

Protected Areas and ABS: Getting Most of the Two

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Abstract

The Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the successfully implemented programmes at national level. Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 focusing on protected areas is expected to receive more support with focus on better management and governance of protected areas in terrestrial and marine ecosystems. This Report focuses on Element 2 of the PoWPA on issues related to access and benefit sharing and provides a review of actions, at national and global levels, on achieving this Element. The Report also provides recommendations related to integrating ABS related issues in protected area management at national level to effectively implement the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

Key Words

Aichi Biodiversity Targets, ABS, PoWPA, Protected Areas, national implementation, CBD Strategic Plan, Nagoya Protocol on ABS

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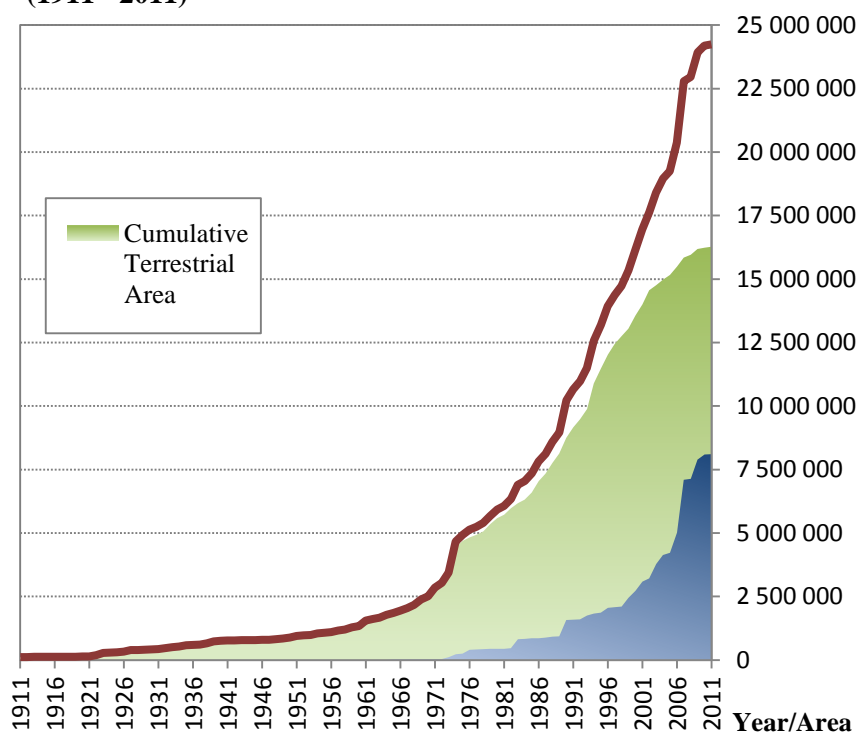
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1 Introduction

The term “protected area” is defined in Article 2 of the Convention as “a geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives”.

One of the most successful programme that is being implemented globally under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the one on protected areas (PA). The Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), adopted during CBD COP VII (Decision VII/28) received a lot of attention and support, including from the recent replenishments of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with total allocations of about USD 1,15 billion, during GEF 4 and GEF 5 cycles. Such focused attention on designation and management of protected areas around the world has resulted in increase in the number and coverage of protected areas as shown in the figure below.

**Growth in nationally designated protected areas
(1911 - 2011)**



Source: IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2012) Database on Protected Areas

2 Implementation of PoWPA

The PoWPA consists of 4 programme elements namely, direct actions for planning, selecting, establishing, strengthening and managing protected areas systems and sites (Element 1); governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing (Element 2); enabling activities (Element 3) and standards, assessment and monitoring (Element 4). Goal 2.1 of Element 2 focuses on promotion of equity and benefit sharing and has two specific suggested activities for the Parties to consider, viz,

2.1.1. Assess the economic and socio-cultural costs, benefits and impacts arising from the establishment and maintenance of protected areas, particularly for indigenous and local communities, and adjust policies to avoid and mitigate negative impacts, and where appropriate compensate costs and equitably share benefits in accordance with the national legislation; and

2.1.6. Establish or strengthen national policies to deal with access to genetic resources within protected areas and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, drawing upon the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization as appropriate,.

The link to access and benefit sharing in the above activities needs to be understood and assessed not only in the context of overall implementation of PoWPA but also activities related to implementation of Article 15 of the CBD on access and benefit sharing (ABS) and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. This paper provides an assessment of status of work related to Element 2 of PoWPA, opportunities to link ABS issues and management of protected areas and suggests ways to link complimentary implementation of Targets 11 and 16 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

With 107 of the 193 Parties to the CBD submitting the national action plans for PoWPA¹, it is worth to assess how countries are planning to achieve target 2.1 of the PoWPA. Of the action plans submitted, a total number of 87 actions by 50 countries during the timeline 2013-2017 have been indicated². This is a welcome trend. The Box below presents how countries are attempting to deal with Target 2 of the PoWPA.

However, review of global implementation of actions for Target 2.1 indicate that 2.63% activities completed, 7.89% activities had significant progress, 14.47% actions with limited progress, 32.89% activities and 42.11% had no activity planned³. Consolidation of the above indicates that less than 10% progress is reported, at global level, to deal with PoWPA target 2.1. This is a concern since uneven implementation

¹<http://www.cbd.int/protected/implementation/actionplans/> (accessed on 19 April 2014)

²<http://www.cbd.int/protected/implementation/actionplans/analysis/> (accessed 20 April 2014)

³<http://www.cbd.int/protected/implementation/default.shtml> (accessed on 20 April 2014)

of various targets could result in ineffective realization of overall work under the PoWPA.

Realizing the importance of protected areas in managing globally and locally significant biodiversity, the CBD COP 10 designed a global target (Target 11) to deal with managing protected areas which reads as follows:

“By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes”.

Country Responses to Target 2.1 of PoWPA

Bhutan: Assessing equitable sharing of benefits

Philippines: PA cost and benefits sharing assessment

Indonesia: Community involvement, benefit-sharing and sustainable development

Gambia: Community livelihood and benefit sharing

Ghana: Asset and Benefit Sharing

Cameroon: Promote the equitable sharing of benefits

Madagascar: Consider sharing benefits in protected areas / improved research / studies to establish and implement monitoring activities in protected areas

Yemen: Progress in promoting equity and benefit-sharing

Croatia: Assess equitable sharing of benefits

Serbia: Access and Benefit Sharing

Finland: Promotion of equity and benefit-sharing and assessment of costs and benefits

Romania: Access to genetic resources and fair distribution of benefits in the use of such resources (ABS)

Ukraine: Involvement of stakeholders, including local communities to management of protected areas, ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and costs associated with their creation and management

Tuvalu: Assessing equitable sharing of benefits and protected area governance

Grenada: Progress in assessing equitable sharing of benefits (2.1)

Yemen Establish and strengthen national policies to deal with access to genetic resources within protected areas and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.

(Source: <http://www.cbd.int/protected/implementation/actionplans/search/> Accessed on 20 April 2014)

As of now, 756102 sq.km of Earth is under protected area with about 12.9% under terrestrial area coverage. In addition to serving as sites for protection of significant biodiversity across the globe spread over diverse ecosystems, the protected areas also have proven to be important storehouses for valuable products based on bioresources.

3 The Nagoya Protocol on ABS

The Nagoya Protocol on ABS was adopted by Parties to the CBD during the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 10) in 2010. Article 15 of the CBD calls for actions by Parties to deal with issues of access to genetic resources and subsequent fair and equitable sharing of benefits. The Protocol will enter into force in October 2014.

The provisions of the Protocol include elements of prior informed consent (PIC) from the providers of the resources, mutually agreed terms (MAT) for access and provisions for sharing of benefits. The Protocol and its provisions call for cross-cutting actions on issues of use of genetic resources using predictable terms in a manner the actions contribute to conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components besides ensuring the benefits of use are shared with providers of the resources.

4 Issues of ABS relevant for PA management

Prospecting for useful products using biological and genetic resources (bioprospecting) in protected areas has yielded valuable commercial products leading to the perception that genetic resources found in protected areas are reservoirs of genetic material with commercial benefits. Such resources range from non-timber forest produce to medicinal plants to high value enzymes and genes with potential for future biotechnological applications^{4,5}.

Though such potential has been well documented and assessed, there has been limited attempt to link activities to sustainably manage protected areas with issues of access and benefit sharing. Little attention has been paid on tapping the potential of genetic resources present in protected areas for prospecting, except in a few countries, using ABS frameworks. With the adoption of Nagoya Protocol on ABS during CBD COP 10, the need to implement ABS related actions in protected areas gains more significance. A large part of this could be generally attributed to the fact that protected area managers in many parts of the world still consider protected areas as in-violate areas preventing access to any material from these areas. However, recent developments in innovative management practices of protected areas, including designating community conserved

⁴Reid, W.V., Laird, S.A., Meyer, C.A., Gamez, R., Sittenfeld, A., Janzen, D.H., Gollin, M.A., Juma, C. 1993 Biodiversity prospecting: using genetic resources for sustainable development, World Resources Institute. Washington DC.

⁵Sarah Laird, Sam Johnston, Rachel Wynberg, EstherineLisinge and Dagmar Lohan 2003 Biodiversity access and benefit sharing policies for protected areas. UNU-IAS, Yokohama

areas (CCAs) is beginning to change the mindset of long term and collaborative management of protected areas for securing not just conservation benefits from these areas but also economic benefits^{6, 7, 8}.

As mentioned in Goal 2.1 and activities 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of PoWPA, benefit sharing has been identified as one of the key issues in addition to governance issues in managing the PAs. However, it is important to mention that though the term benefit sharing is used in various papers and discussions related to protected areas, there has been no single explanation or definition to benefit sharing within the CBD, PoWPA and Nagoya Protocol. As detailed by Schroeder (2007)⁹, Parties to the CBD noted in decision VII/19B that relevant national definitions of benefit sharing shall be collated by an ad hoc open-ended working group. The working group published preliminary results in November 2004 and the existing definitions were identified (see table 1 below).

Definition of Benefit Sharing at National Level	Country
Taking part of (sic) benefit(s) of any kind arising from the utilization of genetic resources	Czech Republic
Monetary advantages sharing and deriving or not from exploitation of these genetic resources between possessor countries and users , but also at the level of possessor country in taking into account local communities and traditional knowledge	Madagascar
Means the sharing of benefits arising from the use, whether commercial or not of genetic resources, and may include both monetary and non-monetary returns	UK
It's an obligation that must be fulfilled in all actions related to access to genetic resources or to traditional knowledge. This obligation is derived from the Convention on Biological Diversity. This participation must be fair and equitable. To fulfill these essential requirements, before an authorization is granted, there must be access to information, sufficient time for resource supplier to independently analyse the information received and definition of control mechanisms regarding the use that will be given to the elements being accessed	Costa Rica

⁶UNEP/CBD/AHTEG-PA/1/3, June 2003.

⁷IUCN, 2000. Financing Protected Areas: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers. No. 5. Financing Protected Areas Task Force of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of IUCN, in collaboration with the Economics Unit of IUCN.

⁸IUCN, 1998. Economic Values of Protected Areas: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers. No. 2. Task Force on Economic Benefits of Protected Areas of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of IUCN, in collaboration with the Economics Service Unit of IUCN.

⁹Doris Schroeder, 2007 Benefit sharing: It's a time for definition. J. Med. Ethics 33:205-209.

Several arguments were made that the equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of conservation in protected areas is a goal in line with the democratization of conservation processes and advances in frameworks of social participation^{10, 11, 12}. It is also assumed that more the benefits are generated from protected areas the more opportunities for conservation at local level. In addition, experience shows there are greater chances that local communities will support the management of these areas if they provide continual benefits from managing such areas¹³.

Sharing of benefits equitably is understood to contribute to ensuring local livelihoods, slowing biodiversity loss due to enhanced management of resources, ensure rights based approach to managing protected areas and generate income for governance issues.

The following illustration from Gonzalez and Martin (2007) indicate the kinds of costs and benefits of managing protected areas. However, such assessments were largely undertaken in the past in the absence of a legally binding regime on ABS (the Nagoya Protocol) but recognize the contributions ABS could make to better management of protected areas.

Benefits derived from Conservation of Protected Areas

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report in 2005 categorizes the services and benefits provided by protected areas to local and international communities as provisional, regulatory and cultural services.

These benefits are multiple, direct and indirect, tangible and intangible and complex. Calculation of benefits from protected area management has been calculated in some cases and communities need to participate in designing such benefit accrual mechanisms.

¹⁰Mulongoy, K.J. and Chape, S. Protected Areas and Biodiversity: An Overview of Key Issues. UNEP-WCMC Biodiversity Series No 21

¹¹Scherl L.M., et al. 2004. Can Protected Areas Contribute to Poverty Reduction? Opportunities and Limitations. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland y Cambridge.

¹²González, A.M., y Martin, A.S. 2007. Equitable Sharing of Benefits and Costs Generated by Protected Areas. Innovations for Conservation Series. Parks in Peril Program. Arlington, VA, USA: The Nature Conservancy.

¹³Sarah Laird, Sam Johnston, Rachel Wynberg, Estherine Lisinge and Dagmar Lohan 2003 Biodiversity access and benefit sharing policies for protected areas. UNU-IAS, Yokohama.

Costs associated with the conservation of protected areas

The relation between conservation costs derived from establishing a protected area and derivation of benefits thereof should not be assumed using simple cost-benefit analyses. In practise such analyses is not possible since significant amount of opportunity costs are also involved in establishing a protected area.

However, there should a mechanism to estimate the costs and provide opportunities to derive the benefits from such areas. Such opportunities include restrictions on access, use and prospecting. Innovative options to derive benefits from provision of access should be explored by PA managers in a manner that contributes to securing the finances for enhanced management of the PAs as well as ensure the local communities derive benefits of participation in management.

5 Experiences in governance of PAs – Lessons for ABS

Commercial prospecting of genetic resources from national parks and protected areas is going on for several years. However, there has been lack of clarity on how, at national level, the park managers can mainstream and/or internalize the ABS principles into providing permits for prospecting. As detailed by Sarah laird *et.al* (2003)¹⁴, the protected area mangers have adopted different strategies to dealing with ABS issues, such as the prospecting arrangements in Yellowstone National Park in the United States where the park management sought to maximize revenues for the Park from bioprospecting partnerships, drawing criticism in the way PA management need to operate and genetic resources be used from such areas.

In several of the provincial protected area agencies in South Africa, for example, the park managers have chosen to await development on national ABS measures, refusing commercial collections until national legislation is in place. This is the case in several countries too. However, park management in African National Parks and EzemveloKwaZulu–Natal Wildlife Park, the Bwindi National Park in Uganda, Waza National Park in Cameroon, and Tai National Park in Cote d’Ivoire have taken pro-active, interim measures to deal with ABS issues without awaiting either the finalization of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS or national frameworks on ABS¹⁵.

¹⁴ Ibid, 2003

¹⁵ Ibid, 2003

With the adoption of Nagoya Protocol on ABS in 2010, it is important now to ensure that specific guidance be provided to protected area managers and communities conserving specific areas on ABS issues that are in line with the provisions of the Protocol and national priorities to secure equitable and fair benefit sharing agreements for prospecting. Any delay in securing this process and implementation will only delay in implementing the PoWPA Element 2 on governance and equity besides putting the entire potential bioprospecting in the back burner. This is neither useful for the users of genetic resources nor beneficial for the PAs.

6 The Importance of Protected Areas to ABS: Linking Target 11 and 16 of Aichi Targets

As mentioned before, protected areas are repositories of biodiversity that provide sustainable sources of biodiversity for conservation and use which could facilitate recurrent bioprospecting. The documented successes with bioprospecting within protected areas and their well-researched management and governance systems are important areas of learning for ABS practitioners wanting to develop and implement ABS frameworks. The demand for genetic resources, and the research and development in the pharmaceutical and other sectors persist. New technologies provide unprecedented opportunities for discovering novel compounds from genetic resources occurring *in situ*. For ABS practitioners, these examples are important sources of information on harbouring important biodiversity, as well as on the management of access and benefit-sharing within PAs.

There are many articles within the NP that are relevant to the linkages within PoWPA. Article 5 deals with fair and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms; Article 6 provides for access to genetic resources which includes prior and informed consent and mutually agreed terms and related issues; Article 7 addresses access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources; Article 8 provides for special considerations for non-commercial research; Article 13 deals with the establishment of national focal points and competent authorities; Article 18 provides for compliance with mutually agreed terms; and finally, the Annexure, which sets out examples of monetary and non-monetary benefits.

ABS policy for Protected Areas: issues to consider

The following issues need to be considered when contemplating an ABS policy for Protected Areas:

- Policy and regulatory linkages between prospective management options of PAs that are in line with the obligations of the Nagoya Protocol and national priorities on ABS – These can range from issuing prospecting permits to negotiating PIC, MAT and benefit sharing arrangements.

- Coordination between PoWPA and ABS focal points at national level – for effective coordination between PoWPA focal points and ABS focal points and competent authorities in drafting Protected Area-ABS policies at Protected Area system-level, involving all stakeholders, need to be addressed, including development of appropriate ABS frameworks at national level.
- Options for development of implementation frameworks for ABS, specific for PAs should be explored, for example involving Indigenous and Local Communities, based on Protected Area system-level policy.
- Frameworks of governance under various categories of PA management should also consider issues of ABS and related equity and fairness principle in addition to focusing on securing tenure and rights for indigenous and local communities.

Opportunities and Challenges for Protected Areas in relation to ABS

The opportunities and challenges for Protected Areas include identifying the commonalities and differences within the prospecting components of genetic resources in Protected Areas and ABS, the linking of ABS national frameworks with Protected Area management plans, enhancing awareness of issues of ethics, equity and governance within the Protected Area stakeholder community, developing endogenous capacities and know-how for protected area managers, indigenous peoples and local communities and ABS as management principles of protected areas and the identification and assessment of best practices, case studies, and model contractual clauses.

7 Way forward

Responding to the third objective of the CBD, the Nagoya Protocol is considered to be the most responsive international legal framework in its emphasis on ethics and equity in the context of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Key elements of the Protocol include the affirmation of the rights of States and indigenous peoples and local communities regarding genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge; identification of the conditions for access and utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, elaboration of benefit-sharing requirements; compliance with national ABS frameworks including respect for the customary laws and community protocols of Indigenous peoples and local communities and linkages with development through sustainable use of biodiversity.

Considering the significant achievements of countries in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the designation and management

of Protected Areas, a review of recent literature on bioprospecting and use of biodiversity indicate that Protected Areas form the core of actions that link communities, conservation and customary use practices. In fact the literature points to the critical importance of emerging Protected Area management practices especially in dealing with issues of justice, ethics and equity.

However, review of implementation of the PoWPA in 2010 found that while significant progress was achieved since 2004, implementation lags behind concerning the assessment of social costs and benefits of Protected Areas; ensuring the effective participation of indigenous people and local communities and the diversification of various types of governance as well as the improvement of management effectiveness and sustainable finance of Protected Areas.

With this in mind, the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and the development and implementation of domestic access and benefit-sharing (ABS) frameworks must now be harmonized with existing frameworks on Protected Areas. The main reason for this urgency towards harmonization is the potential for the cross-cutting nature of ABS law and policy to affect the governance and management of Protected Areas.

7.1 The Opportunity To Make Linkages

The Decisions X/1 and X/ 31 relating to ABS and Protected Areas, adopted by the 10th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the CBD offers a unique opportunity to consider the potential linkages between Protected Area management systems and ABS implementation at national level. With a number of parties to the CBD hastening to ratify the Nagoya Protocol and implement domestic ABS laws, it is critical to ensure that the ABS frameworks not only avoid conflicts with existing Protected Area frameworks, but are also harmonized with the aims of Element 2 of the Program of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) that focus on governance, participation, equity and benefit-sharing.

In order to ensure harmonization between implementation of ABS frameworks and the aims of the PoWPA, it is important to address potential linkages and conflicts that either exist or might arise in the coming months. An important aspect of ABS within Protected Areas that is yet to be understood among communities is that the state does not need to be the conduit for benefits related to Protected Areas. Indigenous peoples and local communities who are the actual primary governors of ICCAs according to PoWPA could be the direct beneficiaries. It has taken a long time before this was understood and accepted within PoWPA, and it would probably take even longer for the new ABS laws and policies to be understood.

ABS should not be seen exclusively as bioprospecting. Although reference is made to bioprospecting in most readings of the Nagoya Protocol, the requirements of ABS are broader than that. There are, for example, biocultural ecosystem services provided by protected areas, especially those that allow indigenous people to modify the environment

in certain ways to provide services, like ecosystem services and cultural habitats that require benefit-sharing.

Property rights and ownership issues need to be addressed, particularly in indigenous and community conserved areas where questions abound regarding the ownership of genetic resources. In addition, Article 10 of the Protocol provides for a multilateral mechanism for trans-boundary genetic resources which was a contentious issue during the negotiations. The contention was that trans-boundary genetic resources should not be viewed only as a nation to nation issue, but also in terms of sub-national issue. The reason for this is that sub-national trans-boundary genetic resources are extremely important to indigenous people since most of the resources are not located entirely on their reservations, but could also be found in Protected Areas, and which means that they may have had a hand in creating those genetic resources.

While it is crucial to explore techniques for extracting funding from bioprospecting, placing pressure on bioprospecting companies for payments may have an adverse effect. The reason for this is that bioprospecting is essentially a lottery system, and if the actual prospecting is taxed, many businesses that operate on a margin would become insolvent. An alternative may be to tax the winners instead; at the level of the samples, although the value of samples, even with the associated traditional knowledge, are not high.

While the Nagoya Protocol provides for state-to-state rights, but not for state-to-community obligations, linking the issue with PoWPA action programme could provide the opportunity since national and local action in securing state-to-community obligations are underway. These obligations are provided for in Article 10(c) and 8(j) of the CBD.

There is a great deal of variability in what is considered to be Protected Areas and what is considered to be bioprospecting. The classification of each is dependent on the interpretation of Article 2 of the Protocol. Similarly, there is still a blurry line between biotrade and ABS. The lack of information regarding the Protected Areas contribution to national income is extensive.

7.2 Benefit-sharing and PoWPA

Benefit-sharing in the context of PoWPA is considered in terms of both costs and benefits in a broader sense. Benefit-sharing in the context of the Nagoya Protocol is much more direct and reciprocal in relation to access to genetic resources. However, both are talking about opportunity costs for States. In Bhutan, for example, the constitutional mandate is to conserve 80% of forest cover and the concern among the citizens is that, the state cares more about the forests than the people. These issues raise important questions around costs and benefits arising out of the establishment and management of Protected Areas, for example: how does it link back to livelihoods and how are people on the ground involved in the entire process?

Target 11 of the PoWPA implies moving into broader landscapes and seascapes, which in turn implies a great deal of underlying tenures, governance types, etc. It also underlies the existence of conservation means and highlights the intersection between Protected Areas and ABS. Since ABS frameworks are being developed almost in isolation, it is necessary to address not only the existing systems of protected area management, but also the systems of the wider landscape in order to achieve synergies between the two areas.

The limits regarding sustainable use need to be identified and compared to what is achievable in a particular landscape or seascape to meet the expectation of equity, while still conserving representative and effectively managed Protected Areas. In Colombia there is an established ABS internal group within the Protected Area agency. This needs to be replicated in other countries to ensure greater participation by Protected Area practitioners in ABS processes.

Although many countries are reviewing their legislative frameworks to explore potential conflicts and harmonization with new ABS legislation, there are challenges in deciding what agency will be responsible for the implementation. The legislative review should therefore, be a meticulous exercise particularly because of its cross-cutting nature.

8 Conclusions

Future management of protected areas clearly needs differential management options as well as efforts to finance such management. Setting aside significant financial resources for managing protected areas as no-go zones will not be attractive for many governments. Deriving benefits, both tangible and non-tangible, from protected areas will emerge as a key challenge to protected area managers in the years to come. Using appropriate ABS mechanisms forms an important option for long-term, sustainable management of protected areas. Implementation of such national and local actions also directly contributes to realizing the objectives of the Nagoya Protocol besides effective implementation of its Article 9 on contribution to conservation and sustainable use. This was amply recognized previously prior to adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS but never was translated into actionable practice.

The options presented in Section 6 of the paper on way forward could potentially contribute to addressing not only the objectives of PoWPA in its entirety but also reduces the burden on financing protected area management. As mentioned earlier, focus on realizing Goal 2.1 and activities 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of PoWPA is rather limited and even the draft Fourth edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO 4) does not focus on these two sub-targets while assessing the role of protected areas in achieving the objectives and goals of the CBD Strategic Plan as well as realizing Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

The recommendation from Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Review and Implementation of the CBD (WGRI 5) calls for mainstreaming ABS issues across all relevant work programmes of CBD and

it is expected that such a call would be further strengthened during CBD COP 12 through a formal decision in this area.

With the agreement of replenishing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in June 2014 for the sixth round (GEF 6), focus on financing protected areas work will be re-energized and therefore this is an appropriate time for countries to develop specific work packages to link protected area management and implementing the ABS principles in such management options through appropriate on-the-ground activities. For this to be effective, the following four point approach could be suggested.

First, the protected area management plans should include focus on issues of ABS and related process and encourage sustainable and equitable prospecting actions.

Second, development of regulatory/legal/management frameworks to implement the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol should consider the current and emerging management practices of protected areas in the country and provide flexible options to deal with ABS issues within the protected areas.

Third, countries need to adopt a cohesive framework for managing protected areas that attract investments in such management options encouraging research and development in such areas rather than using the traditional approach of keeping researchers away from such areas.

Fourth, a specific biodiversity prospecting fund could be established that attracts all ABS related revenues from protected areas at local and national levels.

It will be a lost opportunity if countries do not see synergistic implementation of provisions of the Nagoya Protocol and PoWPA at this point. With about six years left to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and part of Target 16, time has come for us to design and develop implementable ABS projects in protected areas and ensure that the provisions of Goal 2.1 of PoWPA receive needed attention.

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