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## Biodiversity

### An Irreplaceable Resource Vital to Developing Countries and the United States

THE Earth's biodiversity is being lost at an unprecedented rate, with an estimated 1,000 species per year becoming extinct. Tropical rainforests, coral reefs, grasslands, and the highly productive areas of the open sea are all under threat. It is vital to the interests of developing countries and the United States to work to conserve biodiversity in the developing world.

In developing countries, where rapid population growth and greater dependence on subsistence farming, hunting, and gathering often lead to accelerated environmental deterioration, conservation is crucial. Conservation can reduce the potential risk for conflict among poor people lacking the legal right to manage the forest, fisheries, wildlife, and water resources upon which they depend.

Biodiversity conservation in developing countries also has significant economic value to the United States. The extinction of each additional species results in the irreversible loss of unique genetic materials, which are often

**Biological diversity, or "biodiversity," is the variety of all forms of life on Earth. Its complexity is measured in terms of variation at genetic, species, and ecosystems levels.**

linked to development of medicines, foods, and jobs. Of the top-selling 150 prescription drugs in the United States, 79 percent have their origins in nature. The net economic benefits of biodiversity are estimated to be at least \$3 trillion per year, or 11 percent of the annual world economic output.

In recognition of the importance of biodiversity, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has made biodiversity conservation a key goal under its programs to protect the environment. An integral component of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade's (EGAT) Environment Programs, the USAID Biodiversity Team plays the key function of implementing the Agency's biodiversity activities.

## USAID Biodiversity Team

THE USAID Biodiversity Team offers USAID Missions and Bureaus in-house, technical capability in strategy formulation, program design, evaluation, implementation support, as well as the contracting mechanisms listed on the inside of this brochure.

For more information on how to access the Team and its services, please contact:

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USAID personnel may access the EGAT/Environment intranet site at: <http://www.genv.org>  
The public site is: <http://www.usaid.gov/environment>

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Global Biodiversity Conservation  
*Protection and Sustainable Use of the  
World's Biological Wealth*





## USAID and Biodiversity

ONE challenge of biodiversity conservation in developing countries is to maintain biologically diverse habitats and environmental services while supporting economic development. Small farmers and other natural resources users, for example, will abandon destructive practices only if they have economically and culturally acceptable alternatives. Conservation efforts must consider both protected area management and the impact of natural resources policies and practices.

USAID is building local capacities to identify and address key threats to biological diversity and to promote its sustainable use. These programs promote participation and transparency; cooperation among stakeholders; and devolution of authority to local users of natural resources, including recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to manage their traditional lands.

### USAID Biodiversity Conservation Success Stories from Around the World

USAID is working to save species and habitat in more than 45 countries, including the majority of the world's top, species-rich countries. Agency successes include the following:

- With USAID support, communities in Northern **Tanzania** created the Conservation Land Trust (TCLT), the first of its kind in East Africa, to protect approximately 45,000 acres of a vital wildlife corridor linking two major parks. The TCLT grants adjacent communities the authority to develop potential income-generating activities that preserve the integrity of the corridor for wildlife and traditional pastoral use.
- A USAID-supported indigenous governing organization in **Bolivia** successfully protected the Kaa Iya Protected Area, 4.6 million hectares (17,760 square miles) of tropical forest, from petrochemical development.
- In the **Philippines, Indonesia, and India**, a total of 10 million hectares (38,610 square miles) of species-rich habitats are now under community management. After USAID helped a group of Indonesian indigenous people map its resource use and obtain legal authority to sustainably manage its forests, the group was able to stop a logging company from clearing its forest gardens and sacred areas for oil palm plantations.
- In **Ecuador**, 1.4 million hectares (an area roughly two-thirds larger than Yellowstone National Park) are managed better with USAID's support through regulatory reform and implementation of participatory natural resource management plans.
- By improving field-level impacts and community forest management techniques, USAID support in **Madagascar** is seen in forest cover change, an important biodiversity conservation indicator. Forest cover monitoring for the 1993-2001 period puts forest loss rates at 2.6 percent and 3.5 percent in USAID intervention zones. Forest loss in comparable non-intervention zones was 6.7 percent.

USAID supports the conservation of biodiversity through programs implemented by the Agency's in-country Missions and its technical Bureaus based in Washington. The Agency provided \$87 million for biodiversity programs in fiscal year 2001. The Agency's Biodiversity Team manages the following programs:

The **Global Conservation Program** supports the efforts of six partners – African Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International, EnterpriseWorks Worldwide, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, and World Wildlife Fund – to address the most pressing threats to biological diversity in 18 sites worldwide. The new Leader with Associates cooperative agreement promotes partnerships between USAID and the non-profit community (\$29 million USAID funds anticipated over 5 years through 2004 for some agreements and 2006 for others).

The **Biodiversity and Forestry (BioFor) Indefinite Quantity Contract** provides USAID Missions and Bureaus with short and long-term, quick-response, technical assistance to conserve biodiversity and manage forests sustainably. Associates in Rural Development, Inc., and Chemonics International, Inc., are its prime contractors (up to \$75 million USAID funds over 5 years through 2004).

The **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program Cooperative Agreement** is a competitive, small grants program managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that supports projects benefiting migratory birds and their winter habitats in the Caribbean and Central America (\$3.4 million anticipated through 2004).

The **Partnership for Biodiversity Interagency Agreement** harnesses the biodiversity conservation expertise of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Peace Corps to promote biodiversity conservation in selected sites (\$4 million over 10 years through 2004).

The **Consultative Group on Biological Diversity Grant** supports a consortium of 40 U.S. foundations

whose purpose is to lend oversight and coherence to philanthropic spending on global biodiversity. The group helps educate foundations on the importance of conservation and coordinates grant making (\$150,000 over 3 years through 2004).



*Not since the disappearance of dinosaurs has the rate of species extinction—the most common measure of biodiversity loss—been higher. Tropical rainforests, coral reefs, grasslands, and the highly productive areas of the open sea are all under threat.*

