



# UEBT Research Agenda 2021-2024

## Background

The UEBT research agenda defines the focus of evaluation studies that UEBT will be conducting in the timeframe 2021 – 2024. Key research questions are defined below, which will allow UEBT to assess two of the expected impacts in the UEBT Theory of Change:

1. Biodiversity regeneration
2. Improved livelihoods and local development

These expected impacts are selected to be monitored as they are relevant to assess progress towards the UEBT 2024 strategy's focus on **promoting positive impact on people and biodiversity**.

The impacts will be evaluated in areas where natural raw materials sourced by UEBT members are cultivated or collected from the wild. Supply chains to be involved in the evaluation studies will be selected to represent different UEBT assurance programmes (e.g. prioritisation of supply chains for improvements, verification, certification), sourcing countries, and natural raw material supply chains.

## Company-led evaluations

In addition to UEBT conducting or commissioning its own studies, business working with UEBT are also interested in evaluating the impact of their ethical sourcing. Results of studies can be used for internal learning, to provide evidence on whether they are meeting their sustainability strategies, or to communicate about impact to stakeholders. Conducting evaluations is also required for UEBT certificate holders (not required of farms or small organisations located in sourcing areas). UEBT members interested in implementing evaluations, and UEBT certificate holders that are required to implement a study in one or more supply chains can:

- Use this research agenda to read priority research questions to get inspired about possible impacts that could be evaluated.
- Contact UEBT to discuss how to start, hear experiences from other members, and obtain advice and support.

## Theme 1: Biodiversity regeneration

This research stream will assess the impact of UEBT members’ regenerative practices for biodiversity in cultivation/collection areas. Regenerative practices that will be studied include measures to maximise biodiversity, conserve or improve soil health, conserve or improve water conditions, and prevent and mitigate the use of agrochemicals, energy and mismanagement of waste.

<b>Priority questions for theme 1</b>
<b>Knowing the context</b>
Which factors and dynamics are affecting biodiversity regeneration at the context level?
Which factors and dynamics are affecting biodiversity regeneration in the supply chains of natural raw materials sourced by UEBT members?
<b>Strategies for biodiversity regeneration in supply chains certified/verified/prioritised by UEBT members and their effectiveness</b>
Which regenerative practices are in place in UEBT supply chains for biodiversity?
How effective are regenerative practices in ensuring biodiversity is maximised, soil and water conditions are maintained or restored, negative impact of the use of agrochemicals, energy and mismanagement of waste is prevented or mitigated in cultivation/collection areas where UEBT supply chains source from?
Which regenerative practices are proving most effective in this?
Which factors and dynamics are preventing regenerative practices to be effective in ensuring biodiversity is maximised, soil and water conditions are maintained or restored, the negative impact of agrochemicals and energy use and mismanagement of waste is prevented or mitigated, and which of the factors and dynamics identified have most influence in a given context/ UEBT supply chain?
<b>Unintended effects of certification/verification/prioritisation strategies for biodiversity regeneration</b>
To which extent UEBT standard’s requirements on biodiversity regeneration are contributing to the exclusion of certain actors from income generating activities in natural raw materials supply chains?
To which extent UEBT standard’s requirements on biodiversity regeneration are contributing to competition and conflicts over access to resources within farmers’/collectors’ communities?
<b>Justification and opportunities for improvement of UEBT standard requirements and members’ strategies for biodiversity regeneration</b>
How can UEBT standard’s requirements and UEBT members’ approaches be improved to overcome bottlenecks and unintended effects of regenerative practices for biodiversity?

## Theme 2: Improved livelihoods and local development

This research stream aims to assess the impact of UEBT members’ measures on ensuring prices/wages paid to farmers, farm workers, wild collectors are fair (e.g. in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to ensuring living wages). Measures for prices/wages include evaluating the time spent in economic activities at rates that are in line with minimum wage and aspiring to living wages, supporting income diversification and developing local capacity. The research stream is meant to also assess the impact of UEBT members’ measures on ensuring rights of actors such as from discrimination for race, religious beliefs and similar, from slavery-like work, from gender inequality as well as access to education. This also includes respect of rights over land use and traditional knowledge.

<b>Priority questions for theme 2</b>
<b>Knowing the actors</b>
Who are the key actors in communities of farmers/collectors that UEBT members source natural raw material from?
Which roles do the different actors play in the supply chains of natural raw materials that UEBT members source?

<b>Knowing the context</b>
Which factors and dynamics are affecting the ability of the different actors to ensure a decent standard of living for themselves and their households at the community level, and in the supply chains of natural raw material UEBT members source?
Which factors and dynamics are affecting the respect of the rights of the different actors at the community level, and in the supply chains of natural raw material UEBT members source?
<b>Strategies for value creation and right of actors in supply chains certified/verified/prioritised by UEBT members and their effectiveness</b>
How are prices/wages established in UEBT supply chains?
Which measures are in place to ensure that prices/wages are fair, in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to living wages in UEBT supply chains?
How effective are measures to ensure prices/wages are fair in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to living wage equivalents, and which measures are proving most effective in a community/UEBT supply chain?
Which actors are benefiting the most or the least from measures to ensure prices/wage are fair, in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to living wages in a community/UEBT supply chain?
Which factors and dynamics are preventing measures to ensure prices/wages are fair, in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to living wage equivalents to be effective, and which of the factors and dynamics identified have most influence in a community/and UEBT supply chain?
Which measures are in place to ensure the rights of actors in UEBT supply chains?
How effective are measures in ensuring the rights of actors, and which measures are proving most effective in a given community/ UEBT supply chain?
Which actors are benefiting the most or the least from measures to ensure right of actors in a community/ UEBT supply chain
Which factors and dynamics are preventing measures to ensure rights of actors to be effective, and which of the factors and dynamics identified have most influence in a community/ UEBT supply chain?
<b>Unintended effects of certification/verification/prioritisation strategies for value creation and right of actors</b>
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements on ensuring prices/wages paid are fair, in line with minimum wage benchmarks, and aspiring to living wage equivalents are contributing to the exclusion of certain actors from paid tasks in natural raw materials supply chains?
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements to ensure prices/wages paid are fair in line with minimum wage benchmarks, and aspiring to living wage equivalents are contributing to the expansion of informal work in natural raw materials supply chains?
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements to ensure prices/wages paid are fair, in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to living wage equivalents are contributing to conflicts within communities?
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements to ensure prices/wages paid are fair, in line with minimum wage benchmarks and aspiring to living wage equivalents are increasing interest in the natural raw materials and leading to their overexploitation?
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements to ensure rights of actor are contributing to the exclusion of certain actors from paid tasks in natural raw materials supply chains?
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements to ensure rights of actor are contributing to the expansion of informal work in natural raw materials supply chains?
To which extent UEBT standard's requirements on ensuring rights of actor are contributing to conflicts within communities?
<b>Justification and opportunities for improvement of UEBT standard requirements and members' strategies for value creation and right of actors</b>
How can UEBT standard's requirements and UEBT members' approaches be improved to overcome bottlenecks and unintended effects of measures to ensure rights of actors and the payment of fair prices in line with living wage benchmarks?