BIO INNOVATION AFRICA

African-European partnerships for biodiversity conservation

Connecting Business and Biodiversity

Partnerships for local development and global value chains

Imprint

Published by:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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Design / Layout:
MediaCompany - Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH, Bonn

Photo credits:
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On behalf of:
German Federal Ministry for
Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Bonn, February 2026

The project BioInnovation Africa is commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH between 2019 and 2026 in Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia, and South Africa.

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism

environmental affairs
Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Implemented by
giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Building business based on biodiversity

Biodiversity is not just the foundation of life but a source of innovation, inspiration and economic opportunity. Environmental conservation and associated human wellbeing are often seen as conflicting with economic aspirations to turn biodiversity into profits. Increasingly, however, it is a societal and political choice to create enabling environments that welcome the private sector as a capable partner of biodiversity conservation.

Biotrade adds value to biological and genetic resources. It is a sector where biodiversity-friendly public and private partnerships and benefit-sharing are being tested and proven.

Whole industries and business models are being built around plant-based natural ingredients and products, such as the cosmetics, flavour & fragrances and health sectors.

The biotrade sector is highly market-driven and characterised by innovation, the search for new products, and investment in research and development. Public and private partners in the biodiversity economy are often divided by language, organisational logic, incentives, time cycles and procedures; but this can be overcome through dialogue, partnerships and mutual acknowledgement.

Development cooperation can act as an honest broker in building partnerships that recognise the ecological and social value of biodiversity, and the economic potential of biodiversity-based products.

Since 2019 the BMZ-funded project BioInnovation Africa (BIA) – African-European Partnerships for Biodiversity Conservation has been developing and testing this approach through biotrade business partnerships in Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa.

It has seen a fruitful and trusting collaboration with government, business, producer organisations and civil society partners to improve the enabling environment for an equitable and dynamic biotrade. We sincerely thank all our partners for their openness and proactive collaboration, which were instrumental in achieving the project's objectives and laying the groundwork for sustainable value chains that drive social and ecological change in the partner countries.

Friedrich zur Heide
Project Manager
2019-2025

Katrin Münch
Project Manager
2025-2026

The Project at a Glance

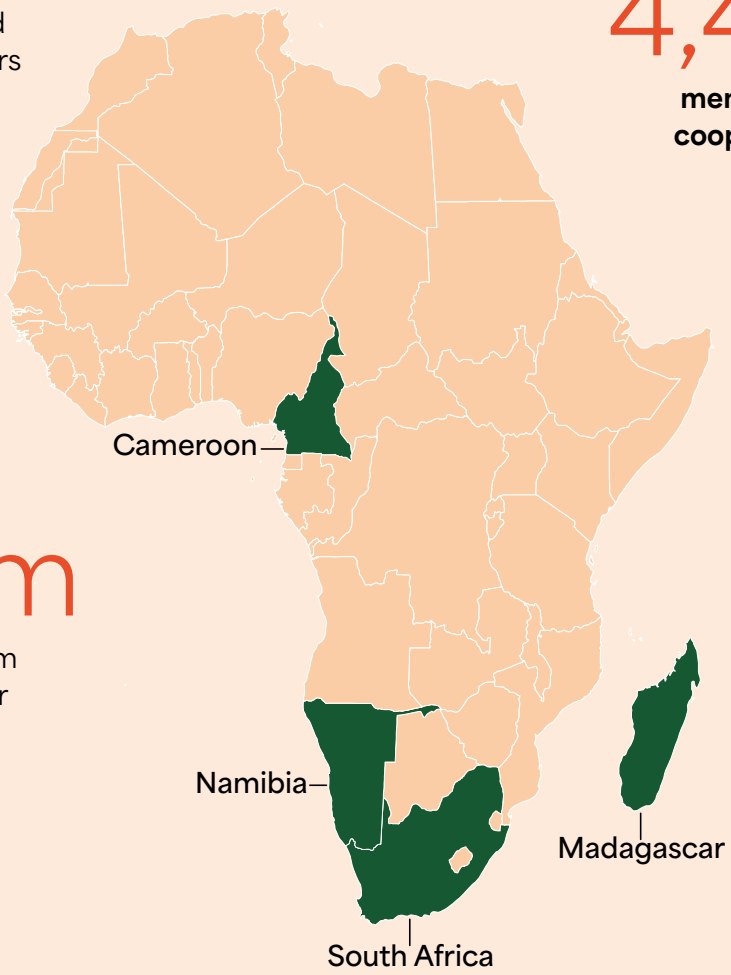
25

partnership projects
with African and
European partners

Skills development for

4,460

members of cooperatives



7

ABS agreements
supported

€ 3,1m

mobilised from
private sector

98

organisations
enabled to train on biotrade
via the BIA Academy

New sustainability and conservation measures introduced across

342,000

hectares

25

different **species supported**
as part of partnership projects, including


Beeswax


Buchu


Centella

Commiphora

Devils Claw

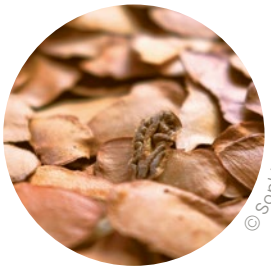

Ginger

Honeybush

Manketti


Marula


Mondia



Mopane

Rooibos

Silver Cluster Leaf


Saro


Tetrapleura

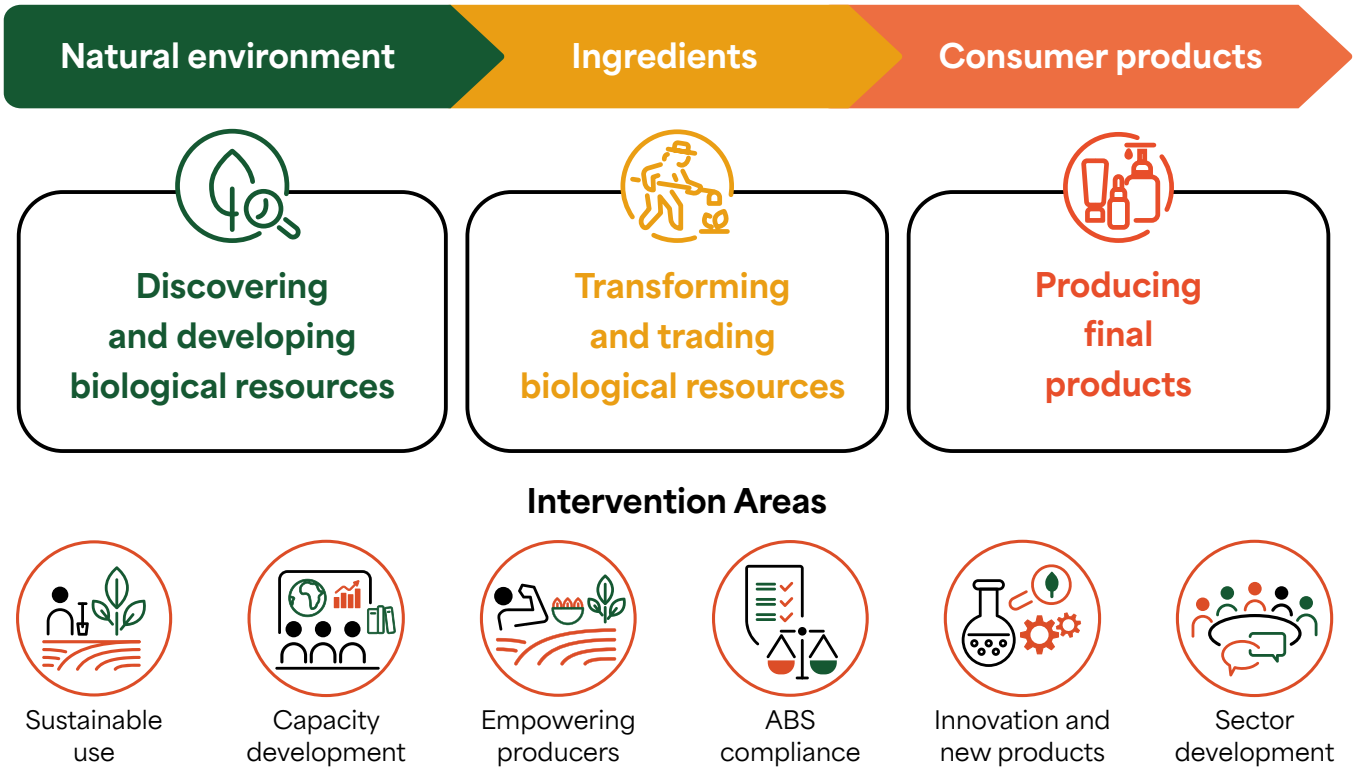

Ylang Ylang

BioInnovation Africa

To strengthen key actors in the biotrade sector, the BIA project applies a **mutually reinforcing two-track approach**. On the one hand, it supports governments in partner countries, as well as private sector associations and civil society organisations. The focus lays on strengthening the institutional framework, developing supportive tools, and facilitating stakeholder exchanges that foster an environment of understanding and promotes sustainable biotrade. On the other hand, the project engages directly in **practical biotrade partnerships**. Based on calls for expressions of interest, BIA initiated a series of partnership projects with African and European companies. These partnerships jointly address key bottlenecks within specific value chains, test innovative solutions, and generate practical lessons to inform policy dialogue and market development.

This approach reflects BIA's understanding that sustainable biotrade requires a **holistic value chain perspective**. Effective and lasting change depends on strengthening the valorisation of biodiversity at multiple levels - from the natural environment, through ingredients and processing, to consumer products.

The simplified graphic below illustrates these stages and highlights the **six core intervention areas** applied by BIA to address central market barriers in the biotrade sector:



The following chapters showcase case studies from BIA's intervention areas, providing deeper insight and concrete examples of the partnerships and activities involved.

What we learned

- **Development cooperation** is well positioned to create partnerships and collaborations that enable Africa's biodiversity trade potential to be realised in a fair and sustainable way.
- **Biotrade value** chains often use traditional methods, are small in scale but employment-intensive, and hold strong potential for local processing. By promoting the biotrade sector development cooperation can simultaneously advance environmental protection, social wellbeing and economic growth.
- **Cooperating with the private sector** from the outset helped the project to understand challenges and tailor support while ensuring market interest and continuation after the project ends.
- By **building business collaborations** in value chains, companies were able to jointly overcome barriers to market entry, comply with quality standards, and expand trade in biodiversity-based products between Africa and Europe.
- **Securing the engagement of all stakeholders** from the beginning of a project is crucial to fostering shared ownership, creating trust and ensuring the project's success and sustainability.
- BIA was able to amplify its impact by **combining funding sources** and mobilizing financial and in-kind support from the private sector.

^ Beekeeper in Madagascar

Empowering producers

OUR APPROACH:

BIA acknowledged the important role of growers and harvesters in biodiversity-based value chains and worked to strengthen their understanding of product quality and sustainability. It supported their internal governance structures and identified alternative economic opportunities.

CASE STUDY

Resilient incomes for local producers in Northern Madagascar

BIA empowered and helped to diversify the incomes of Malagasy harvesters of flowers from the Ylang Ylang tree, a valuable raw material for essential oils.

Climate change means I need to diversify my sources of income. The offer from Floribis to buy firewood to drive their distillation plants convinced me to plant trees and do training on plant production."

Jaosolo Nirina Garcia, teacher and secretary, FTMAF Ylang Ylang producer cooperative

In 2017 the international flavour and fragrance manufacturer Mane and its local partner Floribis introduced the cultivation of Ylang Ylang to a region of northern Madagascar that previously focused on Vanilla. They formed the first producer groups and created a reliable new income source for local farmers.

BIA partnered with the companies in 2021 to further support producers. The project worked with 150 farmers to foster sustainable propagation and cultivation of Ylang Ylang, and improve the quantity and quality of their harvest. There was a strong emphasis on strengthening livelihood stability and long-term resilience.

Cooperative members were introduced to beekeeping and received extended hands-on training in managing bee colonies, building hives and harvesting honey. Beekeeping specialists spent several months supporting the community and helping to professionalised the value chain. BIA promoted women's participation through targeted sensitization and close support from a female expert.

The partnership also helped to establish community-managed plantations of fast-growing firewood to provide future income opportunities and slow the loss of natural forests and biodiversity from charcoal production.

At the first planting exercise, the local Mayor and national and regional representatives of the Ministry of Environment helped raise awareness and inspire local engagement. Since then, the community has shown strong commitment, using the skills gained through BIA training to significantly expand the reforested area. More than 14 hectares have been restored with firewood species and fruit trees. With support from regional ministry representatives, communities developed a management plan to ensure the new forests are used sustainably and can regenerate and provide income for many years.

The project prioritised new income sources that fit local conditions and meet real market demand. Honey emerged as particularly promising. With BIA support, around 1,000 kg of high-quality honey was produced and sold to Floribis and on local markets, generating about €4,000 in additional income over two years and making a meaningful contribution to household livelihoods.

^ Sample Collection © GeoMedia

Driving innovation and new product development

OUR APPROACH:

Innovation is central to a holistic value-adding approach as it enables value chain actors to unlock the full potential of their biological resources. By supporting research and commercial opportunities from under-utilised plants and their by-products, BIA identified income opportunities beyond existing value chains. The project also investigated how by-products can be transformed into new ingredients and products.

CASE STUDY

Namibian tree identified for high-potential cosmetics development

BIA worked with African and European partners to identify and develop new botanical ingredients for international biotrade.

One example is the African Botanical and Value Addition (ABRIVA) partnership between Blue Sky Botanics, the Namibia Nature Foundation, KAZA Natural Oils and BIA.

Its aim was to develop commercial opportunities for communities in the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) region of north-east Namibia, based on sustainable use of wild harvested plants, while building new Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) compliant supply chains.

Three species from an initial list of 10 were identified in BIA phase I as potential new botanical ingredients following an ethnobotanical literature review by a biotrade expert from Kaza Oils.

The Silver Cluster-leaf *(Terminalia sericea)* was selected for further investigation due to its promising anti-inflammatory activity and associated anti-ageing skin care applications, and possible anti-diabetic properties.

Known locally as *Muhonono*, Silver Cluster-leaf is an abundant deciduous tree growing in open woodland across southern Africa. BSB focused its investigations on the leaf with analyses indicating significant commercialisation and export potential in the cosmetics sector.

Developing a new supply chain is complex and requires collaboration and expertise. GIZ supported all partners, with trust and transparency as a foundation, sharing knowledge and expertise, supporting access and benefit sharing, and connecting us to in-country resources and support."

Ellie Thorne, Supply Chain Manager, Blue Sky Botanics

Clinical trials showed statistically significant results for descaling the skin surface and reducing wrinkles. A prototype product was developed, safety tests were conducted, efficacy and stability were assessed, and a marketing concept was developed. Blue Sky Botanics is now identifying international markets for future products.

BIA's support focused on working closely with local communities to facilitate the sustainable harvesting of leaves for the company's research and development phase and ensuring compliance with ABS requirements.

The work with communities in the northeast of Namibia was carried by NNF, one of the country's oldest and most respected conservation and sustainable development organisation. NNF played a key role in engaging communities and supporting field activities.

To further strengthen local capacities, BIA also provided training to NNF staff, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to advance ethical, sustainable and inclusive biodiversity-based value chains.

SILVER CLUSTER-LEAF (Terminalia sericea)

has traditional economic and medicinal value. The bark and leaves are used to treat stomach disorders, pneumonia, diabetes and as an antibiotic for wounds. Its hard termite-resistant wood is used for construction, furniture, tools, fencing, firewood and charcoal production.

Ecologically, it supports biodiversity by providing habitat and food for insects and animals. Sustainable harvesting practices are essential, including proper techniques to ensure the tree's long-term survival and compliance with biodiversity regulations.

CASE STUDY

Turning waste into value in Madagascar

BIA supported an initiative by three European and Malagasy businesses to create new products out of upcycled waste from processing plant ingredients in biodiversity-based value chains. The project is named *Kadoo* from a Malagasy word meaning *bonus*.

'The project creates new economic opportunities by giving a second life to discarded materials, while strengthening brand competitiveness through innovation,' says Mialy Randriantsoa, chief executive of SweetMom, a young woman-led company based in France and one of the project partners.

'Upcycling responds to strong consumer demand for more responsible and transparent products. It reduces energy consumption because it is obtained during existing oil extraction processes.'

Other partners in the Kadoo project are Jacarandas International and Jacarandas Madagascar, as well Bio.Es.Oil.

Beyond a good idea and purpose, developing cosmetic products requires meeting strict standards, including thorough analysis, standardization, and full traceability. Cooperating with BIA enabled businesses to get support from an experienced cosmetic product developer to research hydrosols and assess their viability as cosmetic ingredients.

As a result of the cooperation, prototypes were developed for cosmetics and home fragrance products with Ylang Ylang and ginger floral water, which were previously discarded during production.

> **"The project creates new economic opportunities by giving a second life to discarded materials, while strengthening brand competitiveness through innovation, Upcycling responds to strong consumer demand for more responsible and transparent products. It reduces energy consumption because it is obtained during existing oil extraction processes."**
>
> Mialy Randriantsoa, Chief Executive, SweetMom

The three companies are showcasing the approach and product to international clients, already attracting interest from companies worldwide. BIA supported the partnership particularly at the producer level where it helped to strengthen cooperatives' governance and management to ensure long-term economic resilience.

Innovation often requires significant investment and comes with uncertainty, which is especially daunting for small companies. This partnership project demonstrated that with targeted support and motivated partners from both the public and private sectors, small-scale innovation is not only possible but impactful.

BIO.ES.OIL
Biologic Essential oils of Madagascar

JACARANDAS

SWEETMOM
Cosmetics

^ Signing of the Buchu industry-wide ABS agreement in South Africa

Implementing Access and Benefit-Sharing frameworks

OUR APPROACH:

Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) is a legal obligation that applies to many biodiversity-based value chains. By helping to develop and strengthen the implementation of ABS, BIA contributed to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, with socio-economic development and benefits for rural people and communities.

CASE STUDY

ABS guidance for private sector and research institutions in South Africa

BIA worked with the South African government to create tools to help researchers and businesses to understand and comply with regulatory requirements for the use of South Africa's indigenous biological and genetic resources.

The online ABS decision tree is one of these tools. Developed with the Department for Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), it provides guidance on permit applications in line with national regulations on environmental management and ABS.

Users answer a few key questions and are then advised which permit to apply for. Receiving clear guidance in a short time is key for people and organisations who want to comply with regulations but don't have the time or legal knowledge to research different national ABS permits and processes .

Simple written guidance is important for users to find their way through administrative procedures.

The decision tree is one of many tools that have been jointly developed to help users of biodiversity to understand ABS processes.

DFFE and BIA collaborated with the Southern African Essential Oil Producers Association to provide practical support and mentorship to 19 of its members applying for an ABS permit. Eight more South African small and medium-sized enterprises benefited from similar support through the project. As a result, many of these companies now hold the required permits and are able to ensure compliance throughout their value chains.Many of them now hold the required permits and have been able to ensure compliance across their value chains.

The support of projects like Bio-Innovation Africa enables South Africa to realise the huge value of its biodiversity. The project helped to create a framework for cooperation that fulfils our vision for the sustainable use of natural resources and contributed to knowledge generation. BIA leaves a legacy of partnerships for a thriving biodiversity economy."

Natalie Feltman, Director Bioprospecting Economy, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment South Africa

Access and Benefit Sharing

Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) refers to the legal, policy and ethical framework that regulates access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and ensures the fair and equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from their use. Researchers, academic institutions, and commercial entities share these benefits with resource providers, which are often Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Central to ABS implementation are the principles of Prior and Informed Consent (PIC) of resource owners and traditional knowledge holders and the establishment of Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT), which together form the foundation for transparent, equitable, and legally sound ABS agreements

^ Mondia producers meeting in the community hall in Babadjou.

CASE STUDY

Enabling fair negotiations between businesses and communities in Cameroon

BIA helped a rural Cameroon community to level the playing field in negotiations with an international company seeking to develop flavours and fragrances from the climbing vine *Mondia whitei*.

Known locally as *Magamto*, Mondia has widespread traditional use as a spice, condiment, aphrodisiac, appetite stimulant and cure for diabetes and digestive problems. The plant grows on around 15,000ha around the community of Babadjou in the west of Cameroon.

Global fragrance and flavour leader MANE has been working in Cameroon since 2012 and is committed to business partnerships with a positive impact for communities and the environment. Its interest in Mondia prompted BIA's engagement with the resource and the Mintoum community in the south east of the country.

BIA helped formalise the local Magamto cooperative of sixty women and men from Babadjou village, to establish the supply of Mondia to MANE.

Cameroon law requires companies researching and commercialising plant resources to comply with (ABS) regulation (see box). BIA supported the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) and all parties in the process to establish sustainable and ABS-compliant Mondia value chain.

The Cameroon legislation puts communities at the heart of the process, giving them the right to negotiate directly. This is very empowering, but also challenging for communities who need to negotiate with lawyers from big international companies.

A priority for BIA was thus to enable the community to face that challenge and ensure inclusion and representation with all voices heard. With the support of BIA the community ensured the negotiators represented the diversity of the Mintoum residents, including leaders and cooperative members with different age, gender and ethnic backgrounds.

Mondia is our treasure here in Babadjou. I set up a nursery of 5000 seedlings this year. We are working hard to reforest Babadjou village to have better harvests in the years to come. We are truly thankful for this project that was given to us here in Cameroon and specially in Babadjou."

Francis Dekou, President, Magamto

MONDIA OR AFRICAN GINGER (Mondia whitei)

is a robust climbing vine found across sub-Saharan Africa, with a tuberous rootstock, heart-shaped leaves and red-purple flowers. It is a novel African fragrance or spice with a ginger or liquorice taste and vanilla aroma.

The species is listed as Endangered and has become rare in the wild as a consequence of over-harvesting for subsistence and commercial purposes.

BIA supported the ministry to organise sessions with the community to understand the ABS system and their role and rights, to identify and agree community objective and needs, and advise them on how to approach the negotiation.

It was important for community negotiators to understand their international partner's business strategy, what part of the value chain they would contribute to, and progress with product development.

Negotiations between the community and MANE took place with a neutral and nationally-respected traditional chief as moderator, and representatives of the ministry as facilitators and defenders of community interests. The 21 community representatives were also supported by a council representative and a community lawyer.

The discussions were tough but conducted on an equal footing. The outcomes included € 45,000 in non-monetary benefits over three years, including construction of a new potable water supply system, furniture for the community hall, and partial university scholarships for 24 students.

Funds were also invested in the sustainability of Mondia as a future source of income. The community cooperates with the nearby University of Dschang and a local NGO, which supports a study on the domestication and propagation of Mondia, and reforestation activities.

Francis Dekou, president of Magamto cooperative, talks proudly about what he and his fellow cooperative members have achieved in the last few years with their French partner, which has doubled their demand for Mondia in the current harvest season.

^ Group of Centella harvesters in Madagascar

Strengthening capacities

OUR APPROACH:

The BIA project developed many types of training for diverse stakeholders in biodiversity-based value chains, strengthening their capacity to sustainably and responsibly commercialise biological resources.

The project's capacity development approach operated across three complementary levels – personal, organisational and systemic. At the personal level, it strengthened individual knowledge and skills, from understanding cultivation practices to deepening awareness of social barriers through targeted training on intersectionality.

At the organizational level, it supported producer organizations in building stronger structures and enhanced their ability to access markets. At the systemic level, BIA contributed to strengthening legal and procedural capacities for the implementation of ABS frameworks, for example through dedicated ABS contract training.

BIA support included theoretical and practical training, field visits, working groups and experience exchanges among cooperatives, within country delegations, and across different national and international groups.

Participants gained a solid understanding of the biotrade business environment, business models for adding value to natural resources, and policy and legal frameworks. They explored the challenges and opportunities of conservation and sustainable use, while improving their entrepreneurial and managerial skills to become strong participants in biodiversity value chains.

The training content was well received and applied by participants across the biotrade sector in countries where BIA was implemented. Learning from others through practical experience proved particularly valuable. Some of the most memorable and impactful learning experiences were personal mentoring and short-term placements in companies, and multi-day field trips to other producer groups.

BIA created the BioInnovation Academy to strengthen national capacities for the long-term promotion of biodiversity-based value chains and to ensure the project's valuable training content continues to be used.

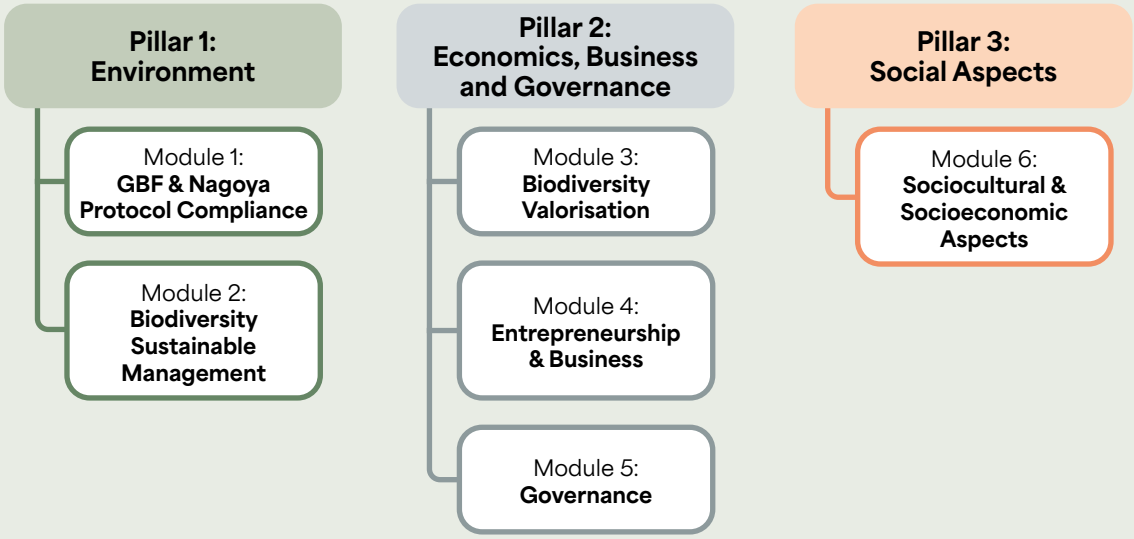
The academy has a comprehensive set of training modules covering diverse themes addressed by BIA. It focuses on building lasting in-country expertise by enabling local trainers and institutions to deliver ongoing training on biotrade and sustainable practices.

Hosted on the atingi open-access online learning platform, BioInnovation Academy courses are designed for trainers working with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, academics, regulators, and biotrade business leaders; and are helping to create a solid foundation for sustainable and inclusive biodiversity-based economies.

The BioInnovation Academy

BIA improved the teaching and facilitation skills of more than 100 trainers from private sector support organisations, civil society, government and academia in Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa. The content has been spread through pan-African institutions, ensuring an impact even outside of the BIA partner countries. The training material includes technical manuals, learning guidance, case studies, presentations and exercises. The training content in English and French is organised into three pillars, six modules and 26 learning units covering the spectrum of biodiversity-based business development as well as socio-economic development and biodiversity conservation.

With support from the BIA team, trained institutions have passed on selected training content to their own audiences. This replication is a key part of the project's strategy to ensure wide-reaching and sustainable capacity building at national and regional levels. A network of BioInnovation Academy trainers is being established to foster continuous exchange, collaboration and knowledge sharing among biotrade practitioners and institutions.



^ Ylang ylang picker in Madagascar

Promoting sustainable use practices

OUR APPROACH:

Sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of biodiversity is at the heart of the project and its partnership-based approach. BIA worked with different actors to highlight the social, economic, and environmental benefits of biodiversity conservation. The project applied a range of tools tailored to different target groups and objectives, showcasing different approaches to addressing biodiversity challenges. The project worked with people and communities to highlight the social, economic, and environmental benefits of biodiversity conservation.

TOOL

Voluntary sustainability standard

Since 2020 BIA facilitated the development and implementation of a sustainability standard and guidelines for the Devil's Claw trade in Namibia, helping to boost community livelihoods, stimulate value addition and exports, and protect the wild-harvested natural resource.

The Namibian Good Agricultural and Collection Practices Plus (GACP+) standard was developed and implemented through a public-private sector partnership supported by BIA, and is based on the World Health Organisation and the European Medicine Agency GACP standard.

The partners were the international pharmaceutical ingredients company Givaudan, the Namibian Devil's Claw Exporters Association Trust (NDCEAT) and the Namibian Network of the Cosmetic Industry (NANCi).

© PhytoTrade Africa

DEVIL'S CLAW (Harpagophytum spp.)

or grapple plant is a perennial plant native to the Kalahari desert regions of Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. The indigenous San people used it to treat digestive disorders, fever and pain; and it is now popular in Western medicine for its anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties.

Devil's claw generates a lot of employment for our people and income for our communities. The training we have received taught us how to use it sustainably and process it correctly for better prices."

Whenzy Mungendje, Quality Control Administrator, ECOSO (member of the Namibian Devil's Claw Exporters Association Trust)

The standard is voluntary and endorsed by the Namibian Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, and the Namibian Standards Institute. It complements the Namibia Devil's Claw Policy of 2010 and national regulations for the use of protected species.

The new standard provides guidance on sustainable harvesting, primary processing, production, quality, trading, certifications and regulatory compliance, including ABS. The aim is to ensure long-term sustainability of the resource and continued economic benefits for local communities.

More than 200 people – including community representatives, traders, and harvesters – have been trained on the GACP+ standard and its implementation guidelines, empowering them to implement sustainable practices.

Four major Namibian Devil's Claw exporters, representing about 80% of export volumes, are aligning their operations with the guidelines and testing them in their own their supply chains, paving the way for a more sustainable and efficient industry.

Givaudan NANCi NAMIBIAN DEVIL'S CLAW EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION

^ Fynbos landscape with Rooibos plants in South Africa. © SARC

TOOL

Mapping and protecting biodiversity

A Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) are a field-based tool toA Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a field-based tool to map biodiversity, identify threats and define conservation actions for farmers growing and sourcing natural ingredients.

Developed by the Union for Ethical Biotrade (UEBT), BAPs contribute to compliance with the UEBT standard in supply chains. They were used by BIA to enable producers to develop a roadmap for continuous improvement in responsible production and sourcing, including in the value chain partnership on Rooibos with the German company Martin Bauer and the South African Rooibos Council. Rooibos *(Aspalathus linearis)* is a shrub growing naturally and cultivated in the western mountain regions of South Africa, in a unique biodiversity-rich ecosystem called fynbos.

Fifteen South African producer organisations were supported to develop a BAP based on their specific needs and production area. These plans include measures for the conservation or rehabilitation of more than 11,000 hectares of fynbos vegetation, as well as pilot initiatives on nearly 500 hectares of land where selected regenerative practices were tested and evaluated.

The development process engaged farmers, maps sourcing areas and articulate indicators and actions.

BIA support for development of a BAP improved ethical sourcing in biodiversity-based supply chains, which is central to the project's aim.

With intensifying expectations for robust action and enhanced transparency in sustainable supply chains, the BAP is a supportive tool enabling companies to establish sustainable sourcing regions for quality ingredients and raw products.

UEBT SOURCING WITH RESPECT

MartinBauer

ROOIBOS COUNCIL

TOOL

Community-led harvesting guidelines

Wild-harvested plants traded through biotrade depend on the health of surrounding ecosystems. Sustainable use therefore requires an understanding of the wider environmental and social context.

It is essential when developing guidelines to recognise how communities interact with the resource, and to value their conservation knowledge and practices.

In the East of Cameroon, BIA supported development of a harvesting guide for the Tetrapleura resource through community consultation, ensuring inclusion of traditional knowledge and market requirements, and drawing on deep knowledge of the Baka Indigenous forest community.

Discussions highlighted the role of the Tetrapleura tree in the forest ecosystem.

TOOL

Large-scale sensitization campaigns

Environmental conservation concerns society as a whole. BIA uses community sensitization to raise awareness and promote positive behavioural change among value chain actors and in the wider community.

As part of BIA's partnership with Jacarandas and Ylang Ylang producers in Madagascar, a three-day environmental campaign was conducted in different villages, with content adapted to local needs and communicated through radio broadcasts, illustration, flyers, posters and games.

Important topics included the impact of charcoal production and conversion of agricultural land. The campaign reached about 120 people and the materials are now freely available for project partners and the Ylang Ylang producer platform, ensuring they stay available and in use after the project.

^ Honeybush stakeholder exchange in South Africa. © Brett Eloff

Fostering sector development and collaboration

OUR APPROACH:

Strengthening product quality, overcoming market barriers and expanding trade require close collaboration between public, private and non-government actors. BIA established and supported sector-wide platforms and exchange formats that brought these actors together, built mutual understanding and fostered a shared vision for sustainable economic development.

CASE STUDY

An industry-wide benefit sharing agreementenables economic development in Buchu sector

Buchu is an indigenous resource endemic to the Western Cape province of South Africa. It is processed into an essential oil for the flavour and fragrance industry and the dried leaf is used in herbal infusions.

Industry bodies including the International Fragrance Association (IFRA), International Organization of the Flavor Industry (IOFI) and South African Association of the Flavour & Fragrance Industry (SAAFFI), approached BIA to develop standard procedures to facilitate commercialisation and sustainable utilisation of Buchu.

One activity was to support South African industry, represented by the Buchu Association, and traditional knowledge (TK) holders from the National Khoi-San Council (NKC) and the South African San Council (SASC) to develop and implement an industry-wide ABS agreement for Buchu. The aim was to provide a transparent and consistent framework for sharing benefits between those who use the biological resource and the communities who hold the related traditional knowledge. Rather than negotiations every few years, it establishes a standard agreement the whole sector can rely on. This creates procedural and financial clarity and predictability, while formally recognising TK associated with the resource and ensuring fair benefits flow from its commercial use.

By replacing many individual negotiations with a single sector-wide arrangement, transaction costs are reduced for TK holders and industry. BIA collaborated with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) to facilitate strategic meetings and negotiations between the key parties involved. Building mutual understanding and trust was a central part of the process, which took about three years to complete.

BUCHU (Agathosma spp.)

is a flowering shrub endemic to dry mountainous regions in the Western Cape of South Africa. It was originally used for cultural and medicinal purposes by the indigenous Khoi and San people. The flavour and fragrance of Buchu is unique and highly valued by the food, fragrance, cosmetics and health industries.

In September 2023, a landmark Buchu Benefit Sharing Agreement was signed at the African Biotrade Festival in Johannesburg. It is the first sector-wide agreement in South Africa to successfully combine monetary and non-monetary benefit-sharing.

BIA then supported development of a standard operating procedure to implement the agreement, including guidelines on calculation and administration of benefits, a building block to transparency.

As part of the non-monetary benefits for TK holders, a short course was developed and piloted to foster understanding of the Buchu supply chain and encourage exchange between industry and TK holders. The training supported by BIA was highly valued by the NKC and SASC, who are now working to share its content within their communities.

Nine Buchu processors secured their ABS permits as a result of joint efforts across the sector.

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CASE STUDY

Madagascar's Centella sector demonstrates impact of cooperation

BIA supported actors in Madagascar by helping to organise the Centella asiatica sector and create an exchange platform that stimulates better cooperation.

This sector initiative, including harvesting communities, government and trading companies, was supported by cosmetics companies L'Oréal and Seppic.

The wild-harvested plant is a valuable source of income for women with limited employment opportunities and no access to farmland, and supports the wider regional economy in an area with limited economic opportunities.

"The sectoral approach is essential for us (as private sector) because it allows us to structure the industry and harmonise practices. It ensures better quality and helps us plan our volumes more effectively. This coordination helps each player to better assume their responsibility, strengthens collaboration between all parties, and makes the Centella industry more sustainable."

Nirina Rakotojaona,
President of the Talapetraka lovain-jafy platform

^ Harvesting of Centella leaves in Madagascar.

The sector exchanges initiated by BIA in 2020 built on efforts by the private sector to improve product quality and assist communities with basic needs. It recognised that harvesters, the private sector and government all benefit from working together to ensure economic growth and environmental sustainability.

The success of dialogues and sector exchanges depends on how well each partner is able and willing to contribute, so BIA organised preparatory meetings to enable the partners, particularly the pickers, to engage actively.

BIA helped to create four new community cooperatives. The collection of Centella is mostly done in informal groups, so the cooperatives enable coordination between harvesters, traceability of the resource and better communication with government and industry.

A joint action plan was developed to address regional and sector challenges, including improved living standards, better product quality, protection of biodiversity and compliance with regulations.

The collaboration led to the first large-scale sensitization campaign, co-organised by key private sector actors and regional government institutions and supported by BIA. The campaign reached more than 2000 people on topics relevant to the Centella supply chain, including sustainable harvesting and child labour.

'The change is noticeable.' says harvester representative Narindrasoa Emilienne Raharivony. 'Before we were there to listen and accept what others decided. Today we speak more, we make proposals and, above all, we do not hesitate to question other stakeholders to defend our interests.'

'It is an honor for us to represent the pickers at these meetings. It allows us to prove that we are organised and that we have concrete proposals to improve the sector.'

CENTELLA (Centella asiatica)

is a small herb that thrives in humid habitats alongside rivers and in wetlands and rice fields. It is a major ingredient in many products for soothing and repairing skin.

Although the plant originates from Asia, Madagascar is now one of the leading producers of Centella, known locally as *Talapetraka*. In the northeastern Alaotra-Mangoro region about 5,000 mostly women harvesters collect the leaves for sale to local companies for export.

Guided by the value chain actors and supported by BIA, the informal sector approach developed into a new registered platform known as *Talapetraka lovain-jafy*, (Centella - heritage for future generations), which enables collective fundraising and other benefits.

ASSOCIATION
Talapetraka Lovainjafy