



Innovation and Biodiversity Conservation



The business case

As a company that is reliant on forest products, Fibria is committed to developing its business in a sustainable way. More than 35% of the land the company owns is dedicated to conservation purposes. The company is thus aware of the role it plays in the conservation of biodiversity hotspots, particularly in the biomes where its operations are concentrated, namely the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest, the Cerrado and the Pampas.

The issue

In recent years, Fibria has established itself as a Brazilian company engaged in sustainable forest management, capable of creating value from renewable resources. With 19,000 employees, the company operates in 254 municipalities in seven states within Brazil. Fibria owns 975,000 hectares of land, of which 352,000 hectares (36%) are dedicated to conservation purposes. The wood is used for pulp production, supplying global demand for high-quality products from certified planted forests. The company's main markets are Europe (42%), North America (25%) and Asia (23%).

Biodiversity degradation is an increasingly widespread phenomenon throughout the world. For years, development processes were incompatible with nature conservation. As humankind gets closer to an ecological tipping point, there is growing onus on business to lead the necessary change. Fibria is an important player in the global pulp market, and because of this, is concerned with biodiversity conservation in Brazil. Fibria's forest plantations are located in three hotspots for conservation: the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest, the Cerrado and the Pampas. Efforts taken to reduce loss in such endangered biomes are important, but the question remains: how to achieve impacts at scale in the

necessary timeframe and at a cost that is feasible. Fibria is developing biodiversity conservation initiatives and projects to address this challenge.

The response

Fibria directs its conservation actions in eight thematic areas: wildlife protection, conservation areas, restoration, landscape management, participation in conservation forums, environmental education, biodiversity-community projects, terrestrial and marine monitoring. Its projects and initiatives align with the Aichi Targets, but on a more local scale the company's goals are to:

- Improve forest management in order to reduce negative impacts of operations and increase positive impacts;
- Have a net positive impact by increasing diversity of habitats for species and protecting high conservation value areas;
- Protect endemic, endangered and rare species;
- Mainstream biodiversity conservation in its practices through environmental education and biodiversity-related community projects.

In the past two years, Fibria has run restoration activities over 5,000 hectares of natural habitat, employing innovative forest management practices to maximize ecosystem regeneration: 1) Fibria has sought to mix species of rapid growth with "diversity" species, which aims to enhance ecological function in forest units; 2) Fibria assesses the area for recovery potential, to inform intervention required, and therefore provide estimates of associated costs; 3) Fibria handles succession monitoring, to evaluate the progress of the restoration process. This is the first time these techniques have been used at such a large scale. The lessons learned from its restoration program in the north of Espírito Santo State, South of Bahia and Vale do Paraíba in São Paulo State, which aims to recover 40,000 hectares by 2025, will bring new insights to both landscape management and restoration.

The Sustainable Forest Mosaics initiative is one of Fibria's most important projects. Taking the landscape as a unit of management, the collaboration between companies and non-governmental organizations

(Kimberly Clark, Veracel, Fibria, Suzano and the Instituto BioAtlântica, Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy) represents an opportunity to test collaborative biodiversity conservation. Projects are being combined and optimized to generate more effective and longer-lasting environmental results. Environmental units for biodiversity monitoring were created and the methodology was converged, to drive actions from the different companies toward a common goal. Priority areas for restoration were also identified. Fibria's experience in this initiative will help it to be used in other regions.

"Biodiversity-community" is another thematic area that takes advantage of collaboration. By involving community members, the company generates awareness of biodiversity conservation while helping to reduce degrading pressure. By tying these two concepts together, as shown in the Brazilian Parrot Project outlined below, permanent results are more likely to be achieved.

Addressing these thematic areas requires innovation, which can be difficult to integrate with traditional management tools. Measuring its performance in the traditional way will only tell part of the story. Fibria is working on improving its management capabilities, by evaluating the potential use of ecosystem services valuation techniques in-house. It is working towards the integration of ecosystem service valuation into the decision-making process, which Fibria believes will improve its business model.

The results

A "biodiversity-community" project, the Brazilian Parrot (*Amazona aestiva*) Project in the state of São Paulo, helped to decrease bird-trafficking. In three years, working alongside the local community, the proportion of nests that were disturbed fell from 95% to 11%. Artificial nests were installed with the help of a bird expert. Environmental education initiatives were developed, with the aim of raising community awareness of this issue, and of increasing the company's capacity to address the problem collaboratively.

As a result, disturbance of nests began to decrease. The concept of using artificial nests was adopted by

the community. Residents installed nests near their houses and now watch over these, which is important in avoiding raids on nests. Fibria's private natural heritage reserves (RPPN) and other preservation areas also play important roles. In 2011, a nature reserve in the state of São Paulo owned by Fibria was considered relevant by ICMBio (the government agency responsible for biodiversity programs) in conserving the southern muriqui (*Brachyteles arachnoides*), a species of spider monkey that is endemic to Brazil. Fibria maintains a partnership with the Pró-Muriqui Association to study this species and provide information on conservation measures to be taken.

Regarding biodiversity monitoring, the number of species identified in Fibria's areas is constantly increasing, revealing the biodiversity importance of landscape mosaics, where forest plantations alternate with native forests.

Owning close to a million hectares of land in Brazil, and after more than 10 years developing biodiversity conservation projects, it has become clear that more environmentally and cost-effective projects are needed. In order to maximize the scale and effectiveness of conservation initiatives, Fibria has decided to set aside 36% of its areas for conservation purposes. As part of this process, it has established a target of restoring 40,000 hectares of degraded land to native forest by 2025, as well as implementing procedures to reduce the operational impacts on biodiversity.

In order to scale-up its conservation initiatives, Fibria is determined to work alongside partners and stakeholders, including communities, with a broad biodiversity conservation planning process and allied initiatives. The Sustainable Forest Mosaics is a prime example of a multi-stakeholder project that should be replicated more broadly. The move toward valuation of ecosystem services that allows for the communication and promotion of biodiversity conservation is promising, but it must evolve as part of a process that influences decision-making.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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