

**BIA Technical Exchange Series - Session N°7:**

**Connecting the dots -  
Conservation, Access and Benefit Sharing  
and the commercial use of biodiversity**

**A global study presented by**

Rachel Wynberg, Bioeconomy Research Chair, University of Cape Town, and  
Sarah Laird, People and Plants International

**Date:** 03.02.2021

**Time:** 13:30 – 15:15 CET

**Venue:** Video conference via MS Teams

**Content and concept**

This webinar is part of a collaborative research and policy project developed to assess the links between biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) and biotrade and is co-funded by the BioInnovation Africa (BIA) project. It is a response to significant gaps in understanding the many direct and indirect ways the range of research and commercial activities regulated by ABS measures impact conservation and sustainable use. The project is reviewing and exploring different approaches, mechanisms, and activities associated with the use of genetic and biological resources, and evaluating their relationship to, and impact on, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Drawing upon the experiences of groups working with ABS, genetic resource use and biotrade around the world, the study includes a review of ABS laws and the literature, interviews with a range of stakeholders, and an examination of ABS and conservation experiences in the 4 BioInnovation Africa (BIA) countries of Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa.

The products from this work include a scoping paper and framework for the relationships between ABS, biotrade and conservation, an executive summary, and a video to further communicate lessons and information contained in the scoping paper.

The aim of this webinar is threefold:

- (1) to present the findings and conceptual ideas emerging from the study;
- (2) to invite input from BIA countries and other actors and stimulate discussion about these ideas and possible follow-up;
- (3) to identify points of departure to link ABS, biodiscovery, biotrade, conservation and sustainable use more strongly in national processes.

## Agenda

Moderation: Suhel al-Janabi

Time	Content	Presenter
13:30-13:40	Welcome and short introduction	Friedrich zur Heide
13:40-13:50	Keynote on international process / role of ABS in the post-2020 biodiversity framework / African position to set the scene (format, objective, context)	Pierre du Plessis
13:50-13:55	Raising the curtain: presentation of a short video of the global study "connecting the dots"	Yannick Zohren
13:55-14:15	Presentation of key finding of the global study "connecting the dots" (incl. review of the relationship between ABS, conservation and sustainable use, selected examples of benefit-sharing for conservation and sustainable use, and approaches to strengthen these relationships)	Rachel Wynberg / Sarah Laird
14:15-14:30	Q&A session	All participants
14:30-15:00	Reflections on enabling environments and key success factors (short inputs from each country and possible points of departure)	Rachel Wynberg / Sarah Laird National ABS Focal points and all participants
15:00-15:10	Summary and the way forward	Moderator
15:10-15:15	Information on the next session	Anja Teschner

## Minutes of the discussion and exchange

*Question:* The global perspective of biodiversity conservation is addressed in the study, but is there also an emphasis on how spatial land use planning on all levels (e.g., sub-national and council level) can contribute to biodiversity conservation? And also, how 'regular' development funding can finance conservation of biodiversity?

- Conservation occurs at many various levels and in many different ways. At this point to pinpoint the connectivity between biodiversity conservation and ABS, the study shed light on a more general level to set the stage.
- But the question hints at an important point to look at, when focus on national or even local level.
- Land use planning is foreseen to be an important part of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in the context of expanding protected areas to cover more – and a better selection of – biodiversity, and beside that allows more connectivity between those areas.

## Country level examples

*Question:* What are the points of departure with respect to BioTrade, conservation and sustainable use in the four countries? What are examples or success stories?

**Cameroon:**

- There are policies in the environment and forest sector that include provisions contributing to finance actions for conservation and sustainable use. Law No. 94 Forest Code (including GR for scientific use) and No. 96 Frame Law on Environmental Protection.
- A national fund for the environment has been established to support approved organizations which support the protection of the environment. The financial resources come from split grants, international donors or voluntary contributions.

**Madagascar:**

- So far many national and international users of GR (especially from the private sector) become used to share benefits with local communities/projects directly. This procedure will be amended, because another approach is foreseen.
- Monetary benefits arising from the ABS mechanism shall be partly redeployed to protect biodiversity. Beneficiary could possibly be IPs or local communities.
- The recognition of traditional knowledge and involvement of IPLCs are important factors to link the use of GR and conservation of biodiversity.
- One approach is the financial support to local managers of protected areas or projects with local communities. Furthermore, this ensures engagement of local communities and strengthens the conservation efforts on various levels.
- To make conservation work it is a precondition to monetize funds for nature conservation, but simultaneously a good structure and staff to implement conservation activities are mandatory.
- *Outlook:* The forest fond has been established with revenues from fees and taxes. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance seeks ways to use those funds for sustainable management of natural resources and in particular biodiversity conservation. This new approach shall be established with due respect to the ABS process.
- *Outlook:* A national fond to foster conservation of biodiversity shall be established. As one deposit also the benefits shared through the ABS mechanism could be fed into the budget of the fund.

**South Africa:**

- To play a role in political debates practical examples are needed to prove that benefit sharing can contribute to conservation of biodiversity.
- One approach to foster conservation of biodiversity through benefit sharing could be to list various options in the application process. And once an agreement has been settled the efforts and progress of the conservation efforts is tracked.

*"This framework is workable indeed. We actually **need to do a study to determine the extent of the link between conservation and ABS**. Looking specifically per industry or species, because as the presentation highlighted there are many interventions happening currently. Unless this is done, we will always doubt the link, I understand. and with this we can improve*

*the link, justify the need for enhancement of this link or, whether there is a need to enhance the link. Unless this study has already done this. Conservation is extremely important for SA as whenever we assess any applications for permits to do research, bioprospect or biotrade, the conservation of the resource is always front of mind in order to reach a decision to grant or deny. **Monitoring** what happens **on the ground** will always be a **challenge** for any country - with vast lands such as SA. I am not sure this can ever be a one size fits all as we realise with the variety of applications. ... Perhaps we could in future **specify various conservation options in applications** - which could be implemented by both, resource providers and users and TK knowledge holders and IPLCs, which could be applicant's duty to report on progress/extent of conservation activities implemented."*

### **Namibia:**

- So far, the regulations have not been gazetted. However, there are some regulations and methods in place to contribute to conservation of biodiversity.
- One instrument is the Environmental Investment Fund that supports individual, projects and communities to ensure sustainable use of natural resources. The effects shall trickle down. It receives funds from big institutions such as the Global Environment Facility
- The right and mandate to govern the use of GR is given to local communities or the municipality. This enables them to establish research collaborations or to create income.
  - *Comment:* The Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Namibia has been functioning well in the regard of natural resource management. However, it needs some further reflections whether it can serve as an anchor point for ABS.
- The 'growth at home strategy' has a focus on the development of rural areas, as most of them create income through the valorization of natural resources.

*General comment:* one observation from Namibia and South Africa is the positive effect that the management of natural resources through communities or other nongovernmental organizations generates. Great results in nature conservation have been established, simply through a different approach of the ownership. This may come from a different mindset of the people, who have a differentiated appraisal towards nature affected by ownership.

### **Digression on an approach to link benefit sharing and conservation from Brazil:**

*"In Brazil the 2015 ABS law ensures that benefit-sharing should necessarily go to biodiversity conservation. Brazilian ABS legislation provides a discount on the amount of benefit sharing due, if the user decides to make benefit sharing in the non-monetary modality. This discount, of 25% of the total due, must be allocated to the elaboration and execution of conservation projects by users themselves. The monetary benefit sharing is paid to a fund, without the need to sign a MAT. And for the non-monetary, the user signs a MAT and proposes a project. The company takes the risk of carrying out a conservation project, which in case it*

*fails the user will still have to pay his benefit sharing obligation. But at the same time, it allows the company to add value to its brand. This mechanism encourages corporate environmental responsibility for users who on the flipside will benefit from consumer recognition. Near 4.400 products (with benefit sharing obligations) are registered in the ABS System so far. From which more than half of the users selected the non-monetary modality.”*