

Rio + 20: Biodiversity in the Green Economy



Biodiversity in the Green Economy

With Rio+20, the UN Earth Summit, there is a new paradigm for sustainable development. The “Green Economy” is an economic model aimed at improving human wellbeing and social equity, while reducing environmental risks. It calls for approaching the social, ecologic and economic interactions in our world as an opportunity.

At the core of putting the Green Economy in action, is biodiversity. Biodiversity encompasses the diversity of all living things, from human beings to microorganisms, including the variety of ecosystems. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is essential for the long-term survival of our planet, as well as to ensure the supply of inputs and ingredients used in a range of economic sectors. Biodiversity is also a source of new products, uses for technology, and activities that involve local communities and improve their livelihoods.

Business and the ethical sourcing of biodiversity

For pioneering companies in the food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical sectors, biodiversity is already a concept that promotes a greener and more inclusive economy. Traditionally, business has taken a limited view of their role in regards to biodiversity. Business contributions to protecting biodiversity have involved planting trees or supporting the conservation of emblematic species. Some companies now also consider biodiversity as a value of increasing importance to consumers.

For companies looking to the future, biodiversity is much more than that. These companies are committed to the ethical sourcing of biodiversity – this is the sourcing of natural ingredients that respects nature and people. Through ethical sourcing, businesses address a range of economic, social and sustainability issues, ensuring their sourcing activities conserve and restore biodiversity, preserve the long-term potential of ecosystems and provide equitable benefits along the supply chain.



Ethical sourcing of biodiversity provides opportunities.

For companies committed to ethical sourcing, biodiversity becomes a tool for innovation. Companies are able to identify and unlock more potential in their work, and add real value along the supply chain. Ethical sourcing of biodiversity further entails improving internal policies, including purchasing, research, development, and marketing. It cuts across and complements other sustainability strategies, such as fair trade and organic.

Finally, considering biodiversity helps manage risks and secure supply chains: potential problems are pinpointed and addressed - equitable and long - lasting partnerships developed.



Fair and equitable sharing of benefits

Ethical sourcing of biodiversity makes business sense. It also can make a significant contribution to better resource - efficiency and social inclusiveness. An example is how ethical sourcing practices support equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity. Through business engagement and practical tools and approaches, ethical sourcing practices provide guidance on issues such as engaging with stakeholders on the basis of dialogue and trust, determining an equitable price, contributing to local sustainable development and negotiating prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms.

As a result, ethical sourcing of biodiversity supports putting in practice the principles of the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity.



Looking to the future

The Green Economy approach brings an unparalleled opportunity – and a renewed drive – for bold thinking on biodiversity. Through ethical sourcing, pioneering businesses already embrace the potential of biodiversity. Companies improve how they function. Innovation becomes central to their strategies, and the key to their success. Their achievements bring sustainable use of biodiversity, respect for all actors and improved livelihoods along their supply chains. These are concrete steps towards making the future we want, the future we are all working towards.

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