



November 2013
2nd Caribbean ABS Workshop

Hosted by the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, Jamaica.

Organised by the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, in collaboration with the Caribbean Community Secretariat and SCBD

25 to 29 November 2013, Kingston, Jamaica

Background

On 03-04 September 2012, the ABS Initiative in cooperation with the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CCS) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) convened the *1st Caribbean ABS Workshop* in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago followed by the *Second Regional Workshop on Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*. On 08 Sep 2013, the CCS convened its *Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for COP-11 of the CBD* at which the delegates were, amongst other topics, informed about the state of Nagoya Protocol and the state of the ongoing international negotiation and implementation process.

The main outcome of the *1st Caribbean ABS Workshop* with regard to further activities in the region were lists of activities that could potentially be supported by the ASB Initiative, the CCS and the SCBD. Out of the 8 Fields of Actions of the ABS Initiative, the participants agreed that activities falling under the topics of developing ABS policies and strategies, ratification support, traditional knowledge and valorisation strategies should be in the focus of future activities in the region. The SCBD will support its Members in all matters related to ratification, awareness raising and funding opportunities. The CCS underlined that it could work on regional level on the development of relevant regional policy, capacity building and related training issues and provided a list of possible activities. The extent to which the CCS could be involved would be dependant on the availability of resources.

The delegates of the CARICOM workshop following the ABS workshop formulated a set of needs at the national and regional level with regard to ABS issues and the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The delegates also recommended "*that the CARICOM Secretariat take the lead in promoting the issue of traditional knowledge in the Community, including the importance of implementing obligations under existing treaties (WIPO) relating to this issue and for its mainstreaming into the strategic development programmes of Member States*" and also "*that Member States finalise their national consultations on this issue with a view to finalising the regional position*".

The *1st Caribbean ABS Workshop* finally set up an Interim Steering Group to give input in the forthcoming regional discussions and to support the preparation of the *2nd Caribbean ABS Workshop*. The 2nd workshop should elect a Regional Steering Committee that would represent the region in the ABS Initiative which also covers Africa and the Pacific.

From 26-28 June 2013, the CCS, supported by the ABS Initiative, convened a *Regional Training Workshop on Drafting Legislation to Support Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol*. While some CARICOM countries reported to have administrative and/or legal provisions in place related to access to genetic resources, it became apparent that these frameworks need to be reviewed and strengthened especially with the view on benefit sharing. Further awareness-raising in respect of the Nagoya Protocol is essential, given the low rate of ratification by Caribbean countries, and the implications of the Protocol not only with respect to access and use of genetic resources, but also potential benefits/challenges related to research, technology transfer, agriculture, economic development, and traditional knowledge and cultures.

Objectives

- Building on this background, the *2nd Caribbean ABS Workshop* is designed to gather participants from governments, indigenous peoples, local communities, academia, NGOs, industry and the private sector. Specific objectives for the workshop are to:
- Discuss strategic approaches for initiating national processes for the ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and to develop basic mechanisms and instruments for effective implementation of ABS systems;
- Exchange information, experiences and lessons learned regarding the rights of indigenous and local communities over genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge as well as mechanism for their involvement in decision making processes; and
- Share information and experiences with regard to existing permit systems for biodiversity research and appropriate monitoring instruments for genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge used in R&D and commercialisation.

Expected Outputs

- Recommendations on strategic approaches to support ratification and national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol;
- Recommendations how to integrate ABS issues in existing systems of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity and income creation for local communities;
- Recommendations on regional ABS issues and tasks that could be followed by the CARICOM Secretariat;
- Recommendations on approaches to recognise rights of indigenous peoples and local communities over genetic resources and associated knowledge; and
- Identification of specific bioprospection and utilisation cases that can be further elaborated as model cases in the context of the ABS Initiative.

Participants

Up to two national delegates from each of the 16 Caribbean ACP Member States will be invited by the co-organisers. Support for one delegate from each of the Caribbean Overseas territories will also be provided. Further, selected regional and national representatives of indigenous peoples, local communities, academia, NGOs, industry and the private sector will also be invited to attend the workshop. Resource persons of the Secretariat of the CBD, the CARICOM Secretariat and the ABS Initiative will be present to support and facilitate the discussions. The Workshop will be conducted in English.

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