



# 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.

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.

## 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 – often in a negative way. A promising approach is to promote biodiversity-friendly production and commercialization. This involves analysing value chains and identifying opportunities to reinforce positive impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and/or reduce negative ones.

Despite its potential, the approach is not yet widely used or known. New ways of promoting and financing biodiversity-friendly production and commercialization need to be identified and implemented.

## The project *Private Business Action for Biodiversity*

The global *Private Business Action for Biodiversity* project promotes promising methods and instruments for biodiversity-friendly production and commercializa-

tion. It tests and enhances them and systematizes the experiences gained in a way that enables both private and public actors to use them. A special focus is placed on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are part of agricultural and forestry supply chains.

In an initial scoping phase, the project has worked together with cooperation partners in Brazil, India and Mexico to develop implementation strategies with the aim to test and improve selected instruments and mechanisms for promoting biodiversity-friendly production and commercialization in the partner countries. Furthermore, the project and its partners contribute to knowledge and capacity building in the public and private sector.

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.

## Project partners

The project *Private Business Action for Biodiversity* is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI).

In the partner countries, the project collaborates with companies and ministries as well as nongovernment organizations.

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## Strategies in the partner countries

In **Brazil**, the focus is on two palm products: açai and carnauba. Açai grows in the tropical Amazon rainforest and is increasingly cultivated in plantations that have a low biodiversity – rather than in mixed forests. Carnauba palms grow on riverbanks in the predominantly semi-arid Caatinga, a region in northeastern Brazil, and are increasingly threatened by invasive species and changes in land use. Wax extracted from the leaves of the palm trees is used in car polish, cosmetics and sweets. The project works with the following instruments:

- Developing successful management practices for carnauba areas
- Cooperating with and supporting the Initiative for Responsible Carnauba
- Improving the sourcing of carnauba wax by modifying the standard of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT)
- A system for impact monitoring with regard to ecosystem services is tested as part of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standard, and applied to açai.

In **India**, the project addresses spice cultivation in the Western Ghats, a mountain range in southern India that is known for its great biodiversity. The project promotes biodiversity-friendly practices in the cultivation of pepper, cardamom, nutmeg and cinnamon as well as chili.

- Biodiversity Action plans for the integration of biodiversity aspects in and around farms are being adapted to the needs of small-scale spice producers, tested and improved. Results and recommendations will be shared with the Indian spice sector.

In **Mexico**, the main focus of the project is on agaves. This plant has a particular tradition in the country and is used, for instance, to produce mezcal and tequila.

- Setting up a monitoring system for the biodiversity-friendly production of agaves
- Providing support in marketing ‘bat-friendly tequila and mezcal’ and advertising this with a label (‘bat-friendly’)
- Integrating the costs for increased biodiversity protection into the production and marketing process

At **global level**, the pilot interventions in the partner countries are being methodically supported and documented to guarantee ongoing sharing of experiences and methods between the international level and the partner countries.

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