



Version 2: 29 November 2021

# 6<sup>th</sup> BioTrade Congress: Trade and biodiversity for a positive future



9 December 2021  
12–3 p.m. (CET), Online

## Background

We are undoubtedly in times of urgency in which steering for environmental sustainability is of crucial importance. The current biodiversity crisis means that nearly one million species are now threatened with extinction and a stark transformational change is required if the vision of “living in harmony with nature” is to be met. Biodiversity supports the livelihoods of nearly half of the human population and provides products and services that contribute to human wellbeing and their economic activities. Indeed, biodiversity loss is not only a threat to species but also a real threat to human life as well.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) identified trade as one of the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss<sup>i</sup>. Trade is also said to be linked to the causes of deforestation, unsustainable agriculture, poaching of wild species, among others. The overdrive of business activities, proliferation of illegal/illicit wildlife trade and unsustainable consumer demand have resulted in the degradation of nature and ecosystems and is ultimately putting biodiversity and human life at risk.

Trade, however, is an indispensable component of national economies involving businesses, societies, and biodiversity. Biodiversity resources are also widely traded, with close to half of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP) is moderately or highly dependent on biodiversity, ecosystems and their services<sup>ii</sup>.

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Trade in nature-based resources when done sustainably, traceably and legally can be a positive incentive for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and promote benefit sharing among all actors in the chain. The World Economic Forum reports that implementing actions for a green and nature-positive recovery could generate 395 million jobs and U\$10.1 trillion in annual business value by 2030<sup>iii</sup>.

UNCTAD's BioTrade Initiative and its partners have been promoting and implementing legal, traceable and sustainable trade of biodiversity – an ethos which supports the recently adopted Bridgetown Covenant, particularly in “supporting developing countries to identify relevant trade and investment policies that contribute to the climate and environmental goals of the 2030 Agenda”<sup>iv</sup>. The Initiative has also been identified as one of the 50+ ways within the United Nations system that can pursue a joint approach on biodiversity and nature-based solutions<sup>v</sup>. Furthermore, UNCTAD and its partners provided inputs to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which is expected to be adopted in 2022 during the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## Objective

The 6<sup>th</sup> BioTrade Congress will address how trade contributes and impacts nature's contribution to people. It will aim at proposing policy recommendations and business and civil society actions in seizing trade and biodiversity opportunities while enhancing nature's contribution to people. Such actions will contribute to reducing biodiversity loss and building resilient livelihoods and economies.

## Structure

The congress will be conducted virtually with interactive discussions. The high-level panel will discuss how trade and biodiversity can contribute to a more sustainable future. Parallel sessions, organized by BioTrade partners, will address the challenges and opportunities in tackling our socio-environmental challenges through trade that conserves, restores and enhances nature's contribution to people at the macro, meso and micro levels. The event will conclude with a plenary with discussions on the results of the parallel sessions, connecting it back to the main theme of trade and nature's contribution to people.

*Parallel session 1: Unpicking the value chain: challenges and experiences in traceability (organized by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation)*

This session will discuss the challenges of ensuring traceability using three examples from which lessons of field experience can already be drawn: the sustainable production of cocoa, rice and orchids derived from in-vitro

production. Geographically, the session will range between Madagascar, India, Thailand and Peru, taking in other countries along the way.

*Parallel session 2: Biodiversity and BioTrade: Evolving tools and approaches (organized by the Union for Ethical BioTrade)*

This session will bring together experts and practitioners to discuss how approaches and tools on biodiversity along BioTrade supply chains have evolved and continue to move towards promoting positive impact. Understanding paradigm changes, new methodologies and needs and experiences on the ground is important as the international community moves to adopt the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, with its ambitious targets and calls for transformative action across society.

*Parallel session 3: Oceans economy and Blue BioTrade (organized by the development bank of Latin America – CAF)*

This session aims to discuss opportunities and challenges for introducing Blue BioTrade best practices in the oceans economy, seeking to shift the current paradigm of exploitation of the oceans to a sustainable pathway of exploration, regeneration and sustainable use, and thus contribute to a positive future.

*Parallel session 4: Circular bioeconomy (organized by UNCTAD)*

This session will explore how circular economy strategies can help conserve and add value to the bioeconomy and further contribute to the discussions on how trade enhances nature's contribution to people.

*Parallel session 5: BioTrade sustainability through standards and certification schemes (organized by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, South Africa)*

This session will bring together experts and practitioners from public, private and NGO to discuss how non-regulatory approaches through standards and certification schemes along biodiversity-based value chains complement and/or strengthen implementation of national Access and Benefit-Sharing Legislations and contribute towards the headline indicators for ABS in the draft Post 2020 Global Biodiversity framework. The conversation will delve into implementation scenarios and lessons learnt from global value chains based on African biodiversity.

The 6<sup>th</sup> BioTrade Congress: *Trade and biodiversity for a positive future* is organized under the [Global BioTrade programme: Linking trade, biodiversity and sustainable development](#) launched by UNCTAD in 2018 with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO.

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<sup>i</sup> The IPBES Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) states that the “Unsustainable use of the Earth’s resources is underpinned by a set of demographic and economic indirect drivers that have increased and, further, interact in complex ways, including through trade.” IPBES (2019). Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. S. Díaz, J. Settele, et al. IPBES secretariat. Bonn, Germany.

<sup>ii</sup> WEF (2020). *Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy*. New Nature Economy series. World Economic Forum. Geneva.

<sup>iii</sup> WEF, 2020. *New Nature Economy Report II: The Future of Nature and Business*. Accessed on 1 November 2021: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/new-nature-economy-report-ii-the-future-of-nature-and-business>

<sup>iv</sup> See para 127 II of the Bridgetown Covenant “*Support developing countries in identifying relevant trade and investment policies to contribute to the attainment of the climate and environmental goals of the 2030 Agenda, with due cooperation with relevant international organizations*”,

<sup>v</sup> For more information, please see: [https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/HLCP41-CRP.2-Biodiversity-and-Nature-based-Solutions-Annex-IV\\_Rev-12-Apr-2021.pdf](https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/HLCP41-CRP.2-Biodiversity-and-Nature-based-Solutions-Annex-IV_Rev-12-Apr-2021.pdf)