



Global BioTrade Facilitation Program

Conserving natural resources and reducing poverty at the same time by promoting the trade of sustainably sourced biodiversity-based goods and services

BioTrade refers to activities related to collecting, producing, transforming and commercialising sustainably sourced goods and services derived from native biodiversity. The purpose of this joint initiative with UNCTAD is to mainstream these activities into national and international agendas and thus to promote the approach as an instrument to achieve the dual goal of conserving biodiversity and poverty reduction.

Rationale

The loss of biodiversity is occurring at an accelerating rate. According to a 2019 study done by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), over one million species face extinction within the next few decades. Besides its drastic impact on the functionality of ecosystems, this development also has negative impact on climate and adversely affects the capacities of providing services that are essential for human survival. Over 70 percent of the world's poor directly depend on intact natural resources in order to cover their basic needs in terms of food, fuel, medicine, shelter and transportation. Furthermore, the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use and trade of biodiversity-derived products and services can also provide countries with valuable opportunities for economic development and thus improvement of livelihoods. Particularly as biodiversity-based products are in high demand and markets have grown significantly in the last two decades. In this scenario, the potential of achieving the dual goal of conserving biodiversity and creating improved economic and social welfare renders the BioTrade approach unique.

Against this background, SECO has been supporting the Global BioTrade Facilitation Program of UNCTAD since 2003 and promotes the BioTrade concept through different specific bilateral engagements, such as in the Mekong Region, Peru and South Africa.

Objectives and activities

The aim of the Global BioTrade Facilitation Program is to synchronize and leverage results from previous phases and thus contributing to unfold the potential of the BioTrade approach for biodiversity conservation as well as poverty reduction. The overall objective of the continued program is to support key stakeholders to seize and capitalize on trade opportunities. At the same time, the program advances the implementation of SDG 15, the Aichi Targets (included in the

SECO country/region

Global

Implementing partner

CITES, UEBT, ITC, ABS Initiative, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, PhytoTrade Africa, and regional and national partners

Implementing agency

UNCTAD

Duration

2018-2022

Total budget

USD 4,700,000

SECO contribution

CHF 3,200,000



UNITED NATIONS
UNCTAD

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, which is an agreed roadmap to implement the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity) and the future global biodiversity framework beyond 2020. UNCTAD will steer, coordinate and facilitate joint actions of key stakeholders at the national, regional and international level and address key concerns limiting the trade flows of biodiversity-based products and services.

The program builds on the following three pillars:

- **Coordination and knowledge sharing among stakeholders**

The program ensures coordination on key BioTrade issues. UNCTAD steers and leverages the capacity of different BioTrade partners to share information. Furthermore, through a structured approach to collaboration, visibility for the partners' work is enhanced and thus incentives for engagement provided. This approach shall further strengthen the business case for BioTrade and help mainstream it into sustainable sourcing and development strategies.

- **Enabling favourable policy environment for BioTrade companies**

BioTrade companies are supported to overcome non-tariff measures (NTMs) and to implement national schemes of access and benefit sharing (ABS) in order to enable their continued participation in the international market. Furthermore, the program will illustrate how the private sector as well as governments can also use BioTrade to report on the implementation of international processes (e.g. SDGs).

- **Facilitate market linkages for BioTrade companies**

The program supports private companies and other partners to increase their knowledge on BioTrade as well as their capacity to raise awareness of BioTrade. Partners will also be encouraged to stimulate growth and development of ethical sourcing practices and sustainable supply chains in relation with the BioTrade principles and criteria.

Governance Structure

UNCTAD is responsible for the implementation of the program. The main coordination vehicle is the annual Stakeholder Steering Committee (SSC) meeting. The SSC consists of key BioTrade partners, beneficiary countries, business actors, and regional and financial entities. The members jointly elaborate a roadmap that constitutes a common implementation plan to advance the business case for BioTrade.

Results so far

Initially, the program aimed at facilitating sustainable trade in biodiversity products and services through innovative collaborative arrangements. An important milestone was the conceptualization and branding of BioTrade through the definition of the BioTrade Principles & Criteria. In a second step, a policy environment that promoted trade and investment through the sustainable use of biodiversity was fostered. A breakthrough was the recognition of BioTrade in the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). Furthermore, the regularly organized BioTrade Congress has become the main gathering place for the BioTrade community at the global level. Finally, the program mainstreamed BioTrade and strengthened the overall policy and regulatory environment for BioTrade sectors, including bringing BioTrade experiences and lessons learned to the negotiations of the global biodiversity framework to be adopted in October 2020. A recognized product of this phase is for example the Handbook on BioTrade and Access and Benefit Sharing: From concept to practice.

How to get involved

The program is open and welcomes additional contributions from other donors as well as BioTrade actors. Relevant stakeholders, willing to share and collaborate, are encouraged to join the discussion in the course of the SSC or in the broader scope of the BioTrade Facilitation Program.

Further information and contact details

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