

Meeting of the Pacific Steering Committee 2014

13 November 2013, Mercure Hotel, Potts Point, Sydney, Australia

Participants

Members of the Steering Committee:

Clark Peteru, SPREP
Elizabeth Munro, Cook Islands
Trinison Tarivonda, Vanuatu

Observers:

Alison Schwaddling, SPC
Erie Tamale, CBD Secretariat (SCBD)
Geoff Burton, Consultant

Secretariat of the Initiative:

Andreas Drews, GIZ
Kabir Bavikatte, UNU-IAS

Rapporteur

Anna Bertram, SPREP

Welcome and Introduction

Andreas Drews, manager of the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

Elizabeth Munro was elected to chair the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda:

It was suggested to skip the progress report “from Suva to Sydney” as all participants have attended the 5th Regional ABS Workshop for the Pacific where this presentation was held on the first day. All Participants agreed. The presentation can be downloaded at <http://www.abs-initiative.info/countries-and-regions/global/australia/5th-pacific-sub-regional-abs-workshop>.

Planning the new phase of the ABS Initiative

The first part of the presentation by Andreas Drews focused on the finding of the external evaluation of the ABS Initiative’s programme phase 2012-2015. The evaluation was carried out between November 2013 and February 2014 by the consulting company “denkmodell GmbH”. It aimed at measuring the performance of the Initiative and at drawing lessons for programme management and the conceptualization of a next programme phase beyond 2015. The evaluation was based on the OECD-DAC criteria – relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, sustainability – and incorporated the findings of the EU result orientated monitoring on the ABS Initiative – a standardised and formalized evaluation process – which was conducted in November and December 2014 in three countries (Cameroon, Guyana and Cook Islands)

A detailed presentation about findings of the evaluation can be downloaded at <http://www.abs-initiative.info/countries-and-regions/africa/benin/workshop-8th-pan-african-abs-workshop> . The full evaluation report is available at <http://www.abs-initiative.info/about-us/approach>.

Based on the evaluation a number of challenges for national implementation were identified which need to be addressed during the next project phase:

- Building regional capacities for capacity development
- National translation of the Nagoya Protocol (NP) for all concerned stakeholder
- More effectively support the development of ABS compliant value chains and negotiation of ABS agreements
- Improving facilitation of learning and exchange

The second part of the presentation highlighted 2014 the key elements of the 'Draft Programme Document 2015-2020' of the ABS Initiative. Building on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation the **intervention logic** for the new phase was redesigned to fully address the necessity to increase support for national implementation processes. The **results matrix** establishes an outcome which can be attributed to the interventions of the ABS Initiative and an objective to which the ABS Initiative contributes but which can only be achieved with contributions of other relevant actors. Based on the results matrix three **core implementation processes** were identified which together with the management processes and auxiliary processes explain the intervention logic of the ABS Initiative for achieving its outcome and objective.

Project implementation will follow a **step-by-step approach** with short term, medium term and long term perspectives. Each term has different approaches on national, regional and international level according to the implementation time. The **modes of delivery will be flexible and dynamic** with direct country support using specific formats, tools and products based on the country needs. Experiences and best practices for developing regulatory ABS frameworks and value chains will be made available at international level. **Small country teams** on both sides, the ABS Initiative and the partner country, will ensure consistency of work in the case of staff turnover and broaden the implementation base in the countries.

At the end of the presentation Andreas stated that the role of the ABS Initiative will include **identification of partner or pilot countries**, leading of country teams, coordinating work of partners, networking, monitoring, initiating innovative implementation processes, and amplifying ABS capacity development. It was stressed that the work and relationship with the different partners (partners in delivery, regional organisations, and international organisations) is very important. Furthermore Andreas expressed the interest of the ABS Initiative to further **explore the possibilities to contribute to national and regional GEF funded projects**.

Work Plan and Budget 2015

Andreas highlighted that the demand of Pacific island states for support and in response the engagement of the ABS Initiative in the Pacific region has reached a level which requires closer attention and management. As a result the ABS Initiative is considering that Kabir Bavikatte will take the role of a **regional coordinator for the Pacific** to ensure continuity and consistency of the ABS Initiative's support to the region. Where and when Kabir would be based in the region needs to be discussed especially in light of the upcoming regional UNEP/GEF ABS project which will be executed by SPREP.

Andreas further explained that new funds under the European Development Fund (EDF) will be available the earliest mid 2016 after the ACP Secretariat and the EU Commission have agreed on the projects for funding under the 11th EDF. The current EU funds of the ABS Initiative will be fully spent during the first half of 2015 and at this stage it is unclear how much funds from other donors will be available for the work of the ABS Initiative in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The resulting lively discussion identified several approaches for responding to these challenges:

- By combining the yearly regional ABS workshop with the inception workshop for the GEF project the ABS Initiative could limit its funding to provide trainers and/or resource persons without having to fund travel cost and DSA for participants. Such support could be attributed as “in-kind contribution” of the ABS Initiative to the GEF project.
- Considering that the ABS Initiative will be supporting the region at least until 2020 if EU funding will be approved under the 11th EDF in 2016 whereas the life time of the GEF project is limited to three years it was highlighted that close collaboration of the SPREP implemented GEF project and the ABS Initiative will be crucial to ensure synergies and best use of funds on both sides. It was mentioned that the absorption capacities of countries are also a critical factor to consider when planning activities.
- It was highlighted that the GEF project not only increases the capacity in the countries but also develops the capacity in SPREP to provide ABS related support to the stakeholders in the countries. To this end the Project Management Unit (2 staff) of the GEF project will be augmented by consultants and SPREP staff. Furthermore it was noted that SPREP is getting funding (e.g. from New Zealand, Australia) to implement the Strategic Plan, which includes ABS (will get build more into the new Strategic plan end of 2015). There was consensus that Kabir would be a good match as a coordinator of the GEF project.
- In order to put the Nagoya Protocol higher on the ACP agenda it was stressed that it would be very important if countries send a letter to the ACP mentioning the importance of ABS and the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in the region. SPC mentioned that they have a template letter for countries available for such purpose.

In light of this the **following decisions** on the way forward were taken:

- *SPREP will assess the budget implications for covering costs for regional workshops and trainings in 2015 and 2016 by the GEF project assuming that the ABS Initiative can only cover costs for trainers and/or resource persons.*
- *SPREP will discuss with the consultants and UNEP the feasibility to bring Kabir on board of the GEF project ensuring in this way close coordination between the work undertaken by SPREP and the ABS Initiative.*
- *The ABS Initiative will submit the workplan and budget for 2015 in February 2015 for approval to the Pacific Steering Committee when hopefully substantive information will be available on funding and the collaboration potential with the SPREP executed GEF project.*
- *The ABS Initiative will explore alternative funding sources within the EU to bridge the gap between the end of the current project phase and the expected EU funding under the 11th EDF.*
- *Countries represented in the Pacific Steering Committee will – supported by SPREP – send letters to their ACP Ambassadors in Brussels and/or the ACP Secretariat urging to continue the funding support to the ABS Initiative under the 11th EDF.*

19 January 2014 – Anna Bertram and Andreas Drews