



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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New EU initiative to protect biodiversity and fight wildlife crime

On the International Day for Biological Diversity today, the Commission is launching a major new initiative to halt biodiversity loss and eradicate poverty in developing countries.

The EU Biodiversity for Life (B4Life) flagship initiative is designed to help the poorest countries protect ecosystems, combat wildlife crime and develop green economies. B4Life will be financed initially from the EU Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic programme as well as from regional and national development cooperation envelopes, with an estimated budget of up to €800 million for 2014-2020.

In line with the EU's Agenda for Change (its policy blueprint to target its resources where they are most needed and can be the most effective) B4Life will focus on Least Developed Countries and countries containing "biodiversity hotspots", the places where ecosystems and their services are the richest but also the most threatened.

Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Development, said: *"We have already agreed with our EU partners that development is not sustainable if it damages the environment, biodiversity or natural resources. B4Life will now provide the means to step up our efforts to support livelihoods through halting biodiversity loss and combating wildlife crime."*

Biodiversity and development are closely linked and mutually reinforcing: healthy ecosystems sustain development while development impacts on habitats. Seeing ecosystem conservation and restoration as an opportunity to generate growth, create jobs and reduce poverty through a green economy contributes to the EU's development agenda.

It is hoped that the initiative will attract additional funding from other development partners including EU member states.

B4Life will operate in three priority areas:

- **Promoting good governance of natural resources.** This will help the fight against corruption; improve transparency by involving public and private sectors, civil society and academia in partnerships; support the development of national biodiversity strategies, and help improve regulations to protect biodiversity and the management of protected areas.
- **Securing healthy ecosystems for food security.** This priority will promote sustainable farming practices and the development of environment-friendly products; help restore degraded areas; support the development of community-based land management plans and coastal management plans, including marine protected areas.

- **Developing nature-based solutions towards a green economy.** This should leverage funding and stimulate business models such as markets for green products and eco-tourism; promote public-private partnerships for the sustainable management of natural resources; help develop Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes for small farm holders: offering incentives to manage their land to increase the quality and quantity of key habitats; and ensure access to benefit sharing for indigenous people and local communities.

Fighting wildlife crime

In addition to the three priority areas, B4Life will include a special '**Wildlife Crisis Window**' (WCW), dedicated to combating the increase in the illegal trade of endangered species, particularly in Africa. As well as threatening species, wildlife poaching and trafficking harm local and national security. Recent evidence shows that rebel militias and possibly terrorist groups are now involved in elephant and rhino poaching as a means of financing their actions.

The WCW will tackle poaching and trafficking at all levels: at a local level by securing the management of priority protected areas; at a national level by reinforcing the rule of law by tackling corruption and improving investigation; at a regional level by promoting anti-criminal networks and the creation of cross-border protected areas, and by improving species monitoring; and internationally by supporting organisations specialised in the fight against wildlife crime, illegal trade and smuggling.

Background

The EU is the largest contributor of biodiversity finance to developing countries.

The European Commission alone provided €1.3 billion to biodiversity and biodiversity-related projects from 2002 to 2012. This contribution helped safeguard the planet's richest and most threatened ecosystems.

In terms of European Commission funding from 2002 to 2012, roughly a third of the contribution provided developing countries with support to manage protected areas, for example to maintain elephant populations and curb poaching. A significant part of it was also spent on sustainable forest management, including efforts to combat illegal logging and prevent deforestation.

EuropeAid flagship initiatives are large, multidisciplinary development programmes designed to tackle major global problems and maximise impacts through setting a clear objective and recognisable goals.

For more information

New EU initiative to protect biodiversity and fight wildlife crime, Q&A: [MEMO/14/373](#)

Website of DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid

www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid

International Day for Biological Diversity <http://www.cbd.int/idb/>

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