

DSM position paper on biodiversity

Key messages

DSM appreciates the value of biodiversity and ecosystems services and actively contributes to the preservation thereof.

DSM supports the ambitions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and is fully committed to adhering to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

Biodiversity and sustainability

Among the conditions for a sustainable world are biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. Biological diversity - or biodiversity - is the term given to the variety of life on earth and the natural patterns it forms. Changes in biodiversity can influence the supply of ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food, water, and clean air; regulating services such as flood and disease control; cultural services such as spiritual, recreational and cultural benefits; and supporting services, such as nutrient cycling, that maintain the conditions for life on Earth.

DSM and industrial biotechnology

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, world leaders agreed on a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development, meeting our needs while ensuring that we leave a healthy and viable world for future generations. One of the key agreements was the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Initiated by the UN in 2001, some 1,360 experts assessed the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and the need for conservation and sustainable use of those systems. This "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment" showed that over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history, largely to meet rapidly growing demands for food, fresh water, timber, fiber and fuel. The gains in human well-being and economic development, however, have been achieved at growing costs in the form of the degradation of many ecosystem services, increased risks of nonlinear changes, and the exacerbation of poverty. These problems, unless addressed, will substantially diminish the ecosystem benefits that future generations obtain from ecosystems. The challenge of reversing the degradation of ecosystem while meeting increasing demands for their services, will involve significant changes in policies, institutions and practices.

In 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, the CBD adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with an overarching framework on biodiversity to be translated into national biodiversity strategies and action plans. In the 4th Global Biodiversity Outlook in 2014, a periodic report of the CBD with the latest data on biodiversity, UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon stated: *“The international community is increasingly aware of the link between biodiversity and sustainable development. More and more people realize that the variety of life on this planet, its ecosystems and their impacts form the basis for our shared wealth, health and well-being. This positive trend must be expanded as part of our efforts to counter worrying evidence of biodiversity loss, which has its greatest impact on the poor and ultimately affects all societies and economies. During the first years of the 2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity made great strides in addressing loss. Still, much more action is needed”.*

DSM and biodiversity

DSM considers biodiversity an essential part of sustainable development and corporate responsibility. DSM is part of society, takes its place in nature and therefore believes that we have an important role to play in the conservation of nature. Indeed, as a leading life sciences company, DSM specializes in learning from nature in the development of new products and processes which use natural resources more efficiently and minimize environmental impacts.

DSM appreciates the value of biodiversity and ecosystems services and actively contributes to the preservation thereof. We do this by:

- building awareness about natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystems;
- assessing and monitoring DSM’s impact on protected areas within its vicinity;
- developing impact assessments;
- setting targets that reduce the impact of DSM’s operations;
- developing measures that help mitigate DSM’s impact;
- integrating the value of natural capital into investment decisions (e.g. carbon pricing);
- cooperating in stakeholder dialogues; and
- ensuring DSM’s compliance with the CBD protocols.

The CBD stresses interconnection between biodiversity and climate change; biodiversity and ecosystems make an important contribution to mitigate climate-change. That is why DSM further reduces absolute greenhouse gas emissions; improves greenhouse gas efficiency, energy efficiency and the renewable energy content.

DSM, the Convention on Biological Diversity, Cartagena Protocol and Nagoya Protocol

DSM supports the ambitions of the CBD, which are (1) the conservation of biological diversity, (2) the sustainable and safe use of its components, and (3) the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from such use. Therefore, DSM is fully committed to adhering to the supplementary agreements to the CBD, namely the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. This has been embedded in our management systems.