



# About the ABS Clearing-House

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## THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE



<http://absch.cbd.int>

### INTRODUCTION

The Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABS Clearing-House, ABSCH) is a platform for exchanging information on access and benefit-sharing established by [Article 14](#) of the Nagoya Protocol, as part of clearing-house mechanism under [Article 18, paragraph 3](#) of the Convention. The ABS Clearing-House is a key tool for facilitating the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol by enhancing legal certainty, clarity and transparency on procedures for access and for monitoring the utilization of genetic resources along the value chain. By making relevant information regarding ABS available, the ABS Clearing-House helps users access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and providers fairly and equitably share in the benefits arising from their utilization.

### THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE IS TO SHARE INFORMATION IN ORDER TO:

- Assist **users** in finding information on how to access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge; and
- Assist **providers** in receiving information related to the utilization of their genetic resources once they leave the provider country's jurisdiction.



- **Access** – Enhancing legal certainty, transparency and clarity on how to access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.
- **Benefit-sharing** – Contributing to increase opportunities for sharing benefits from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.
- **Compliance** – Assisting to ensure compliance with ABS measures and transparency in monitoring the utilization of genetic resources through the value chain.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) was negotiated in order to provide greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge by:

- Establishing more predictable conditions for access to those resources; and
- Helping to ensure benefit-sharing when genetic resources leave the contracting Party providing the genetic resources.

Researchers and businesses need legal clarity, certainty and transparency when accessing genetic resources and/or associated traditional knowledge. Without such legal certainty, potential users of genetic resources and/or associated traditional knowledge could be less eager to invest in bioprospecting and researching activities, as their activities may lead to controversy and allegations of misappropriation or misuse of these resources or knowledge.

Providers of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, on the other hand, want to ensure that benefits arising from the utilization of their resources are shared in a fair and equitable manner once the resource or knowledge leaves the country.

## THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE CAN HELP EVERYONE GET WHAT THEY WANT

### What Providers want:

- Control over access to their own genetic resources (GR) and traditional knowledge (TK)
- Ensure that users comply with all conditions set in mutual agreed terms (MAT)
- Assurance that the entitled benefits arising from utilization are received in accordance with MAT

### What Users want:

- Access to GR and associated TK
- A clear understanding about how to access GR and TK
- Legal certainty for utilizing GR and TK when due process has been followed

### What everybody wants:

- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits
- Sustainable use of biodiversity
- Conservation of biodiversity

The Nagoya Protocol's provisions on access, benefit-sharing and compliance provide a framework that aims to address the concerns of both users and providers. However, in order to translate the Nagoya Protocol into practice, Parties need to create the necessary conditions and take the measures required by the Protocol to ensure that a national framework is in place to implement ABS at the national level and enable the development of ABS agreements for the benefit of all involved in the process. It is in this context and with this aim that Parties to the CBD included [Article 14](#) in the Nagoya Protocol, which establishes the ABS Clearing-House.

The Nagoya Protocol establishes the ABS Clearing-House, as part of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention, as a means for sharing information related to access and benefit-sharing, and in particular its goal is to provide access to information made available by each Party relevant to the implementation of the Protocol.

The ABS Clearing-House allows countries to share information on procedures for accessing genetic resources and monitor the utilization of the resources along the value chain. The ABS Clearing-House plays a key role in enhancing the legal certainty and transparency that both providers and users of genetic resources, as well as associated traditional knowledge, are looking for.

## THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE IS HELPING TO MAKE THE "ABC'S" OF ABS A REALITY

### The "ABC's" of ABS:

- **Access** – Enhancing legal certainty, transparency and clarity on how to access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.
- **Benefit-sharing** – Contributing to increase opportunities for sharing benefits from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.
- **Compliance** – Assisting to ensure compliance with ABS measures and transparency in monitoring the utilization of genetic resources through the value chain.

A fully functional ABS Clearing-House also represents a major step in achieving [Aichi Biodiversity Target 16](#), which provides that by 2015, the Nagoya Protocol is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

### MORE INFORMATION:

- [The ABS portal on the CBD website](#)
- [Key developments](#) related to the ABS Clearing-House
- [Relevant decisions and documents](#) on the ABS Clearing-House
- [Text of the Nagoya Protocol and courtesy translations](#)
- [How to become a Party](#): States and regional economic integration organizations that are Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are eligible to become a Party to the Nagoya Protocol. The United Nations Secretary-General acts as depository for the Nagoya Protocol through the United Nations Treaty Section in New York.
- Information on the current membership of the [COP-MOP Bureau](#)
- [Nagoya Protocol COP-MOP Decisions](#)

### WHAT IS THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE?

In practical terms, ABS Clearing-House is a website, administered by the CBD Secretariat and established by [Article 14](#) of the Nagoya Protocol. It is designed to enable Parties, but also non-Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), international and non-governmental organizations, research institutions and businesses to make information relevant to ABS available in a standardized, and open and organized global repository. The Protocol identifies essential information, as well as additional information to be made available through the ABS Clearing-House, in a standardized, open and organized way, in order to enhance certainty, clarity and transparency in access and benefit-sharing.

### FACTS ABOUT THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE

- It is a website and global repository of ABS information
- It is designed to be user-friendly and interoperable with other websites
- It shares information, published by Parties as well as others, to facilitate ABS and the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol

### WHAT DOES THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE DO?

#### **1. Facilitates connections between users and providers of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.**

The ABS Clearing-House allows providers to share information on contacts, procedures and requirements for accessing genetic resources and traditional knowledge. Users can use the ABS Clearing-House to easily find information how to access these resources in an organized manner, and all in one convenient location. By providing access to reliable information the ABS Clearing-House facilitates the connection between users and providers of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and therefore promotes opportunities to develop fair and equitable ABS agreements.

#### **2. Helps users to comply with ABS measures and requirements.**

By sharing reliable information regarding national procedures and requirements on ABS, countries can help users of their genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge understand and follow ABS rules and facilitate users' compliance with national legislation.

#### **3. Provides tools to help monitor the utilization of genetic resources.**

Through a centralized and standardized system, the ABS Clearing-House plays a key role in helping providers monitor how their genetic resources are being used throughout the value chain. When a provider country grants access to a genetic resource and publishes information on the permit or its equivalent, the ABS Clearing-House automatically generates an internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC).

The IRCC provides evidence a permit or its equivalent was issued and that the user has complied with the provider country's ABS rules and procedures. The IRCC can facilitate users of genetic resources to provide the required information to the checkpoints established along the value chain. The information collected or received by checkpoints is then published on the ABS Clearing-House in a format called a checkpoint communiqué (CPC). The ABS Clearing-House makes this information publicly available and also sends the checkpoint communiqué, as an email, to alert all those involved in the process, and most importantly the Party providing prior informed consent (the provider country), to inform them of the utilization taking place. These tools have been set up in this way in order to allow for monitoring to be possible even when genetic resources leave the provider country's jurisdiction.

#### **4. Offers reliable and up-to-date information.**

The information available on the ABS Clearing-House follows secure publishing procedures. These procedures ensure that users have access to accurate information on ABS, making the process of access and utilization of genetic resources more fair, transparent and reliable.

#### **5. Promotes awareness-raising and capacity-building for the Nagoya Protocol.**

The ABS community can use the ABS Clearing-House to share experiences in implementing the Nagoya Protocol, capacity-building resources, communication materials and publications on ABS to a wider audience. In this way, the ABS Clearing-House plays an important role in building capacity to implement the Protocol and providing easy access to best practices, lessons learned and materials.

#### **6. Promotes efficiencies in developing capacity-building projects and materials for the Nagoya Protocol**

Countries and organizations can share information on their projects, resources and materials for building capacity for the Nagoya Protocol. Having all available information in a single place can help organizations and countries to learn from other projects, to create synergies both at the design and implementation stage of projects and avoid the duplication of efforts in capacity-building activities and materials.

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### WHO IS THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE FOR?

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#### **Parties and Non-Parties**

By publishing national information on the ABS Clearing-House, Parties to the Nagoya Protocol and other governments, help both users and providers of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Users can find the information they need to access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, while providers will find tools to monitor the utilization of these resources. Parties have an obligation to use the ABS Clearing-House to share certain information of particular importance to the implementation of the Protocol. Non-Parties to the Protocol are also encouraged to participate and use the ABS Clearing-House to share the same information required by Parties.

#### **Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs)**

IPLCs can use the ABS Clearing-House to share information on how to access traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, such as community protocols and procedures and customary laws. They can also access and contribute to the ABS Clearing-House with awareness-raising and capacity-building materials on ABS in their own indigenous languages.

#### **Private sector and research institutions**

Private sector and research institutions utilizing or seeking access to genetic resources can also benefit from the ABS Clearing-House by finding reliable and up-to-date information on how to access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. They can also use the ABS Clearing-House to share information on the model contractual clauses, codes of conduct, guidelines and best practices that they have developed.

#### **Organizations involved in capacity-building for the Nagoya Protocol**

Organizations involved in capacity-building for the Nagoya Protocol can share capacity-building resources and materials and information on their projects or activities, including lessons learned from their implementation. In exchange, they are able to access information on projects or resources registered by other actors, and therefore, create opportunities for capitalizing best practices and developing coordinated approaches to building and developing capacity.

#### **International and non-governmental organizations and others**

International and non-governmental organizations and others can raise awareness and promote capacity building on ABS through the ABS Clearing-House. The ABS Clearing-House offers a space to share materials, general literature and learning material related to ABS and the Nagoya Protocol. These resources can contribute to promote ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, as well as increase opportunities for collaboration among the ABS community.

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## GETTING STARTED USING THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE

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### GETTING STARTED FOR GOVERNMENTS

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In accordance with [Article 14, paragraph 2](#) of the Protocol, in line with [decision NP 2/2, paragraph 11](#), Parties are urged to publish all mandatory information available at the national level on the ABS Clearing-House, as soon as possible. They are also urged to ensure that the information published is complete and relevant and kept up-to-date. In addition, Parties are urged to make permits or their equivalents available to the ABS Clearing-House so that they can constitute internationally recognized certificates of compliance. Non-Parties are also encouraged to provide the ABS Clearing-House with relevant information as soon as possible. In order to make national information available on the ABS Clearing-House, countries first need to nominate a publishing authority. Countries that have not yet designated their publishing authority are kindly requested to do so at their earliest convenience.

Follow the steps below to start publishing national information on the ABS Clearing-House. For any questions or assistance, please contact: [absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int).

#### STEP 1: DESIGNATE A PUBLISHING AUTHORITY

An essential and important step in order to be able to publish information on the ABS Clearing-House is to first designate a Publishing Authority (PA) for your country. The publishing authority is the single person responsible for approving the publication of national records and ensuring that all information made available is complete, non-confidential, relevant, and up-to-date.

Important things to know about the publishing authority:

If you are not sure who to designate as the publishing authority, the ABS national focal point can be designated as the publishing authority.

The publishing authority can be changed easily at any time by the ABS national focal point.

A publishing authority is necessary in order to publish national records (including the Interim National Report) on the ABS Clearing-House.

Download and complete the [PA/NAU Designation form](#) or contact the Secretariat ([absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int)) for help to designate a publishing authority.

#### STEP 2: SIGN IN

Once you have been designated as the publishing authority or a nationally authorized user for your country, if you don't already have a CBD account, you will receive instructions by email on how to setup your CBD Account and password and sign-in to the ABS Clearing-House. Once signed-in, click the "submit" link in the main navigation bar, to access your dashboard where you can view and submit national records for your country.

#### STEP 3: PUBLISH YOUR INFORMATION



To ensure that the ABS Clearing-House fulfils its role, [Article 14 of the Protocol](#) states Parties to the Protocol are required to make available certain key types of information through the ABS Clearing-House. In addition to this essential information, the Protocol also identifies other useful types of information that are to be made available through the ABS Clearing-House. Non-Parties are encouraged to make information available under the same conditions as Parties.

Publishing information in the ABSCH should be easy. The CBD Secretariat operates a help desk to provide on-demand technical support, answer questions and receive feedback. The CBD Secretariat can also provide online webinars and face-to-face trainings. Please contact us ([absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int)) for more information.

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## GETTING STARTED FOR STAKEHOLDERS

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Other stakeholders, including indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs), capacity-building organizations, private sector and research institutions and international and non-governmental organizations and others are invited to submit relevant reference records. Reference records include a number of ABS relevant resources and information and can be submitted by any registered user of the ABS Clearing-House. The CBD Secretariat, acts as the publishing authority for reference records and is responsible for validating all reference records before final publication in the ABS Clearing-House. Although, registered users do not publish reference records directly, they must ensure the information they submit is correct, non-confidential, complete and up-to-date.

**Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs):** IPLCs can use the ABS Clearing-House to share information on how to access traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, such as community protocols and procedures and customary laws. They can also access and contribute to the ABS Clearing-House with awareness-raising and capacity-building materials on ABS in their own indigenous languages.

**Capacity-building Organizations:** Organizations involved in capacity-building for the Nagoya Protocol can share capacity-building resources and materials and information on their projects or activities, including lessons learned from their implementation. In exchange, they are able to access information on projects or resources registered by other actors, and therefore, create opportunities for capitalizing best practices and developing coordinated approaches to building and developing capacity.

**Private sector and research institutions:** Private sector and research institutions utilizing or seeking access to genetic resources can also benefit from the ABS Clearing-House by finding reliable and up-to-date information on how to access genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. They can also use the ABS Clearing-House to share information on the model contractual clauses, codes of conduct, guidelines and best practices that they have developed.

**International and non-governmental organizations and others:** International and non-governmental organizations and others can raise awareness and promote capacity building on ABS through the ABS Clearing-House. The ABS Clearing-House offers a space to share materials, general literature and learning material related to ABS and the Nagoya Protocol. These resources can contribute to promote ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, as well as increase opportunities for collaboration among the ABS community.

Follow the steps below to start submitting relevant information to the ABS Clearing-House. For any questions or assistance, please contact: [absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int).

### STEP 1: SIGN UP FOR A CBD ACCOUNT

A CBD account is needed to be able to submit information on the ABS Clearing-House. If you don't have a CBD account, please sign-up here: [accounts.cbd.int/signup](https://accounts.cbd.int/signup). After filling the simple form, you will automatically be emailed a link to use to confirm your account. A CBD account enables you to register reference records in the ABS Clearing-House. [Click here to create a CBD account](#).

## STEP 2: SIGN IN

Simply click "sign-in" at the top-left of the screen to sign into the ABS Clearing-House. Once signed in, click the "submit" link in the main navigation bar, to access your dashboard where you can choose the type of record you wish to submit.

## STEP 3: SUBMIT REFERENCE RECORDS

Submitting information in the ABS Clearing-House should be easy. The CBD Secretariat operates a help desk to provide on-demand technical support, answer questions and receive feedback. The CBD Secretariat can also provide online webinars and face-to-face training. Please contact us ([absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int)) for more information.

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## FINDING INFORMATION

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### TYPES OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE

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#### NATIONAL RECORDS

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National records are published by Governments and include national information relevant for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol as well as information Parties are obliged to provide in accordance with the Protocol. Prior to being made publicly available in the ABS Clearing-House, all national records are approved by the national publishing authority (PA).

**ABS National Focal Point (NFP)** - Responsible to liaise with the Secretariat and make available information on procedures for accessing genetic resources and establishing mutually agreed terms, including information on competent national authorities, relevant indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders ([Article 13, paragraph 1](#)). The NFP must be designated or modified by completing an [official designation form](#) offline and sending it (by fax, email or post) to the CBD Secretariat.

**Competent National Authorities (CNA)** - Entities designated to, in accordance with applicable national legislative, administrative or policy measures, be responsible for granting access or, as applicable, issuing written evidence that access requirements have been met and be responsible for advising on applicable procedures and requirements for obtaining prior informed consent and entering into mutually agreed terms ([Article 13, paragraph 2](#))

**Legislative, administrative or policy measures on ABS (MSR)** - Measures adopted at the domestic level to implement the access and benefit-sharing obligations of the Convention or/and the Nagoya Protocol.

**National Websites and Databases (NDB)** - Information and links to national websites or databases that are relevant for ABS.

**Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance (IRCC)** - A certificate constituted from the information on the permit or its equivalent registered in the ABS Clearing-House, serving as evidence that the genetic resource which it covers has been accessed in accordance with prior informed consent and that mutually agreed terms have been established. It contains information that can assist in monitoring the utilization of genetic resources by users throughout the value chain ([Article 17](#)).

**Checkpoints (CP)** - Entities designated by Parties to effectively collect or receive relevant information related to prior informed consent, to the source of the genetic resource, to the establishment of mutually agreed terms and/or to the utilization of genetic resources, as appropriate ([Article 17, paragraph 1\(a\)](#)).

**Checkpoint Communiqués (CPC)** - A summary of the information collected or received by a checkpoint related to prior informed consent, to the source of the genetic resource, to the establishment of mutually agreed terms and/or to the utilization of genetic resources and registered in the ABSCH ([Article 17, paragraph 1\(a\)\(i\)](#)).

**Interim National report (NR)** - Information submitted by Parties in the context of [Article 29](#) of the Protocol to report on the measures that it has taken to implement this Protocol.

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## REFERENCE RECORDS

Reference records include a number of ABS relevant resources and information and can be submitted by any registered user of the ABSCH (Parties, Non-Parties, governments, international organizations, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders).

**Virtual Library Resources** - The virtual library in the ABS Clearing-House hosts a number of ABS relevant resources including, among others, general literature on ABS, awareness-raising materials, case studies, videos, capacity-building resources, etc.

**Model Contractual Clauses** - Model contractual clauses are addressed in [Article 19](#) of the Protocol. They can assist in the development of agreements that are consistent with ABS requirements and may reduce transaction costs while promoting legal certainty and transparency.

**Codes of Conduct, Guidelines, Best Practices and/or Standards** - Codes of Conduct, Guidelines, Best Practices and/or Standards are addressed in [Article 20](#) of the Protocol. They may assist users to undertake their activities in a manner that is consistent with ABS requirements while also taking into account the practices of different sectors.

**Community Protocols and Procedures and Customary Laws** - Community protocols and procedures and customary laws are addressed in [Article 12](#) of the Protocol. They can help other actors to understand and respect the community's procedures and values with respect to access and benefit-sharing.

**Capacity-building Initiatives** - Information on capacity-building initiatives (projects, programmes, activities) at national, regional and international levels, are shared to promote synergy and coordination on capacity-building and development for access and benefit-sharing.

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## CBD SECRETARIAT MANAGED RECORDS

Information published by the CBD Secretariat. These include meetings, news stories, notifications and statements.

**News** - News stories compiled from various media sources, relevant to access and benefit-sharing.

**Meetings** - Information on upcoming meetings relevant to the implementation of the Protocol.

**Notifications** - Notifications issued by the CBD Secretariat and relevant to the implementation of the Protocol.

**Press Releases** - Press releases issued by the CBD Secretariat relevant to access and benefit-sharing.

**Statements** - Statements relevant to access and benefit-sharing made by the CBD Secretariat.

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## SEARCH

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The [search page](#) is where you will find all available information on the ABS Clearing-House. On the search page, records are organized into three categories (national records, reference records and SCBD records) and displayed in separate tabs. All record categories can be searched simultaneously by using a combination of free-text filters and predefined filters. By default, no filters are set, and all records are displayed under each record category tab. The search results can be narrowed down using combinations of filters giving users the flexibility to retrieve a very wide or a very narrow set of results. The filters available are: free text (user entered text), record type, Party status, keywords, countries, regions and groups and the date the record was published.

Each time a filter is selected, the search will be executed, and the active filter will appear at the top of search page. Simply click on an active filter to remove it from the search. On the same page, below the filters, you will find the search results. The search results are separated by record category and displayed under separate tabs. This is done to maintain a clear distinction between categories of records with a view to reduce the possibility confusing a national record, submitted by the government, with a reference record, which can be submitted by any registered user.

**Records are also color-coded to reinforce its record category:**

Records in blue = national records

Records in orange = reference records

Records in grey = CBD Secretariat managed records

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## COUNTRY PROFILES

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One of the most convenient ways to access national information in the ABS Clearing-House is through the [country profiles](#). Each country profile contains all the national information that has been made available by that country and it can provide information on the institutional structures and legislative, administrative or policy measures in place for implementing the Nagoya Protocol.

The national records, available through a country's profile, contain information that has been validated by the country's publishing authority (PA). The PA is responsible for authorizing the publication of all national records registered in the ABS Clearing-House, ensuring that the information made available in the ABS Clearing-House is complete, relevant and up-to-date; and, ensuring that no confidential information is published in the ABS Clearing-House.

Clicking on "[Country Profiles](#)" in the main navigation bar will take you to a map and list of countries. The list of countries includes information on the number of national records each country has made available. This information can be sorted and grouped by party status and/or regions and regional groups in order to help

report on the number of Parties and number and type information made available for a certain region. You can click on a country from the list or the map to open the country's profile.

The national records in a country's profile are grouped into sections by their record type. Each section can be expanded by clicking the record type title or adjacent plus (+) sign, to reveal the complete list of records. The country's profile also provides additional information related to ratification, such as, the country's Party status and dates of ratification and entry into force, when applicable.

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## EMAIL ALERTS

The ABS Clearing-House allows registered users to set up personalized email alerts when new records are published. Email alerts can be set up under the "[preferences](#)" tab on the submit page.

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## SUBMITTING INFORMATION

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### INFORMATION-SHARING OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE PROTOCOL

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To ensure that the ABS Clearing-House fulfills its role, [Article 14](#) of the Protocol states Parties are required to make available certain key types of information through the ABS Clearing-House. In addition to this essential information, the Protocol identifies other useful types of information that are to be made available through the ABS Clearing-House. Non-Parties are encouraged to make information available under the same conditions as Parties.

[Article 14, paragraph 2](#) describes the mandatory information that Parties to the Nagoya Protocol are required to make available in the ABS Clearing-House:

- (a) Legislative, administrative and policy measures on access and benefit-sharing;
- (b) Information on the national focal point and competent national authority or authorities (CNA);
- (c) Permits or their equivalent issued at the time of access as evidence of the decision to grant prior informed consent (PIC) and of the establishment of mutually agreed terms (MAT).

[Article 14, paragraph 2](#) also requires Parties to make available through the ABS Clearing-House any information required by this Protocol. This would include:

- (a) Measures to inform potential users of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources about their obligations for access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge ( [Article 12, paragraph 2](#));
- (b) Information provided to designated checkpoints that collect or receive, as appropriate, relevant information related to prior informed consent, to the source of the genetic resource, to the establishment of mutually agreed terms, and/or to the utilization of genetic resources, including from internationally recognized certificates of compliance (IRCC), where they are available ([Article 17, paragraph 1 \(a\) \(iii\)](#));
- (c) Information on capacity-building and development initiatives at national, regional and international levels that should be shared through the ABS Clearing-House with a view to promoting synergy and coordination on capacity-building and development for access and benefit-sharing ([Article 22, paragraph 6](#)).

The ABS Clearing-House will also need to provide access to other types of information that Parties may provide, or officially endorse, relevant to the implementation of the Protocol. Additional information specified in the Protocol ([Article 14, paragraph 3](#)) includes:

- (a) Relevant competent authorities of indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs), and information as so decided;
- (b) Model contractual clauses;
- (c) Methods and tools developed to monitor genetic resources;
- (d) Codes of conduct and best practices.

Finally, [Article 14, paragraph 2](#) also provides that Parties shall make information to the ABS Clearing-House any information required pursuant to the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties to the Protocol. This includes the request, from [decision NP-1/3, paragraph 4](#), for Parties to the Protocol to submit an [interim national report on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol](#), as called for under [Article 29](#) of the Protocol, twelve months prior to the third meeting of the COP-MOP. The decision also welcomes submissions of relevant information by Non-parties. Accordingly, Parties and Non-Parties are invited to submit to the Secretariat their interim national report, through the ABS Clearing-House, as soon as possible.

## INTERIM NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL

### SUBMISSION OF THE NATIONAL REPORT

In [decision NP-1/3](#), paragraph 4, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol (COP-MOP) requested Parties to the Protocol to submit an interim national report on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, as called for under [Article 29](#) of the Protocol, twelve months prior to the third meeting of the COP-MOP (held in November 2018). The decision also welcomes submissions of relevant information by non-Parties. Accordingly, Parties and non-Parties are invited to submit to the Secretariat their interim national report, through the ABS Clearing-House, as soon as possible and no later than 1 November 2017, in the format and following the guidelines for submission contained in [decision NP-1/3](#).

#### **Preparation of the interim national report**

When preparing the report, it is recommended that countries involve all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure a participatory and transparent approach to its development. In addition, countries are:

Encouraged to include information in their interim national reports on difficulties and challenges related to implementation of the Protocol in line with [decision NP 2/3](#), paragraph 4;

Invited to pay particular attention to providing information on the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol related to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by indigenous peoples and local communities, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, when preparing and submitting their interim national reports, in line with [decision NP-2/10](#), paragraph 3; and

Invited to submit information on their experiences related to the mobilization of resources in support of the implementation of the Protocol, as well as on the status of funds mobilized in line with [decision NP-1/7](#), paragraph 8.

Information submitted through the interim national report, as well as through the ABS Clearing-House, will be taken into account by the Executive Secretary in the preparation of documentation for consideration by the Compliance Committee, the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the third meeting of the COP-MOP.

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## HOW TO SUBMIT THE INTERIM NATIONAL REPORT

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Countries should submit the report online through the ABS Clearing-House in an official language of the United Nations. The submission format is available on the ABS Clearing-House at the following address: <https://absch.cbd.int/en/register/NR/new>.

For more information on how to submit the report online, please refer to the step-by-step guide available here: <http://absch.cbd.int/about/guides/nr>.

Only if it is not technically feasible to submit online, Parties may resort to offline submissions using the form available on the ABS Clearing-House. Countries should send the report via email to the Secretariat ([secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)), and include a scanned copy signed by the ABS Clearing-House publishing authority.

The Secretariat is available to provide technical support for the publication of information in the ABS Clearing-House and to assist in the submission of the interim national report. For any questions or assistance, please contact: [absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int). Financial support is also available from the Global Environment Facility to assist eligible Parties to prepare their interim national report. For more information, see [notification 2017-032](#).

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## ROLE OF THE INTERIM NATIONAL REPORTS

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The interim national report can be a useful tool for both Parties and non-Parties to assess the level of implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, as well as gaps and needs in terms of capacity, and will assist the COP-MOP in reviewing, on a regular basis, the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and to make, within its mandate, the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation in accordance with [Article 26](#), paragraph 4. Information submitted through the interim national report can also serve to share experiences, challenges and solutions among countries in relation to the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. In this regard, the interim national report can be a valuable tool for building and developing capacity to implement the Protocol and for designing capacity-building activities more effectively. This is an opportunity to identify good practices and constraints in implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The information coming from the reports can assist the COP-MOP in reviewing the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and to make the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation. In this regard, the interim national reports will be one of the main sources of information, together with the ABS Clearing-House, for conducting the first [assessment and review](#) of the effectiveness of the Protocol and the information provided will inform and will be taken into account for the consideration of a number of issues by COP-MOP 3 and other subsidiary bodies.

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## REPORT ANALYSER

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This online tool allows you to select specific sections or questions of the report and to display the results by country or region. Click here to view the report analyser: <https://absch.cbd.int/reports>

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## USER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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A CBD account is needed to be able to submit information on the ABS Clearing-House. If you don't have an CBD account, please sign-up here: [accounts.cbd.int/signup](https://accounts.cbd.int/signup).

After filling the simple form, you will automatically be emailed a link to confirm your account. A CBD account enables you to register reference records in all CBD clearing-houses, including the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), the ABS Clearing-House, and the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM). To submit national information on

behalf of your country you will also need the appropriate user roles to be associated with your account. These roles can be assigned by the ABS national focal point or publishing authority.

The three categories of users of the ABS Clearing-House are:

## 1. NATIONAL USERS

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National roles for the publishing authority and nationally authorized users can be easily change and managed online using the ABS Clearing-House user management functionality.

### ABS NATIONAL FOCAL POINT (NFP)

The NFP is responsible to liaise with the Secretariat and make available information on procedures for accessing genetic resources and establishing mutually agreed terms, including information on competent national authorities, relevant indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders ([Article 13, paragraph 1](#)). The NFP must be designated or modified by completing an [official designation form](#) offline and sending it (by fax, email or post) to the CBD Secretariat.

In order to make information available in the ABS Clearing-House the NFP is responsible for designating a single person responsible for approving the publication of all national records. This role is referred to as the publishing authority. The NFP can designate themselves as the publishing authority if desired.

### THE PUBLISHING AUTHORITY (PA)

The single person responsible for publishing all national records in the ABS Clearing-House. The publishing authority can publish records directly in the ABS Clearing-House. They can also designate one or more national authorized users (NAUs) to assist them in preparing draft records for their publication in the ABS Clearing-House on behalf of their country. The publishing authority will have to approve all records submitted by NAUs.

Non-Parties are encouraged to share all relevant ABS information through the ABS Clearing-House in the same conditions as Parties. Therefore, Non-Parties must also designate a PA in order to publish national information.

**The PA is responsible for:**

- Authorizing the publication of all national records registered in the ABS Clearing-House;
- Ensuring that the information made available on the ABS Clearing-House is complete, relevant and kept up-to-date; and
- Ensuring that no confidential information is published in the ABS Clearing-House. The ABS Clearing-House does not host any confidential information and all information published in the ABS Clearing-House is publicly available and can be accessed by the general public.
- Managing the designation of the national authorized users (NAUs)

### NATIONAL AUTHORIZED USER (NAU)

Countries may also designate one or more national authorized users (NAUs). The function of NAUs is to assist the publishing authorities in the preparation of draft national records. National authorized users can create and manage draft records for their country and send them as requests to the publishing authority for publication.

For example, it may be useful to designate a checkpoint as a NAU and enable them to submit checkpoint communiqués to the publishing authority for approval and publication on the ABS Clearing-House.



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## 2. REGISTERED USER

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Anyone can sign-up for a CBD account and submit reference records to the ABS Clearing-House. This gives all stakeholders, such as, indigenous people and local communities, academia, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and the private sector, the opportunity to contribute relevant ABS information and to create a community where knowledge and best practices are shared to support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The Secretariat, acts as the publishing authority for reference records and is responsible for validating all reference records before final publication in the ABS Clearing-House. Although, registered users do not publish reference records directly, they should ensure the information they submit is correct, non-confidential, complete and up-to-date.

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## 3. NON-REGISTERED USERS

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A CBD account is not required to access the information published on the ABS Clearing-House. All published information is made publicly available through the search and country profiles.

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## CBD ACCOUNTS

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A CBD account is the online identity used to sign in to all CBD websites and clearing-houses. All users of the ABS Clearing-House will require a CBD account to submit information on the ABS Clearing-House. Get a CBD account here: <https://accounts.cbd.int/>

In addition, to access the submission forms for national records on the ABS Clearing-House you must be officially designated as the publishing authority (PA) or a nationally authorized user (NAU) on behalf of your country.

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## SUBMITTING OFFLINE / OFFLINE COMMON FORMATS

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The ABS Clearing-House operates based on submissions submitted under common formats. Common formats are standardized forms to facilitate submission of information in a harmonized manner. The ABS Clearing-House common formats make use of controlled vocabulary and metadata in order to facilitate a consistent registering and search of information in the ABS Clearing-House.

The common formats differentiate between mandatory and non-mandatory information. Some fields are mandatory to ensure that the record contains the minimum information necessary for displaying records consistently. The common formats are also designed to be flexible and provide for opportunities to include additional information

Offline common formats are available in MS word format and can be downloaded using the links below:

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## NATIONAL RECORDS

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- [Contact \(person or organization\)](#)
- [Competent National Authority](#)
- [National Websites and Database](#)
- [Legislative, administrative or policy measures](#)
- [ABS Procedure](#)
- [National Model Contractual Clause \(NMCC\)](#)

- [Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance](#)
- [Checkpoint](#)
- [Checkpoint Communiqué](#)
- [Interim National Report](#) [en](#) | [fr](#) | [es](#) | [ru](#) | [ar](#) | [zh](#)
- [Designation of ABS National Focal Point](#)
- [Designation of Publishing Authority/National Authorised Users](#)

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## REFERENCE RECORDS

- [Virtual Library Record](#)
- [Capacity-building Initiative](#)
- [Model Contractual Clauses, Codes of Conduct, Guidelines, Best Practices and Standards](#)
- [Community protocols and procedures and customary laws](#)

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## TIPS TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE NATIONAL INFORMATION

- 1. PROVIDE TRANSLATION IN MORE THAN ONE UN LANGUAGE:** Did you know that records can be published in more than one language? One of the most effective ways to ensure information is easily accessible to a wider audience is to publish information in more than one official United Nations language.
- 2. CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE KEY ELEMENTS IN ABS MEASURES:** By completing the section on “key elements related to ABS” in the submission form, countries can share reliable information on national measures and clearly identify how each measure addresses key elements related to access, benefit-sharing and/or compliance.
- 3. CLEARLY SPECIFY THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY:** Publishing information on a country’s competent national authority helps potential users to identify who the responsible government entity is for granting access to genetic resources.
- 4. PUBLISH ABS PROCEDURES:** Most of the users of the ABS Clearing-House come to the website looking for simple and straightforward guidance on the steps required to gain access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. By making your ABS Procedures available on the ABS Clearing-House, you can help potential users understand and navigate your national ABS systems, and therefore promote compliance with your national ABS requirements.
- 5. PUBLISH NATIONAL MODEL CONTRACTUAL CLAUSES:** Model contracts can assist in the development of agreements that are consistent with national ABS requirements and may reduce transaction costs.
- 6. PUBLISH INFORMATION ON ABS PERMITS TO CONSTITUTE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE:** Publishing ABS Procedures indicating the steps needed to obtain an ABS permits or its equivalent is the key step to promoting compliance with your national ABS system. However, once a user is granted their national permit the next step is to make part of this information available to constitute an internationally recognized certificate of compliance on the ABS Clearing-House in order to facilitate the system for monitoring utilization when it occurs outside your jurisdiction. Countries that are facing challenges in publishing their ABS permits or who are interested in connecting their national permitting

systems or websites with the ABS Clearing-House to share data are encouraged to contact the [Secretariat for assistance](#).

#### STEP-BY-STEP GUIDES

For more information on how to publish information have a look at all our handy step-by-step guides here: <https://absch.cbd.int/about/guides>.

## MONITORING UTILIZATION

### MONITORING THE UTILIZATION OF GENETIC RESOURCES THROUGH THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE



<https://youtu.be/4hu1Ktf6zJo> - This video has been developed by [ABS Capacity Development Initiative](#) in collaboration with the SCBD and is available for download in French, English, Spanish, and Arabic.

Provisions of the Nagoya Protocol work together to create a system to monitor utilization of genetic resources. The goal of this system is to inform and alert the appropriate authorities in both the provider country (country granting access to the genetic resource) and user country (country where the utilization is taking place), on

events related to the utilization of genetic resources. The ABS Clearing-House forms part of a feedback loop that allows, in particular, provider countries access to the information related to the utilization of their genetic resources even when utilization happens outside of their jurisdiction. The information made available to the ABS Clearing-House can be used to help assess whether the user is utilizing the genetic resource in compliance with the ABS requirements and domestic regulations of the provider country and can help to ensure the resulting benefits are being duly shared.

Parties are required to establish certain entities that play an important role to support the system to monitor the utilization of genetic resources set out by the Protocol. To successfully operationalise the monitoring system facilitated by the ABS Clearing-House, each Party must implement the Nagoya Protocol effectively at a national level and make available the required information to the ABS Clearing-House.

## OVERVIEW OF THE KEY ENTITIES AND CONCEPTS

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The information below provides an overview of the key entities and concepts involved in monitoring genetic resources through ABS Clearing-House:

**PARTIES:** To successfully operationalize the monitoring system facilitated by the ABS Clearing-House, it is important that each Party implement the Nagoya Protocol effectively at a national level and make available the required information to the ABS Clearing-House.

**THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE:** The ABS Clearing-House (ABS-CH) is the main tool setup by the Protocol to share information and facilitate monitoring utilization of genetic resources. Established in [Article 14](#), the ABS Clearing-House is a mechanism to share information relevant to ABS in order to enhance the necessary conditions for ABS to happen, namely: access, benefit-sharing, and compliance. The ABS Clearing-House also transmits information in order to alert the relevant authorities when information related to monitoring the utilization of genetic resources (IRCC and CPC) is made available.

**USERS (OF GENETIC RESOURCES):** Users are responsible for sharing the benefits derived from genetic resources with the providers. They seek access to genetic resources for a wide range of purposes, from basic research to the development of new products. They are a diverse group, including botanical gardens, industry researchers such as pharmaceutical, agriculture and cosmetic industries, collectors and research institutes. To gain access, users must first get permission (known as prior informed consent or PIC) from the provider country and establish an agreement (known as mutually agreed terms or MAT) to share the resulting benefits equitably.

**UTILIZATION/USE OF GENETIC RESOURCES:** Utilization of genetic resources (defined in [Article 2 \(c\)](#)) whether from plants, animals or micro-organisms, refers to the process of researching their beneficial properties and using them to increase scientific knowledge and understanding, or to develop commercial products.

**PROVIDER COUNTRY (COUNTRY PROVIDING PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT):** The Party responsible for granting prior informed consent (PIC) and establishing mutually agreed terms (MAT) and issuing a national permit or equivalent to the user for the specific genetic resources is referred to as the provider country. They also are responsible for submitting information on the national permit or equivalent to the ABS Clearing-House in order to constitute an IRCC as evidence that the genetic resources has been accessed with PIC and MAT has been established in accordance with the ABS requirements of the provider country ([Article 6, paragraph 3\(e\)](#)).

The provider country will receive information (in the form of checkpoint communiqués made available in the ABS-CH) gathered from the user at checkpoints in the country where the genetic resources are being used.

The provider country can use the information provided by checkpoint communiqué to locate the original national permit or equivalent. This way the provider can consult the national permit, which may contain confidential information, and compare this information against the information provided in the checkpoint communiqué. In case of any doubt or discrepancy to whether the genetic resource is being used in accordance with prior informed consent (PIC) and the established mutually agreed terms (MAT), the provider can take appropriate measures and contact the user or the country where utilization is taking place in order to cooperate bilaterally on the resolution of any potential issues of misappropriation.

**USER COUNTRY (COUNTRY WHERE UTILIZATION IS TAKING PLACE):** The User Country refers to the country responsible for the jurisdiction in which utilization of a genetic resource is taking place. All Parties are responsible for designating effective checkpoints and ensuring the information provided by users of genetic resources at their checkpoints is made available to the ABS Clearing-House. Designated authorities of the user country can also receive the information coming from their own checkpoints about how genetic resources are being used within their jurisdiction. This allows user countries to establish a channel of communication with provider countries, and if desired, to take steps to verify that users of genetic resources under their jurisdiction are in compliance with ABS measures and to cooperate in cases of alleged violation.

**CHECKPOINTS (CP):** Parties are to designate effective checkpoints along the value chain, that are to collect or receive information provided by users related to the utilization of genetic resources as described in [Article 17](#) of the Protocol. The information collected or received by the checkpoints is meant to inform and alert relevant authorities, and above all, authorities in the provider country as to how their genetic resources are being used. The information collected or received at checkpoints is made available as a record on the ABS Clearing-House called a Checkpoint Communiqué (CPC).

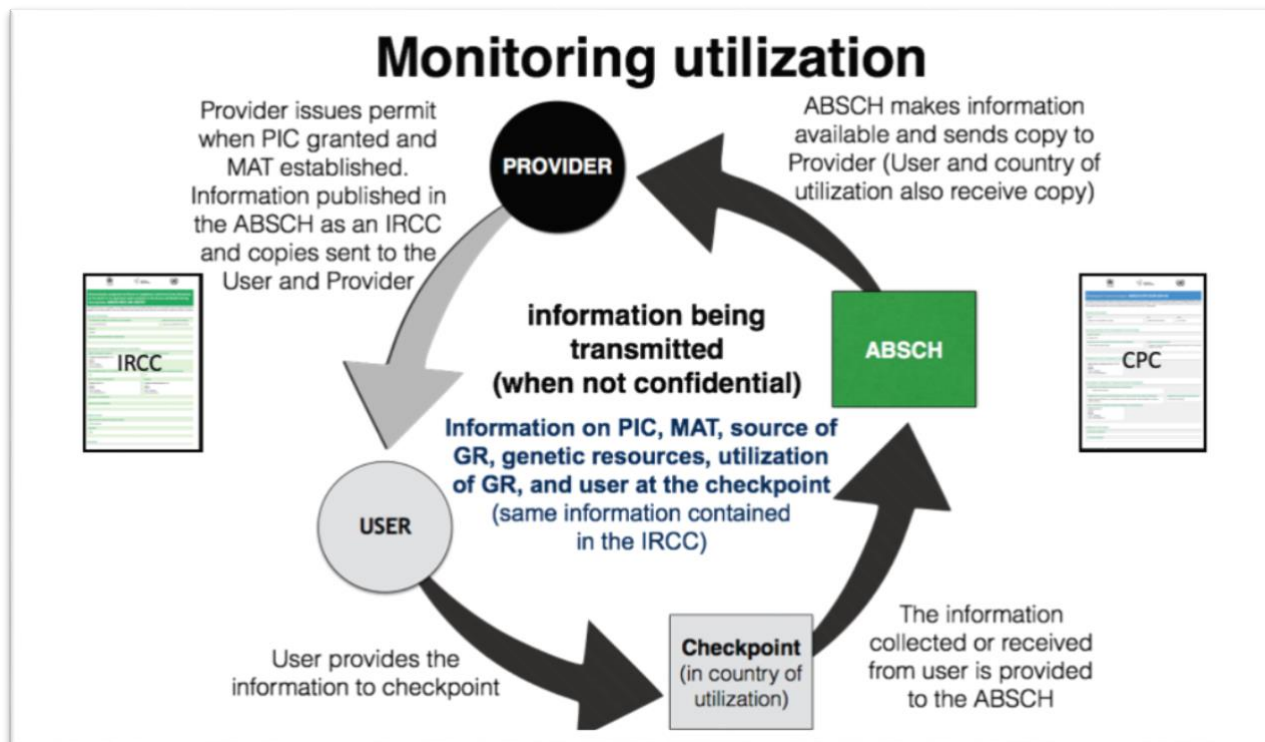
**INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE (IRCC):** Parties requiring prior informed consent (PIC) are to provide for the issuance of a permit or equivalent ( [Article 6, paragraph 3\(e\)](#)), at the time of access, and make this information available to the ABS Clearing-House ( [Article 14, paragraph 2\(c\)](#)). When information on a national permit or equivalent is entered into the ABS Clearing-House and published, it becomes available as an IRCC ([Article 17, paragraph 2](#)). An IRCC provides evidence that the user has accessed a genetic resource legally and in accordance with prior informed consent and that mutually agreed terms have been established, as required by the domestic ABS legislation or regulatory requirements of the provider country (country providing prior informed consent) ([Article 17, paragraph 3](#)).

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** The ABS Clearing-House does not host confidential information and therefore Publishing Authorities (PA) should take the utmost care to ensure that national records, in particular IRCCs and CPCs, do not contain confidential information. [Article 17, paragraph 4](#), provides that the IRCC shall contain some minimum information when it is not confidential. Technically, in the ABS Clearing-House, the mandatory fields of the IRCC and CPC allow the possibility to avoid entering confidential information (either with checkbox indicating the information for the field is confidential or by the use of a free text field giving the submitter the flexibility to provide information that is not confidential).

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## THE FLOW OF INFORMATION THROUGH THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE TO SUPPORT MONITORING THE UTILIZATION OF GENETIC RESOURCES

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### STEP 1: ISSUING A NATIONAL PERMIT OR ITS EQUIVALENT AND CONSTITUTING THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE (IRCC)

Utilization of genetic resources (defined in [Article 2 \(c\)](#)) whether from plants, animals or micro-organisms, refers to the process of researching their beneficial properties and using them to increase scientific knowledge and understanding, or to develop commercial products. Users of genetic resources from the scientific or business community may seek access for scientific research or product development. To gain access, users must first get permission (known as prior informed consent or PIC) from the provider country. In addition, the provider and the user must negotiate an agreement (known as mutually agreed terms or MAT) to share the resulting benefits equitably.

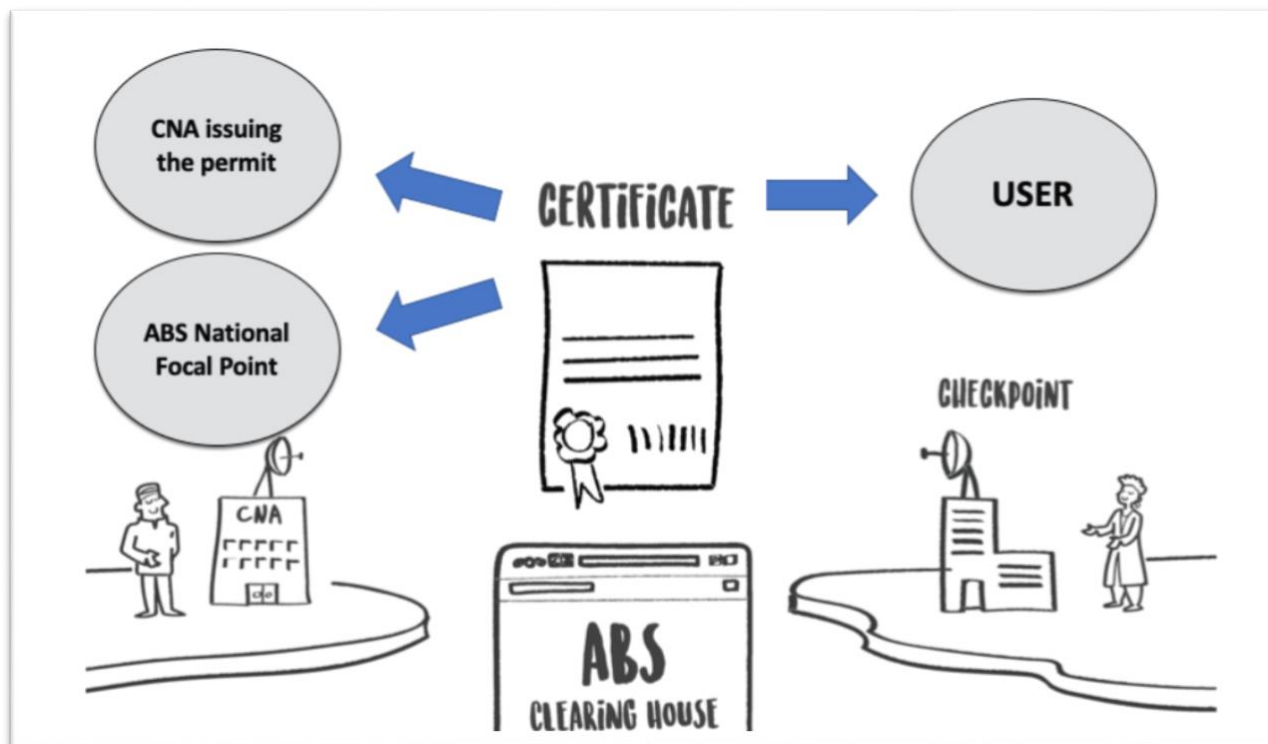
The information made available on the ABS Clearing-House can help potential users of genetic resources understand the ABS requirements and institutional arrangements in place in a provider country. The ABS Clearing-House also provides contact information for ABS national focal points. ABS national focal points can help facilitate access and clarify the requirements and procedures in place in their countries in order to access to genetic resources and/or the associated traditional knowledge.

Competent national authorities (CNA) are bodies established by governments and are responsible for granting users access to their genetic resources and representing providers on a local or national level. CNAs are responsible for granting prior informed consent (PIC) and establishing mutually agreed terms (MAT) and issuing a national permit or equivalent to the user for the specific genetic resources. Parties are required to submit information on the permits they issue to the ABS Clearing-House in order to constitute an internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC).

When the information on the permit or its equivalent is published in the ABS Clearing-House, an internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC) is constituted. One of the responsibilities of the publishing authority is to ensure that no confidential information is published when constituting an IRCC on the ABSCH.

Once published the ABS Clearing-House will email a copy of the IRCC to:

- (a) the national focal point and the competent national authority or authorities of the country responsible for issuing the permit or its equivalent;
- (b) the provider (entity that holds the right to grant access to the genetic resources) of the genetic resource, if this information is not confidential; and
- (c) the person or entity that was granted prior informed consent (the user), when not confidential.



In the process of monitoring the utilization of genetic resources or associated traditional knowledge it can be important when determining whether the genetic resource is being used in accordance with prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAT) that the provider country is able to trace each IRCC back to the original permit or equivalent (which may contain confidential information). Each IRCC that is published is assigned a unique identifier called the UID. The UID can be useful to link the national permit or equivalent to the IRCC. The unique reference or identifier of the national permit or equivalent can also be saved in the IRCC record format.

## STEP 2: UTILIZATION OF THE GENETIC RESOURCES

Monitoring the utilization of genetic resource to ensure benefits are shared and ABS requirements have been met can be difficult, especially when the utilization takes place outside of the provider's jurisdiction. The ABS Clearing-House supports the implementation of the provisions of the protocol by establishing a feedback loop that provides information on the utilization of genetic resources to the relevant entities and authorities. By making information available on the ABSCH related to utilization of genetic resources at checkpoints, authorities in both provider and user countries can be kept up-to-date in a transparent manner on the utilization of genetic resources.

Parties to the Protocol are required to designate effective checkpoints. Effective checkpoints are located at key places along the value chain where information can be collected or received from users related to the utilization of genetic resources. Some possible examples of checkpoints are the places where a user would need to go to and provide pertinent information when undertaking research and development on a genetic resource, when claiming a right in relation to the innovation made from such research and development, or when commercializing any resultant product.

When a user encounters a checkpoint they will need to provide certain key information related to prior informed consent (PIC), to the source of the genetic resource, to the establishment of mutually agreed terms (MAT) and/or to the utilization of genetic resources, as appropriate ([Article 17, 1\(a\) \(i\)](#)) when it is not confidential. The internationally recognized certificate (IRCC) which serves as evidence that the genetic resources which it covers has been accessed in accordance with PIC and that MAT have been established, already contains most of the key information and can help to facilitate the information the user is to provide at a checkpoint.

The information collected or received at checkpoints is made available as a record on the ABS Clearing-House called a Checkpoint Communiqué (CPC). The CPC, when an IRCC is not provided, require the user at the checkpoint to provide similar key information related to PIC, MAT, the genetic resource, source country, utilization, and the person at the checkpoint. The additional information for the CPC, with the exception of source country, is entered in a free text format which offers the flexibility to provide the necessary information to assist provider countries to monitor the utilization of their genetic resources while allowing for no confidential information to be entered in the ABS Clearing-House.

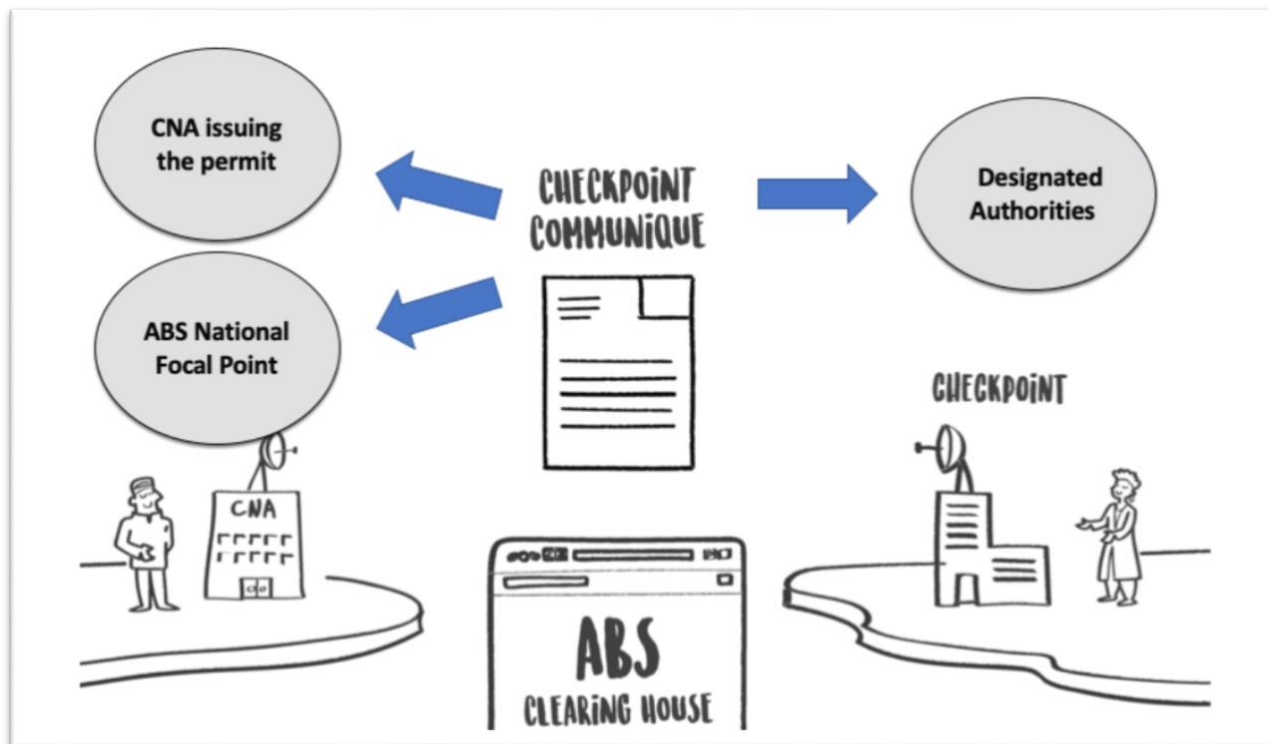
### STEP 3: RECEIVING THE CHECKPOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

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After publication on the ABS Clearing-House, the checkpoint communiqué (CPC) becomes publicly available, and is automatically sent to the following entities, as appropriate:

- (a) The designated national authority/ies of the user country as determined in the common format on checkpoints;
- (b) The national focal point and the competent national authority/ies of the country providing of the genetic resource; and
- (c) The person or entity that was granted prior informed consent, if this information is not confidential.





Although, each entity receiving the CPC has the option to take steps in order to determine if the utilization taking place is being done in accordance with the original permit (or its equivalent) and domestic ABS requirements of the provider country, the provider country is best placed to assess the information received in the CPC and determine whether access to the genetic resource was properly obtained and being used and in accordance with the mutually agreed terms. When the CPC contains a reference to an IRCC or national permit (or its equivalent) and the information on how the genetic resource is being used, the provider country will be able to look up and consult the original national permit (or its equivalent) containing any confidential information and compare this information against the information provided by the CPC and then decide to take appropriate measures or contact the user in case of doubt or discrepancy.

Even when much of the required information is confidential, it is still valuable to the provider country that the CPC is published. As long as the CPC is published, even when the information is limited or confidential, monitoring the utilization of their genetic resources can still be possible through bilateral communication and cooperation between the authorities in the user and provider countries. Parties are required to cooperate in the resolution of situations related to possible non-compliance to ensure the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources are being shared, in a fair and equitable way, and that the conditions set out in PIC and MAT are met.

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## INTEROPERABILITY

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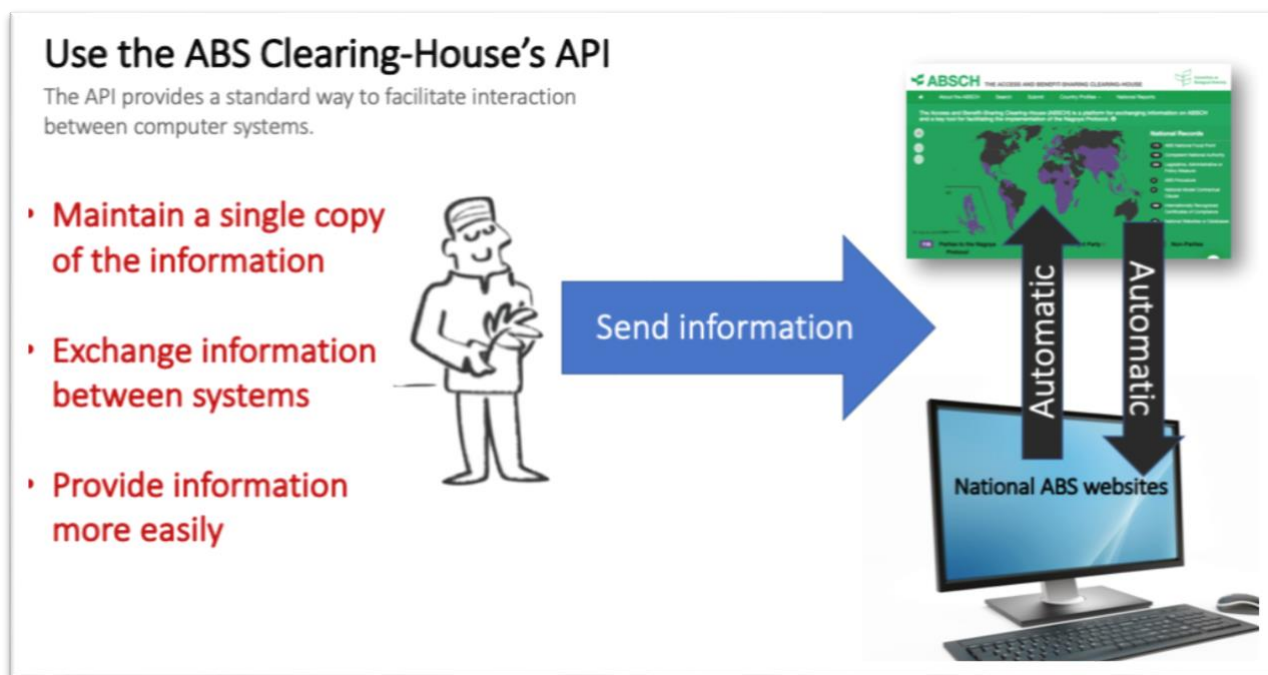
### THE APPLICATION PROGRAMMING INTERFACE (API)

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Paragraph 1(c) of the modalities of operation of the ABS Clearing-House ([decision NP-1/2, annex](#)) provides that the Secretariat shall design the ABS Clearing-House to be interoperable and facilitate the exchange of information with other databases and systems, in particular Parties' databases, as well as databases of other instruments and organizations.

With this aim, the Secretariat has developed an [application programming interface \(API\)](#). The API is the main tool to facilitate interoperability and the exchange of information with other IT systems or databases, in particular the IT systems of Parties, as well as, of other instruments and organizations. The API provides a standard interface described by a set of standard protocols to facilitate interaction with computer systems. The API is meant to allow the seamless integration of the data and functions of the ABS Clearing-House into other systems in ways that best fit their own needs, workflows and technologies.

Parties and others can make use of the API to avoid duplication in the submission of information to the ABS Clearing-House and, at the same time, create national or regional information systems that are fully compatible with the ABS Clearing-House. This may be particularly useful for domestic information systems containing information on permits or their equivalent or information collected or received to implement [Article 17](#) of the Protocol.



Documentation for developers on the use of the API is available at: [scbd.github.io](https://scbd.github.io).

Examples and sample code are available at: [github.com/scbd/api-examples](https://github.com/scbd/api-examples).

Please note the development of the API documentation, examples, and sample code is an on-going effort and is updated regularly.

For more information on how to use the API please contact the Secretariat at: [absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int).

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## HELP TO USE THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE

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### TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

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The CBD Secretariat organizes webinars, trainings and workshops to build capacity for the use of the ABS Clearing-House. In an effort to maximize effectiveness and efficiency, trainings will be conducted online and remotely (webinars, skype) when possible. Face-to-face group training will be integrated into relevant regional or global workshops and events organized by the CBD Secretariat and partner organizations.

If you are interested in a webinar or training for the use of the ABS Clearing-House, please contact the CBD Secretariat ([absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int)) for more information.

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### STEP-BY-STEP GUIDES

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The Secretariat has prepared step-by-step guides to provide detailed instructions to assist with using the ABS Clearing-House and publishing records.

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### PUBLISHING NATIONAL RECORDS

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- [Competent national authority \(CNA\)](#)
- [Legislative, administrative or policy measures on ABS \(MSR\)](#)
- [ABS procedures \(PRO\)](#)
- [National Model Contractual Clauses \(NMCC\)](#)
- [National websites and databases \(NDB\)](#)
- [Information on ABS permits to constitute an internationally recognized certificate of compliance \(IRCC\)](#)
- [Checkpoints \(CP\)](#)
- [Checkpoint communiqué \(CPC\)](#)
- [Interim national report \(NR\)](#)

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### SUBMITTING REFERENCE RECORDS

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- [Virtual library resources \(including literature and capacity-building resources\)](#)
- [Model contractual clauses, codes of conduct, guidelines, best practices and/or standards](#)
- [Community protocols and procedures and customary laws](#)
- [Capacity-building initiatives](#)

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### CONTACT US

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For information or questions please do not hesitate to contact us. We are always happy to hear from you and we would be pleased to organize a phone call.

EMAIL: [ABSCH@CBD.INT](mailto:ABSCH@CBD.INT)

## MORE INFORMATION

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Helpful links:

- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Text of the Protocol](#)
- [Step-by-step guides](#)
- [Offline common formats](#)
- [ABS Forums](#)
- [Send us your feedback](#)
- [Online version of this guide](#)