



Green trade organizations: striving for fair benefits from trade in non-wood forest products

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A sampling of organizations and alliances that bring together producers and traders committed to ecological, economic and social sustainability.

Green trade organizations aim to secure sustainable supply systems and to ensure benefits to local people from national, regional and international trade. These organizations promote trade practices that adhere to the principles of sustainable development in all its facets: ecological sustainability (use and conservation), economic sustainability (productivity) and social sustainability (equity).

The main handicap of those involved in production and trade of non-wood forest products (NWFPs), from indigenous peoples' associations to private-sector enterprises, is the lack of market information and market access and the difficulty of obtaining information on appropriate processing technologies for their products.

Green trade organizations can help improve access to national and/or international markets for NWFP producers, especially those in developing countries, and at the same time provide guidance on increasing added value for their agricultural and forest products. In addition, they can assist in the export of products, thus helping to provide foreign exchange for the home country.

Green trade organizations are united in various alliances according to their main focus (ecological, social or economic):

- The International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT) (www.ifat.org) brings together producers of handicrafts and food products from developing countries with buyers and managers of "alternative" trading organizations to do business in a way that is beneficial and fair, avoiding traditional intermediaries.
- The Fair Trade Federation (FTF) (www.fairtradefederation.com) is an association of wholesalers, retailers and producers committed to providing fair wages and good employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged artisans and farmers worldwide. It links low-income producers with consumer markets and educates consumers about the importance of purchasing fairly traded products which support living wages and safe and healthy conditions for workers in developing countries. FTF also acts as a clearinghouse for information on fair trade and provides resources and networking opportunities for its members.

- The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) (www.ethicaltrade.org) is an alliance of companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and trade union organizations working to promote correct implementation of codes of labour practice. Its activities include the monitoring and independent verification of the observance of code provisions.

ORGANIZATIONS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON NWFPs

In recent years green trade organizations have been established for NWFP marketing all around the globe. EcoMarket International (<http://www.ecomarket.net>) has been established on Internet as the European platform for green products, services and information. In the Netherlands, ProFound (www.ThisIsProFound.com) has initiated a NWFP exporters database to provide all potential exporters of NWFPs a means of advertising on the Internet. The Natural Resources Institute in the United Kingdom carries out work comparing ethical and conventional trade in NWFPs (www.nri.org/NRET/markets.htm) and has established the UK Consultative Group on Ethical Trade and Forests (www.nri.org/NRET/forukcon.html).

The following examples of green trade organizations give an idea of some of the different types of organization that place specific emphasis on NWFPs.

Green Trade Net

The Green Trade Net initiative of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) offers assistance for the full range of activities from harvesting of the raw material to processing, research and trade contacts. The Green Trade Net office provides detailed company, product and country information for importers, producers and consultants. The information base currently covers more than 650 organic products (including many edible NWFPs) from 27 developing countries. The following services are available:

- Green Trade Net provides the opportunity for producers to contact importers and to offer their products through the Web site (www.green-tradenet.de);
- importers can search for export products via the Green Trade Net office by fax, phone or e-mail;
- information is available with regard to different product groups such as essential oils, herbs or tea;
- importers are sent information about specifications, availability, certification status and producers;
- monthly mailings of current offers in different product groups are sent to importers;
- Green Trade Net distributes product samples to interested importers (of which more than 160 are in contact);
- direct links are established between registered exporters and importers that have expressed an interest in their product.

The registration of producers and product promotion is done on the basis of written consent. Information given by Green Trade Net is free of charge.

[The Internet pages of some of the important organizations dedicated to ethical trade](#)

ForesTrade

ForesTrade, a United States-based company specialized in the production and marketing of fine-quality certified organic and sustainably harvested products, acts as a catalyst for the building of mutually supportive alliances of producers, processors and support organizations in the producing countries and as the primary network to the international market. ForesTrade supports local institutional development, training and extension, certification and ongoing monitoring, supervision and quality control activities in partner countries such as Guatemala, for example. Since the United States (unlike other countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland) gives virtually no government subsidies for such activities, ForesTrade, a partly privately owned company, must mobilize resources to set up its projects. Therefore, it serves primarily as an international marketing and trading agent for producers in order to recover the costs of the projects.

ForesTrade offers a broad selection and a reliable supply of tropical spices and selected essential oils to natural food processors, distributors, manufacturers and the personal care industry. The products, which include vanilla, cassia, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, mace, ginger, turmeric, allspice, cardamom, coffee and patchouli oil, are primarily produced by a cooperative network of small farmers, indigenous organizations and local businesses in South and Southeast Asia and Central America. ForesTrade provides stimulus and support to environmentally sound agriculture, local economic advancement and rain forest conservation.

The BIOTRADE Initiative

Many developing countries are endowed with rich and highly diverse biological resources which provide a wide range of products and services such as watershed protection, ecotourism and products for, among others, the pharmaceutical, cosmetic, food and agrochemical industries. The BIOTRADE Initiative (www.biotrade.org) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was launched during the third Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November 1996. Its mission is to stimulate investment and trade in biological resources as a means of furthering the three objectives of CBD:

- promotion of the conservation of biodiversity;
- the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity;
- fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of biological resources.

The initiative undertakes to fulfil this mission by developing countries' capacity for sustainable use of biodiversity to produce new value-added products and services for national, regional and international markets. To achieve these goals, the BIOTRADE Initiative works to integrate the private sector, governments, local and indigenous communities and other relevant players in a mutual beneficial framework.

The initiative has three complementary components:

- market research and policy analysis;
- Web services and communications;
- a country programme.

The BIOTRADE country programme represents the most comprehensive part of the initiative. It analyses opportunities and constraints for the development of a sustainable bioresource industry. To capture opportunities and solve identified problems, the country programme develops proactive strategies focusing on biobusiness development, partnerships, sustainable use, conservation and benefit-sharing incentives.

The other two programme components are designed to compile and analyse market data and

policy issues and to disseminate the information thus gathered through a Web site, printed publications and briefings. These components form the basis for a more transparent understanding of market dynamics and trends, market barriers, trade and investment flows, property rights regimes and biobusiness development as well as conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.

The final goal for national sustainable biobusiness development will be to launch and implement new partnerships integrating the national stakeholders' interests with the commercial objectives of national, regional and international financing sources, the consulting sector (NGOs and others) and other global players.

