

# Thanakha's BioTrade market potential through the implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing in Myanmar

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## INTRODUCTION

- Rapid growth of worlds' demand for biological resources creates new economic opportunities but also threats to local biodiversity.
- The Nagoya Protocol (NP) on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) seeks to safeguards user's access to biological resources and traditional knowledge (TK), in exchange for sharing the benefits derived from their use with the provider country.
- Myanmar, one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world, signed the NP in 2010, but implementation is still at early stages.
- Thanakha is a NTFP that has been traditionally used by Myanmar's people as a skin care and cosmetic product for over 2000 years.
- Current interest of global cosmetic industry is increasing the BioTrade export potential associated with Thanakha

## OBJECTIVE

- Analyse the potential of implementing ABS or other measures to support the development of a sustainable Thanakha Market System (MS) and reduce threats to local biodiversity and TK.

## METHODS

### Area of study (Figure 1)

- 5 townships in Myanmar's Dry Zone: Ayardaw, Yesagyo, Myaing, Pauk and Pakokku.

### Data collection

- Structured interviews with 35 Thanakha farmers.
- Semi-structured interviews with 17 Thanakha key informants.
- Field observations (Figure 2).

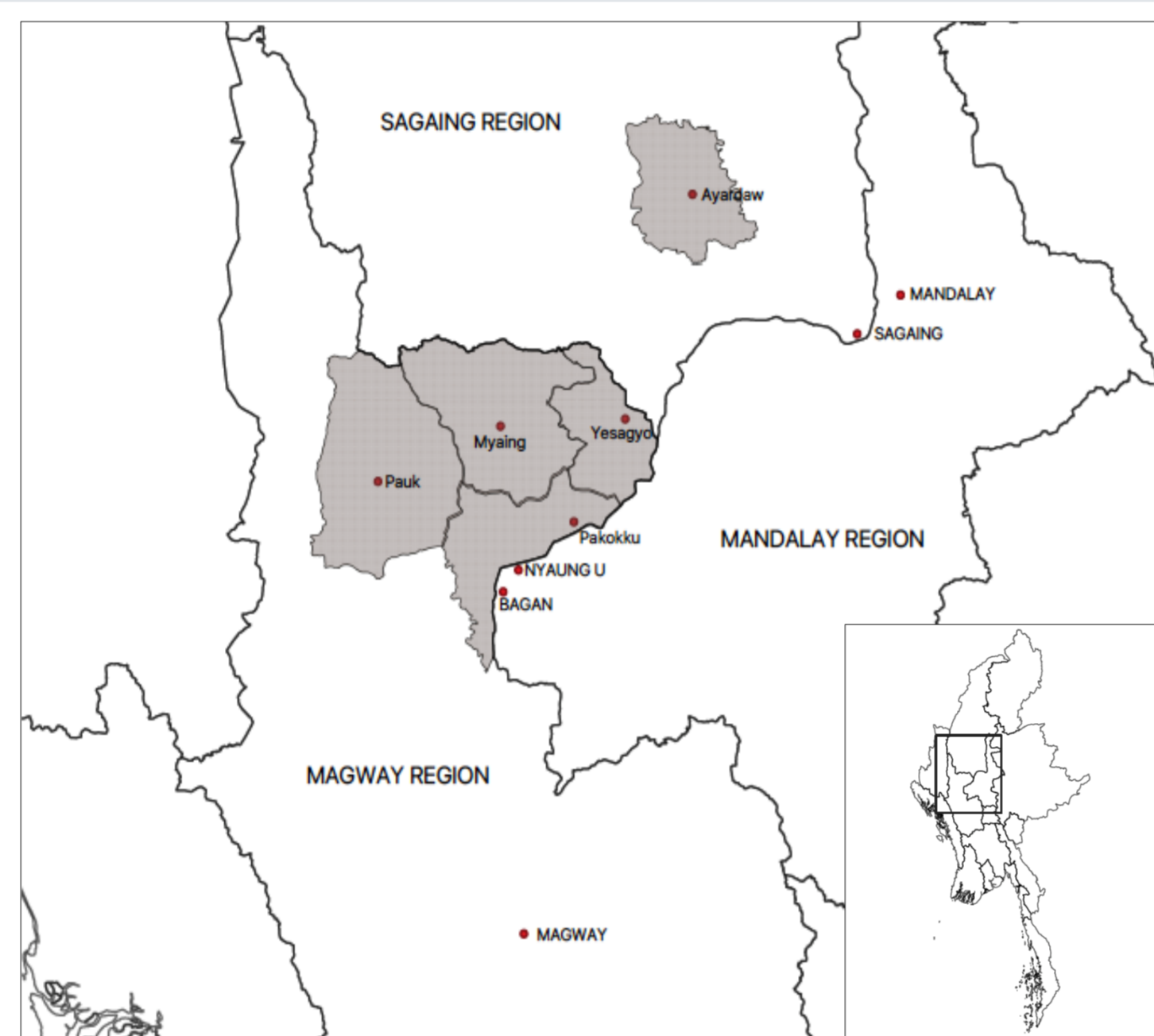


Figure 1. Study area



Figure 2. Women wearing and trading Thanakha in Myaing market.



Figure 3. Level of infrastructure of a local Thanakha processing plant in Myaing.

## RESULTS

### ABS in Myanmar

- Weak legal and institutional ABS framework.
- ABS implementation is supported by international projects and national initiatives.
- Existence of mechanisms that grant access to GR, but lack of benefit sharing negotiations.

### Thanakha Market System (Figure 4)

- Land tenure system limits farmer's access to loans.
- Lack of processing technology for meeting export demand (Figure 3).
- Weak certification and testing practices at manufacturing level.

### ABS and Thanakha in Myanmar

- Thanakha is associated to high agrobiodiversity levels and traditional knowledge.
- Current R&D activities could trigger ABS obligations.
- Low level of awareness and knowledge about ABS.
- Current level of ethical sourcing practices:
  - Low level of traceability
  - Medium access to relevant information by farmers
  - Low access to fair prices by farmers
  - Low commitment of private sector with local development
  - Lack of agreements when sourcing for R&D and commercial purposes from foreign institutes/companies

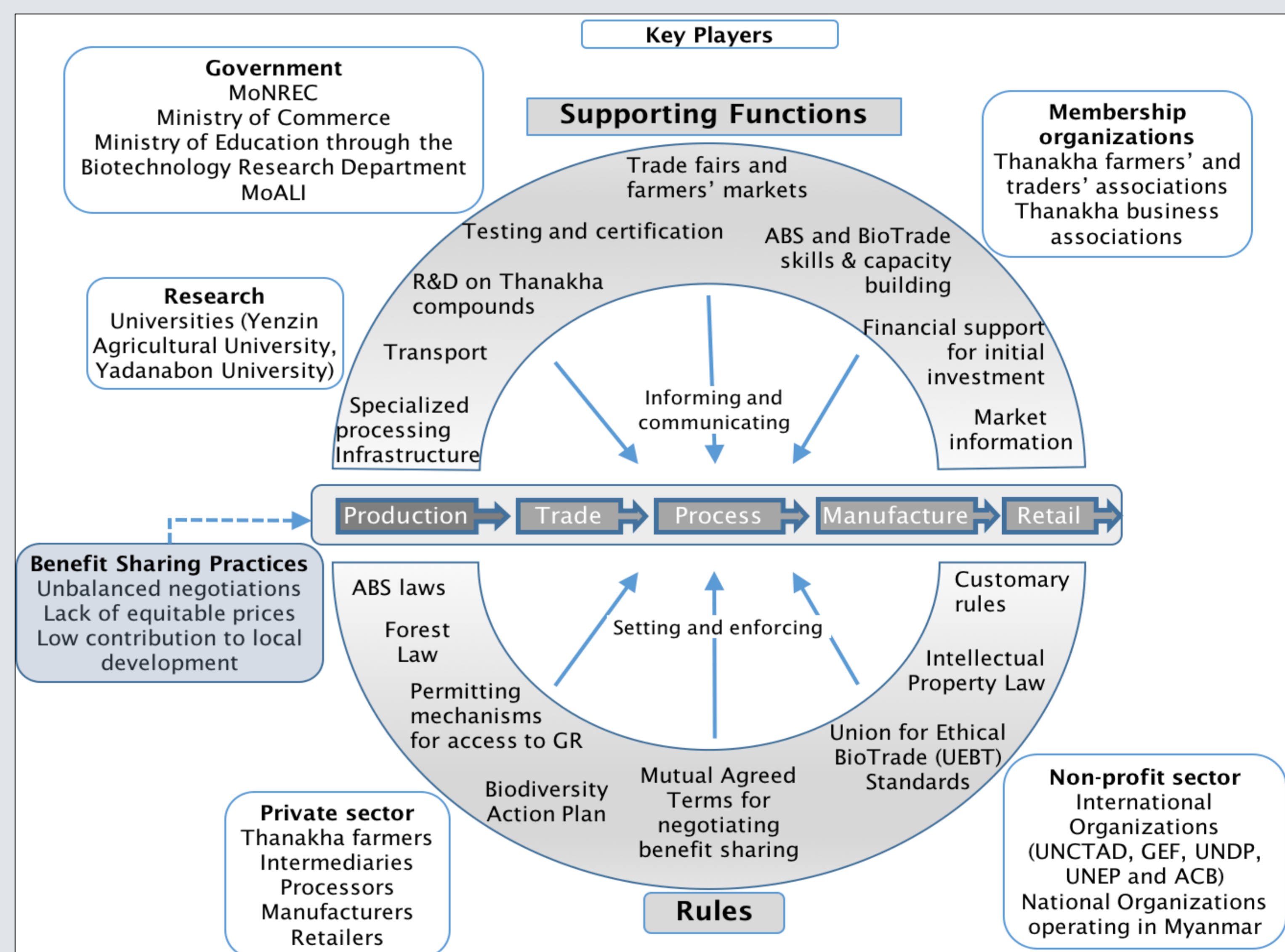


Figure 4. Thanakha Market System in Myanmar's ABS context.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- BioTrade principles and ethical sourcing practices are extremely relevant for promoting sustainable trade of Thanakha and supporting the implementation of ABS requirements in Myanmar.
- Current constraints of Thanakha market system are related to farmers' access to capital, local supplying capacity of processed material, and company's fulfilment of international market standards.
- Future efforts should consider solving current land tenure issues, raising awareness about local benefits rights, improving farmer's access to information for fair negotiations as well as improving traceability mechanisms along the value chain.
- Benefit sharing should focused on rural infrastructure, protection of traditional breeder's rights, Geographical Indications (GI), and strengthening Thanakha Farmer's Associations.