

Negotiation Skills in the ABS Arena

*Two trainings hosted by the
Nambian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET)*

17th to 19th September and 22nd to 24th September 2008, Windhoek, Namibia

Background

These trainings are part of the **ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa**. Background information about the Initiative and full documentation of previous workshops and events is provided on www.abs-africa.info. This website was launched under this Initiative to provide a platform for information exchange and it is envisaged to develop it further into an **ABS Clearinghouse for Africa**.

Negotiations between different stakeholder groups play a crucial role in the development and implementation of ABS legislation and regulations at the international as well as at the national level. Furthermore, getting to mutually agreed terms (MAT) with appropriate benefit-sharing regulations is vital for successful bioprospecting agreements. However, practice reveals that negotiating partners are often not equally empowered to sit at level eyes at the negotiating table.

Therefore, the development of negotiation skills is mentioned as one of the key issues in the *CBD Action Plan on Capacity-Building for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing*, which was adopted by COP 7 in February 2004, as well as in the capacity-building needs assessment undertaken during the conceptualisation phase of this initiative (www.abs-africa.info/cbneeds.html).

Not necessarily unique to the ABS arena, complex negotiation processes in the field of sustainable development, environmental protection or resource conservation involve working with many different partners, interest groups and funding bodies, and require constructive negotiating skills. Stakeholders must be able to spotlight topics, represent their interests, develop workable solutions and at the same time maintain good relations with the negotiating parties. Furthermore, in the varied relationship structures between actors with differing degrees of power and divergent interests, some stakeholders may find that they are not exactly in the strongest position.

Objectives of the training

After the training, participants will be able to find constructive and sustainable solutions to both bilateral negotiating situations and complex group negotiations in the environmental arena. Particular consideration will be given not only to specific situations and topics taken from the ABS arena, but also to intercultural aspects of negotiating.

Training contents

The training is based on the Harvard method. This is the world's leading negotiating concept and is used both in the political arena and in bilateral and multilateral negotiating situations in everyday and professional life. The training will consist of the following elements:

- Assessing your own personal negotiating style
- Avoiding situations in which parties bargain over positions
- Separating and appropriately treating people and the problem
- Analysing own interests and those of the other party
- Inventing and using options

- Using objective criteria
- Developing a best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA)
- Negotiating in delegations: dynamics, strategic roles, planning negotiations
- Taking into account (inter-)cultural negotiating patterns

The following **teaching tools** will be applied:

- Short interactive lectures and discussions using visual aids
- Experiments and simulation exercises with bilateral and multilateral negotiating situations
- Seminar reader to accompany the course

Participants

The up to **15 participants in each of the two trainings** include ABS National Focal Points and representatives of Competent National Authorities for ABS, negotiators in the last meeting of the ABS Working Group, staff of national research and development institutions, NGOs from the local, national and regional level, staff of international institutions, as well as relevant private sector representatives including farmers and breeders.

Preference will be given to participants from Southern Africa, as the training is being offered in the other African regions as well.

Dates and venue

The trainings will be held from

- **17th to 19th September 2008 (T1)** and
- **22nd to 24th September 2008 (T2)**

in Windhoek, Namibia.

Contact

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