

FIJI GEF PROJECT: ACCESS BENEFIT SHARING

Discovering nature based products and building capacities for the application of the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and Benefit Sharing (abs) in Fiji

Mr. Savenaca Kaunisela
Permanent Secretary of iTaukei Affairs
Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Nasese, Suva



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1. CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY

- Ratified in 1992 its objective is to:-
 - address gradual loss of biodiversity.;
 - Encourage conservation and sustainably use biological diversity,
 - **the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources (GR).**

The Nagoya Protocol (24th October, 2012) requires measures be developed to access genetic resources:-

- i. prior informed consent,
- ii. mutually agreed terms according to legislation or regulatory requirements of Contracting Party.
- iii. benefits arising including those associated with TK is covered.



2. Pressing Issues

In-depth knowledge of ABS concept – at all levels especially at decision making level

Expertise on ABS especially legal

research methods

how resources are acquired,

the formal relationship between those who have historically held these resources and associated indigenous knowledge (TK),

and parties who seek this knowledge for commercial purposes.

Land and marine tenure system- resource ownership



3. National Context : Fiji's GEF ABS

July 2014 MTA and DOE signed Fiji ABS project endorsed:-

1. Discovering active compounds for pharmaceutical and agrochemical uses from organisms in marine areas; (scientific survey & transfer knowledge)
2. Operationalization of ABS Agreements and Benefit Sharing;
3. Increased capacity to operationalize Nagoya obligations (awareness programme, administrative systems and procedures and establishment database



- Stakeholders: range of stakeholders from communities (managing their local areas through the FLMMA initiative), DOE, FIPO, National Trust, Ministry and Pharmaceutical Companies.
- Each stakeholder identified with specific responsibility itemised.
- The existence of FLMMA as marine conservation sites initiated under the FLMMA project at the consent of the communities. (15 of the 420 sites)
- Remuneration will be paid out –through establishment of a new Trust, or an existing trust but this must be determined by the community.



4. Approach by Fiji Government

A. Guidelines and Procedures

- i. National ABS Framework aligned to Bonn Guidelines provides for transparent processes that will assist stakeholders on approaches and processes to facilitate access to genetics.

The framework puts measures to ensure :-

- prior informed consent is observed,
- mutually agreed terms are established
- monitoring and transparent processes are in place.



- ii. Developing a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Framework aligned to PIC Protocols is vital . Purpose is:-
 - a. to encourage development through a transparent process to trigger community ownership;
 - b. provide and allow for the documentation of each;
 - c. instruction when carrying out community consultation.

- iii. The draft Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Policy is focused on ABS but emphasis is on EC; this will provide an excellent template to draw on when attempting to develop an ABS legislation.



B. MONITORING ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE (MEC)

remains the biggest challenge

The move towards environmental sustainability commenced in 2011, policies endorsed would assist MEC efforts: -

NATIONAL ITAUKEI RESOURCE OWNERS COMMITTEE (NTROC)

Is a bid to encourage resource owners to effectively manage their resources, representatives from PC and discuss ABS, REDD PLUS, other issues affecting environment including space and sub-surface issues. More importantly it is a representative forum for resource owners.

The appointment of Conservation Officers(2014) within the 14 provinces, will assist with the implementation of resolutions passed by the NTROC committee and monitoring (funding from external sponsors ie private foundation – Packard Foundation.



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. Cultural Mapping - Mapping TK & EC aligned to international and regional agreements and the utilisation of to determine compliance and set standards is vital to ABS process (9 of 14 provinces completed since 2010; about 630 of 1170 villages)

. NGO/ Research/Consultants Registration Database- Concerned with activities occurring in Provinces, developing a registration database is vital to monitor activities but to ensure sustainability and continuity of community projects.



5. Challenges and Needs

• Proper and appropriate awareness packages

• Translation of concepts into local languages

• Access to multiple funding sources;

• Implementation of FPIC and standard reporting templates and procedures;

• Appropriate monitoring mechanisms;

• Acquiring appropriate Information and technology

• And skilled personnel to oversee each stage including implementation.

• Harmonization of the two treaties (Nagoya protocol- marine bio-prospecting and ITPGRFA Treaty –
land- biodiversity)

• Increased capacity to operationalize Nagoya obligations (awareness programme, administrative
systems and procedures and establishment database)

• Role of government involvement



Lessons Learned

Marine bio-prospecting experience in Fiji since 1990s before ABS ratification

Resource-owners interest due depleting rate of resource

Recognition of the value of genetic resources

Value adding project – recent National GEF

ABS GEF funded projects has opportunity for strengthening multi-government collaboration

Fiji LMMA Network work with communities on natural resource management

Existence of research interests in the academic field- USP

Existence of other enabling legislations , eg EMA 2005 and EPS Act 2002

6. Conclusion

Reminded words of George Bernard Shaw:

“ Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their mind cannot change anything’

Yes ABS is foreign but acknowledging the benefits for developing nations, change is inevitable, with commitment and passion we can determine how it will benefit our nation.

