



International Chamber of Commerce

The world business organization

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Integrating biodiversity into sustainable agriculture

How business contributes

Sustainable agriculture is of central interest for the nutrition of a rising world population. Here, good agricultural practices can be combined with the protection of biodiversity. Protection of biodiversity and maintenance of functioning ecosystems, such as water supply and soil protection, play a central role.

The private sector is a key player in the development and promotion of practices and technologies that can make sustainable agriculture a reality for more countries, local communities, and farmers. Solutions needed to attain sustainability in agriculture are known, they need to be replicated and scaled up to become mainstream worldwide.

Some examples of good practices:

- **Integrated Crop Management (ICM)** is a holistic approach to the management of agricultural ecosystems. With regard to biodiversity conservation, ICM encourages the maintenance or (re-) establishment of natural habitats by establishing field margins, levees (e.g. in rice), beetle banks or hedges. These activities not only safeguard habitats for flora and fauna by providing cover and refuge for beneficial insects, predators and wildlife but also serve as windbreaks to reduce soil erosion. The maintenance of natural habitats at the farm level also contributes to establishing a network of connected habitats at the broader landscape level called for by the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- **Chiquita** started to work on a pilot project in the Sarapiquí region of Costa Rica, which aims to protect biodiversity with the support of communities, farmers, authorities and

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scientists in 2003. The GTZ, the Swiss retailer Migros and Chiquita have funded the project, which is based on the Rainforest Alliance's concepts of sustainable tropical agriculture. The project's activities include the protection of remaining forest on private properties, the establishment of biological corridors connecting forest areas, environmental education for local inhabitants, and the creation of small businesses linked to conservation and eco-tourism. This pilot project has generated a method and a vision which can be applied on a much larger scale.

- **Bayer CropScience** cooperates with customers, research institutes and NGOs – for example in Brazil and the UK – in projects on how to regulate water flows on farms or by increasing biodiversity of birds and pollinators through the planting of native trees and the cultivation or preservation of hedges or field margins. At the same time, these measures contribute to the company's basis of business in the long run: species and water flow maintenance are important ecosystem functions and contribute services such as water regulation, erosion control or the pollination of agricultural plants by insects.
- **Voluntary Agri-environment schemes, UK:** Agri-environment scheme is a term used in the UK to describe national (or local) schemes that pay farmers to farm in an environmentally sensitive way. The schemes were first introduced in 1987 and have up until 2005 been targeted at specific areas throughout the country that are considered to have high conservation value.

In 2005 with the introduction of the new Environmental Stewardship (ES) scheme all farmers in England are eligible. The new ES scheme is based on a points system. Farmers have to score sufficient points per hectare in order to be successful. Farmers wishing to apply are required to complete a Farm Environment Plan (FEP). This records everything of conservation and environment interest on the farm and outline how these areas will be managed, in line with the set of options and objectives of the scheme. The scheme is administered by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). More than 60% of UK farmers today apply these schemes.