

THE **ABS**
CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE



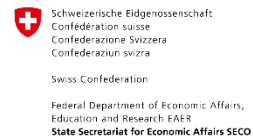
L'INITIATIVE DE
RENFORCEMENT
DES CAPACITES
POUR L'**APA**

ABS Capacity Development Initiative
A Multi-Donor-Initiative Focusing on
Capacity Development for Access and Benefit-Sharing

Final Report
Presenting the activities of 2025
and consolidating results from the entire funding period
(September 2022 – December 2025)

Date of Submission: March 2026

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Executive Summary

The ABS Capacity Development Initiative, a multi-donor initiative funded by Germany, Norway, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, concludes 20 years of implementation with this final report. During its final phase (2022–2025), the Initiative supported partner countries and international processes in strengthening capacities and framework conditions for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of biological resources, including genetic resources and related digital sequence information (DSI), contributing to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and local livelihoods.

The implementation period was characterised by significant developments in the global policy framework. The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in 2022 and the establishment of the Cali Fund for DSI in 2024 created new reference points for Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS). In this political environment, the ABS Initiative contributed to shaping relevant policy processes, especially by providing capacity development on DSI, facilitating exchange through international events and retreats, and supporting the development of political commitments on sustainable biotrade and benefit-sharing. It further promoted the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in these processes. As the first of its kind globally, the ABS Initiative developed, together with UEBT, a structured instrument for industry dialogues on ABS compliance and framework conditions. At the African regional level, it further played a key role in developing the AU Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP) in 2024 and in crafting the Gaborone Declaration at the First African Biodiversity Summit in 2025. Overall, an independent evaluation across OECD-DAC criteria confirmed the relevance of the approach, the effectiveness in achieving results, and the contribution to strengthening ABS implementation at different levels.

Progress was achieved across all **outcome indicators**, although partly hampered by external factors and reporting timelines. Aggregated data on increased monetary and non-monetary benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity was not available at project closure due to postponed reporting deadlines. As a proxy, the number of Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs) increased in selected partner countries, indicating a rise in ABS agreements. The share of private sector actors reporting satisfaction with ABS framework conditions reached 59 %, reflecting progress as well as remaining challenges related to regulatory complexity and long reform processes. In addition, instruments recognising the role and rights of IPLCs were further developed and applied, with women's participation reflected in implementation practice.

Output indicators were predominantly achieved or exceeded. *Output Indicator 1* on new concepts for benefit-sharing implementation exceeded targets in the development of national ABS monitoring approaches and achieved results in the provision of DSI-related capacity development and the ABS Business Lens. *Output Indicator 2* on multi-stakeholder partnerships exceeded its target regarding the number of partnerships established. *Output Indicator 2.2* on implementing research projects on simplified access measures was partially achieved realising one of two planned research partnerships. *Output Indicator 3* on the integration of ABS into trade and economic policy processes achieved its target through technical contributions to AfCFTA processes and exceeded expectations through the initiation of interministerial measures in several African partner countries. *Output Indicator 4* on IPLC participation exceeded targets by strengthening capacities for ABS negotiations and supporting participation in biodiversity-based value chains, including through dialogue processes and sector-specific negotiations.

After 20 years, the Initiative leaves a portfolio of tools, approaches and partnerships that can be used by partners at national, regional and global levels. Future efforts should focus on operationalising existing frameworks, strengthening institutional capacities, and supporting the implementation of ABS in biodiversity-based value chains.

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Abbreviations

ABioSA	ABS Compliant Biotrade in Southern Africa
ABS	Access and benefit-sharing
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU / AUC	African Union / African Union Commission
BBNJ	Biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
BCP	Bio-Cultural Community Protocols
BfN	Bundesamt für Naturschutz, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
BIA	BioInnovation Africa (BMZ funded, implemented by GIZ)
CA+	Convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers
CNA	Competent National Authority
COP	Conference of the Parties
DARBE	Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom
DSI	Digital sequence information on genetic resources
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources in Food and Agriculture
SMME	Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder-Partnership
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NFP	National Focal Point
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland
UEBT	Union for Ethical BioTrade
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

I. Introduction

20 years after its foundation, the ABS Initiative is ceasing its activities and wishes to thank all donors, international cooperation partners, and all stakeholders in its partner countries for the support and results achieved.

The 2025 Annual Report of the ABS Capacity Development Initiative presents both the activities and achievements of the year 2025, as well as the cumulative results from the entire funding period, September 2022 to December 2025.

The objective¹ of the ABS Initiative was to improve the capacity and conditions for successful cooperation between providers and users of biological resources, including genetic resources and related digital sequence information for the fair sharing of benefits for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and local livelihoods.

At the outcome level the ABS Initiative will be assessed against:

- increased aggregated monetary / non-monetary benefit-sharing reported by partner countries;
- commercial users operating in partner countries being satisfied with the ABS framework conditions;
- acknowledgement of role and rights of IPLC in conservation and sustainable use, with a special focus on women's participation in benefit-sharing.

In this regard the ABS Initiative co-shaped and provided impulses to the international discussion about new concepts for benefit-sharing in the context of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). It further fostered and accompanied the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships between providers and users of biological / genetic resources. The Initiative also supported national and regional actors with the aim to foster the integration of research & development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources and fair benefit-sharing into national trade, economic, and conservation policies. Through capacity building it strengthened the active participation of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) in the negotiation of benefit-sharing agreements and the management of sustainable biodiversity-based value chains.

The implementation built on more than a decade of experience, good practices collected, and lessons learned by the ABS Initiative. The development of targeted tools and methodologies for awareness raising and capacity development served as the basis for the reinforcement of ABS implementation skills of regulators and actors in partner countries as well as at the subregional and regional levels.

The ABS Initiative generated hands-on examples and best practices relating to the defined outputs (see chapter III), which in turn supported the scaling up to global impacts, e.g. through international or regional partners. The scope of the Initiative for conceptual advice and on-the-ground action was global, the focus countries from 2022 to 2025 were Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and South Africa. Depending on available financial resources and the corresponding needs of partners in some working areas the Initiative partnered with regional organisations, other projects, or other countries.

The ABS Initiative was hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and funded by the governments of Germany, Norway, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and United Kingdom. The Secretariat of the ABS Initiative was awarded to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It served as convenor and focal point for member and partner relations and is responsible for managing and implementing project activities.

¹ For details on objective and indicators, please see Annex I, Impact Matrix

II. Context: Current status of ABS and DSI in international discussion

Global

The conservation of biodiversity is essential for the future of the Earth. Not only the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Biodiversity Council (IPBES) have stated that the enormous global loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity is having a threatening impact on our livelihoods, but the World Economic Forum (WEF) has also been naming this loss as one of the greatest risks of our time in its annual risk report for several years. In this dynamic, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) forms the international legal framework for reducing losses of and conserving biodiversity. With the adoption of the KMGBF by the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) in December 2022, the CBD's principle of benefit-sharing was given a political boost: one of the four long-term goals by 2050 (Goal C) and one of the 23 medium-term goals by 2030 (Target 13) relate to increasing benefit-sharing.

In addition, COP 15 decided that the principle of fair and equitable benefit-sharing should also be applied to the use of intangible components of genetic resources - the so-called digital sequence information. At COP16 in October 2024, a corresponding multilateral mechanism including a fund for sharing the financial benefit arising from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI), the Cali Fund, was adopted and entered into force in February 2025. It is intended to be a new CBD instrument for resource mobilization and thus contributing with a strong involvement of IPLCs to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15.a (Raise and substantially increase finance from all sources for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems) of the 2030 Agenda. However, many critical aspects to make the fund operational, such as the triggers for payments by DSI users, the development of incentive schemes, the governance mechanism of the fund, its interrelation to other multilateral fora or the fund's disbursement criteria require further conceptual dialogue and technical discussion.

The increasing importance of the principle of benefit-sharing and corresponding ABS systems in various international forums is also clearly perceptible. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development addresses the promotion of benefit-sharing in areas such as biodiversity and agriculture in SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources in Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Nagoya Protocol as well as other international agreements form the benefit-sharing regime under international law. With the adoption of the Convention on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) in February 2023, a further multilateral benefit-sharing system for the utilization of genetic resources and DSI was adopted. The members of the World Health Organization (WHO) have adopted a treaty on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (CA+) in May 2025 including a benefit-sharing system for the use of human pandemic genetic resources and DSI. The modalities of this pandemic ABS system will be negotiated when the treaty enters into force. With the adoption of the GBF, the principle of equitable benefit-sharing in the CBD has been given a clearly visible high political priority in the global medium-term strategy up to 2030 and its national implementation guided by the NBSAP revision process.

However, monitoring the ABS elements of the GBF poses major challenges to CBD parties, in particular as target 13 of the GBF does not only cover Nagoya Protocol but also all other international ABS instruments.

Regional Africa

The negotiations of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) were concluded in 2023. In February of the same year, the member states of the African Union (AU) adopted two additional relevant protocols on services and intellectual property both of which contain strong references to environmental protection, biodiversity, and access and benefit-sharing (ABS). A pan-African conference convened by the AU Commission's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) developed the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP) in June 2023 with technical support from the ABS Initiative. The strategy was formally adopted at the AU Summit in February 2024.

In continuation of these regional efforts, the African Union Commission organised the **first Africa Biodiversity Summit** in November 2025 in Gaborone, Botswana, under the theme *“Leveraging Biodiversity for Africa’s Prosperity.”* This high-level summit, convened at the mandate of the AU Assembly, brought together Heads of State and Government, ministers, experts and partners to provide political leadership on biodiversity governance, strengthen frameworks for resource mobilisation, and align regional priorities with global biodiversity commitments. The Summit culminated in the **Gaborone Declaration**, reinforcing Africa’s shared commitments to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use as central to socio-economic development and continental resilience.

The project’s thematic priorities are reflected in both the ABSAP and the Gaborone Declaration on Biodiversity. These outcomes of the ABS Initiative provide a solid entry point for integrating ABS-related issues, biotrade, and private-sector mobilisation at both national and regional levels in Africa.

Situation in the focus Partner Countries

In **Côte d'Ivoire** the adoption of the ABS decree has been delayed since May 2023. However, in preparation for its adoption, the ABS-Initiative has supported the Competent National Authority, MINEDDTE, in developing a handbook for providers and users of genetic resources and traditional knowledge, as well as a brochure with a brief outline to facilitate understanding of the ABS system in Côte d'Ivoire. The ABS Initiative participated in workshops related to the revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and supported the national ABS focal point in advocating for the integration of Access and Benefit-Sharing into the strategy in line with a mainstreaming approach.

The 2024 general election marked a clear rupture in **South African** politics. For the first time since 1994 the African National Congress (ANC) lost its outright parliamentary majority, ushering in an era of coalition politics at the national and provincial levels between ANC, the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and a growing set of smaller and new entrants had to negotiate working arrangements to govern. This outcome has real and immediate implications for the 2026 local government elections, where municipal coalitions and voter behavior will be shaped both by the successes and the failures of national-level coalition governance. The current National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) and the draft of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA) review processes provide an excellent platform for substantially improving the development and growth of the bioprospecting and biotrade sector as it set out ten “Transformative Enabling Interventions.”

In **Kenya**, responsibility for traditional knowledge was returned to the Ministry of Gender, Culture, Arts and National Heritage after the elections in August 2022. There is still a lack of structures for the operationalisation of the law to protect traditional knowledge. The critical budgetary situation of the counties makes the planned cooperation with the County of Marsabit in the multi-stakeholder partnership and with national institutions difficult. In addition, the government was almost non-functional during the GenZ-protests in mid-2024. Through the MSP-Workshop in November 2024,

contacts were reestablished and an MSP-process on gums & resins value chain started. In 2025, a high level of activities in Marsabit county and national institutions could be reestablished. This enabled partners to launch project applications (NEMA on benefit-sharing monitoring at the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership) and start projects (Marsabit Botanical Garden and Marsabit women cooperatives on Aloe valorisation with the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency and on Aloe, gums & resins and Moringa valorisation with the Swiss Wyss Academy for Nature) continuing the work on ABS and biotrade topics.

Benin remains a partner country. Support measures have been focused on ad hoc requests from the national focal point. There were no enquiries during the reporting period. However, the country's ITPGRFA Focal Point has attended the 13th Pan-African ABS and BioTrade workshop in Senegal in order to pick up on approaches to support the mutual implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and the Plant Treaty in Benin.

All partner countries are updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and were supported by the ABS Initiative in mainstreaming and integrating ABS in the NBSAPs and other national sectoral strategies.

III. Implementation

The ABS Initiative aimed at improving the capacity and conditions for successful cooperation between providers and users of biological resources and related digital sequence information for the fair sharing of benefits for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and local livelihoods.

Outcomes - Achieving expected result

Outcome Indicator 1: In the context of the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity), 4 partner countries report on increases of aggregated monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the use of biological resources.

Activities implemented under the different workstreams – particularly the development of new concepts for monitoring benefit-sharing, the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and the integration of Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) into national trade and economic policies – contribute directly to this Outcome Indicator. Achieving increased monetary and non-monetary benefits in partner countries requires enabling conditions, including stakeholder commitment, functional institutional frameworks, and the creation of value chains that allow biological resources to generate tangible benefits.

By the end of the project, partner countries had not yet formally reported increased benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The deadline for submitting the National Reports on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol—which provide the primary data basis for assessing Outcome Indicator 1—was postponed to 28 February 2026. As a result, updated official reporting data were not yet available at project closure.

Nevertheless, activities under Workstream 1.1 (Development of new concepts for monitoring benefit-sharing) were successfully implemented. Four partner countries received technical support to establish national monitoring concepts designed to facilitate the preparation of the benefit-sharing sections of their National Reports. In the absence of updated National Report data, the project used the number of Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs) issued during the project period as a proxy indicator for increased benefit-sharing. The number of IRCCs increased significantly in Kenya (from 98 to 130; +33%) and South Africa (from 47 to 87; +85%). In contrast, the figures for Benin (20) and Côte d'Ivoire (1) remained unchanged during the reporting period. The increase in IRCCs in Kenya and South Africa suggests a rise in concluded Mutually Agreed Terms (MATs), which in turn indicates a likely increase in both monetary and non-monetary benefit-sharing arrangements.

Outcome Indicator 2: 70% of the 60 active companies subject to ABS (Access and Benefit-Sharing) and operating in the partner countries confirm their satisfaction with the ABS framework conditions.

To increase the satisfaction of companies with the legal and administrative ABS framework conditions, the first step is to establish the feasibility of ABS processes. Through the multi-stakeholder partnership approach, companies are brought into direct dialogue with providers of genetic resources, including local communities. This exchange contributes to mutual understanding, trust-building, and the identification of bottlenecks within ABS procedures. Furthermore, the dialogue initiated with companies through the ABS Cooperation Index supports this objective. The index provides a structured instrument for identifying concrete needs for improving business conditions while ensuring regulatory compliance.

A stakeholder satisfaction survey, addressing 185 stakeholders, including 91 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and five cooperatives, was conducted in 2025. Of the 96 commercial stakeholders contacted, 32 (33%) responded. Among these respondents, 22 (69%) indicated that they were actively involved in ABS-related activities. Respondents were asked to assess their level of satisfaction with various elements of the ABS framework conditions, including sectoral support, guidance documents, regulatory procedures, and legislation. Of the 22 companies engaged in ABS activities, 13 (59%) reported being moderately to very satisfied with these four elements. This result falls below the target value of 70% defined in the outcome indicator.

However, the formulation of the indicator assumed that 60 companies in the partner countries would be actively engaged in ABS. This assumption proved unrealistic, as only 22 companies were identified as participating in ABS activities during the project period. The non-achievement of the indicator therefore partly reflects an overestimation of ABS-active companies at the design stage.

Furthermore, structural improvements to the enabling environment and broader ABS framework conditions extend beyond the direct influence and timeframe of a single project. Legislative reforms, regulatory adjustments, and institutional changes require longer political and administrative processes. As a result, improvements in framework conditions and related satisfaction levels can only partly be attributed to project interventions within the project period.

It should be noted that, due to ABioSA's stronger focus on commercial biodiversity-based value chains compared to the ABS Initiative, 85 of the 96 commercial stakeholders surveyed were located in South Africa. This reflects the comparatively advanced development of biodiversity-based commercial value chains in South Africa relative to other African partner countries and partly explains the geographical concentration of responses.

Outcome Indicator 3: 15 instruments for the acknowledgement of the role and rights of IPLC in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are used in partner countries, 60% of which explicitly include women's participation in the sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of biological resources.

This indicator measures the use of instruments that recognise the role and rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) have historically proven effective, as they codify traditional knowledge and practices, define rules for the use of genetic resources, and formalise benefit-sharing arrangements.

However, developing BCPs requires considerable time, expertise, and financial resources. As these conditions are not always met, the project identified alternative instruments—such as action plans or ABS agreements—which were also assessed under this indicator. In this context, a study was

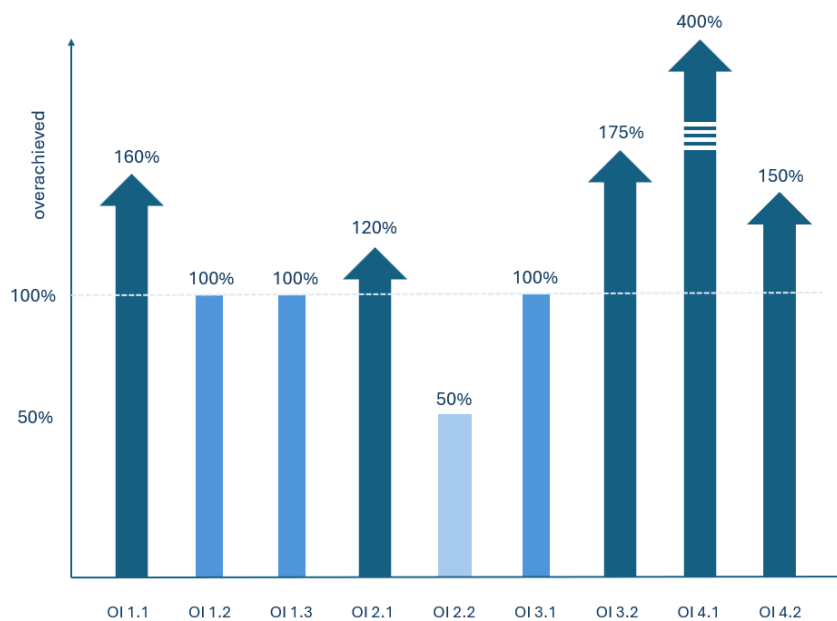
conducted by Natural Justice and the project developed a knowledge product² to present alternative approaches to BCPs and provide guidance on feasible instruments for recognising IPLC rights in diverse contexts. In addition to the eight baseline instruments, 12 new instruments established under the project formally recognise IPLC rights, with six explicitly mentioning women’s participation in benefit-sharing. Five instruments from Cameroon and Côte d’Ivoire do not explicitly reference women. However, in practice, women are actively involved in ABS activities and benefit-sharing.

A closer analysis of the contexts in which these instruments were developed helps explain the absence of explicit references to women’s participation. For example, a negotiation guide and a biocultural protocol in Cameroon, as well as the Buchu ABS agreement in South Africa, do not explicitly mention women’s participation. In practice, however, community processes in these and other partner countries are organised in ways that inherently involve women. Convening such processes without women’s participation would be impractical and incompatible with equitable benefit-sharing.

From the project’s perspective, the absence of explicit references therefore does not indicate a lack of inclusion. Women’s participation is inherently embedded in many ABS-related community processes. In this context, the indicator aimed to capture a transformative process that in several countries is already well established and may no longer always require explicit mention in formal instruments. Overall, the project demonstrates that the practical use of instruments to recognise IPLC rights—and to ensure women’s participation—is more important than formal wording alone, highlighting the effectiveness of flexible, context-adapted approaches in promoting equitable biodiversity governance.

Outputs - Implementation progress

The graphic provides an overview of output indicator performance, with most output indicators achieved or overachieved. Output Indicator 2.2 is partially achieved, as one of the two planned MSPs with research institutions has been formally established, while the second has been initiated but not yet formally concluded.



² [Approaches and Tools - Supporting the Rights and Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the Implementation of ABS in Africa](#)

Output 1: New concepts for the implementation of sharing the benefits arising from the use of biological resources are provided for the international discussion in the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Output Indicator 1.1: 3 documented concepts of national systems for monitoring ABS indicators in the context of the GBF are made available to the Secretariat of the CBD and the member states for international discussion.

Baseline: 0 documented concepts (there are no monitoring systems, as the ABS indicators are still being negotiated in the GBF Monitoring Framework)

Target value: 3 documented concepts of national systems

Final value: 1 template for national concepts developed, **3 national concepts finalised** (ET, ZA, BR), **1 national concept in validation** (KE)

ABS indicator study: The project supports the development of monitoring systems for ABS and DSI benefit-sharing, and the whole-of-society approach in selected partner countries. The ABS Initiative collaborated with the Leibniz Institute DSMZ from September 2023 to March 2024 in preparing the study Access and Benefit-sharing Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for the SCBD, which was presented at a workshop prior to SBSTTA 24. At the DSI dialogue in October 2023, the concept for monitoring benefit-sharing at national level and the upcoming interviews as part of the study on the GBF's ABS indicators commissioned by the CBD Secretariat were presented to various government representatives from all global regions.

Kenya: In December 2023, a workshop on monitoring systems was held at the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI). During 2025, a national concept with the participation of 13 institutions under the lead of NEMA was developed. The validation by two institutions is pending as of December 2025. An institutional IT-based ABS application and permitting system was developed for WRTI that could be used for automation of monitoring benefits received.

Ethiopia: During 2024 and 2025, a national concept for Ethiopia was developed together with the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute.

Brazil and South Africa: During 2025, South Africa (DEFF) and Brazil (CGEN / MECC) were supported in a South-South cooperation on adapting their benefit-sharing monitoring and reporting schemes to the requirements of the KMGBF. Both concepts were finalized at the end of 2025.

Vietnam and Colombia expressed interest in a collaboration, but the realisation did not take part.

Output Indicator 1.2: One newly developed concept of an index indicator that determines the "business and cooperation climate" with regard to ABS from the point of view of companies was discussed in relevant forums.

Baseline value: 0 concepts (so far, no index indicator on ABS exists)

Target value: 1 concept

Final value: 1 newly developed concept was discussed in **10 relevant forums**

In collaboration with the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) tool for business insights and engagement on access and benefit sharing was developed and finally named "ABS Business Lens". The concept was presented to ten forums which gave input for the final version:

- Sep 2024 Doing ABS Workshop, Bonn
- Oct 2024 UEBT Member Exchange, Amsterdam

- Oct 2024 Side event at CBD COP 16, Cali
- Jan 2025 Namibian Network of the Cosmetics Industry (NANCI)
- Feb 2025 NEMBA working group (South Africa), South African Rooibos Council, Buchu Association, Southern African Botanical Products Association (SABPA), South African Honeybush Tea Association
- Feb 2025 Groupement des Exportateurs d'Huiles Essentielles et Extraits de Madagascar (GEHEM)

International business platforms active in the field of biodiversity, as well as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBSCD) and Business for Nature, and associations such as the International Fragrance Association (IFRA), the International Organization for the Flavour Industry (IOFI) were able to exchange views on cooperation and business conditions during the UEBT Member Exchange.

The index tool enables the discussion of specific needs for change for good business conditions and compliance with ABS. Key challenges that the companies perceive in the implementation of ABS at national level were discussed and possible solutions evaluated. The basis for further development of the concept and for dialogue between the private sector and national governments was thus created, and further activities can build on this.

Output Indicator 1.3: Participants in the events on DSI indicate that the improved capacity resulting from these activities enabled them to better represent the interests of their governments or organisations in the CBD COP 16 negotiations on benefit-sharing in the use of DSI.

Base value: no surveys

Target value: Rating of at least 5 on a scale from 1 to 6

Final value: Participants rated the improvements with 5

Topics	Webinars rated	Meetings rated
Better representation of interests in DSI negotiations	5	5
Increase in personal capacities	5	5
Usefulness of information	5	5
Relevant topics covered	6	5

The ABS Initiative, often in cooperation with Meridian Institute, undertook a multitude of capacity development activities in support of the informal process leading towards the DSI-negotiations during COP 16 and after COP 16 (see overview below). Due to this intense work on DSI-topics, the ABS Initiative continued to be the most active actor providing capacity development and dialogue space in this field worldwide.

- Nov 2022 • 1st Informal DSI Retreat, The Hague: part of the NO-ZA environmental partnership, capacity development for the DSI negotiations during COP 15
- Apr 2023 • Webinar: Consideration of Digital Sequence Information in the CBD and other UN For a
- May 2023 • Participation: Informal Consultative Process on DSI and Other Key Issues, conducted by Meridian Institute
- Jul 2023 • Webinar: Governance issues related to the role of IPLCs in the future DSI multilateral system
- Oct 2023 • 2nd Informal DSI Retreat, The Hague: capacity development for the DSI negotiations during OEWG DSI 1
- Participation: Dialogue on the Design of a Global Fund from the Use of DSI, Oslo, conducted by Meridian Institute
- Nov 2023 • Side event: Reflections on Features and Modalities of the Multilateral DSI-System - Outcomes of the 2nd Informal DSI Retreat during OEWG DSI 1, Geneva

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side event: Pueblos Indígenas de Abya Yala: CCTT asociados a los RRG, los DSI y su relación con el Protocolo de Nagoya y nuevo Marco Mundial Kunming-Montreal de la Diversidad Biológica during OEWG 8j 12, Geneva
Mar 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar: Information on international DSI-negotiations, GIZ internal • Participation: European User Perspectives on the CBD MBSM from the Use of DSI, Vilm Island, organised by Meridian Institute
Apr 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Science-Policy Dialogue on DSI, Nairobi, in cooperation with ILRI and the AU Commission
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar: Non-Monetary Benefit-Sharing (NMBS) under the CBD and other UN Fora • Participation: Stakeholder & Rightsholder Exchange & Dialogue, Paris, organised by Meridian Institute • Presentation: Informal DSI activities together with Meridian Institute at the IAG DSI workshop before SBI 4
Jun 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation: GRULAC Science-Policy Dialogue, Cali, organized by Meridian Institute • Webinar: Reflecting on the First African Science-Policy Dialogue on DSI
Aug 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia-Pacific Science-Policy Dialogue, virtual, in cooperation with Meridian Institute
Sep 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd DSI Informal Users Exchange and Negotiators Retreat, Pretoria: in cooperation with Meridian Institute, capacity development for the DSI negotiations during COP 16
Oct 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side event: Outcomes of Pretoria User Exchange /Negotiator's Dialogue, COP 16, Cali
Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar: Reflecting on the CBD COP16 decision on DSI
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar: Engaging the Private Sector in the Multilateral Mechanism (MLM) and the Cali Fund

Output 2: Multi-stakeholder partnerships between providers and users of selected biological resources have been established.

Output Indicator 2.1: 11 multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) between providers and users with domestic, regional or international partners address the industry-specific implementation challenges for ABS-compliant value chains.

Baseline value: 6 MSPs (6 sector-wide agreements in South Africa: for the rooibos industry, SDP Buchu; SDP Honeybush, SDP Marula, SDP Essential Oils, SDP Baobab, *Aloe ferox*)

Target value: 11 MSPs

Final value: 7 new MSPs are initiated: 1 in Côte d'Ivoire, 1 in Kenya, 1 in Senegal, 3 in South Africa, and 1 regional approach, **13 MSPs in total**

The ABS Initiative supported the establishment and expansion of multi-stakeholder partnerships for ABS-compliant, biodiversity-based value chains in the partner countries Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa, as well as at continental African level. Processed experiences and lessons learnt flowed into the broader regional and global capacity development work of the ABS Initiative (South-South exchange).

South Africa: 3 additional SDPs were developed

7. A multi-stakeholder partnership has led to a database of properties of marula and baobab to combat oil adulteration. (b-TAF: Botanicals Trusted and Authenticated Fingerprinting, www.b-TAF.org)
8. *Sceletium tortuosum* as a sub-species under the Essential Oils Cluster has developed a separate SDP. The Southern African Botanical Products Association (SABPA, <https://sabpa.africa/>) was established as part of the SDP. Regular meetings take place to ensure stakeholders are informed.
9. As a spin-off from the Baobab SDP, the association entered into a partnership with the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) to pick up research that was identified within the sector plan for baobab powder application for gut health. (<https://www.samrc.ac.za/sites/default/files/2023-09/BaobabFruit.pdf>)

The approach that was followed by ABioSA in the development of sector plans in South Africa were presented as examples of efficient implementation of multi-stakeholder partnerships within prior to the above-mentioned activities.

Kenya: Based on a series of meetings in 2022 and 2023 supported by the ABS Initiative, the national platform “IPLCs of Kenya” was founded as a trust in May 2024. The IPLCs of Kenya are the key partner of the multistakeholder processes at local level to promote biodiversity-based value chains. It was decided to focus on Marsabit County and value chains for gums & resins and potentially *Aloe* species. In November 2024, an MSP on gums and resins was initiated leading to the adoption of the:

10. Marsabit County Strategy for Gums and Resins Production, Processing and Marketing and an action plan for its implementation.

Côte d'Ivoire: Building on community workshops held with a total of 102 participants from the Comoé region where they selected four medicinal plants they wanted to work on together with the research and private sectors, a multi-stakeholder partnership was established from 2024 to 2025. Following the first Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) meeting, which took place in 2024 with around 30 participants from research, private sector, local communities and government focused on establishing the need for an MSP on medicinal plants, defining a shared vision and agreeing on strategic axes, a second MSP meeting was held at the beginning of 2025. This workshop provided training on the valorisation of medicinal plants — from plant to product — and addressed market requirements, including standards, with support from external experts. In parallel, meetings were held with the prefect and representatives of provincial ministries to strengthen institutional support for traditional healers. This included the creation of healer associations in each region, which was complemented by a regional workshop bringing together traditional healers to initiate these associations. A third MSP workshop in mid-2025 was dedicated to discussing and formally adopting a Joint Action Plan and Agreement. The Action Plan outlines concrete steps to be taken by 2030, while the Agreement clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholder groups, particularly with regard to the recognition of the rights and role of local communities. It was then submitted to the Ministries of Environment, Health and Research for validation. A study conducted across multiple areas of the Comoé region supported this work by confirming that the four targeted medicinal plants were generally abundant, including one species protected under CITES. However, it also highlighted that careful management of harvesting was needed in certain locations due to pressures such as land-use change and overexploitation.

11. **Action Plan of the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership** for the Promotion of Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge and written Agreement between the stakeholders for its implementation.

Senegal: The ABS Initiative was collaborating with the bilateral GIZ Invest for Jobs Project in order to strengthening the capacities of and collaboration between actors in the baobab sector involving also public institutions such as ministries and academia. Whereas the key objective of Invest for Jobs is to create new and sustainable employment in rural areas of Senegal the ABS Initiative aims at supporting an institutionalized public-private dialogue on sector development, conservation and benefit-sharing. After several preparatory technical meetings, a national multi-stakeholder workshops adopted a **Senegalese Action Plan for “Sustainable Baobab”** in May 2025. Two consecutive national workshops in December 2026 (one with financing institutions, one with line ministries) defined institutional tasks, cooperation necessities and spelled out collaborative actions. Institutionalized outcomes of this Process are the

12. **Multi Stakeholder Taskforce “Baobab durable” and the autonomous Senegalese branch of the “African Baobab Alliance”** (currently in its officialisation)

Africa regional: The ABS Initiative was cooperating with the **African Baobab Alliance (ABA)**, comprising harvesting cooperatives, African Baobab transforming SMMEs, researchers, and final consumer product manufacturers from 14 African countries. To increase sustainable production, R&D, exports and sales related to Baobab products – as a prerequisite for benefit-sharing – this MSP aims at facilitating the development harmonized regional African approaches on resource monitoring, benefit-sharing and valorization support. During the First African Biodiversity Summit in November 2025 in Botswana, this continental MSP was supported in launching its:

13. Policy Paper “How BioTrade Supports Implementation of the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP) through a plenary panel session with senior governmental representatives and a side event

Output Indicator 2.2: With the support of MSPs, 2 international research projects have implemented simplified measures for access to biological resources while sharing the benefits.

Baseline value: 0 research projects (no research projects are supported so far).

Target value: 2 research projects

Final value: 1 research project implemented simplified measures

The **International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)** as a long-standing partner of the ABS Initiative, decided to cooperate with the ABS Initiative to take up discussions with partner countries in African animal genome projects on simplified ABS procedures through the development of multi-partner consortium benefit-sharing agreements. In late 2023 genomics and breeding project partners in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have been selected to work on simplify access procedures in partner countries and promote benefit-sharing with local communities. Several meetings with ILRI took place in 2024 to discuss concept papers on relevance of R&D with animal genetic resources for food and agriculture under the KMGBF. In 2025, workshops and national consultations were conducted with the three lead institutions and other national organisations to develop the Agreement for the Establishment of the African Cattle Genomics Consortium on Access to and Benefit Sharing from Data Derived from Livestock Genetic Resources. Despite considerable progress on the content, the work could not be finalised within the project timeframe due to an unresolvable dispute regarding the payment of additional per diems for meeting participants.

In 2023 contact was established with the **BioSCape project**, a NASA financed world class research collaboration partnership between scientific institutions from the USA and South Africa to record and analyze South African Western Cape’s African biodiversity, e.g. through traditional taxonomy and genome sequencing, to a large extent taking part in the USA. Despite being in possession of all necessary provincial ABS permits by Cape Nature, the project struggles to receive a documentation of ABS compliance through an IRCC by the South African Competent National Authority at DFFE. A temporary MSP was formed between DFFE, ABS-relevant institutions, SANBI and universities under BioSCape. Based on a round-table approach, the gaps between provincial research permits and national ABS permits were revealed. IRCCs were issued on the basis of the provincial permits to demonstrate compliance with South Africa's laws and legal access and utilisation. The experiences of this MSP will be used to facilitate permitting and access for future BioSCape access and other research projects. The round-tables approach, now including also the provinces, should be continued for future project-based MSPs. The long-term view is to produce nationwide Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for ABS permitting spanning from the provincial to the national authorities in charge.

Output 3: Capacities of national and regional actors have been strengthened in order to integrate research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources and fair benefit-sharing into national trade and economic policies.

Output Indicator 3.1: 5 technical contributions on the integration of research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources and fair benefit-sharing have been introduced into the discussion on the implementation of the Pan-African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and its protocols/annexes.

Baseline value: 1 technical contribution (UNCTAD study supported by the project on the implications of the AfCFTA for trade and biodiversity)

Target value: 5 technical contributions

Final value: 5 technical contributions

In cooperation with the Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE) Directorate of AUC DARBE and the GIZ-AUC project Support to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the ABS Initiative planned to develop information services for the AU member states in order to take into account the objectives of the GBF in the implementation of the AfCFTA and its Protocols. A:

2. **Background document** on the linkages between AfCFTA, its protocols and the KMGBF was submitted to SEBE. SEBE showed initial interest in further discussions between relevant AUC departments but did not initiate such talks. The activities stalled.

The ABS Initiative, in collaboration with UNCTAD, facilitated interactions between AUC DARBE and an international trade-related audience during UNCTAD's 7th BioTrade Congress "Global governance for trade and biodiversity" in March 2024. Commissioner Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko was given the opportunity to present the policies and commitments of the AUC in the areas of biodiversity, gender and trade in the:

3. **High-level presentation** "Toward Inter-regional Sustainable Trade in Biodiversity-Based Products in Africa"

She could also introduce into the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan during the:

4. **Interview Session** "Zooming-in on Africa's transition to a greener development" moderated by the ABS Initiative. Finally, the:
5. **Panel** "Making it Real: Using Policy Instruments to Promote Biodiversity and Benefit-Sharing" with the advisor to the African negotiating group in the CBD, the former lead negotiator from Cameroon and the ABS Initiative discussed the technical links between biodiversity and trade based on the AU Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the documents of the AfCFTA. The sessions are reflected in the [report of the UNCTAD congress](#).

Output Indicator 3.2: 10 joint measures by ministries of the environment and other ministries for the integration of research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources with fair benefit-sharing in national planning and policy instruments (trade, agronomic and economic policies, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans) have been initiated in partner countries.

Baseline value: 3 measures (South Africa: Biodiversity Economy Strategy; Kenya: National Forum for the Development of Traditional Medical Devices, Benin: Simplification of ABS Regulations with the Agricultural Sector)

Target value: 8 measures

Final value: In 5 countries and at the African level 11 joint measures had been initiated, mainstreaming measures and first steps identified; in **total 14 joint measures**

The ABS Initiative conducted and supported several international and regional meetings to advance ABS mainstreaming and peer exchange among African partner countries. These included Anglophone and Francophone African NBSAP dialogues held in Nairobi and Lomé in May 2024, a partner country meeting in Bonn in September 2024 with representatives from Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa to identify priority mainstreaming measures, and the 13th Pan-African ABS Workshop in Saly in February 2025, which facilitated exchange on ABS mainstreaming approaches across Africa.

Continental-level cooperation: At the continental level, the cooperation with the SEBE Directorate of AUC DARBE resulted in the following joint measures:

4. Development of an **African Union Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ABSAP)** endorsed by the AU Executive Council in February 2024; the ABSAP reflects all topics of the KMGBF including capacity development to generate and use digital sequence information (DSI), to benefit from its use and to shape the coming international negotiations on DSI
5. Development of the **Gaborone Declaration on Biodiversity**, adopted by Heads of State and Government at the First Africa Biodiversity Summit in November 2025. The declaration contains, inter alia, the commitment to “invest in harnessing the full potential of biodiversity and traditional knowledge to drive sustainable economic growth, diversification, and resilience in Africa including nature-based economic opportunities, sustainable biotrade and bio-industries, with fair and equitable benefit-sharing to unlock regional and international markets for biodiversity-based products and enhance Africa’s competitiveness in the global bioeconomy.”

Côte d’Ivoire: The entry point for ABS mainstreaming was a stocktaking study of existing international and national legal frameworks, national development plans, policies, strategies and action plans as well as potential contact persons among newly identified stakeholders.. Based on this analysis, the following measures were initiated:

6. **NBSAP process:** ABS was integrated into revised NBSAP, integration of Target 13 into new NBSAP by intersectorial commission
7. **Action plan:** developed together with representatives of different sectors during the revision workshop of mainstreaming study. As set out in the action plan, the NFP then met with two Ministries to discuss synergies
8. **Visualisation of ABS procedures:** interpretation of ABS decree by members of ABS committee
9. **Madagascar:** Participation in the working group on the development of the NBSAP and contributed to the: **Inclusion of ABS and GBF Target 13 in the NBSAP**

Namibia: The Ministry of Environment Fisheries and Tourism (MEFT), supported by the ABS Initiative initiated the following joint measures:

10. **Creating a mechanism to enhance coordination.** Building on the African BioTrade Festival held in South Africa in September 2023 and 2025, the Namibian Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, together with the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board and the Namibia Trade Forum, initiated joint preparations to co-host the next festival in 2027. This inter-ministerial initiative represents a concrete joint measure contributing to the integration of BioTrade, research and development, and the sustainable use of biological resources with fair and equitable benefit-sharing into national trade, economic, and biodiversity policy frameworks, including the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).
11. A first workshop took place in June 2025 with following line ministries and institutions attending:
 - Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) as host
 - Ministry of Justice, Labour and Reform / Office of the Attorney General
 - Ministry of Health and Social Services
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform
 - Namibia Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST)
 - Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA)
 - Ministry of International Relations and Trade
 - Ministry of Industrialisation, Mines and Energy
 - Ministry of Urban and Rural Development
 - Ministry of Home Affairs, Safety and Security
 - Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture
 - Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs
 - Namibia Revenue Agency (NAMRA)
 - Namibia Police (NAMPOL)

Senegal: In cooperation with the the Ministry of Environment and Ecological Transition, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and other relevant institutions, it was agreed to develop and support an:

12. **Action Plan on Sustainable Baobab Valorisation**

South Africa: In cooperation with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, and Department of Science, Technology and Innovation following two joint measures have been initiated:

13. The **benefit-sharing monitoring and reporting concept** (developed under WS 1.3) was **integrated in the NBSAP**
14. During the 2nd African Biotrade Festival in September 2025, the **BioProducts Advancement Network South Africa (BioPANZA)** was launched.

Output 4: The participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the negotiation of benefit-sharing agreements and the management of sustainable biodiversity-based value chains has improved.

Output Indicator 4.1: 80% of the 50 representatives of IPLC, of which 50% are women and 30% are young adults who have been qualified on negotiation processes, confirm that they have asserted their interests, based on examples.

Baseline value: 0 improvements in the representation of interests (so far, there is no survey on the use of training and advisory content)

Target value: 40 representatives of IPLCs confirm to have asserted their interests in the ABS process, including 20 women and 15 young adults.

Final value: 241 participants from which 162 were (representatives of) IPLCs have been capacitated in *inter alia* ABS negotiations in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and South Africa. The workshops included **117 women and twelve young adults (age 18-35)**.

Kenya: 17 lawyers and technical ABS experts were trained in ABS contract negotiations in September 2024, including **4 female lawyers representing IPLCs and their organisations**. The training was based on the third edition of the ABS initiative's ABS Contract Training Tool, which was updated in 2023 and amongst other contained a new chapter on the role of IPLCs in ABS contract negotiations. The experiences of these 4 lawyers should be used to support IPLCs during ABS negotiations. Such negotiations either did not happen until December 2025 or support was not requested by IPLCs.

Côte d'Ivoire: Two workshops in Comoe region conducted in August 2024 included sessions on ABS negotiation. An increase in inter alia negotiation capacities was monitored by 15 questions prior and after the workshop. The workshops were attended by **102 participants (including 46 women and seven young persons)**. **100% of the participants confirmed an increase of their negotiation capacity**. Participants later informed their communities and neighboring communities about ABS and basic negotiation processes.

South Africa: Through the ABioSA Community Pilot Project, four workshops were conducted to strengthen dialogue, negotiation capacities, and participation within the biotrade value chain. A total of **122 participants** attended, **including 56 IPLC representatives, 67 women, and five young adults**. The workshops resulted in (1) an orientation training guide (Art of Community Hosting), (2) the ABioSA Wayfinder dialogue tool, and (3) the establishment of the "Friends of Honeybush" community, bringing together indigenous peoples, local communities, and private sector actors.

Building on these enhanced capacities, the South African Honeybush Tea Association (SAHTA), in collaboration with the National Khoi and San Council and the South African San Council, engaged in **negotiations towards an industry-wide benefit-sharing agreement in line with the Nagoya Protocol and national ABS regulations**. The process has been facilitated by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and guided by a jointly adopted Code of Conduct to ensure transparent and consensus-based engagement.

Output Indicator 4.2: 80 % of a representative sample of representatives of IPLCs confirm an improved participation in the management of 4 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains.

Baseline value: 2 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains with improved IPLCs participation (*Echinops* in Cameroon; Rooibos in South Africa)

Target value: 4 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains with improved IPLCs participation

Final value: **100% of IPLC participants** of workshops on **medicinal plant value chains (Côte d'Ivoire)** and **gums and resins value chains (Kenya)** confirmed improved participation. Participants of workshops in the context of **two Sector Development Plans (Buchu and Honeybush) in South Africa** were capacitated for more effective participation in these value chains.

In total: 6 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains with improved IPLCs participation.

Côte d'Ivoire: Two community workshops held in the Comoe region in August 2024 were the basis to integrate **13 representatives (three women)** of local communities in a first MSP workshop in December 2024 in Yamoussoukro. The group **agreed that their participation in medicinal plant value chains was improved.**

Kenya: Representatives of nine communities of Marsabit County have been integrated in the consultation processes to develop the county's valorisation strategy for gums and resins as well as in an MSP-workshop (84 participants) in November 2024. As a follow-up activity, a community-based training on biodiversity-based value chains was developed together with the WRTI in May and June 2025 and presented to the government and stakeholders of Marsabit County in July 2025. During the Training on Sustainable Harvesting of Gums and Resins in Moyale in July 2025, **100% of 30 participants (seven women) from local communities from Moyale sub-county confirmed their increased participation in gums and resins value chains.**

South Africa: Two measures to strengthen participation of IPLCs in the management of biodiversity-based value chains were implemented through the ABioSA Sector Development Plan (SDP) program. A **SDP** for the utilisation of the **traditional medicinal plant *Agathosma betulina* (Buchu)** was developed in cooperation with IPLCs and private sector partners to support equitable benefit sharing with the local community.

Work on the **Honeybush (various species of *Cyclopia*) SDP** was further advanced through a piloted community engagement approach, promoting collaboration across the value chain and amplifying the voices of local communities, particularly women and youth. Participation increased steadily over the course of the activities.

Structural and institutional implementation challenges for the ABS Initiative

The most significant challenge in the current project phase was the **postponement of the Global Biodiversity Framework's adoption**. This delay affected all implementation processes of the ABS Initiative. In particular, the two-year postponement had an impact on mainstreaming efforts as well as on cooperation with the private sector and the scientific community. The development of ABS monitoring concepts was not prioritised at national level, as the GBF monitoring framework was only adopted in November 2024 and the deadline for submitting the First National Report under the Nagoya Protocol was postponed to February 2026.

Cooperation with the **AU Commission's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (AUC DARBE)** remained challenging. Despite several attempts, joint working processes could not be established. Limited ownership and a low level of engagement were observed among the responsible partners, presumably due to competing priorities. Requests for additional funding or the secondment of personnel were raised repeatedly but could not be accommodated, as they were not foreseen in the current project design.

IV. Project management

The project was implemented by GIZ through a combination of international and national long-term experts as well as short-term consultants. Overall responsibility was held by an international long-term expert based in Bonn, Germany, who provided technical leadership and management at the international level, including cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) and dialogue with donors. The position was supported by a financial expert (controlling) and up to two international long-term experts responsible for cross-cutting functions such as event management, communication, knowledge management, and impact monitoring. Two additional international long-term experts based in Germany led the technical implementation of Outputs 1–4 and assumed regional coordination roles for selected partner countries.

At country level, up to five national long-term experts (one in Côte d'Ivoire and four in South Africa on a pro-rata basis) provided advisory services, coordination, and implementation support. Their work was closely aligned with existing bilateral and regional GIZ programmes to ensure synergies and efficient use of resources.

GeoMedia GmbH complemented the implementation through specialised expert pools, providing targeted support in communication, studies, moderation, training, and other technical areas.

Selected activities were implemented through national and international partners financed by the project, including UEBT, Natural Justice, and People Plants International (Re-Thinking ABS Programme). The strategic use of existing capacities on the ground, combined with partnerships with experienced organisations and close alignment with other technical cooperation projects, contributed to cost-effective and coherent programme implementation.

Co-Funding 2022 - 2025

A continuation of the ABioSA II measure until 12/2025 with an increase in funding of up to EUR 673,000 was agreed with SECO in 2024.

The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Safety (Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit, MLNV) was supporting the project with a grant of EUR 500,000 (contract dated November 2023).

The contract with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs / NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) was signed in December 2023; the combined financing of approx. EUR 1.9 million also supported all fields of action of the ABS Initiative.

V. Project Evaluation - Summary

The independent evaluation of the ABS Initiative (September 2022–September 2025), conducted by Main Level Consulting AG, assessed the programme against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria using a mixed-methods approach, including 26 interviews with key stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries, and donors. **Overall, the evaluation rates the Initiative very positively across all criteria and confirms that it has made an important contribution to advancing Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) implementation at multiple levels.**

The Initiative **demonstrated high relevance**, as its objectives and activities are closely aligned with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nagoya Protocol, and the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework. It **responds to concrete needs at local, national, regional, and global levels**, combining bottom-up engagement with communities and value chain actors with top-down policy support and international dialogue.

In terms of effectiveness, the Initiative achieved strong results. Two out of three outcome indicators were reached and the remaining one is on track, while most output indicators were achieved or exceeded. The project also contributed to more inclusive governance processes, particularly through **increased participation of women and youth**. Efficiency was assessed as very high, reflecting strong financial management, transparent reporting to donors, and adaptive programme management that ensured good value for money.

The evaluation further identified a high level of impact, with the Initiative contributing to structural improvements in ABS governance and implementation. In several partner countries, it helped stabilise or strengthen national ABS systems and **supported the development of practical mechanisms for benefit sharing**. At the same time, the evaluation highlights that overly complex regulatory frameworks and insufficient market orientation may limit private-sector engagement and reduce the practical usability of ABS systems.

Sustainability is strongest where ABS systems are already institutionalised and embedded in national structures. In such contexts, project results are likely to continue beyond the programme period. In other countries, continued support may be required to consolidate institutional capacities and maintain momentum. The **evaluation also emphasises the importance of strengthening local expertise, simplifying legal and administrative procedures, and ensuring long-term capacity development**.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the ABS Initiative successfully filled critical gaps in the global and national implementation of ABS, exceeded several project-level objectives, and created a solid foundation for further scaling. **Future efforts should focus on simplifying regulatory frameworks, strengthening local ownership and expertise, promoting market-oriented approaches, and supporting regional harmonisation** in order to translate project achievements into durable and scalable benefit-sharing outcomes.

Annex I. Impact Matrix

Name of the TC project

Multi-Donor-Initiative Capacity Development for *Access and Benefit-sharing*

global/supra-regional

Global multi-donor initiative

Project number

2022.2000.2

Duration

09/2022 - 12/2025

Impact matrix generated on

June 2022 (amended 02.2024)

Objective and outputs	Indicators	Sources, Time for data collection	Assumptions
<p>Module objective</p> <p>The conditions for successful cooperation between providers and users of biological resources for the fair sharing of benefits for biodiversity conservation in partner countries are improved.</p>	<p>Module objective indicator 1</p> <p>In the context of the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity), 4 partner countries report on increases of aggregated monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the use of biological resources.</p> <p>Baseline value: 2 (in the context of the 2017 National Reports on the Nagoya Protocol, only the partner countries South Africa and Kenya reported on monetary and non-monetary benefits).</p> <p>Target value: 4 countries (2025)</p>	<p>Analysis of the official and informal reporting of partner countries to the Secretariat of the CBD and national institutions with regard to the increase of the benefits. The monitoring mechanism of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) will only be established after its adoption in 09/2022, including the respective indicators.</p> <p>Biological resources include genetic resources, organisms or parts thereof, biotic components of ecosystems that have an actual or potential benefit or value for humanity.</p> <p>Data collection: 12/2022 and 04/2025</p>	<p>Not applicable because the project is a global multi-donor initiative</p>
	<p>Module objective indicator 2</p> <p>70% of the 60 active companies subject to ABS (Access and Benefit-Sharing) and operating in the partner countries confirm their satisfaction with the ABS framework conditions.</p> <p>Base value: 20 % of companies subject to ABS (estimate, so far, no representative survey on their satisfaction; the population of active companies subject to ABS operating in the partner countries using biological resources or related associated traditional knowledge will be established in the first year of implementation).</p> <p>Target value: 70% of companies subject to ABS (2025)</p>	<p>Annual survey initiated by the project on the satisfaction of companies subject to ABS on a scale of 4 (1 = "not satisfied", 4 = "very satisfied"), whereby "satisfaction" is considered to be achieved with a median of 3 points and higher.</p> <p>Parameters on general conditions for ABS that are queried are derived from the process of developing an "ABS cooperation index" (see Output 1) and include, for example, accessibility and duration of the approval process, reliability of the agreements made and the partner, available information on providers (states or</p>	

		<p>indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC), knowledge carriers, decentralized administrations), assessment of business prospects in the country, willingness to invest. Data collection: 01/2023, 06/2024 and 06/2025</p>	
	<p>Module objective indicator 3 15 instruments for the recognition of the role and rights of IPLC in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are used in partner countries, 60% of which explicitly include women's participation in the sharing of benefits arising from utilisation of biological resources. Baseline value: 8 instruments, of which 2 with women's participation Target value: 15 instruments, of which 9 with participation of women (2025)</p> <p><i>The baseline and target values of module target indicators 1, 2 and 3 are preliminary. They will be reviewed in the first year of implementation and, if necessary, adjusted as part of the first annual reporting.</i></p>	<p>Analysis of the use of the relevant instruments: e.g. Biocultural Community Protocols (BCP), ABS contracts, new policies, strategies, guidelines or implementing regulations, as documents by the partners</p> <p>An instrument deems to be used, when it is used after its development by the actors for their work, decisions or planning.</p> <p>Data collection:04/2025</p>	
<p>Output 1 New concepts for the implementation of benefit-sharing from the use of biological resources are provided for the international discussion in the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework.</p>	<p>Output indicator 1.1 3 documented concepts of national systems for monitoring ABS indicators in the context of the GBF are made available to the Secretariat of the CBD and the member states for international discussion. Baseline value: 0 documented concepts (there are no monitoring systems, as the ABS indicators are still being negotiated in the GBF Monitoring Framework) Target value: 3 documented concepts of national systems (2024)</p>	<p>Documented concepts of monitoring systems, analysis of use in the international context. The concepts can be provided as part of the CBD's ABS Clearing House mechanism, through side events, in webinars or training events of the Capacity Development Initiative or other actors promoting organisational development. Data collection: 02/2024</p>	<p>The new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) will be adopted by the CBD member states at the end of 2022 as planned. The topic of ABS will be emphasized within the GBF, the corresponding new monitoring framework (starting in 2024) and the associated reporting obligations of the CBD. The topic of ABS will continue to be dealt with operationally by the partner countries and the regional organisations.</p>
	<p>Output Indicator 1.2 One newly developed concept of an index indicator that determines the "business and cooperation climate"</p>	<p>Evaluation of the documentation of forums (e.g., UEFT Annual Conference or Global Platform on Business and Biodiversity) and the contributions to a possible "ABS Cooperation Index".</p>	

	<p>regarding ABS from the point of view of companies was discussed in relevant forums.</p> <p>Baseline value: 0 concepts (so far, no index indicator on ABS exists) Target value: 1 concept (2024)</p>	<p>Similar to the German Business Index and based on surveys, the “ABS Cooperation Index” is intended to provide information on expectations and dispositions of companies about the future use of biological resources and intended cooperation including fair benefit-sharing.</p> <p>Data collection: 02/2024</p>	<p>There is a willingness of companies in partner countries to invest in biodiversity-based value chains and in research and development with biological resources.</p> <p>During the national implementation of the CBD, the rights of the IPLC are recognized.</p> <p>There are industry associations in the partner countries that have shown an interest in dealing with the challenges related to ABS implementation with the goal of concluding benefit-sharing agreements on a long-term basis.</p>
<p>Output 2 Multi-stakeholder partnerships between providers and users of selected biological resources have been established.</p>	<p>Output indicator 2.1 11 multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) between providers and users with domestic, regional or international partners address the industry-specific implementation challenges for ABS-compliant value chains.</p> <p>Baseline value: 6 MSPs (6 sector-wide agreements in South Africa, e.g., for the rooibos industry) Target value: 11 MSPs (2025)</p>	<p>Evaluation of the bylaws and work plans of the MSPs supported by the project regarding the solution-oriented processes of ABS implementation challenges.</p> <p>Multi-stakeholder partnerships include representatives of industries using biological raw materials, genetic material and derivatives and associated traditional knowledge; competent authorities; indigenous and traditional knowledge holders and, where appropriate, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academia, with the long-term aim of concluding a benefit-sharing agreement.</p> <p>Data collection: 04/2025</p>	<p>Government institutions, which participate in the multi-stakeholder partnerships support the reduction of barriers to the development of biodiversity-based value chains.</p> <p>The Competent National Authorities (CNA) also apply the standards for the introduction of simplified ABS procedures for further non-commercial research.</p> <p>The negotiating position and legal certainty of agreements will be strengthened by the formalisation of IPLC rights.</p>
	<p>Output indicator 2.2 With the support of MAPs, 2 international research projects have implemented simplified measures for access to biological resources while sharing the benefits.</p> <p>Baseline value: 0 (no research projects are supported so far). Target value: 2 research projects (2025)</p>	<p>Evaluation of reports of the research projects which demonstrate a simplified access and report on benefit-sharing. This includes the documentation of participation in trainings and the use of the generated knowledge, materials and official documents of research cooperation (applications, permits, agreements).</p> <p>Data collection: 04/2025</p>	

<p>Output 3 Capacities of national and regional actors have been strengthened to integrate research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources and fair benefit-sharing into national trade and economic policies.</p>	<p>Output indicator 3.1 5 technical contributions on the integration of research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources and fair benefit-sharing have been introduced into the ongoing negotiations on the creation of the Pan-African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and its protocols/annexes. Baseline value: 1 (UNCTAD study supported by the project on the implications of the AfCFTA for trade and biodiversity) Target value: 5 technical contributions (2024)</p>	<p>Evaluation of the documented technical papers and meeting minutes of the contributions made with other institutional partners (UN Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD and the Environmental Department of the AU Commission) with regard to the successful integration of research and development, BioTrade and ABS into the negotiations of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Data collection: 02/2024</p>
	<p>Output indicator 3.2 8 joint measures by ministries of the environment and other ministries for the integration of research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources with fair benefit-sharing in national trade and economic policies have been initiated in partner countries. Baseline value: 3 measures (South Africa: Biodiversity Economy Strategy; Kenya: National Forum for the Development of Traditional Medical Devices, Benin: Simplification of ABS Regulations with the Agricultural Sector) Target value: 8 measures (2025)</p>	<p>Analysis of protocols, political declarations of intent and press releases documenting joint measures of ministries of environment, trade, economy, and agriculture with regard to the promotion of BioTrade and the use of biological resources in connection with fair benefit-sharing. Joint measures include e.g. the development of support and financing instruments for companies and local value creation, development of national bioeconomy strategies, exchange formats, campaigns, simplification of regulations, including harmonised implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Nagoya Protocol. Datenerhebung: 04/2025 Data collection: 04/2025</p>
<p>Output 4 The participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the negotiation of benefit-sharing agreements and the management of sustainable biodiversity-based value chains has improved.</p>	<p>Output indicator 4.1 80% of the 50 representatives of IPLC, of which 50% are women and 30% are young adults who have been qualified on negotiation processes, confirm that they have asserted their interests, based on examples. Baseline value: 0 improvements in the representation of interests (so far, there is no survey on the use of training and consulting content) Target value: 40 improvements in representation of interests confirmed by representatives of IPLC, including 20 women and 15 young adults (2025)</p>	<p>Standardised surveys of participants of training courses Young adults include the group of people aged 18-35 years. Data collection on a regular basis (12 months), starting 6 months after the training or the provision of consulting services.</p>

	<p>Output indicator 4.2</p> <p>80 % of a representative sample of representatives of IPLCs confirm an improved participation in the management of 4 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains.</p> <p>Baseline value: 2 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains with improvements (on Echinops in Cameroon; on Rooibos in South Africa)</p> <p>Target value: 4 sustainable biodiversity-based value chains with improvements (2025)</p>	<p>Data collection: Survey of IPLC representatives (sample: N = 15 per supported biodiversity-based value chain) using standardised questionnaires (differentiated by age and gender) with a scale of 5 from 1 ("low participation in management") to 5 ("excellent participation") at the beginning and towards the end of the project.</p> <p>IPLCs' involvement in the management of a value chain includes, for example, positive changes in the following areas: (a) leadership, (b) planning, (c) structures and processes, (d) human resources, (e) monitoring & evaluation. A confirmation of the improvement of participation in a value chain is considered to have been achieved with an increase in the value by an average of 2 points.</p>	
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Outputs	Key activities for outputs	Inputs / planned instruments and human resources	Assumptions
Output 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompanying of international working groups and organisation of webinars for the (further) development of ABS headline indicators in the GBF • Advising competent government institutions in partner countries on piloting the monitoring of ABS indicators • Advising actors in government and private sector on the design and testing of an index indicator that determines the disposition of companies with regard to ABS ("ABS Cooperation Index") • Advising actors in government and academia on the development of a typology of non-monetary benefits in the field of non-commercial research (e.g., in cooperation with the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities, CETAF), supporting unhindered research. • Advising affected stakeholders and stimulation of the international expert discussion on current and emerging topics, e.g., the use of digital sequence information of biological resources (DSI), as well as on the implementation of targeted training offers in coordination with the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD). 	<p>International long-term expert (27 expert months)</p> <p>National long-term expert (8,5 expert months)</p> <p>Short-term experts (13 expert months)</p> <p>Financing (176.000 EUR)</p> <p>Assets (2.171 EUR)</p>	<p>Actors from policy, business, academia and civil society are prepared to work together on new concepts for the effective implementation of benefit-sharing in the use of biological resources, which go beyond the narrow framework of the Nagoya Protocol.</p> <p>Research institutions and companies can be motivated to participate in MSPs.</p>
Output 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising government institutions on the development of databases on ABS-relevant companies in partner countries (e.g., with UNCTAD, trade/economy ministries) and the implementation of Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) processes in order to identify and motivate specific target groups important for the MSPs (entrepreneurs, representatives of the IPLC) • Accompanying the selection of eligible MSPs for selected commercially used raw materials: potential analyses, design and preparation of a call for expressions of interest • Advising actors in a sector or value chain on the development of 'Sector Development Plans' (SDP) and identification of targeted support offers (e.g., active participation of IPLC, technical advice, development of financial incentives, education and training, matchmaking, etc.) • Identification of ABS-relevant international research co-operations including South-South co-operations • Advising actors in government and academia on the application of a typology of non-monetary benefits in non-commercial research in return for the simplification of ABS approval procedures 	<p>International long-term expert (31 expert months)</p> <p>National long-term expert (28 expert months)</p> <p>Short-term experts (38 expert months)</p> <p>Financing (461.000 EUR)</p> <p>Assets (3.350 EUR)</p>	

Output 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of suitable entry points and advice on the integration of research and development, BioTrade and the use of biological resources with fair benefit-sharing in the negotiations of the AfCFTA (in co-operation with the GIZ-AfCFTA project and UNCTAD). • Conduct studies as a basis for informed policy decisions (e.g., transaction costs in relation to the benefits of ABS, gender-sensitive implementation of ABS). • Policy advice to government institutions and actors in academia and the private sector on mainstreaming of ABS and the implementation of ABS in connection with biodiversity conservation and promotion of trade and economic with simplified/harmonised ABS rules, as well as on gender transformative approaches. • Advising actors in government and training institutes on the institutionalisation of existing and new training offers (incl. Training of Trainers) and on the extension of Human Capacity Development on ABS to other sectors. • Accompanying the reappraisal of the experiences with SBCC approaches to address companies and local decision-makers, with the aim of creating (voluntary) incentives for benefit-sharing agreements. 	<p>International long-term expert (26 expert months) National long-term expert (23,5 expert months) Short-term experts (21,5 expert months) Financing (162.000 EUR) Assets (1.843 EUR)</p>	
Output 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and support of training cycles to increase the negotiating capacities of IPLC for ABS agreements as well as accompanying legal and expert advice. • Development and implementation of training programmes for representatives of IPLCs, especially women and young people, including exchanges with companies and scientific organisations that use biological resources (e.g., at their production/research facilities). • Advising and training IPLCs on recognition of rights on resources and participation and their implementation in the management of biodiversity-based value chains, e.g through the development of BCPs or comparable instruments. • Awareness raising and implementing SBCC-approaches on matters of ABS and applicable ABS procedures. • Creation of concepts to develop/transfer traditional use practices of IPLC into evidence-based "proof of concepts" and to apply for government R&D funding. 	<p>International long-term expert (25,5 expert months) National long-term expert (28 expert months) Short-term experts (32 expert months) Financing (381.000 EUR) Assets (3.600 EUR)</p>	

Annex II. Modul Impact Logic

