UEBT SOURCING WITH RESPECT®

GUIDELINES FOR ACTIONS ON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

WHITE-TAILED BUMBLEBEE *BOMBUS LOCORUM*

Principle 1 of the UEBT standard promotes conservation of biodiversity[1]. One important aspect of this principle is the implementation of concrete actions to maintain, restore, or enhance biodiversity in cultivation or wild collection areas[2]. Criterion 1.2 focuses on these actions..

A DEEPER LOOK AT CRITERION 1.2 IN THE UEBT STANDARD

Let us look at the indicators for 1.2 in detail and explore some additional guidance:

1.2.1 Minimum requirement Current cultivation, wild collection or related activities have not resulted in the conversion or deforestation of intact ecosystems, from 1 January 2014 onward.

Tips and guidance

- Identify all activities linked to cultivation and wild collection of plants in cultivation and wild collection areas since 1 January 2014.
- Make sure to include also activities related to cultivation and wild collections such as storing, processing, and transporting of natural raw materials.
- Map intact ecosystems[3] that exist in cultivation and wild collection areas.
- Determine if the activities have been causing conversion of intact ecosystems[4].
- Carry on with activities if they do cause destruction of intact ecosystems' species composition, structure and function. This is, for example, the case of cultivation/wild collection that contributes to maintaining or restoring intact ecosystems (e.g., agroforestry, permaculture, regenerative farming, and forms of natural farming and wild collection that give attention to biodiversity conservation, regeneration and sustainable use as defined in the UEBT standard).

REFERENCES

[1] ***Biological diversity:*** *Variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).*

[2] ***Cultivation or wild collection areas*** *are the area that encompasses the cultivation or wild collection site, but also includes areas that are adjacent and, in the vicinity: these areas may be positively or negatively affected by cultivation or wild collection activities.*

[3] ***Intact ecosystem:*** *An ecosystem that substantially resembles – in terms of species composition, structure, and ecological function – one that is or would be found in a given area in the absence of major human impacts. An ecosystem can be intact despite human activities take place when much of the original species composition, structure, and ecological function are being maintained or regenerated. Examples of intact ecosystems are pristine ecosystems, primary forests, rainforest, peatlands, savanna and other ecosystems with high capacity of carbon storage and intact features.* ***Ecosystem:*** *A dynamic complex of plant, animal and microorganism communities and their non-living environmental interacting as a functional unit (Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992)*

[4] ***Conversion (of intact ecosystems):*** *Change of an intact ecosystem to another use that results in the destruction of its species composition, structure and function to the extent that their regeneration to the previous state is unlikely and the previous capacity to provide services to the environment and to people is lost. Conversion may occur, for example, when intact ecosystems are changed to plantations, croplands, pastures, water reservoirs, infrastructures, mining, and urban areas with the just described negative impact on the ecosystems. When the described negative impact does not occur, change of an intact ecosystem to another use is not considered conversion and is not banned under this standard. This is, for example, the case of cultivation that contributes to maintaining or restoring intact ecosystems.* ***Deforestation:*** *A form of conversion which occurs when conversion concerns intact forest ecosystems.*

For example

Conversion of intact ecosystems

An organisation is conducting cultivation or wild collection activities in an area that resulted from land use changes, including conversion of parts of intact ecosystems. However, the changes were not introduced by the farmers, wild collectors, or the organisation that are involved in the cultivation or wild collection activities.

The organisation directly responsible has obtained all the needed authorisation to implement cultivation and wild collection activities in these areas that were previously changed in use by someone else. The cultivation and wild collection activities can therefore be implemented. However, biodiversity actions to restore some flora, fauna and habitats from the ecosystems that had been converted should be defined and carried out.

1.2.2 Critical Stepwise Concrete actions to maintain, regenerate, or enhance biodiversity are initiated or supported in cultivation or wild collection areas, considering the information gathered under indicator **1.1.1**[1].

Tips and guidance

- Before starting any action, make sure to assess biodiversity in cultivation and wild collection areas, including main threats, key species, habitats and ecosystems, initiatives operating for biodiversity promotion.
- Ensure that assessments of biodiversity consider field experience, local and scientific knowledge.
- Gather information on biodiversity that can be used to define actions to conserve, restore or enhance biodiversity in cultivation and wild collection areas.
- Use the UEBT templates for 'Biodiversity Action Plans' to guide the assessment of biodiversity, gather information, define relevant actions.
- Support/initiate actions that contribute to biodiversity conservation, restoration and enhancement considering the results of the assessment. Actions tackle main treats identified and enhance opportunities. They take place both in cultivation and wild collection sites and areas.

See more in **Actions that contribute to biodiversity conservation, restoration and enhancement in cultivated and wild collection sites**, *opposite.*

REFERENCE

[1] *Inidicator 1.1. 1 states that information on biodiversity relevance of cultivation or wild collection areas is available, using datasets, existing studies, official classifications or local knowledge.*

Actions that contribute to biodiversity conservation, restoration and enhancement in cultivated and wild collection sites

Protect/restore ecosystems and natural habitats, such as:

- Restoring or maintaining vegetation bordering waterways as well as other important habitats
- Protecting or restoring natural structures (e.g. trimming of hedgerows, re-plant hedges, maintaining stone walls, planting flower and buffer strips, and similar)
- Implementing bare ground and low till practices to allow ground nesting
- Prefer water canal, trenching and other natural infrastructure over artificial one for soil drainage
- Creating protection zones including buffer, riparian and non-intervention areas to safeguard sensitive areas from cross-contamination
- Contributing to management plans and monitoring systems for water basins, forests and other relevant habitats

Creation of priority areas for biodiversity, such as:

- Setting aside land in cultivation and collection sites to allow for regeneration of natural vegetation and that are free from the application of agrochemicals
- Setting up, maintaining or regenerating areas covered by naturally occurring, rare, protected and endangered vegetation
- Setting up, maintaining or regenerating areas covered by vegetation that supports the presence of naturally occurring, rare, protected and endangered animal species
- Managing vegetation cover in set-aside land, and other land fields to promote native, rare, protected and endangered species
- Providing nesting and foraging sites for birds and beneficial insects, including host plants pollinators
- Securing and restoring critical breeding grounds for aquatic species along rivers and in wetlands
- Incorporating or maintain non-crop native vegetation cover in non-productive areas in collection and cultivation sites (e.g. border planting, live fences, shade trees, grassland, set-aside land)

Promote interconnectivity among habitats, by, amongst others:

- Creating corridors that connect habitats in cultivation or collection areas
- Enhancing field margins in cultivation or collection areas (e.g. live fences, hedges, ditches, riparian strips, areas around waterways and other road and field margins)

1.2.3 Critical Stepwise If none of the examples under **1.2.2** are relevant in cultivation or wild collection areas, other relevant actions are initiated or supported, considering the information gathered under **1.1.1**.

Tips and guidance

- Initiate/support other actions than those listed in 1.2.2 when those do not respond to the threats and opportunities for biodiversity identified in the cultivation and wild collection area or when they are not feasible
- In those cases, initiate/support other actions for biodiversity conservation, restoration, enhancement that fall into the same or similar categories of actions as in 1.2.2 and respond to the treats and opportunities identified with the biodiversity assessment.
- In those cases, initiate/support actions beyond the cultivation and wild collection areas, in the closest suitable sites.
- Use the UEBT templates for 'Biodiversity Action Plans' to define relevant actions.

For example

Taking actions for biodiversity when the land is not owned or is too small for set asides

An area where cultivation or wild collection takes place is not owned by the farmers, wild collectors or companies buying from them. The relevant permittees are therefore asked before starting any actions for biodiversity conservation, restoration or enhancement.

If this consent is not obtained or there is a limited timespan that would not allow biodiversity actions to be completed and results to be seen, nearby areas could be identified and acquired to implement the actions. In addition, the management of existing and close by areas of natural interest could be supported by biodiversity actions.

Cultivation site is too small and therefore does *not* allow set aside areas for actions of pure conservation

In this case, biodiversity conservation could become an integral part of the cultivation practices. Native flora and fauna that is relevant for local biodiversity and also beneficial for the farm (e.g., that can be used to attract or eat insect or to balance soil fertility) or that has an economic value (e.g., can be used to diversify incomes) could be introduced directly in the cultivation areas.

1.2.4 Critical Stepwise Targets are set for concrete actions undertaken under **1.2.2** and **1.2.3** that allow for assessment of progress and impact.

Tips and guidance

- Make sure to set targets that are:
  - SMART– Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely.
  - relevant to monitor the progress in implementing actions for biodiversity conservation, restoration, enhancement.
  - relevant to assess the impact of those actions on key aspects of biodiversity such as genetic and species diversity, habitats diversity and conditions, soil and water conditions.
- Use the UEBT templates for 'Biodiversity Action Plans' to define relevant targets, progress and impact indicators, and to report about them.

Roles and Responsibilities

Actions to ensure biodiversity conservation, restoration, enhancement can be carried out by:

- **Producers:** People or organisations directly involved in the wild collection of plants, including farmers, pickers, farmer and picker's group and cooperatives.
- **Suppliers:** People and organisations in the supply chain that provide natural raw material for further processing or manufacturing.

Companies buying and processing natural raw material from producers or suppliers at source support these actions by commissioning analysis of biodiversity, providing training to producers on the actions they are asked to implement, making expertise available to monitor progress and impact of those actions, covering costs associated to the improvement needed.

For more guidance and training, please contact UEBT at certification@uebt.org

For more information on Biodiversity Action Plans, write to the UEBT biodiversity team at biodiversity@ethicalbiotrade.org

UEBT

De Ruijterkade 6, 1013 AA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands | Telephone: +31 20 22 34567 | Email: info@uebt.org

Representation in Brazil France India Madagascar Vietnam

Connect with us www.uebt.org | www.linkedin.com/company/uebt

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