Turning science into action: how BioSE-RDC is supporting biodiversity policy in the DRC

As the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) updates its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), BioSE-RDC is helping scientists, policymakers and public institutions work together to turn biodiversity knowledge into practical national action.

By Daniel Mukubi Kikuni and Abisha Mapendembe

When the Democratic Republic of the Congo recently completed the technical validation of its updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), it marked more than a planning milestone. It showed how science, policy and implementation can be brought together through an inclusive national biodiversity platform.

At the centre of this process was the **National Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Platform of the DRC — BioSE-RDC**.

From the outset, BioSE-RDC created a space where scientists, policymakers, public institutions and other stakeholders could work together as partners shaping a shared national framework. This was not a one-off consultation. It was an ongoing dialogue embedded throughout the NBSAP revision process.

Creating a space where science informs decisions

Early in the process, BioSE-RDC convened discussions around a critical question: what role should scientists play, not only in informing the NBSAP, but also in supporting its implementation?

Researchers were invited to reflect on their strategic contribution and on how scientific knowledge could better support national priorities, policy choices and investment decisions. This helped shift the role of science from providing background information to actively strengthening the credibility, relevance and usefulness of the NBSAP.

As a result, scientists and researchers contributed to the technical foundation of the strategy and helped support alignment with international commitments, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Addressing a familiar challenge openly and constructively

As in many countries, one ongoing challenge has been ensuring that scientific knowledge is consistently reflected in policy and decision-making processes. What made this process important was how that challenge was addressed.

Through BioSE-RDC, an open and structured dialogue allowed scientists to explain why research does not always influence policy and how this gap could be narrowed. Together, participants identified practical roles for the scientific community, including:

- providing robust, context-specific expertise;
- supporting the integration of research findings into national policies;
- strengthening the scientific credibility and legitimacy of the NBSAP;
- providing information and data on biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
- helping inform national priorities and biodiversity-related investment and financing decisions.

From a document to a shared national framework

By anchoring the NBSAP revision within BioSE-RDC, the updated strategy became more than a policy document. It became a shared national framework, understood and owned by many of the actors involved in its delivery.

The platform helped ensure that the NBSAP is connected not only to global biodiversity goals, but also to national planning processes and reporting obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Supporting continued engagement through CABES

Through CABES, support has focused on strengthening BioSE-RDC as a practical mechanism for connecting science, policy and implementation.

This included support for a scientists' workshop through the platform to identify concrete priorities and pathways for continued scientific engagement in NBSAP implementation. The aim is to ensure that scientific contributions are not only recognised but also used in the next phase of national biodiversity action.

Sharing experience beyond national borders

The experience of BioSE-RDC is also resonating internationally. On 17 November 2025, during two side events held in Belém on the margins of the 30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the platform's role in strengthening the science-policy interface was shared with an international audience.

These exchanges generated discussion among participating delegations and highlighted the wider relevance of inclusive national biodiversity platforms as vehicles for translating global science into national action.

Why inclusive national biodiversity platforms matter

The experience of the DRC shows that inclusive national biodiversity platforms can play a central role in making biodiversity strategies work.

By creating trusted spaces for dialogue, interpretation and collaboration, platforms like BioSE-RDC help ensure that scientific knowledge informs decisions, that policies are owned nationally, and that global commitments are translated into national implementation.

As countries across Africa continue to revise and implement their NBSAPs, the lesson from the DRC is clear: when science is embedded in an inclusive national platform, it does not just inform policy — it helps make policy work.

About the authors

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Optional website image caption

Suggested caption:

BioSE-RDC is helping connect science, policy and implementation in support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

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