



## Bio-cultural Community Protocols : Africa and South Asia

Securing local communities' customary use of natural resources and protecting their traditional knowledge

### Project description

Natural Justice is working with communities to develop bio-cultural community protocols. These help communities assert their rights to manage their natural resources and regulate access to their traditional knowledge according to their values and customary laws.



### Business model

The bio-cultural approach is a new way of assisting indigenous and local communities to assert their rights to use their natural resources according to local custom and to protect their resources and traditional knowledge from unauthorized use.

Bio-cultural community protocols help communities articulate for other stakeholders how the law supports their management of natural resources and protects against the misappropriation of their traditional knowledge.

Natural Justice works with communities in Africa and Asia who face marginalization or potential misappropriation of their traditional knowledge.

### Scaling up activities

- Establish peer-to-peer networks of communities who develop bio-cultural community protocols in Africa and Asia.
- Deepen partnerships with NGOs and Community Based Organisations in Africa and Asia, building an international network of bodies supporting bio-cultural community protocols.
- Introduce the use of bio-cultural community protocols in other fields of environmental policy such as UN REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) and payments for ecosystem services.
- Work with UNEP to establish a website for community protocols.

### Immediate needs

Natural Justice requires assistance with:

- developing links to funding bodies
- governance advice.





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### Partnership

- ❶ **The ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa** supports Natural Justice with African-based projects and facilitates the involvement in regional initiatives.
- ❷ **UNESCO** is encouraging the bio-cultural approach in its biosphere reserves in Africa and Asia.
- ❸ **UNEP** is supporting work in Asia and has provided funding for a book on bio-cultural community protocols, released at the 8th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing.



### Social, environmental and economic impacts

**Social impact:** The development of bio-cultural community protocols constitutes a process of bio-cultural and legal empowerment within a community, providing for collective thinking about new issues or emerging legal frameworks. The protocol itself puts other stakeholders on notice that the community knows its rights.

**Environmental impact:** Indigenous peoples and local communities are best placed to manage their natural resources. Bio-cultural protocols help

communities to assert their rights to contribute to biodiversity conservation by their customary use and protection of natural resources.

**Economic impact:** Bio-cultural protocols lead to livelihood improvement by securing communities' rights to their natural resources and traditional knowledge. This provides them with the basis upon which to use their natural resources for their own purposes, engage in bio-trade or enter into benefit sharing agreements.

### Contact

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### SEED Partners

SEED is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other current partners are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.



### About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: [www.seedinit.org](http://www.seedinit.org)

### SEED Secretariat

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