

Biodiversity

DESCRIPTION

Biodiversity programs help conserve the most biologically significant places across the world. They promote U.S. national and economic security objectives by empowering good governance, strong policies, and protecting the natural systems that can help alleviate extreme poverty and provide a foundation for development.

WHAT DOES THIS BUY?

Funds are provided to partners through grants, cooperative agreements, and other mechanisms to implement programming. Programs safeguard fisheries in the Caribbean using coral reefs and mangroves to protect coastal communities from natural disasters in the Pacific. They work to ensure watersheds provide an abundance of clean water in Africa and support Latin American countries that are building local capacity to manage natural resources and conserve tropical forests.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST

- In FY 2016, as a result of USAID assistance, **more than 1.5 million people have more income, better jobs,** and other economic gains through sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. Millions more benefit indirectly from biodiversity and the natural services it provides.
- **Forty percent of intrastate conflicts within the past 60 years were strongly linked to the competition for natural resources,** resulting in flows of displaced persons and national and regional instabilities.¹
- In Guatemala, USAID helped communities generate more than \$29 million in sales of sustainable timber and nontimber forest products creating approximately 3,000 jobs.²
- Community conservancies in northern Kenya earned \$1.65 million from conservation enterprises while reducing poaching of elephants and rhinos by 35% and 78%, respectively, as a result of investments in training, equipment, conservation education, and new ranger outposts.
- Fisherman applying sustainable practices in El Salvador recorded over \$1 million in sales in only six months, a strong incentive that is transforming fishing practices while conserving Central America's marine biodiversity.
- In 2016, the Government of Zambia arrested more than 300 individuals for wildlife crimes and seized more than 1,300 pounds of ivory.³
- The proportion of illegally killed elephants through poaching and human-wildlife conflict dropped from 56% in 2016 to 34% in 2017, continuing the decreasing trend since 2012.

U.S. INTEREST

- **Programs deter wildlife trafficking, poaching, and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products,** which is both a serious conservation concern and a threat to global security.
- Conservation programs support sustainable livelihoods, political stability, and good governance in regions of strategic importance to the U.S. In turn, this enhances the capacities of local and national economies to develop foreign markets for American goods.

Looking to the Future

Biodiversity – TITLE VII

BOLD VISION

- Additional funding could increase the U.S.’s ability to promote stability, sustainable development, and disaster resilience in key countries and regions across the world. This could allow for an increase in land and water under protected or managed status, greater local capacity to manage and conserve natural resources, and increased effectiveness in combating the illegal wildlife trade.
- We can pursue a sustainable path. We can create a new vision for the planet – one powered by a virtuous cycle, where people recognize the role nature plays in improving their lives and are eager to take better care of it. We can create a world where people and nature thrive.

IMPACT OF CUTS

- The choices we make today will define the **legacy we leave behind**. If we stay on the “business as usual” path, we will face major biodiversity loss and a growing number of environmental challenges that make life harder for future generations. We risk becoming trapped in a vicious cycle where we overexploit and degrade nature, in turn harming our health, our livelihoods, and our quality of life.
- Cuts would further scarcity and degradation, which threatens the natural resources necessary to secure sustainable livelihoods, political stability, and good governance in difficult regions of the world.
- Despite successes in reducing illegal wildlife poaching, it continues to be a threat to biodiversity.

1 “Why is it Important?” Conservation International. <https://www.conservation.org/projects/Pages/Conservation-and-peacebuilding.aspx>.
2 “Biodiversity, Conservation, and Forestry Programs,” USAID. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USAID_FAB_FY2016_Annual_Report_FINAL.pdf.
3 “Wildlife,” Northern Rangelands Trust. <https://www.nrt-kenya.org/wildlife>.

5 YEAR FUNDING HISTORY

