

Private Business Action for Biodiversity

The importance of biological diversity

Biodiversity is the diversity of life, comprising the wealth of species, genes and ecosystems on Earth. It provides the basis for functioning ecosystems, which in turn deliver services such as fertile soils, clear water, pollination or climate regulation. Functioning ecosystems serve as living space for people, animals and plants, provide shelter from extreme weather events, are a basis for economic activity, and offer space for recreation.

Governments, public and private alliances, and initiatives worldwide are working to preserve biodiversity. Yet the loss of biodiversity is progressing faster than ever before, and it is increasingly jeopardizing human livelihoods. Among the main causes are pollution and overexploitation, changes in land use, the proliferation of invasive species, and climate change. These are usually driven by institutional and market failure which create difficulties to achieve sustainable development.

To safeguard the basis of our existence, we must preserve biological diversity and fight more decisively against its loss than we have done so far.

Biodiversity and private businesses

Businesses can play an important role in combating the causes of biodiversity loss. On the one hand, the services provided by nature are at the basis of many economic processes. On the other hand, economic activity alters biodiversity and ecosystems – and often degrades them.

The past decade has seen a rise in private sector investment into the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. This

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Cooperation partners	Institutions in the partner countries, international initiatives and networks, interested companies
Partner countries	The project works at a global level. It envisages pilot activities in three partner countries (possibly Brazil, India, and Mexico).
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demonstrates both the importance of the issue and the interest on the part of businesses. However, there is still vast potential for expanding such activities – to the benefit of biological diversity as well as to that of the companies.

A promising approach is to promote biodiversity-friendly production, commercialization and marketing. This involves analysing value chains and identifying opportunities to reinforce positive impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and/or reduce negative ones. The subsequent transformation process aims at improving those activities in a way that preserves and strengthens biological diversity, while simultaneously reducing costs and risks for businesses.

Despite its potential, the approach is not yet widely used or known. The private sector still needs to improve and strengthen its methodological knowledge, establish ap-

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appropriate market conditions, and reduce transaction costs to convert existing production systems into biodiversity-friendly ones. Moreover, the public sector requires enhanced information to support the appropriate framework conditions. It is important to identify new opportunities to promote and finance biodiversity-friendly production, commercialization and marketing.

The project Private Business Action for Biodiversity

The global project Private Business Action for Biodiversity pursues to identify, analyse and test promising approaches, methods and tools for promoting biodiversity-friendly production, commercialization and marketing; to test and learn from their implementation to further develop them where required; and to systematize the experiences gained in a way that enables both private and public actors to use them.

The initial scoping phase is used to identify, review and analyze existing approaches. Based on the results, the project develops implementation strategies together with cooperation partners in three countries (probably Brazil, India, and Mexico). Furthermore, the project and its partners conduct needs assessments, which contribute to developing and strengthening know-how and capacities in the public and private sectors.

At the heart of the project are pilot applications of selected methods, mechanisms and tools for promoting biodiversity-friendly production, commercialization and marketing in the partner countries. The focus is on businesses that are particularly dependent on ecosystem services, or where the value chains strongly affect ecosystems. The aim is

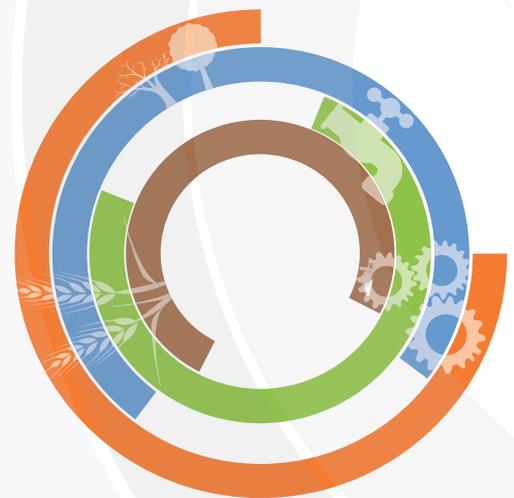
to contribute to tangible improvements in production, commercialization and marketing, so as to strengthen and preserve biological diversity. Thus, the project explicitly builds on the interest, motivation and existing experience of the cooperating companies.

Measures and tools that prove particularly successful in the testing phase will be processed and introduced into the debate at international and national level. This way the project shares valuable experience and makes recommendations, which will contribute to achieving the objectives of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Partners

The project Private Business Action for Biodiversity is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

It envisages collaboration with companies and ministries as well as non-government organizations in the three partner countries. In addition, the project intends to cooperate closely with other interested initiatives and regional networks.



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