

Third ABS Capacity Development Workshop for Africa

hosted by the

Ministère de l'Environnement, des Forêts et du Tourisme

24th to 28th November 2008, Antsiranana (Diego Suarez), Madagascar

Background

This workshop is 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 the Initiative to provide a platform for information exchange and it is envisaged to develop it further into an ABS Clearinghouse for Africa.

The first continent wide workshop under this initiative was held in November 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa, and the second in December 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. A number of workshops with regional or issue based focus and trainings have been organized since then under the Initiative, including the Ministerial Meeting on the Seychelles in preparation for the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP 9) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the recent briefing for the African negotiators in Bonn, Germany, prior to COP 9.

The workshop in Madagascar will mark the transformation of what began as the Dutch-German ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa into a multi-donor initiative as well as the move into negotiation of operational text for the international ABS regime.

Objectives of the workshop

Building on this background the objectives of the workshop are to

- take stock of the first implementation phase (2006-2008) of ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa and provide guidance for its second phase from 2009-2011,
- foster the implementation of ABS regulations at the national and local level by exchanging experiences with bioprospecting cases in the region – new cases and follow-up on case studies discussed in previous workshops under the initiative – and build a broad basis for the development of best practices for ABS in Africa, and
- reflect on the ABS related outcomes of COP 9, prepare for the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Compliance (Namibia) and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Concepts, Terms, Working Definitions and Sectoral Approaches and to support the formulation of operational text for the international ABS regime of the African Group.

Programme overview

The workshop will consist of the following elements of work:

Towards best practices for ABS

Shedding light into bioprospecting experiences is essential to come to practical and realistic solutions for regulating and implementing ABS highlighting approaches ensuring compliance by users of genetic resources. A field visit and discussion with stakeholders involved in the bioprospecting activities of the International Cooperative Biodiversity Group (ICBG) in Northern Madagascar will provide insights and first hand experiences in a long-term programme aiming to link drug discovery, biodiversity research,

conservation and development. For an overview on ICBG's activities in Madagascar see <http://www.wlbcenter.org/icbg.htm>.

Specific tools for the management of the negotiation process of bioprospecting agreements and for ABS related communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) will be introduced and discussed.

Linking up to the negotiation of the International ABS Regime

The agenda for the negotiation of the international ABS regime will be presented. Building on the experiences in the presented bioprospecting cases, recommendations for African positions on the agenda items "compliance" and "concepts" will be formulated and compared against first drafts of operational text for these agenda items.

The ABS Africa Initiative: review of the first phase and the way forward

The not unexpected high-intensity roadmap for the negotiation of the International ABS Regime provides guidance for the implementation of the Initiative for the coming two years. Taking stock of the achievements so far will provide the basis for the discussion of the roadmap until COP 10.

Products of the workshop

- Contributions to the compilation of bioprospecting case studies and experiences reports.
- Recommendations for operational text for the agenda items of WGASB-7 as input for the planned African Delegates briefing prior to WGABS-7 in the first quarter of 2009.
- Tentatively a report that will be transmitted to the CBD Secretariat for distribution as an information document for the 7th meeting of the Working Group on ABS.

Participants

The up to 70 participants include private sector representatives involved in biotrade and bioprospecting, ABS National Focal Points and representatives of Competent National Authorities for ABS, negotiators in the last meeting of the ABS Working Group, relevant international institutions as well as NGOs from the local, national and regional level with practical experiences in the implementation of relevant projects and/or business initiatives.

Date and venue

The workshop will be held from 24th to 28th November 2008 in Antsiranana (Diego Suarez), Madagascar. Simultaneous interpretation English/French/English will be available for most of the workshop sessions.

Contact

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