

TRAINING COURSE TO BUILD AFRICAN CAPACITY IN ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

A Short Course Presented by the University of Cape Town, South Africa
and the ABS Capacity Development Initiative

Harare, Zimbabwe
1-5 June 2015



Photo: Frank Vassen



WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A COURSE ABOUT ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING?



The use of genetic resources and the sharing of benefits arising from this use have received considerable attention over the past two decades. Not only is there increasing recognition of the interdependencies of countries on the world's genetic resources, but so too is there greater awareness of the potential benefits that arise from the use of these resources for poverty alleviation, food security, biodiversity conservation, technology transfer, and the improvement of research and scientific capacity. The development of the internationally binding Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has given impetus to this interest, and, combined with a proliferation of related national laws and policies, has highlighted the considerable capacity constraints that exist in ABS implementation.

By the end of 2014, four years after the Nagoya Protocol was adopted in Japan, 92 nations had become signatories to the Protocol, and 52 had ratified it – among them more than 20 African nations. Numerous activities have been initiated to respond to the Nagoya Protocol and to the challenge of implementing ABS, intending to lead to an increase in ABS knowledge and capacity. Nonetheless, a number of constraints remain. Many of these are linked to the fact that ABS – and indeed the CBD – bring together a complex mix of scientific, conservation, trade and legal elements that touch on a wide range of controversial and difficult issues, from the implications of new biotechnologies through to the protection of traditional knowledge, the patenting of life, and broader concerns about globalisation and corporate control over food

supply and healthcare. Such complexities present particular challenges for capacity building, and require solutions that are cross-sectoral in nature, wide-ranging in scope and that bring together a range of diverse understandings and stakeholders.

African countries face particularly acute capacity constraints in implementing ABS at the national and regional level. On the one hand, many have very diverse and unique biological resources and rich repositories of traditional knowledge, which attract high levels of bioprospecting. On the other hand, most African countries have spiralling levels of poverty, massive development needs and limited technical capacity to deal with these problems. Regulating and managing ABS under such circumstances is clearly a substantial challenge.

THE TRAINING

To help overcome such constraints a five-day training course will be held from **MONDAY 1 JUNE to FRIDAY 5 JUNE 2015** in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The course will be co-hosted by the Zimbabwean Ministry of Environment and the Genetic Resources and Biotechnology Institute.

The training course was originally designed by the Environmental Evaluation Unit (EEU) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, where it was held for the first time in January 2010. A second course was presented in collaboration with Strathmore University in Nairobi in October 2011, followed by a third course held in Gaborone in February 2013, and a fourth presented on the island of Zanzibar in May 2014. All the training courses have been conducted in cooperation with and with the financial support of the multi-donor ABS Capacity Development Initiative.



WHO CAN ATTEND AND WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS?



This fifth course will be open to English-speaking participants from around Africa.

The training will comprise a mix of lectures, group and pair work, role-playing exercises, discussion, and practical sessions. At the end of each day, a short questionnaire will test participants' knowledge. A one-day field trip will complement the theoretical part of the programme.

Leading thinkers and practitioners will present on a variety of topics including:

- Concepts underpinning ABS
- International policy and legal frameworks for ABS
- The Nagoya Protocol
- Developing and implementing national laws and policies for ABS
- Roles of different ABS stakeholders
- Agriculture and ABS
- Negotiations in the ABS process
- ABS tools – e.g. permits, contracts, material transfer agreements, benefit-sharing agreements
- The bioprospecting process and industry
- Benefit sharing and biotrade
- Traditional knowledge issues
- Intellectual property rights
- Biopiracy and rights

After the training it is expected that participants will:

- Have a good understanding of the concepts and principles underpinning ABS
- Be familiar with key provisions of the Nagoya Protocol

- Have knowledge of the variety of tools available to manage and regulate ABS, and ways in which ABS agreements, policies and laws can be developed, negotiated, and implemented
- Be familiar with the key debates in ABS and the positions adopted by different stakeholders
- Be in a better position to coordinate local ABS activities and participate in national, regional, and international networks

Who can attend and what is the selection process?

FORTY PARTICIPANTS will be selected to attend the course, drawn from Anglophone African nations. We encourage and will prioritise attendance from institutions, organisations and countries that have not yet had an opportunity to participate in the course.

Minimum requirements for participation are:

- Involvement in ABS activities in own country,
- At least three years of experience in a relevant field,
- An ability to take the training outcomes forward in a concrete way, and
- Competence in English.

All sectors and professions are welcome to apply. Anticipated participants include policy makers, parliamentarians, legal advisors and legislators, and government officials from environmental, agricultural and trade departments, international and national research institutions, those involved in biodiversity programmes, the private sector, NGOs and CBOs.

However, if the course is over-subscribed the organisers will select applicants to ensure an appropriate balance. Junior and mid-career professionals who wish to improve their understanding of ABS and the topics indicated are welcome to apply.



WHAT WILL THE COURSE COST?

Training fees, travel costs (including transfers, visas and flights), accommodation, and three meals per day will be covered by the ABS Capacity Development Initiative. Additional hotel services such as laundry, telephone calls, room service, bar purchases, and other incidental expenses will be for participants' own accounts.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?

Simply fill in the online application form at <http://bio-economy.org.za/abs-training-course/>

or write to the course coordinator - Jaci van Niekerk at jaci.vn@gmail.com who will send you the form to complete and return via fax or email.

The closing date for applications is **FRIDAY 30 JANUARY 2015**. Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their application by **MONDAY 9 MARCH 2015**.

CORE TEAM

COURSE DIRECTOR:

Associate Professor Rachel Wynberg

RESOURCE PERSONS AND FACILITATORS:

Peter Munyi
Roger Chennells

FURTHER QUERIES?

For queries regarding course content, the selection process etc., please contact **COURSE CO-ORDINATOR JACI VAN NIEKERK** at:

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For queries regarding logistics, flights, visas and dietary requirements, please contact **COURSE ADMINISTRATOR FAHDELAH HARTLEY** at:

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