



NBA Releases ₹14.88 Crore as Access and Benefit Sharing funds to Andhra Pradesh Forest Department

Till date, over ₹104 crore disbursed under ABS mechanism for Red Sanders conservation to Andhra Pradesh, taking NBA's total ABS disbursements beyond ₹143 crores

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The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has continued its succession of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) disbursements with the release of ₹14.88 crore (USD 1.65 million) to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. The funds are earmarked for the protection, conservation, regeneration, research and development, awareness creation, and capacity-building programmes related to Red Sanders, as benefit-sharing contributions arising from 29 Form-I applications.

With this release, India's cumulative ABS disbursements have crossed above ₹143 crore (USD 15.8 million). To date, the NBA has released over ₹104 crore (USD 12.5 million) to the State of Andhra Pradesh towards Red Sanders conservation as well as benefit claimers, and over ₹15 crore (USD 1.8 million) released to various states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha and Telangana.

Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), globally valued for its distinctive deep red timber, is endemic to limited pockets of the Eastern Ghats, notably in the Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa, Prakasam and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh. The benefit-sharing contributions have accrued from the auction of 1,115 tonnes of Red Sanders wood confiscated and seized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and subsequently auctioned by Central Government agencies, including the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd., MMTC Limited and PEC Limited.

Noteworthy to mention that through the Red Sanders access and benefit-sharing amount, NBA supported research projects on Red Sanders, covering conservation, sustainable use, genetic improvement, and value addition through reputed government research institutions like ICFRE-IFGTB, ICFRE-IWST, CSIR-IICB.

Field surveys across forest divisions of Andhra Pradesh resulted in the documentation of 1,513 genetic resources with geo-referenced traits and assessed over 15,000 standing trees for variability and reproductive behaviour. Seeds from elite resources were collected for ex situ conservation, with ongoing efforts to establish a National Red Sanders Field Gene Bank. Propagation technologies were strengthened through standardised tissue culture, improved germination, and high-success vegetative propagation methods. Preliminary Seed Production Area guidelines were also developed to support long-term sustainability.

Value-added products such as soaps, creams, lip care products, and wood coatings were successfully developed from bark and heartwood. Notably, Royalseema RS Soap® was trademarked (Trademark No. 5870030) and Royal Red lipstick met Bureau of Indian Standards specifications, demonstrating translation

of research into practical applications by ICFRE – Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore.

The initiative reaffirms the NBA's sustained commitment to fair and equitable benefit sharing, prevention of illegal trade, and strengthening of collective action in biodiversity governance. NBA is ensuring long-term protection of the ecological, genetic, and socio-economic values of Red Sanders by reinvesting ABS proceeds into conservation, scientific innovation, and community-linked development. These efforts collectively safeguard this endemic species for present and future generations while reinforcing India's leadership in biodiversity governance.

VM/SK

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