



Biodiversity for Development

An Overview of UNDP's Work on Biodiversity towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

What Is Biodiversity?
The term biodiversity (shorthand for biological diversity) refers to the full variety of life on earth – plants, animals and micro-organisms – including genes, species and entire ecosystems, and the vital services these ecosystems provide to society.

Biodiversity for Development
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UNDP and Biodiversity

Poverty and biodiversity are intimately linked. The poor, especially in rural areas, depend on biodiversity for food, fuel, shelter, medicines and livelihoods. Biodiversity also provides the critical 'ecosystem services' on which society depends, including air and water purification, soil conservation, disease control, and reduced vulnerability to natural disasters such as floods, droughts and landslides. Biodiversity loss exacerbates poverty, and likewise, poverty is a major threat to biodiversity.

Thus, UNDP has made *Biodiversity for Development* a prime focus of its Energy and Environment Practice. Through capacity development, knowledge management, policy advice and advocacy, UNDP helps more than 140 countries maintain and sustainably use biodiversity. Closely integrated activities, including its Biodiversity Global Programme, the Equator Initiative and the Global Environment Facility, enable UNDP to leverage change at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Biodiversity and the Millennium Development Goals

The protection and sustainable management of biodiversity—including genetic resources, species and the ecosystem services that support human development—is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of measurable, time-bound goals and targets agreed upon by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. Although one of the MDGs (MDG 7, on ensuring environmental sustainability) deals most explicitly with biodiversity, wise use of biological resources is important for the full range of development priorities encompassed by all eight MDGs.

For example, eradicating hunger (MDG 1) depends on sustainable and productive agriculture, which in turn relies on conserving and maintaining agricultural soils, water, genetic resources and ecological processes. The capacity of fisheries to supply hundreds of millions of the world's people with the bulk of their animal protein intake depends on the maintenance of ecosystems (such as mangroves and coral reefs) that provide fish with habitat and sustenance.



MDGs aimed at improving health and sanitation (MDGs 4, 5 and 6) require healthy, functioning freshwater ecosystems to provide adequate supplies of clean water; and genetic resources for both modern and traditional medicines. Lessening the burden of water and fuel collection is critical to achieving MDG 3 on gender equality and empowerment of women.

UNDP works to ensure that biodiversity considerations are integrated in processes designed to achieve the MDGs. At the same time, UNDP works to help the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), multilateral and bilateral organizations, NGOs, other civil society organizations, and the private sector incorporate the MDGs in their efforts.

UNDP's Biodiversity Programmes

UNDP contributes its expertise on biodiversity policy and knowledge management through efforts at the community, national, regional and global levels.

The Biodiversity Global Programme

UNDP's Biodiversity Global Programme assists developing countries and communities to influence national and global policies, benefit from knowledge on biodiversity, and advance their sustainable development and poverty reduction goals.

UNDP works to help integrate biodiversity, ecosystem services, protected areas and other commitments under the CBD into national policies and programmes, including in such key sectors as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and energy. These efforts address social, economic and policy frameworks such as the MDGs, *Human Development Reports*, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Sustainable Development Strategies. Activities include: empowering local communities and indigenous peoples to protect their traditional knowledge and ensure equitable access and sharing of benefits from biodiversity; and achieving synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements related to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The Biodiversity Global Programme works through strategic partnerships to provide cutting-edge knowledge on: policies that work for people and biodiversity, 'ecoagriculture' approaches, gender and biodiversity, greening the coffee, cacao and tourism industries, payment for ecosystem services, and biodiversity and its importance to human health (a partnership with the Center for Health & the Global Environment of Harvard Medical School (CHGE), UNEP and WHO). To learn more, visit www.undp.org/biodiversity.

UNDP's Drylands Development Centre (DDC) works with people to fight poverty in the dry areas of the world through the practice of sustainable land management. DDC focuses attention on the unique and valuable biodiversity in dryland ecosystems worldwide and promotes the sustainable use of this biodiversity through: policy action and advocacy, programming for biodiversity-friendly development at the country level, and knowledge sharing and outreach. To learn more, visit www.undp.org/drylands/vul-biodiversity.htm.

Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative is a partnership that promotes greater recognition of the critical role of local communities in reducing poverty and conserving biodiversity. Launched in January 2002, the work undertaken by Equator Initiative partners champions and supports sustainable communities in the Earth's equatorial region.

Key activities of the Equator Initiative include: the biennial Equator Prize; sponsoring innovation in sustainable tropical communities through research networks and learning exchanges between communities; helping communities and eco-entrepreneurs to find ways to balance livelihoods with biodiversity conservation; and raising global public awareness of sustainable tropical communities worldwide.

The Equator Initiative is a partnership of UNDP with BrasilConnects, Conservation International, the government of Canada, the government of Germany, the International Development Research Centre, IUCN – The World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment, and the United Nations Foundation. To learn more, visit www.undp.org/equatorinitiative.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Established in 1991, the GEF is a financial mechanism operating through UNDP and other implementing agencies to help developing countries fund projects and programmes that protect the global environment.

To date, UNDP GEF has provided over \$1.9 billion through grants and cost-sharing to developing countries for biodiversity-related projects.

This support also encompasses enabling activities to help countries respond to CBD obligations as well as funding for project preparation. The UNDP GEF supports some 250 full-size projects (for which GEF support amounts to more than \$1 million) and 30 medium-size projects (less than \$1 million) in 141 countries. To learn more, visit www.undp.org/gef.

GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP)

Funded by the GEF and implemented by UNDP, the SGP supports community-based approaches through grants of up to \$50,000. The SGP works through National Steering Committees composed of representatives from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, academia, donor agencies and UNDP. To date, more than 3,000 biodiversity-related projects of local NGOs and community-based organizations in 73 countries have been funded, totaling over \$58 million. To learn more, visit www.undp.org/sgp.

Regional Bureaus and Country Offices

UNDP's Regional Bureaus and Country Offices undertake biodiversity projects that complement the programmes described above and respond to region and country-specific needs. UNDP has Country Offices in 166 countries in five global regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia & the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America & the Caribbean).

Partnerships

Selected UNDP biodiversity-related partnership initiatives include:

- Conservation Finance Alliance
- Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
- Ecoagriculture Partners
- Global Biodiversity Forum
- Poverty and Environment Initiative
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
- UN Millennium Project.

UNDP is committed to building public-private partnerships for biodiversity. Examples include the UNDP/Swiss Re/CHGE partnership initiative on the biodiversity, economic and health dimensions of climate change, and the *Footprint Neutral* programme with Swiss Re.

UNDP's Biodiversity Programme also collaborates closely with the CBD Secretariat, IIED, IUCN, RSPB, SwedBio, The Birdlife Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, UNESCO, UN Foundation, WCS, WRI, WWF and others.



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