



Environment and climate change

Biological diversity

The challenge

The conservation of biological diversity – the diversity of ecosystems, genes, and plant and animal species – is one of the greatest challenges faced by society today. For biodiversity and the services that the ecosystems provide – such as clean water, nutrient-rich soil, oxygen – are crucial to human existence. Biodiversity is the foundation of resistance to disease and adaptation to changing environmental conditions. These diverse services of nature are of immense value to society.

Developing countries have a particular wealth of biodiversity. The poor often depend for their survival upon direct access to this diversity. Biological diversity in these countries must therefore be used sustainably and protected with particular care. At the same time biodiversity conservation has to be seen as a global service for humanity.

Our approach

We help our partner countries implement the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In this way we and our partners contribute to the development of sustainable strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity – strategies that promote economic development and poverty reduction without endangering biological diversity.

Such an approach requires prior analysis of the current conditions and of the reasons for biodiversity loss. Often appropriate legislation and incentive mechanisms must be put in place, or existing ones amended, so that biological diversity can be conserved and the basis of people's livelihood secured. Alongside major bilateral and regional programmes, for example to safeguard protected areas especially using co-management strategies, fostering biodiversity

based value chains, as well as biological safety and access and benefit sharing (ABS).

Our services

GIZ offers the following advisory services of relevance to the conservation of biological diversity:

- **Conservation for development**
We draw on new concepts and ideas in order to develop a comprehensive approach to nature conservation for and with people.
- **Sustainable use of biodiversity**
We develop participatory strategies and concepts for the sustainable use of biological diversity.
- **Access and benefit sharing**
We promote the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.
- **Biosafety**
In line with the Cartagena Protocol, we work to ensure that the use of genetically modified organisms does not entail risks to the environment and human health.
- **Environmental governance**
We support changes to the political framework that enable it to contribute to the conservation of biological diversity.
- **Communication, Education, Public Awareness (CEPA)**
We advise on how target groups can be informed of the importance of conserving biological diversity.



- **Indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge**

We advise indigenous communities conserve biological diversity and maintain their traditional knowledge, and ensure that natural resource management takes account of their special interests.

The benefits

GIZ has been advising on the conservation and sustainable use of biological and agricultural diversity for more than 20 years. Our work on biodiversity currently involves some 80 projects being conducted with more than 35 partner countries and regional organisations such as COMIFAC and the African Union. Our varied and lengthy experience is at your disposal.

We cooperate closely with other players in the field. In our work with government bodies and institutions, international organisations and private companies in Germany and abroad we draw on long-standing contacts and wide-ranging experience. We have evaluated and reviewed numerous examples of projects involving integrative and participatory approaches, some of them dealing with politically sensitive issues such as ABS. We have experience of strengthening the capabilities of organisations and individuals in our partner countries, especially those of local and indigenous communities in rural areas.

An example from the field

Despite being an arid country, Mauritania has great species diversity. The mudflats of the Banc d'Arguin national park provide overwintering, resting and breeding grounds for 250 bird species, both seabirds and migratory species. Here fish spawn, turtles lay their eggs and marine mammals give birth to their young. In the east of the country wetlands form islands of biodiversity in the midst of the semi-desert; however, these areas are also the source of livelihood for a growing population and their livestock herds. The aim of

GIZ's natural resource management programme in the country, implemented on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is to provide advice in order to ensure that government and people work together to conserve the valuable resources of these areas and use them sustainably.

The fishermen who live in the national park use only a specified number of sailing boats; they have agreed not to use motor boats or to catch endangered species (sharks and rays; sea turtles) and with the park authorities they set an annual limit on the catch of other species. They are compensated for the loss of benefit that this entails through the promotion of alternative income-generating opportunities associated with fish processing and eco-tourism. In and around the wetland areas the government has delegated management rights to local user associations. Together, and if necessary involving nomadic livestock herders from outside the area, these groups draw up rules for the conservation and use of natural resources and monitor compliance with the rules through a network of field guardians. In addition GIZ supports the trans-regional sale of wild fruits, natural remedies and gum arabic, thus enabling local people to generate extra income from their sustainable management practices.

The policy advice process has been successful in anchoring the principle of 'conservation and use with the involvement of the population' in the national environment action plan and incorporating it into Mauritanian legislation, specifically in the laws on national parks, grazing and forestry.

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Imprint

Published by:
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Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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