



# The Biodiversity Fund

Linking sustainable biodiversity management and poverty alleviation

 Oxfam Novib

people  
unlimited  



# Linking sustainable biodiversity management and poverty alleviation

In the global context, particularly for many rural economies, poverty alleviation is entangled with the sustainable use and development of biologically diverse resources. In such settings local people rely on these resources for their livelihoods. Strengthening access to, and use of these resources provides security and resilience for the poor in the face of shocks and stresses in the environment and markets. Moreover, adherence to quality systems such as fair trade and organic production can enhance biodiversity, strengthen the productivity of the natural resource base and increase the income of small scale producers.

The Biodiversity Fund has been created to stimulate sustainable biodiversity management. It supports programmes that conserve, develop and use biodiversity such as participatory plant breeding and seed systems support. It supports extraction and production activities that do not negatively affect the sustainability and diversity of biological resources. The Fund aims to offer a sustainable livelihood to those with limited control over resources.



Overall objective of the Biodiversity Fund is to help eradicate poverty by promoting and strengthening the sustainable management of biodiversity in primary production processes through co-operation with international civil society.



## Uniquely, the fund aims at practical support and concrete results at all levels, from local farmers to international networks.

Biodiversity is essential to the world's ability to maintain its current level of food supplies and the necessary environmental services such as clean air and, adequate water supply.

The quality of natural resources, and the diversity of plant and animal species, varieties and ecosystems have, however, severely declined over the past years. This has negatively affected the lives of poor people as their lives are inextricably linked to biodiversity for diverse food, medicines, housing materials etc. Decline in access to or quality of biodiversity has a direct impact on their livelihoods and vice versa.

Official recognition of validated options for small-scale production practices that conserve biodiversity is still limited. Especially in the South numerous practices still exist in which local biodiversity is used, conserved and developed. Several international NGOs have taken up the challenge to further improve such biodiversity conserving practices and strive for recognition and active marketing of their quality produce. The Biodiversity Fund promotes quality systems like IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements, MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), guaranteeing sustainable production in terms of social and environmental standards.

While environmental conservation and development have sometimes been seen as mutually incompatible, in fact they can support and promote each other. The Biodiversity Fund focuses on the development of production processes that conserve, develop, and at least do not negatively affect stability and diversity of biological resources and are at the same time beneficial for small-scale producers and low income groups.

## How it works

The Biodiversity Fund was established in 2000 with the support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Biodiversity Fund supports international and regional organisations that are now working to revive and expand sustainable methods and products and market them effectively, while protecting the rights and interests of farmers, fishers and collectors of non-timber forest products in the context of globalisation.

The Fund's intervention strategy is based on increasing productive performance through improvement in seed systems and by strengthening the producers' marketing capacities in order to secure a stable or increased income and improve livelihoods.

The Fund further aims to create the necessary conditions for biodiversity conserving production systems to survive and flourish. Essential for these systems to perform are farmers' free access to a wide variety of seeds, and livestock keepers to a diverse range of animal breeds. Land rights and access to fishing grounds and forest areas are important prerequisites. A strong civil society co-ordination is considered essential to create, support and monitor these conditions.

Because of the relatively scarce initiatives that promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Africa, this region receives particular attention from the Fund.

## What the Biodiversity Fund does

**Strategic funding:** The Biodiversity Fund financially supports regional and international civil society organisations and networks.

**Knowledge sharing and capacity building:** The Biodiversity Fund monitors and evaluates partner performance and impact. It builds their capacities. The Fund provides a platform for discussion and enables knowledge transfer in relevant areas.

**Policy dialogue:** The Biodiversity Fund and its partners seek partnerships with the public and private sector in the Netherlands and elsewhere; it lobbies and campaigns at local, national and international levels on biodiversity and development.

## Facts and Figures

**Period** April 2005 - March 2009

**Annual budget** 1,8 million Euro

**Number of organisations supported in 2007** 20

**Implementing organisations** Hivos and Oxfam Novib

**Advisor** IUCN NL

**Initiator and current funding agency** Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for International Cooperation

## Expenditures by sector

73% agro-biodiversity

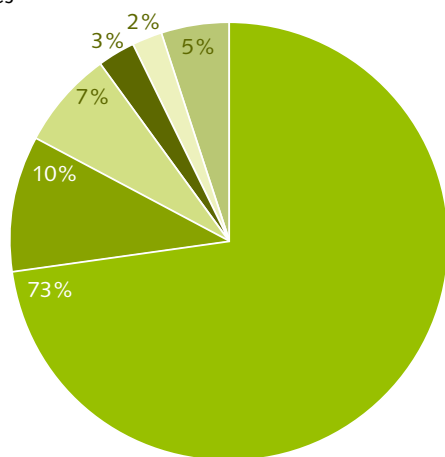
10% non-timber-forest-products

7% livestock

3% forestry

2% fisheries

5% other



## Topics addressed

- organic agriculture
- pesticides and their alternatives
- agricultural seed supply systems
- participatory variety selection and plant breeding
- animal genetic resources
- genetically modified organisms
- social and environmental standards
- intellectual property rights on living organisms
- sustainable resource management of fish, timber, non timber forest products, agricultural produce
- indigenous peoples rights and biodiversity

## Partner PHYTOTRADE The beauty of baobabs

“PhytoTrade, the South African Natural Products Trade Association, creates new markets for new products that are native to the region and at the same time conserve biodiversity. In 2006, PhytoTrade members generated gross sales of almost US\$ 900.000 from natural products. At least 29,350 poor people were involved in supplying this trade, 93% of them women. Collectively, they earned some US\$ 384,000 from the sale of some 490.000 kg of raw or semi-processed natural products to PhytoTrade members. These products all came from sustainable sources covering at least 50,000 hectares - meaning that rural people have been given a strong economic incentive to manage 50,000 hectares of native biodiversity in a sustainable manner.”

“In this very dry region, it is better to grow indigenous plants rather than exotic cash crops, which often fail, and lead to soil erosion. We focus on nine native species and join forces with commercial companies to develop products from them. For example, we’ve teamed up with the natural product company Afriplex to develop the first commercial Baobab fruit extracts, suitable for food and cosmetics. Potential customers for baobab fruit extract include a major beverage company. What’s more, the fruits have seeds, which produce a second product: oil. With the French company Aldivia, we’ve developed a baobab carrier oil for cosmetics.”

“The great thing is, we can be almost 100% sure that the poor will benefit long-term from baobab products, because the tree cannot be plantation grown. It’s big, slow growing, and thrives in the driest and poorest areas. When people realise the economic benefits of the trees, they preserve them. If they have an economic incentive to manage their environment in a sustainable way, they will do so.”

*Gus Le Breton, PhytoTrade, Africa*

## Partner CBDC Asia

# Seeds of change

“At a time when intellectual property rights (plant variety protection laws) are threatening the dynamism of farmers’ seed systems, our Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation/ Biodiversity Use and Conservation in Asia Program (CBDC -BUCAP) helps strengthen the capacities of farmers to manage plant genetic resources and secure local seed systems, and therefore to conserve biodiversity. CBDC-BUCAP helps to re-introduce and conserve traditional seeds, in some cases by crossing them with modern varieties. For farmers who are in the intensive production system, it reduces the need for them to buy seeds every season, making them independent producers themselves. Some farmers, in fact, are able to produce a surplus which they can sell. The income generated from these activities significantly contributes to the household economy to the point that some farmers are able to buy farm equipment, motorbikes and improve their well-being.”

“We are implementing CBDC -BUCAP in five different countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Bhutan and the Philippines. As a result, farmers over a wide area of Asia are developing and selecting their own varieties of rice, suited to the unique environmental conditions of their local area. They are forming support groups and seed clubs to exchange seeds and market the surplus seeds (and grains) locally, and some are acting as trainers to help others. Also, farmers are increasing their lobbying skills, and encouraging local policy makers to create supporting programmes for them.”

*Ditdit Pelegrina, Searice - CBDC, Community Biodiversity Conservation and Development Programme, the Phillipines*

## Partner IFOAM

# Reaping organic rewards

“Organic farming helps to alleviate poverty in many ways. It means crops fetch higher prices, while cash input is far lower, since fertilisers and pesticides aren’t used. Moreover, it means land is more productive, and remains so for a much longer time. Organic agriculture also bolsters farmers’ confidence and self-esteem, as it is based on traditional and indigenous knowledge.”

“With the support of the Biodiversity Fund, we’ve been developing training manuals to spread organic farming. Aimed at trainers, they focus on topics like seed saving and production in different climates. We have members in 110 different countries globally, and they range from producer groups to government institutions, to educators and stores. It has been said that we reach hundreds of thousands of farmers through our network and then even more if you consider the consumers.”

“Besides training, we promote Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGSs), which verify that produce is organic and help to educate and develop the market. These are an affordable alternative to third-party verification systems, which are expensive, so they give poorer farmers a chance to enjoy some of the benefits. When producers get together and develop internal control systems, which they all follow, they can certify their system. Certification like this goes a long way towards opening up markets for small producers. It can also be a stepping stone for meeting certification requirements needed for export to Western markets.”

*Angela Caudle, IFOAM, International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements, Germany*

## Who it supports

The Biodiversity Fund supports over 20 organisations. All grantees are civil society organisations and/or networks operating at regional or global levels. The initiatives combine interventions at grass roots level with an active role in international lobby and advocacy. The grantees strive for sustainable production, an increase of marketing options, the acceptance of social and environmental standards and the formulation of policies and laws in support of sustainable biodiversity management (e.g. on pesticides or biosafety) and rights of poor people over resources.

**ACB** African Centre for Biosafety | **CBD Alliance** Convention on Biodiversity Alliance | **CBDC** the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Network in Asia, Africa and Latin America | **ELD** Endogenous Livestock Development Network | **FoE-ERA** Friends of the Earth Nigeria/International | **FPP** Forest Peoples Programme | **FSC** Forest Stewardship Council | **Gaia/African** Biodiversity Network | **GRAIN** | **IFOAM** International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements | **ISEAL** International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance | **LPP** League for Pastoral Peoples | **MSC** Marine Stewardship Council | **NTFP** EP Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme | **PAN** Pesticides Action Network in Asia and Latin America | **PEDIGREA** | **PhytoTrade** | **Utz Certified**

The **Biodiversity Fund** is managed by Hivos and Oxfam Novib.

**Hivos** is a non-governmental organisation, guided by humanist values, that wants to contribute to a free, fair and sustainable world where citizens, women and men, have equal access to resources, opportunities and markets and can participate actively and equally in decision-making processes that determine their lives, their society and their future. Hivos works in 32 countries with 800 partner organisations. In 2006 Hivos disbursed 75 million Euro with a staff of 135.

**Oxfam Novib**, a Dutch NGO for development co-operation, is fighting for a just world without poverty. We work together with people, organisations, businesses and governments, locally and internationally, in projects and lobby. Because poverty and injustice are global problems, related to unjust economic and political relationships. Oxfam Novib works with 830 counterparts in 60 countries worldwide. In 2006 Oxfam Novib disbursed 180 million Euro with a staff of 350.

The Biodiversity Fund is financially supported by the **Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, Directorate General for International Cooperation.



## Contact us

For information and future collaboration contact Carol Gribnau (c.gribnau@hivos.nl) or Gigi Manicad (gigi.manicad@oxfamnovib.nl)

### c/o Hivos:

Raamweg 16 | P.O. box 85565

2508 CG The Hague | The Netherlands

T +31 (0)70 376 55 00 | F +31 (0)70 362 46 00

[www.hivos.nl](http://www.hivos.nl)