



A Guide to Biodiversity for the Private Sector

www.ifc.org/BiodiversityGuide

Partnerships: Building Alliances to Address Biodiversity Issues

To develop and implement an effective, lasting biodiversity strategy, most companies will need to reach out and form relationships with non-governmental organizations, government agencies, local communities, civil society groups, academia, competitors, and other industry sectors. This is true both because few companies have sufficient in-house biodiversity expertise to manage the issue alone and because the public good aspect of biodiversity resources means that collaborative approaches will be the most effective long-term strategies. This guide provides a useful summary of this point in the section Sector-specific Biodiversity Issues [see http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/Content/BiodiversityGuide_Sectors].

Early on in the biodiversity strategy development process, companies should analyze both their existing in-house capacity and the roles and influence of external parties and how they can be included in the strategy. This review will likely reveal both opportunities for scaling-up internally as well as possible options for partnering with outside parties.

The Value of Partnerships

Partnerships between companies and other companies, organizations or individuals can have benefits not only for biodiversity, but also for business. Such alliances offer a company a number of opportunities.

- **Access to biodiversity expertise.** Effective biodiversity management may call for skills that are not readily available within a company. Conservation organizations, government agencies and academic or research institutions can address this shortfall. In some cases, it may be more cost effective to work with third parties to undertake monitoring and other tasks. Partnerships with such outside organizations can also enhance a company's credibility and transparency on biodiversity issues.
- **Increased capacity and staff empowerment.** Long-term alliances between NGOs and private sector companies can

help build a company's in-house expertise and empower staff to become agents for change on biodiversity issues.

- **Improved risk assessment and needs analysis.** External dialogue and consultation tests and refines internal assumptions about risk and responsibility and can clarify the role of companies and others. Outside stakeholders can help a company identify key issues and, ultimately, better understand how its operations affect biodiversity and local people. Left unresolved, misunderstandings with local communities can generate tensions that can jeopardize a company's informal license to operate.
- **Leverage for change.** Combining expertise and common interest can provide for a powerful and balanced force for change since it allows partners to utilize their particular strengths through an agreed action plan and set of tasks.

Companies can also create value for their partners through capacity building, mentoring and secondments. In situations where partner organizations may lack specific business-related capacity or in-house skills, private companies may second staff, or help to mentor partners on topics such as project and financial management, administration and human resources or legal issues. Shell [<http://www.shell.com>] is sharing business skills through short secondments to IUCN's Asia Regional Office [<http://www.iucn.org/places/asia/>] in Bangkok, Thailand and with UNESCO [<http://www.unesco.org>] programs in Uganda and the Seychelles. This program also has business benefits for Shell, by allowing staff who participate in the programs to develop skills and experiences that serve them (and Shell) well in future partnerships and multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Models of Engagement

Partnerships come in many shapes and forms, from ad-hoc relationships to formal contractual arrangements. Companies may consider the following options when assessing partnership needs.

Private sector partnerships. Forging links with other companies in the same sector to address sector-wide challenges can help establish common industry standards, reduce biodiversity risk, level the playing field, and provide mechanisms for sharing good practices, through mentoring and peer review. Examples of such sectoral initiatives include the Global Mining Initiative [<http://www.icmm.com/gmi.php>], the International Tourism Partnership [<http://www.internationaltourismpartnership.org>] and the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform [<http://www.saiplatform.org>].

Public-private partnerships. Under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), [<http://www.biodiv.org>], countries are required to produce National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), which can have implications for businesses, particularly those requiring access to land and natural resources. Many businesses and governments are now working together to refine national, regional and local BSAP processes. For example, BP, [<http://www.bp.com>] which has a policy of developing Biodiversity Action Plans at key facilities at the business unit, site and regional levels, has recently developed a regional BSAP for its operation in Indonesia. For private sector companies, such alliances can help build long-term relationships and trust with public and regulatory agencies.

Public financing, for example through the Global Environment Facility, [<http://www.gefweb.org>] is another way that companies can access the resources of the public sector to help deliver biodiversity benefits where there is a demonstrable public good element.

Private sector-civil society partnerships. Partnerships with conservation organizations or other civil society groups can allow companies to access skills, encourage good working relations, promote mutual understanding and capacity building, and enable cultural exchange. These alliances can take many forms, including sponsorship, dialogues, knowledge sharing and agenda setting, technical assistance and co-branding.

For example, the Shell Group [<http://www.shell.com>] sought help from the Smithsonian Institution [<http://www.si.edu>] to map biodiversity and identify opportunities to minimize the impact of a planned natural gas project in the Camisea region of Peru. The two partners have also collaborated on a biodiversity assessment and monitoring project in Gabon [<http://www.nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MAB/researchprojects/appliedconservation/gabon/>]. Rio Tinto [<http://www.riotinto.com>] has partnered with BirdLife International [<http://www.birdlife.org>] to improve knowledge and interest in birds throughout the company's operations, improve habitats at Rio Tinto sites, identify opportunities for mitigation of biodiversity

impacts through wider conservation initiatives, and link with local communities on integrated biodiversity conservation and management.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships. In many instances, businesses may find value in working with a group of different partners, including other businesses (such as companies upstream or downstream in the supply chain) and civil society groups. For example, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) [<http://www.fsc.org>], an international network that promotes responsible forestry management and certification, includes representation from the entire forest products supply chain, as well as other stakeholders, including indigenous peoples associations, unions and NGOs. Other similar programs include the PEFC, [<http://www.pefc.org>] and there are several regional multi-stakeholder forestry initiatives such as the Malaysian Timber Certification Council [<http://www.mtcc.com.my>] and the Lembaga Ekolabel Indonesia [<http://www.lei.or.id/english/faq.php>]. In Brazil, Aracruz Cellulose, [<http://www.aracruz.com.br/en>] Veracel, [<http://www.veracel.com.br/en>] Petrobras, [<http://www2.petrobras.com.br/ingles/index.asp>] and DuPont, [<http://www.dupont.com>] together with Conservation International, [<http://www.conservation.org>] founded the Instituto BioAtlântica (IBio) [http://www.celb.org/xp/CELB/programs/forestry/instituto_bioatlantica.xml] to engage the private sector in the conservation and restoration of Brazil's Atlantic Forest.

Tri-sector partnerships. Bringing together business, the public sector and civil society groups, tri-sector partnerships have proven to be a valuable form of multi-stakeholder alliance. It is critical to clearly define the role of each player in such partnerships, and find the right incentives for them to fulfill that role. Flower Valley, [http://www.flowervalley.org.za/f_1024.htm] in South Africa, is an innovative tri-sector partnership that has developed a viable business based on the international marketing of sustainably harvested fynbos the wild flowers of the Cape. Also in South Africa, diamond mining company De Beers [www.debeersgroup.com] has partnered with the government agency South African National Parks [<http://www.sanparks.org>] and two conservation groups, the Peace Parks Foundation [<http://www.peaceparks.org>] and the Endangered Wildlife Trust, [<http://www.ewt.org.za>] to establish a 40,000 ha Nature Reserve adjacent to its Venetia mine, reintroduce species, and strengthen economic opportunities for local SME suppliers and communities.

Partnerships with communities. For many companies, local communities will be important partners in biodiversity initiatives. In such partnerships, it is particularly important to recognize that issues of trust and capacity constraints need to be addressed in order for the alliance to succeed. This issue was critical for the viability of the biodiversity management-based business model at Phu My. [See the [Holcim Vietnam case study](#)]