

Fact Sheet: Biodiversity in the Cosmetics Sector

This fact sheet assists environmental and sustainability managers as well as auditors with analyzing biodiversity and integrating it into corporate management systems. The sheet contains references to legal guidelines and provides, where possible, suggestions to industry specific operating figures and indicators for the continuous improvement of corporate biodiversity management.

According to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity the term biodiversity describes diversity of life on the different levels of biological organization. This includes the diversity of species (plants, animals, fungi, microorganisms) and ecosystems as well as the genetic diversity within species and populations. Biodiversity is the basis for functioning and stabile ecosystems and ensures their ability to provide the economy and society with essential goods and services. These include raw materials, like food and clean water as well as numerous biological resources that serve as natural ingredients with useful properties in cosmetic products.

Drivers of Biodiversity Loss

The scientific community is convinced that due to human influences, species are becoming extinct at up to 1,000 times the rate that natural condition would cause. Without effective measures, biodiversity loss will continue to accelerate leading to unforeseen effects on the economy and society. From a global perspective, the following factors are the primary drivers of biodiversity loss:

- Degradation and destruction of habitats and ecosystems
- Overexploitation of natural resources
- Climate change
- Emissions/Pollution
- Invasive alien species

Whereas the reduction of emissions is a „traditional goal“ of environmental management systems and climate change increasingly taken into consideration via the reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gases, other aspects are rarely considered. Therefore, this fact sheet places special emphasis on the degradation of ecosystems, overexploitation of natural resources and invasive alien species and describes direct and indirect opportunities for companies to take these aspects into account. The following chapters describe direct and indirect influence of cosmetic companies on these aspects.

The Cosmetics Industry benefits from biodiversity

Many cosmetic products contain natural ingredients which derive from plants and animals. Among these are essential oils, pigments, surfactants and other substances of biological origin with useful properties for cosmetic applications. Rising consumer demand for natural ingredients and sustainable cosmetic products mean that biodiversity is increasingly becoming a strategic issue for the cosmetics industry. When it comes to the development of new active ingredients for cosmetics, biodiversity is a rich source for inspiration and innovation. Sustainable companies that are engaged in the protection of biodiversity could therefore capitalize on market potential and get a competitive advantage.

Potential Impacts of the Cosmetic Industry on Biodiversity

The most significant direct and indirect negative effects on biodiversity are generally related to the cultivation or collection of biological raw materials. The main environmental impacts are the (indirect) land usage for resource production, the destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems, pollution through the use of pesticides and fertilizer and erosion promoting cultivation methods. A striking example of this is the globally increasing production of palm oil for which large areas of primary rainforest are still being sacrificed. In the case of wild collection, the ecological sustainability of the resource collection is dependent on the favorable conservation status of the used species and its population. Factors influencing the preservation negatively are improper harvesting methods or harvesting times as well

as a harvesting rate above the regeneration capacity of the species. The Candeia tree (*Eremanthus erythropappus*), which produces the anti-inflammatory alpha-bisabolol, which is used in several skin creams and is native to the Amazonian rainforest, is a good example for this.

Positive Influences of the Cosmetics Industry: Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, Equitable Benefit Sharing
Where natural habitats and ecosystems are critically endangered, e.g. through overuse in the absence of alternative sources of earnings by demographic groups a sustainable use of biodiversity can generate income and create strong incentives for biodiversity preservation. This is especially true when local populations are at the same time involved in the value-added process. Ultimately, it is their management decisions that will positively or negatively impact the preservation of species and ecosystems. The preservation of traditional knowledge, a goal of the UN Biodiversity Convention, can be seen as a prerequisite for a high quantity and quality of biological raw materials. This is especially true for raw materials and ingredients collected from the wild. The environmental and sustainability management of cosmetic companies should foster the potential for biodiversity protection through sustainable use and economic participation of small scale farmers or gatherers.

Strategy/Management

Strategic management allows for the continuous improvement of the biodiversity performance of the company. The integration of the topic into the corporate target system and anchoring it both strategically and operatively in the company is the basis for successful biodiversity management. Because cosmetic companies can be extremely dependent on biological raw materials and ingredients from regions of high biodiversity as well as on the use of materials from protected or endangered species, the corporate management should adapt its environmental policy to support the goals of the UN Biodiversity Convention.

Environment and Sustainability Managers as well as auditors should assess to what extent the strategic importance of biodiversity is known as well as anchored in the company. In order to accomplish this, it is recommended to analyze the corporate mission and environmental policy.

Questions to the strategic management…

- *Does the corporate environmental policy support the goals of the UN Biodiversity Convention?*
- *Does the environmental/sustainability policy contain goals and measures for the protection and conservation of biodiversity?*
- *Are the consequences of global biodiversity loss assessed in the corporate risk management? Is there a contact person for the topic of biodiversity or nature conservation?*
- *Are the direct and indirect impacts of the company on biodiversity assessed and ranked for their significance?*
- *Does the company operate in regions with a special protection status or in regions with a high significance to biodiversity?*
- *Does the company's commodities portfolio contain natural ingredients?*

Stakeholder

Since biodiversity is a complex sphere of activity, companies often rely on external expertise. Through scientific institutions, nature conservancy agencies or environmental organizations, companies can access information on biodiversity relevant questions on cosmetic value added processes. Also, NGOs and research institutes can be helpful in the planning and execution of pilot projects, e.g. in the field of sustainable resource use and supply chain management.

Possible Measures:

- *Stakeholder-mapping: analysis of stakeholders and their objectives as well as potential contribution for the company in promoting biodiversity*
- *Cooperation with international/national/local organization in the area of biodiversity*
- *Framing of transparent structures for stakeholder dialogue i.e. participation of interest groups*

According to EMAS Annex II B.5, the integration of stakeholders is necessary. In order to facilitate a successful integration, an adequate framework must be designed and implemented. Existing participation structures including transparent handling of requests related to biodiversity by stakeholders can be seen as a proxy indicator for a successful biodiversity management.

Procurement/Supply Chain

The procurement department can heavily influence the corporate performance in the area of biodiversity through the choice of suppliers and production factors. In addition to quality and cost aspects, purchasing should be bound by sustainability criteria concerning biodiversity. For example, the purchase of material derived from endangered species or species with an unknown state of preservation should be barred. A prerequisite for the operating guidelines is the traceability of natural resources or ingredients to their geographic origin. The first step is an internal analysis and a supplier survey to identify the type, quantity and origin of the used materials by own analyses and by directing enquiries to suppliers. Suppliers should be questioned about measures for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. Suppliers with a certified environmental or sustainability management system should have corresponding measures in the environmental program or action plan.

Possible Measures:

- *Identification of geographic origin of biological raw materials and ingredients*
- *Identification of biodiversity rich areas and regions in countries of origin*
- *Analysis of possible impacts of resource procurement on biodiversity*
- *Analysis of Population densities, harvest rates, harvest times of wild collected biological raw materials*
- *Determining binding biodiversity criteria for the procurement process*
- *Analysis of sustainability performance of suppliers focused on the area of biodiversity*
- *Performance audits of "high risk" suppliers*

The questions from the Chapter "Strategy/Management" should also be used for supplier assessments.

Significant Figures and Indicators for Purchasing/Supply Chain:

- *Number and volume of natural raw materials and ingredients; Share of commodity portfolio*
- *Number and volume of natural raw materials and ingredients which originate from biodiversity-rich regions; Share of commodity portfolio*
- *Number and volume of natural raw materials and ingredients, which acreage stem from areas inside or adjacent to protected areas or areas with high biodiversity value; Share of commodity portfolio*
- *Number and volume of natural raw materials and ingredients, that derive from endangered species (pursuant to IUCN Red List, national Red Lists or CITES); Share of commodity portfolio*
- *Number and share of suppliers, that are questioned/checked concerning management and measures in the area of biodiversity*
- *Number of certified biological raw materials and ingredients; Share of commodity portfolio*

Background Information for Risk Assessment of Commodities Portfolio

Possible criteria for the assessment of natural raw materials or ingredients from a biodiversity perspective could be the biodiversity value of the region of origin, the proximity of the cultivable area to protected or biodiversity-rich areas, the method and intensity of cultivation or the conservation status of species from wild collection.

The greater the diversity of species and ecosystems in the region of origin of a raw material, the greater the negative impact from the raw materials production can be. Helpful tools for the initial assessment are global and regional survey maps of biodiversity. Likewise important is the question whether a biological raw material stems from a region with water scarcity or soil erosion.

To rank the **biodiversity-richness of a specific area and region** that are not necessarily protected there are numerous concepts developed by nature conservation organizations together with scientific institutions. Established concepts are the *High Conservation Value Areas* (HCVA; Forest Stewardship Council) or the **Key Biodiversity Areas** (KBA; International Union for the Conservation of Nature – IUCN). Further information and additional concepts are available via the portal *A-Z Areas of Biodiversity Importance*, *Protected Planet* or the commercial tool *IBAT for Business*. Alternatively, national and international nature protection institutions can be contacted. If these regions are identified, it may be examined if they are in or **close to protection areas**. Appropriate information can be gathered by the national environmental authority or environmental organizations or can be reached by using relevant web portals like *Protected Planet*.

Because a certain production method also determines the scale of impacts on biodiversity, **sustainable agricultural methods** conforming to local ecological requirements are a necessary criterion for the company and its suppliers. With the **collection** of wild plants, it is important that the harvesting methods do not lead to the endangering or destruction of the wild population. Information on threat status of specific species can be found in either the IUCN Red List or preferably national Red Lists. Further guidance on the sustainable collection of wild plants can be found in the *Ethical BioTrade Standard* of UEBT, and the *International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants* (ISSC-MAP) co-developed by IUCN. An extension module can be found in the *FairWild Standard* from the Fair Wild Foundation, which was developed by nature conservancy organizations, scientists and practitioners.

Further information can be found in the links at the end of the fact sheet.

Research and Development

Since many raw materials originate from biodiversity-rich countries and regions, impacts on biodiversity should already be considered in the research and development stage. One of the objectives of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity is the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. Cosmetic companies using genetic resources in research and development must recognize the rights of countries and communities over these resources, and only utilize these resources with their prior informed consent (PIC). The utilization of genetic resources should also be based on mutually agreed conditions (MAT) with the provider country or community, including agreements on the sharing of benefits.

Possible Measures:

- *Obtaining of permission of the provider of genetic resources prior to research and development measures (prior and informed consent) and agreeing on the conditions for this use (mutually agreed terms)*
- *Development of criteria for an appropriate access and benefit sharing (ABS) approach*
- *Development of criteria guiding patent applications on biodiversity based R&D*

Possible Figures/Indicators:

- *Number of genetic resources being researched or developed*
- *Number of patent applications filed that consider biodiversity criteria*
- *Number of genetic resources being researched or developed with existing ABS policy*

Production

Similar to the land use of the raw material production, companies should assess the geographic location of its own production sites as well as those of its suppliers and undertake a risk assessment. Especially suppliers operating in biodiversity-rich regions should have a functioning and certified environmental management system (ISO 14001, EMAS III).

Possible Measures:

- *Assessing proximity of production sites (own and suppliers) to protected areas or areas of high biodiversity value (analogue to the Environmental Indicator EN 11 of the Global Reporting Initiative)*
- *Examination of correspondent sites for existence of a functioning environmental management system*

Product

Even at the end of the cosmetic value chains there exist risks of negative impacts on biodiversity. For example, many of the active ingredients of cosmetics end up in the sewage water and cannot be filtered in conventional sewage treatment plants. Such "Xenobiotic" (bio-incompatible) materials end up in streams and rivers and are likely to accumulate in aquatic organisms and for instance compromise their reproductive capabilities.

Possible Measures:

- *Avoiding or reducing the use of bio-incompatible materials (Xenobiotics). The focus should be on possible measures aimed at materials that can currently not be filtered out of sewage.*

Focus: Biodiversity und Cosmetic Standards

In the cosmetics industry numerous products standards and labels exist. The most prominent examples include:
- the **BDIH** Seal für Controlled Natural Cosmetics (Bundesverband der Industrie- und Handelsunternehmen für Arzneimittel, Reformwaren, Nahrungsergänzungsmittel und kosmetische Mittel e.V.)
- the **NaTrue** Seal (NaTrue Network, a European initiative of many leading organic and natural cosmetics companies)
- the **ECOCERT** Seal (largest European control and certification organization in the area of environment)
- the **DEMETER** Seal (Demeter e.V. brand, an international umbrella organization for biologically dynamic agriculture)

All mentioned seals follow a broad sustainability approach and primarily look at the naturalness of ingredients, sustainable nature of the production process and a requisite labeling. However, the goals of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), especially the objectives to conserve biodiversity and to use it sustainable, are only implicitly considered in these standards.

The only standard that includes detailed questions on the origin of the resource and goals of the CBD is the **UEBT-Standard** from the *Union for Ethical BioTrade*. The standard is a standard that can be both applied to management systems, and supply chains of natural ingredients of raw materials, guiding R&D and sourcing activities. The Union for Ethical BioTrade supports companies in the ethical procurement of biological and genetic resources resources and risk assessment of natural ingredient portfolios and thus can provide further guidance, which goes beyond the above mentioned standards and seals.

Transport/Logistic

The most important environmental aspect in the area of logistic and transport is the emission of greenhouse gases. Options to reduce the emissions are for example short transportation routes and concise supply chains. Cosmetic companies should also focus on the proliferation of potential invasive species through commodity flows and logistic processes. Invasive species are organisms that are introduced into a habitat where they naturally do not occur. Highly competitive species that find no natural predators and competitors can spread to the detriment of local species and thereby become invasive. In some cases, these biological invasions can disrupt the composition and functioning of ecosystems and can cause high economic costs. Especially cosmetic companies working with plant based raw and fresh material from foreign countries can be susceptible to this. Companies should take action to stop the proliferation of potentially invasive alien species. The precautionary principle should be considered.

Incoming goods with biological raw and fresh materials should always be subjected to encompassing visual inspection for possible stowaways (i.e. insects). If "contamination" is observed, the organism concerned should be destroyed.

Possible Measures:

- *Identification of possible gateways for potential invasive species in the company (i.e. goods entrance)*
- *Process description and procedure for "contaminated" material*
- *Development of protocols for documentation of material contamination*

Corporate Facilities and Properties

EMAS has set land consumption as a performance indicator for biodiversity. For the biodiversity management in the cosmetics industry, land consumption through production and administrative buildings plays a minor role. However, a nature-oriented design of the properties can be a contribution to the corporate engagement for local biodiversity conservation.

Possible Measures:

Nature-oriented design of facilities; Creation of ecological value structures for promotion of local biodiversity i.e.:

- *Native bushes and trees (orchards, hedges, forest etc.)*
- *Unfertilized flower meadow and herb lawn, flower strips, meager meadows*
- *Sparsely vegetated areas such as gravel and marl soils, fallow land*
- *Dry walls, stone piles, wood piles, dead wood structures*
- *Nature -oriented designed stagnant or running waters, (temporary) wetlands*
- *Creation of ecological value structures (i.e. dead wood piles, nesting aids, insect hotels)*
- *Biodiversity friendly green roofs*
- *Traffic areas (streets, paths, parking lots) with permeable surface without runoff drainage*
- *Reduction or elimination of synthetic pesticides*
- *Creation of botanical education gardens*

Significant Figures/Indicators for Corporate Facilities and Properties:

- *Percentage of unsealed surface area compared to total surface area of the site*
- *Percentage of nature-oriented area of corporate facilities compared to total property*
- *Preservation or restoration of ecosystems as compensation for sealed surfaces above legal minimums through i.e. reforestation, (financial) support of protected areas (% in comparison to unsealed surface)*

Marketing/Communication

The growing interest of consumers in products with natural ingredients offers cosmetics companies a chance for communication. Natural raw materials allow stories to be told about them that together with product and brand advertisement raise the awareness of consumers to biodiversity. It is important not to equate the use of natural ingredients with biodiversity protection. Especially in the cosmetics industry, it is important for the company to believably demonstrate that natural resources are of sustainable origin.

Dialogs and critical assessments of the own sustainability reports (e. g. GRI) by external actors can help to bring a company's communication and performance in line. It's desirable that a company supports projects for the protection of ecosystems or biodiversity, virtually as a compensation of the ecological footprint which cannot be prevented. NGOs and the public sector (e.g. the administration of sanctuaries) are always looking for financial support, especially in times of scarcer resources. But the sponsorship of biodiversity projects should by a "voluntary exercise", not a surrogate for a continuous reduction of negative impacts. Furthermore, the projects should fit in the product range and be developed in cooperation with an NGO or an agency on a partnership basis. It's not about buying a service! The suspicion of green washing has to be and can be avoided by communicating the cooperation and results in a trustworthy and realistic way. It must not be talked up as the solution of all problems.

Possible Measures and Figures/Indicators:

- *Compliance with GRI criteria for biodiversity for sustainability reporting*
- *Supported projects for the conservation of biodiversity (number of projects, quality of goals, measures and results)*
- *Active involvement of stakeholders (i.e. nature conservation organisation) in the environmental/sustainability reporting (number and quality of involvements)*
- *Biodiversity as a topic for media communication (number of press releases, reached journalists….)*
- *Consumer activities for biodiversity protection (number of activities, quality of goals, measures and goals)*

Legal Compliance

The legal compliance in the area of environment is an important element of the EMAS validation. The ISO 14001 also requires an assessment of legal compliance (§ 5.2.). Companies should not only know the national law sources concerning nature and species conservation but also the European legislation. A compendium of important legal sources and texts as well as further detailed information can be found on the website of the European Business and Biodiversity Campaign:
http://www.business-biodiversity.eu/default.asp?Lang=ENG&Menue=140

Following is a selection of relevant legal sources:

International Law

- Convention on Biological Diversity CBD, 1992),
- Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Cartagena-Protocol, 2000)
- Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization Nagoya-Protocol, 2010)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1973)
- Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention, CMS, 1979)
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention, 1971)

European Law

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
- Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds
- Directive 2004/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage
- Council Regulation (*EC*) No *338/97* of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein

National Law

- See, for example, national ministries of environment or relevant databases

Significant Figures/Indicators for Legal Compliance:

- *The company has an overview of the current legislation concerning biodiversity. Employees are informed about said legislation and have access to the texts (Law collection, access to official law databanks) (yes/no)*
- *Training of employees in the case of new legislation and amendments (number of qualified employees)*
- *The company requires from all suppliers/service providers a declaration that environmental and nature conservation legislation are respected (number of suppliers/service providers who have signed this declaration)*
- *Continuous increase in the number of suppliers/service providers holders of environmental management certification (percentage of the total number)*
- *Training of suppliers/service providers in legislation relevant to biodiversity (percentage of qualified suppliers and service providers*

Glossary

Access and Benefit Sharing: Goal of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that seeks the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources.

Biological Resources: genetic resources, organisms or parts thereof, populations, or any other biotic component of ecosystems with actual or potential use or value for humanity (according to CBD)

Biodiversity: the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems (according to CBD)

Biodiversity Hotspot: Regions of high biodiversity and a high percentage of endemic flora and fauna that are especially endangered and are a protection priority. To be a biodiversity hotspot, a region must be home to 1500 endemic species of fauna (=0,5% of global plant species) and must have lost over 70% of its original size (according to Conservation International).

Cosmetics = cosmetic product: substances or compounds that are used externally on parts of the human body (skin, hair, nails, lips and external intimate regions) or on the teeth and mucous membranes of the oral cavity for the exclusive or primary purpose of cleaning, perfuming, changing of its look, protection, conservation or influence the body odor (according to EG Cosmetics Regulation).

Ecosystem: means a dynamic complex of plant, animal and microorganism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (according to CBD)

Genetic Material: All material of plant, animal, microbial or other origin that contains functional hereditary units or genes.

Genetic Resource: genetic material with actual or potential value

Habitat: means the place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs (according to CBD)

High Conservation Areas: natural habitats, which are of outstanding significance or critical importance due to their high environmental, socioeconomic, biodiversity or landscape values (according to Forest Stewardship Council; FSC, WWF)

Invasive Species: Non native species that have detrimental effects on other species, biotopes and habitats (German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, BfN).

Natural Ingredients: ingredients stemming from plants, animals, fungi or microorganisms in whole or parts thereof, even if substantially processed (in reference to the Biotrade Standard from the Union for Ethical Biotrade)

Protected Areas: means a geographically defined area that is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives (according to CBD)

Sustainable Use: means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations (according to CBD)

UN Convention on Biological Diversity: (CBD) In 1992 ratified treaty signed by over 190 states creating the central framework for biodiversity. The convention has three main objectives namely: protection of biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity, and access and benefit sharing.

Links and Publications

Regions of high biodiversity and protected area

Protected areas map material: www.protectedplanet.net

Protected areas map material, Key Biodiversity Areas etc. on the IBAT Portal (subject to charge): www.ibatforbusiness.org

Overview of High Conservation Value Areas Concept: http://www.hcvnetwork.org/resources

Overview of Key Biodiversity Areas Concept: http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/areas/22

Information and Overview of Biodiversity Classification Concepts on Portal: www.biodiversitya-z.org/areas

Endangered Species

Red List of endangered flora and fauna from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) www.iucnredlist.org

Sample of Cosmetics Standards That Take Into Account Biodiversity

International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP): www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/service/skript195.pdf

FairWild Standard der Fair Wild Foundation, developed by nature conservancies, scientists and practitioners: http://www.fairwild.org/publication-downloads/fairwild-standard-ver-20/FairWild-Standard-V2.pdf

Union for Ethical Biotrade (UEBT): www.ethicalbiotrade.org

Ethical Biotrade Standard: http://ethicalbiotrade.org/news/wp-content/uploads/STD01-Ethical-BioTrade-Standard-2012-04-11_.pdf

UEBT patent principles: http://www.ethicalbiotrade.org/dl/UEBT_principles_on_patents_biodiversity_EN.pdf

Guidelines and Tools for the Integration of Biodiversity in Corporate Management

Corporate Biodiversity Management Handbook. *A* guide for practical implementation www.bmu.de/fileadmin/bmu-import/files/english/pdf/application/pdf/handbuch_biodiversitaetsmanagement_bf_en.pdf

Biodiversity Initiatives for Companies

European Business and Biodiversity Campaign – Knowledge pool, Case studies, Experts: www.business-biodiversity.eu

Biodiversity in Good Company – Member initiative: www.business-and-biodiversity.de

European B@B Platform – http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/index_en.html

Union for Ethical BioTrade – member initiative, guidance documents, case studies: www.ethicalbiotrade.org

Further Information

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB): http://www.teebweb.org

TEEB for Business: http://www.teebweb.org/teeb-study-and-reports/main-reports/business-and-enterprise/

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More information: www.business-biodiversity.eu

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