



Private Business Action for Biodiversity

Biodiversity-friendly Production and Commercialisation in the Indian Spice Sector

Situation

The Western Ghats of India have been listed amongst the world's most important Biodiversity Hotspots. At the same time, they are one of the main areas for spice cultivation. Spices are a prime source of livelihood for millions of smallholder producers in India. However, changes in agro-practices are not only putting spice production at risk, but also destroying biodiversity and the environment.

Biodiversity is the diversity of life, comprising the wealth of species, genes and ecosystems on Earth. It provides the basis for functioning ecosystems, which in turn deliver services such as fertile soils, clear water, pollination and climate regulation. However, increasing loss of biodiversity is gradually jeopardising human livelihoods. Businesses can play an important role in combating the causes of biodiversity loss. A promising approach is to promote biodiversity-friendly production and commercialisation.

There are many examples from the Western Ghats which prove that biodiversity-friendly spice production is possible. The spices can be cultivated in mixed cropping systems; and it is possible to reduce the use of chemical pesticides, or to even replace them completely. However, many businesses are not conscious of these practices due to lack of information and awareness about the concepts of biodiversity and ecosystem services. This is especially true when it comes to integrating biodiversity into business operations.

Objective

The 'Private Business Action for Biodiversity' (PBAB) project pursues to identify and analyse capable mechanisms and instruments for promoting biodiversity-friendly production and commercialisation. The test pilot approaches are operating in three partner countries – India, Brazil and Mexico. The project aims to learn from the pilot implementation to develop mechanisms and instruments where required, and to systemise the experiences gained, in a way which enables both the private and public actors to use them. The results will be then discussed at the national and international level.

In India, the project has the following objectives:

- To adapt instruments for integrating biodiversity aspects—in and around farms, such as management tools, biodiversity action plans—to the needs of small-scale spice producers, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Western Ghats, and the improved instruments are used within the spice sector.
- To improve awareness and knowledge regarding biodiversity-friendly production and commercialisation in the spice sector amongst the private and public actors.

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Approach

In India, the project will identify and test instruments and mechanisms that promote biodiversity-friendly production and commercialisation in the spice sector in the Western Ghats. Predominant spices here are pepper (black and green), cardamom, nutmeg, and cinnamon. The project aims to disseminate existing examples of biodiversity-friendly production and commercialisation by introducing management tools that improve the integration of biodiversity aspects. These tools are not yet widely acknowledged and have not yet been adapted to the context of Indian smallholder producers.

As the first step, the project will adapt the method to the Indian context with a group of Indian and international experts. A training of trainers at intermediary level—agricultural advisors to companies and standard organisations—will build capacity on biodiversity aspects in general and on the application of these instruments. Furthermore, the project is planning to accompany smallholder producers during pilot implementations on selected areas together with partners. It will also sensitise smallholder producers to biodiversity on and around their farmland.

The project collaborates with spice companies, business associations, ministries as well as non-government



organisations. In addition, the project cooperates closely with other interested initiatives and regional networks.



Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

The project contributes particularly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, which aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, and SDG 15, which aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

Specific **guidelines for India** will set an **innovative approach** for biodiversity-friendly production in the **Indian Spice Sector**

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