

Report about the Special Meeting of the Steering Committee 2011

11 to 12 June 2011, Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations, Wendake, Québec, Canada

Participants

Members of the Steering Committee

Bente Herstad, NORAD, Norway
Christian Glass, BMZ, Germany
Christina Bronnum-Johansen, MIM, Denmark
Heiko Warnken, BMZ, Germany
Kabir Bavikatte, Natural Justice
Kauna Schroeder, Namibia
Morten Walløe Tvedt, FNI
Ossama El-Tayeb, Egypt
Pierre du Plessis, CRIAA-SA/DC
Prudence Galega, Cameroon

Samuel Diemé, DPNS, Senegal
Søren Mark Jensen, MIM, Denmark
Valerie Normand, SCBD

Secretariat of the Initiative

Andreas Drews, GIZ
Barbara Lassen, GIZ
Suhel al-Janabi, GeoMedia GbR
Susanne Reyes-Knoche, GIZ

Observer

Hartmut Meyer, Consultant

Objective

To further the discussion which began during the last meeting of the Steering Committee in February 2011 on the implications for the ABS Capacity Development Initiative in shifting its focus from supporting the African Group in the negotiation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS towards supporting national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

To discuss the implications of the membership of the EU in the ABS Capacity Development Initiative through its BIOPAMA Programme and the resulting broadening of the regional scope to the Caribbean and Pacific group of countries.

Welcome, objectives, programme

Mr. Heiko Warnken who chaired the meeting, welcomed the participants and outlined the objective of this special meeting of the Steering Committee of the ABS Initiative. He then asked the participants to briefly introduce themselves and state their expectations for the next one-and-a-half days of discussions.

Presentation of the results of the recent evaluation of the Initiative's work

During May 2011 a Project Progress Review took place for the GIZ implemented programme "Implementing the Biodiversity Convention" as basis for planning of the next phase from 04/2012 to 03/2014. Barbara Lassen presented the results and conclusions relating to the work of the ABS Initiative which is a component of this programme (for details refer to the attached presentation). She finally announced that the relevant chapters of the final report will be made available to the members of the SC in July 2011.

The resulting discussion focused on the following issues:

- Whether to prioritize and to identify certain flagship ABS cases or model countries that could act as best practices or better focus on facilitation and look at other ABS related initiatives that are taking off with the aim to complement them or even create synergies.
- The progress review provides an excellent indication of the strengths of the Initiative. Before embarking on the next phase it is important to reflect how the ABS Initiative can sustain the quality of work that has been done so far.

- Building on the trust of the African Group gained so far, transparency of decision making is essential for the further success and the members of the African Group in the SC should report back to their constituency about the outcomes of the SC meeting.
- Linking ABS to the debate about Green Economy could be a key challenge for the next phase of the Initiative.
- The work of the ABS Initiative at the regional level is critical for the work at the national level since the activities at the regional level secure the political mandate and create the impetus for the national level work. Furthermore, there is also some need to support African Group in preparing itself for the ongoing international discussions and negotiations within the ICNP.
- The success of the Initiative is based on working with all relevant stakeholders, incl. Government, ILCs, academe, and the private sector while bringing technical expertise into the political arena.

The new EU-ACP BIOPAMA Project

The European Commission and the Secretariat for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) agreed early 2011 to implement the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Project (BIOPAMA) with an ABS component for five years with an EU contribution of 20 Mio Euros of the 10th European Development Fund. Andreas Drews presented the key elements of the project. The ABS component constitutes a 5 Mio Euro contribution to the ABS Initiative to be implemented by the Secretariat of the ABS Initiative under the guidance of its SC (for details refer to the attached presentation).

In the resulting discussion it was highlighted that the SC of the ABS Initiative will remain independent from the governance structure of the BIOPAMA project and that one representative of the Secretariat of the ABS Initiative will represent the ABS Initiative in the SC of the BIOPAMA project.

Further news and developments

The members of the Secretariat of the ABS Initiative informed the SC on a number of relevant news and developments since the last meeting of the SC early February 2011.

- The private sector is increasingly interested in the work of the ABS Initiative. During the yearly conference of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) in May 2011 in Paris a number of companies and research institutions approached the ABS Initiative to ask for advice.
- A public-private-partnership (PPP) project of GIZ and UEBT finally took off early 2011. The objective of the project is to raise awareness among UEBT members in Africa and Europe on ABS issues and to analyse biotrade supply chains in Africa in order to identify ABS relevant elements and to develop audit tools to this effect.
- Also since early 2011, funded by the ABS Initiative, UEBT and NJ are exploring the potential of using BCPs in the ABS/biotrade supply chains with pilot projects in Peru, Brazil and Madagascar.
- Triggered by the political awareness, which was created for ABS by the last Pan-African ABS Workshop in Morocco, a national kick-off ABS workshop took place late April 2011.

Decisions / Follow up

- *The Secretariat should write a short paper discussing possible collaboration with the private sector. Key questions:*
 - *How to cope with the demands from business?*
 - *Criteria how to select business partners for the development of ABS partnership*
 - *Potential conflict of interests?*

Presentation of the amended and adapted Workplan and Budget 2011 of the ABS Initiative

Andreas Drews explained that so far all planned activities in the Workplan 2011 as approved by the SC in February 2011 have been implemented. He further highlighted that the shortfall in the Danish contribution for 2011 (from 650.000 Euro to 450.000 Euro) can be compensated to a large extent by reduced funding requirements for the two planned new positions in the Secretariat which will at the earliest be filled by October 2011 and to some extent by the EU contribution. New activities have to be included to address the broadening of the regional scope of the ABS Initiative:

- To inform the delegates of the Caribbean and Pacific countries about the BIOPAMA project and its ABS component an information dinner was organized during ICNP 1 in Montreal. The delegates welcomed the project and highlighted that support for national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol is urgently required.
- To enable sound and needs based planning of activities for the two new regions (Caribbean and Pacific) two assessment missions will be undertaken by the Secretariat ideally back-to-back with the NBSAP workshops planned by the SCBD for these two regions in October and November 2011.

After some questions for clarification the amended and adapted Workplan and Budget 2011 were approved by the SC as they were presented.

What it takes to catalyze ABS implementation and create functioning ABS partnerships

After a presentation by Suhel al-Janabi outlining the functions and roles of an initiative aiming at capacity development, needs to fill to be able to catalyze the development of best practices and scaling these up to a regional scale, a broad exchange on views and experiences took place which extended into the second day of the meeting. The discussion evolved around the following key issues:

- How best the need for best practices and functioning ABS partnerships can be addressed – by supporting and developing a few individual cases or nurture existing ABS cases that have the potential for scaling up rather than just for show casing.
- At the one hand countries need to develop and implement ABS policies and on the other hand resource providers have to learn how to negotiate contracts. To be able to address these different kinds of capacities the ABS Initiative needs to involve its partners and where needed identify other partners and build complementary relationships with them.
- The need for a time-line that outlines the short, medium and long term priorities of the ABS Initiative facilitating to identify the priorities accordingly.

Presentation of a draft time-line for the work of the Initiative

As requested by members of the SC Suhel al-Janabi presented a draft timeline for the further work of the ABS Initiative during its next phase. The presentation highlighted the need for parallel support for developing ABS regulations at the national/regional level and facilitating ABS partnerships with the private sector at the local level enabling to develop the urgently required best practices as a starting point for scaling up at national and international levels.

The resulting discussion highlighted

- the difficulty for prioritizing ABS related capacity development activities as many needs require to be addressed simultaneously. This has to be reflected in any timeline that is to be developed.
- the multitude of tasks which need to be run in parallel requires to clearly identify the relevant partners and outline how they will work together to support the short, medium and long-term goals of the Initiative. This synergy between the Initiative and its partners

must be displayed – e.g. supporting countries to ratify the Nagoya Protocol is done by the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD).

- the need for some criteria to identify those countries on which the focus will be set or which pilot cases are chosen by the Initiative. This will enhance the transparency of decision making.

Decisions / Follow up

- *The Secretariat shall elaborate a compilation on different capacity development fields in which the Initiative will intervene in order to support the implementation of ABS. Also criteria to decide which actors / countries to support and which not to support in that sense have to be set up.*
- *The Secretariat should develop a more detailed timeline of short, medium and long-term goals (one-year, three-year and five-year) goals that also outlines the short, medium and long term priorities of the Initiative and identifies the priorities accordingly and provide that as soon as possible to the SC. Those timelines should not be too detailed but describe general priorities and activities that will be achieved in the short, medium or long term.*

Options for a new governance structure of the ABS Initiative

With the EU becoming a member, who also broadens the regional scope of the ABS Initiative governance structures of the ABS Initiative have to be adapted for several reasons: (1) So far only one donor explicitly supports ABS implantation in the Caribbean and the Pacific, (2) available funding for the Caribbean and the Pacific is small as compared to Africa, and (3) the number of countries in each of the two regions is about only one third of the number of African countries and are members of larger regional negotiation blocks (GRULAC; Asia and Pacific) in the ABS process.

Andreas Drews presented an option outlining a common SC covering strategic decision making for the ABS Initiative as a whole to ensure that the ABS Initiative continues to exist as “one initiative”. Programming of workplans and budgeting at the operational level could be done within regional sub-committees in which only the relevant members and partners would be represented.

During the discussion it became obvious that many open issues regarding the steering and governance of the BIOPAMA project are not yet answered and that it would be most appropriate if the Secretariat of the ABS Initiative would prepare a number of background and information papers for the SC to have a sound basis for the required restructuring of the Initiative’s governance structure.

Decisions / Follow up

- *The Secretariat should develop a short paper on the different governance models that exist for comparable initiatives and circulate it amongst the SC members to provide information for decision making on the way forward.*
- *At this stage there should not be a joint ACP annual meeting since the ICNP negotiations are still underway and the African Group needs to use these Pan-African meetings to coordinate and discuss with African stakeholders.*
- *The Secretariat should develop criteria and terms of reference for SC members (role and mandate of members, observers and donors; balanced representation of the recipients) and circulate it amongst the SC members.*
- *A result oriented report of the SC meeting will be established and published on the Initiative’s website. Internal minutes should document the whole process of discussion.*

Andreas Drews and Suhel al-Janabi

Co-Managers of the ABS Capacity Development Initiative