



## THE UNCTAD BIOTRADE INITIATIVE

### What is BioTrade?

BioTrade refers to the collection, production, transformation, and sale of goods and services derived from native biodiversity. This process occurs in an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable manner.

An example is the value chain of the caiman yacare, a species of crocodile native to southern Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, and northern Argentina. Local communities in Bolivia have successfully implemented sustainable management plans resulting in exports of skins and products derived from Caiman yacare to Italy, generating over US\$1,4 million in sales (a 282% increase over 2003). Exports of these products to the United States now total US\$500,000 (up 364% over 2003).

### What is the UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative?

The BioTrade initiative, launched in 1996, supports the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through the promotion of sustainable and responsible trade in biological resources. The Initiative has established partnerships with a number of national and regional organizations to develop BioTrade in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

### How does the BioTrade Initiative work?

BioTrade activities are carried out under seven principles developed by the Initiative and its international partners:

1. Conservation of biodiversity
2. Sustainable use of biodiversity
3. Fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biodiversity
4. Socio-economic sustainability (productive, financial, and market management)
5. Compliance with national and international regulations
6. Respect for the rights of the actors involved in BioTrade activities
7. Clarity about land tenure, use, and access to natural resources and knowledge

These principles are further elaborated through an associated set of BioTrade Criteria which have been developed to ease and encourage private-sector participation. For example, one criterium for the sustainable use of biodiversity (Principle 2) calls for extraction rates lower than regeneration rates, and the application of monitoring systems and productivity indexes for all activities relating to the use of natural resources.

## **The Role of International Agreements**

Article 10 of the Convention on Biodiversity calls for the sustainable use of components of biodiversity. Article 11 calls for social and economic incentive measures for conserving biodiversity.

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development recommends the formulation of incentives to stimulate the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and advocates steps to improve developing countries' abilities to compete in emerging markets for biodiversity products.

Moreover, the Biotrade Initiative addresses needs stressed by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the plan of action of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. These include the need to reconcile the goals of environmental sustainability, including biodiversity loss, with the development requirements and the dependence of millions of the poor on biological resources.

The Initiative also works towards meeting the objectives of other biodiversity-related conventions such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Together, these multilateral processes provide the multilateral framework for developing and promoting BioTrade.

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