



Brussels Rural Development Briefings
A series of meetings on ACP-EU development issues

Briefing session n° 17

Biodiversity for ACP rural development

Wednesday 10 March 2010

**The place of biodiversity in development cooperation:
The major future challenges
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Executive Summary**

Brief description of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature – IUCN

The IUCN is an international organisation having its seat in Switzerland. Its members include States (80), government agencies (115) and national and international NGOs (more than 850). The IUCN has offices in some forty countries and members or experts in more than 160 countries. It relies on a network of 11,000 experts divided between 6 specialist committees: Ecosystem Management, Education and Communication, Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, Environmental Law, Species Survival and the World Commission on Protected Areas. The organisation provides scientific expertise in the field of biodiversity, in particular via its Red List of Threatened Species, its classification of protected areas and its evaluation of world heritage site applications (UNESCO). It also carries out fieldwork on several essential themes for biodiversity, such as water (*Water and Nature Initiative*), forests (*Livelihoods and Landscape Strategy*) and oceans (*Protect Planet Ocean*) and advises numerous governments, environmental conventions and has the status of observer to the United Nations.

The state of biodiversity and ecosystem services

A worrying situation

Out of the 8 to 14 million existing species, only 1.8 million have been described and 45,000 are monitored by the IUCN in the framework of its Red List, which shows that almost 40% are in danger of disappearing. The ecosystems evaluation for the millennium (2005) showed that 60% of ecosystem services are already degraded, while the report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* (2009) underscores the economic efficiency of the conservation of ecosystems rather than converting them into agricultural land, production forests or aquaculture farms.

What should be done?

We must apply the fundamental principle of ecology: diversity = stability. In concrete terms, this can be achieved by creating a network of protected areas and corridors to link them in order to protect samples representative of animal and plant life and maintain ecosystem services (water, wood, soil fertility, pollination and reproduction), and via the diversification of the agricultural landscape, by developing, for example, agroforestry. We must also focus on the long-term management of biodiversity: territorial development policy, jus soli, decentralisation of management, sustainable management incentives (eco-certification).

Biodiversity in European cooperation development

Predominantly virtual commitments

Despite the numerous commitments given at the level of the EU and the OECD, progress remains slow. Biodiversity is rarely considered as a priority area of cooperation and it figures only marginally in the EDF budgets (with the notable exception of several regional programmes such as those of East and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, of the Pacific region and, to a lesser extent, of West Africa). Human resources are also very limited and do not enable the European Commission to work sufficiently in partnership with local communities.

How can we take biodiversity forward?

By adopting a long-term approach: using sustainable financial mechanisms (e.g. trust funds, the REDD programme once it is operational), drawing on successful operations (ECOFAC, COMIFAC, etc.) and working at local level by putting in place, along the lines of the model used by the Netherlands and France, a system of low-value financing for biodiversity. By effectively integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into development cooperation: allocating an adequate budget to it, making biodiversity a compulsory component of financial aid programming discussions, involving civil society and establishing a monitoring system and performance indicators.