



**UEBT**  
SOURCING<sup>®</sup>  
WITH RESPECT

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# A SNAPSHOT OF THE ETHICAL BIOTRADE STANDARD

## WHY AN ETHICAL BIOTRADE STANDARD

A growing number of companies and other organisations that source ingredients from biodiversity are looking to make a positive contribution to sustainable development. The Ethical BioTrade Standard defines practices for sourcing of ingredients from biodiversity that seek to regenerate local ecosystems and secure a better future for producers—the farmers and pickers involved in cultivation and wild collection activities.



### Explainer

#### What are “ingredients from biodiversity”?

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth—the diversity of ecosystems, species and genes within species. Any living organism is considered a component of biodiversity, whether plant, animal, microorganism or fungus. The Ethical BioTrade Standard thus applies to raw material such as plant parts (e.g. flowers, leaves, roots, stems, fruits or bark) and plant compounds (e.g. plant-based oils, butters, waxes, extracts, flavours, fragrances, colorants).

Plant cells, microorganisms, algae and beeswax would also be covered. The UEBT standard is oriented towards specialty ingredients used in small volumes, different than commodities such as coffee or bananas or fish that are the focus of other sustainability standards.

### Explainer

#### What are “sourcing” activities?

The Ethical BioTrade Standard requirements apply to sourcing activities. In the Ethical BioTrade Standard, “sourcing” is used to describe the range of activities through which raw material is produced, processed, and acquired.

It includes selecting suppliers, defining quantity and quality, negotiating prices and other terms of purchase, and processing of raw material. However, not all requirements apply to all sourcing activities. Some of the practices outlined in this standard focus on cultivation or wild collection activities. Other practices focus on the company or organisation being assessed. A few requirements extend to suppliers or other actors along the supply chain.

A close-up photograph of an aloe vera plant, showing several thick, green, ribbed leaves. The leaves are arranged in a fan-like pattern, with some showing small, light-colored spots. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue, suggesting a clear sky. The overall image is bright and natural.

## Background

The Ethical BioTrade Standard—also referred to as the UEBT standard—was developed based on the United Nations Conference Trade and Development (UNCTAD) BioTrade Initiative Principles and Criteria. Revised in 2019, the UEBT standard is aligned with international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Scope

The UEBT standard can be applied around the globe. It is applicable to both cultivation and wild collection.

## Sectors

Companies that use the UEBT standard are primarily active in

- Cosmetics
- Food
- Natural pharmaceuticals

Nevertheless, the application of the standard is not limited to these sectors.

## Stages in the supply chain

The UEBT standard establishes good practices along the supply chain, from the cultivation and wild collection areas to the work of UEBT member companies, which may be positioned in various levels downstream (they may include farms, cooperatives, processing companies, product manufacturers and brands).

The relevance of the good practices in the UEBT standard depends on where in the supply chain they are to be implemented.

## Uses

The UEBT standard can be used for

- General guidance
- Ethical sourcing systems
- Verification and certification of natural raw materials
- Chain of custody certification

## Indicators: Levels of importance

Indicators in the UEBT standard have different levels of importance (**minimum**, **critical**, **critical stepwise**, **regular** and **regular stepwise**).

This means there are different expectations as to whether full compliance is required. Some indicators allow for additional time for implementation.

*The indicators are available in the full Ethical BioTrade Standard available on the UEBT website at [www.ethicalbiotrade.org](http://www.ethicalbiotrade.org)*

# A SNAPSHOT OF THE ETHICAL BIOTRADE STANDARD

*This snapshot covers Principles and Criteria only*

## PRINCIPLE 1 CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

This principle sets out a framework for practices to maintain, regenerate, and enhance biodiversity. The specific practices to be adopted depend on the context.

Principle 1 requires assessing the local situation and aligning practices with local strategies. Practices are not restricted to cultivation or wild collection sites, but also include the broader cultivation or wild collection areas.

**1.1 Information on biodiversity is collected in cultivation or wild collection areas**

**1.2 Concrete actions are taken to maintain, regenerate, or enhance biodiversity in cultivation or wild collection areas**

**1.3 To ensure relevance and continuous improvement, concrete actions are periodically adjusted to changing conditions**

## PRINCIPLE 2 SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY

This principle fosters cultivation and wild collection practices that advance sustainable use of biodiversity. It encourages cultivation and wild collection practices that promote natural and regenerative processes. This may include organic farming practices, which are promoted but not required.

Principle 2 practices concern key components of biodiversity such as species diversity and genetic diversity. These practices also extend to soil, water and air in cultivation and wild collection sites. When practices differ for cultivation or wild collection this is specifically mentioned.

**2.1 Practices are adopted to ensure sustainable use of the species cultivated or wild collected, and to prevent or mitigate negative impact on other species**

**2.2. Cultivation and wild collection practices promote climate resilience**

**2.3 Soil and water conditions are conserved or improved in cultivation and wild collection sites**

**2.4 Practices are adopted to prevent and mitigate the negative impact of the use of agrochemicals**

**2.5. Measures are taken to improve energy efficiency and reduce waste and contamination in cultivation and collection sites**

## PRINCIPLE 3 FAIR AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THE USE OF BIODIVERSITY

This principle advances long-term relationships and payment of fair prices to producers—that is, the local pickers or farmers collecting or cultivating plants used for natural raw materials. It seeks to ensure such activities contribute to local development needs in the cultivation and collection areas. Moreover, it promotes compliance with legal requirements and good practices on access and benefit sharing (ABS).

**3.1 Prices paid for natural raw materials are fair**

**3.2 Sourcing arrangements with producers are based on dialogue, trust and long-term collaboration**

**3.3 Local development needs, as defined by producers and their communities in the cultivation or wild collection areas, are supported**

**3.4 Use of natural raw materials complies with applicable legal requirements on access and benefit sharing (ABS)**

**3.5 In cases where no legal requirements on ABS apply, the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge accessed from indigenous peoples and local communities respects ABS principles**

**3.6 Patents and other intellectual property rights respect the rights of countries, indigenous peoples and local communities over genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge**

## PRINCIPLE 4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY (PRODUCTIVE, FINANCIAL AND MARKET MANAGEMENT)

This principle promotes the integration of relevant requirements in the Ethical BioTrade Standard in operations and management systems, including quality and traceability systems. The integration of requirements in criteria **4.1** and **4.2** takes place at the level of UEBT member organisations. Criteria **4.3** and **4.4** also apply at the cultivation and wild collection level (i.e. processing companies).

**4.1 Ethical BioTrade practices are promoted through organisational operations and management systems**

**4.2 Resources are available to implement Ethical BioTrade practices**

**4.3 Quality systems are aligned with market requirements**

**4.4 A traceability system is in place in line with market, certification and legal requirements**



## PRINCIPLE 5 COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION

This principle promotes and facilitates compliance with principles, laws and regulations relevant to the cultivation, collection, supply, research, processing or commercialisation of natural raw materials. It identifies certain national laws and regulations, as well as international agreements, with particular relevance to Ethical BioTrade practices.

**5.1 Activities respect laws and regulations that are applicable and relevant to Ethical BioTrade practices**

**5.2 Activities respect international agreements relevant to Ethical BioTrade practices**

## PRINCIPLE 6 RESPECT FOR RIGHTS OF ACTORS INVOLVED IN BIOTRADE ACTIVITIES

This principle promotes respect of human and workers' rights and decent labour conditions along the supply chain, considering relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and national regulatory frameworks.

It focuses on respect for rights at the level of UEBT member companies, as well as in cultivation and wild collection activities (i.e. producers and local processing companies).

**6.1 Respect for human rights**

**6.2 Children's rights are respected**

**6.3 Workers' rights are respected**

**6.4 Health and safety conditions**

## PRINCIPLE 7 CLARITY ABOUT LAND TENURE, RIGHT OF USE AND ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES

This principle defines practices that respect rights over land and natural resources, particularly the relevant rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in cultivation and collection areas.

**7.1 Disputes over ownership or use of land and natural resources are addressed**

**7.2 The rights and traditional practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected**

**7.3 Cultivation and wild collection activities do not jeopardize local food security**

### Support from UEBT

For full information about the Ethical BioTrade Standard, its content and requirements and the pathways to compliance, visit [www.ethicalbiotrade.org](http://www.ethicalbiotrade.org) where the full standard is available for download.

For questions related to the standard or UEBT membership, please email us at [info@ethicalbiotrade.org](mailto:info@ethicalbiotrade.org)

UEBT is a non-profit association that promotes sourcing with respect. We work to regenerate nature and secure a better future for people through ethical sourcing of ingredients from biodiversity.

**Images:** Dill umbels *Anethum graveolens*, Lavender fields, France *Lavandula angustifolia*, Aloe vera *Aloe vera*, Myeongdong shopping centre Seoul, South Korea



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