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CONTACT: Don S. Doering, Executive Director at [info@jrsbiodiversity.org](mailto:info@jrsbiodiversity.org), (206) 454-7915.

## **JRS Announces Three Grants to Research Biodiversity Data Policies in Africa**

SEATTLE, Washington – January 16, 2015 – The JRS Biodiversity Foundation today announced funding for three new grants that support biodiversity policy research. These grants will create a better understanding of the policy landscape among African countries that shapes the supply of and the demand for biodiversity information.

Sub-Saharan Africa faces enormous challenges to protect biodiversity while achieving sustainable growth. Decision-making in all sectors will need accessible and high quality biodiversity information and analyses. Public policies for information technology, government transparency, conservation, and environmental impact assessments are all examples of domains in which law and regulation determine the access to biodiversity information. There has been little policy research to date to understand whether and how national policies are supporting biodiversity information access and how biodiversity information, in turn, supports sound policy. The grants announced today target this knowledge gap:

[African Technology Policy Studies Network](#) – Biodiversity Informatics Policy Landscape, \$50,050

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) will study and analyze existing policies, institutions, and legislation that influence the value and access of biodiversity information. ATPS will do this by reviewing available literature on policies to find what is currently known on this issue, and then use that to develop focus groups, surveys, and workshops with experts to further understand how existing policies affect biodiversity information. The project's analyses will help decision makers and policy researchers to understand the relationships among information and conservation and development goals and the policy environment in other African countries.

[Conservation International Foundation](#) – GDSA Country Policy and Bioinformatics Projects Review, \$42,800

The Gaborone Declaration of Sustainability in Africa (GDSA) represents 10 African countries' effort to better understand and manage their renewable natural capital. Current knowledge and information is not sufficient to support the GDSA goals. Conservation International is evaluating the current situation in each country with respect to policy and natural capital accounting. The JRS-funded project will review and catalog the existing policies in each GDSA country and in two other like-minded countries which influence the creation, use, and value of biodiversity data and information. This project will result in a comprehensive database of relevant policies and a publicized report to generate discussion about existing policies and to assist with future planning and decision making.

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JRS Announces Three Grants to Research Biodiversity Data Policies in Africa *continued*

[Institute of Policy Analysis and Research-Rwanda](#) – Biodiversity Informatics Policy Research, \$49,400

The Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR)-Rwanda focuses on providing research and analysis to inform policy makers in Rwanda and the region. The goal of this project is to identify, document, and assess policies, legal frameworks, and technical and cultural factors in the region that relate to biodiversity informatics, in order to inform policy makers and researchers in related fields. The project will conduct a content analysis and literature review, and consult stakeholders to better understand existing policy frameworks and strategies affecting biodiversity informatics. By reviewing and describing the current policy framework relating to biodiversity informatics, the project will catalog best practices for promoting the use and sharing of biodiversity information.

“The Foundation is excited to support these grants that will enrich the understanding of the complex interplay among public policies, access to biodiversity data, and decision-making,” said Executive Director, Don Doering. “We anticipate that policy research through a lens of biodiversity information will inform policy development and ensure that investments in biodiversity data will be guided with knowledge of the policy context and institutions.”

### **About the JRS Biodiversity Foundation**

Founded in 2004, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation focuses upon supporting biodiversity data and knowledge that are used to preserve and to sustainably manage biodiversity in those developing economies where biodiversity is most threatened. Since 2007, the foundation has awarded \$13.2M in grants.

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