate change is the most important environmental and social issue of the 21st century. By cutting down forests faster than its regenerative rate takes away one of the world’s major sinks for CO2 and thus accelerates climate change by increasing the latent CO2 concentration in the atmosphere. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the question how regional economic development and entrepreneurship are triggered and fostered through effective forest management. Literature presents many possibilities how governments can tackle the problem of rainforest degradation and the lack of rural development. The research aim is to show award-winning initiatives and develop a best practice model for the Amazon region recommending how this issue can be solved locally. A comparative case study analysis was conducted on 10 initiatives from Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador to assess them based on their impact. In the following steps common success factors and threats were identified. The common factors were used in the final step to develop a best practice model. The model shows the most important factors to consider which are: a participatory governance model, the development of alternative livelihoods, partnerships, and education and awareness.