



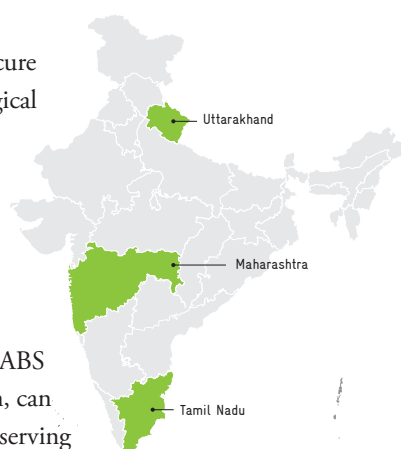
Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Partnership Project

Situation

India is one of the 17 megadiverse countries in the world. With just 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, India's biological richness is spread across a vast range of habitats and ecosystems. These support 7 per cent of globally recorded species, including over 45,000 plants and 91,000 animal species—out of which many are keystone and charismatic species. India's rich biological heritage coexists with over 1.2 billion people and about one-sixth of the world's livestock population. For millions of Indians, therefore, biodiversity supports their very livelihoods and way of life. Thus, protecting and maintaining India's rich biodiversity and natural resources is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

India gained prominence as one of the leading countries which signed the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992 and further adopted the Nagoya Protocol in 2014. This led to an early set-up of a legal framework to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of biological resources. The Indian Parliament enacted the Biological Diversity Act (BDA) in 2002 which is being implemented nationwide by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) as well as through decentralised institutional structures like the State Biodiversity Boards (SBB) and the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) at local level. The National Biodiversity Authority notified the 'Guidelines on Access to Biological Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge and Benefits Sharing Regulations' in 2014 which prescribe the procedures for access to biological resources and guides the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of biological resources with providers of the resources.

However, the potential of the legal framework on ABS to secure benefits from the use of biological resources has not fully been explored. This limits the range of economic and social benefits that are channelled back to the communities. Tapping the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, with ABS supporting its implementation, can significantly contribute to conserving and promoting sustainable utilisation of biological resources. This holds an enormous potential for economic development of local communities.



Objective

The ABS Partnership project aims at strengthening the capacities of the National Biodiversity Authority, selected State Biodiversity Boards and Biodiversity Management Committees. It also aims at creating awareness amongst commercial users of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge for the effective implementation of ABS mechanisms under the Biological Diversity Act 2002, in keeping with India's commitments under the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

The project is implemented by the **National Biodiversity Authority**, the State **Biodiversity Boards** and **Biodiversity Management Committees** in three states

WHAT IS ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING?

ABS refers to the way genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge may be accessed, and how the benefits that result from their use are shared amongst the people or countries using the resources (Users) and the people or countries that provide them (Providers).

Approach

The project is implemented at the national level in partnership with the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), at the state level, with the three State Biodiversity Boards (SBB) of Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu, and at local level with Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) in all three states. The project employs the following approaches:

- Awareness-raising, communication, and stakeholder dialogues across different actors and stakeholder groups on creating a better understanding about the Biological Diversity Act 2002, ABS Guidelines and the Nagoya Protocol on ABS
- Development of good practices on benefit-sharing among communities, based on utilisation of biological resources for commercial as well as research purposes
- Development of an IT-enabled ABS monitoring system for the National Biodiversity Authority to effectively monitor the use of biological resources in ABS processes

Progress

- The project has directly engaged with over a thousand people across various stakeholder groups in three states. These include the officials from forest departments and other government line departments such as agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and animal husbandry, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (RDPR) and biodiversity-based businesses, members of Biodiversity Management Committees.
- A communication strategy developed by the project was launched at a COP13 side-event, organised by the ABS

Capacity Development Initiative, GIZ Germany

- The project led side-event at COP13 titled “India’s insights from head starting the implementation of Access and Benefit-sharing and launch of an online course on ABS” with support from other ABS implementing projects in India. These were UNEP-GEF, Indo-Norwegian Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law, UNDP ABS Global Project and United Nations University – Institute for Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)
- The project has undertaken studies to support the pilot in establishing ABS compliant value-chain and to elucidate traceability in bio-resources trade to ensure benefit sharing with BMCs at source locations
- An IT tool called the ABS- Monitoring System (ABS-MS) has been developed for the NBA to track the use of Indian biological resources in patent applications and research. It was launched on the International Day for Biological Diversity 2019.
- Stakeholder consultations was held with Indian experts to develop good practices of benefit sharing.



Contribution to 2030 Agenda

The ABS project contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15: Life on Land, by aiming to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by securing fair and equitable access and benefit-sharing of biological resources. It also contributes to SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.

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Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead Executing Agency	National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Government of India State Biodiversity Boards of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand
Lead Implementing Agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	11/2017 – 04/2020
Budget	€3 Mio
Website	www.indo-germanbiodiversity.com

