



The Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House

The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing is an international agreement adopted under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010. Its objective is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and implementing the three objectives of the CBD.

The Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) Clearing-House is a key tool established by the Nagoya Protocol. It is an online platform for exchanging information on ABS. Parties to the Nagoya Protocol are required to make information available on the ABS Clearing-House in order to enhance legal certainty, clarity, and transparency on the procedures for access, and to monitor the utilization of genetic resources. Non-Parties are also encouraged to make information available under the same conditions as Parties.

How the ABS Clearing-House works in practice

Take, for example, a scientist who wants to access a plant in order to conduct research and development on its genetic and/or biochemical composition. The scientist can consult the ABS Clearing-House to find information such as: the requirements for accessing the plant (genetic resource) in the provider country, the contact information of the ABS national focal point who can advise on the applicable procedures, and the contact information of the competent national authority responsible for granting access. By publishing national information in the ABS Clearing-House, countries are thus helping users – such as the scientist – to understand and comply with their domestic ABS laws and regulations.

The ABS Clearing-House plays an important role by facilitating the connection between users and providers of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge and by helping countries monitor the utilization of their genetic resources.

In addition, anyone can use the ABS Clearing-House to share information on capacity-building initiatives, disseminate capacity-building resources, model contractual clauses and codes of conduct, community protocols, communication materials and publications on ABS to a wider audience. As a central repository of information on access and benefit-sharing, the ABS Clearing-House supports the implementation of the Protocol including by providing easy access to best practices, lessons learned and relevant materials.



Convention on
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Key Messages

- The ABS Clearing-House is an online platform for **exchanging information on access and benefit-sharing**
- The ABS Clearing-House **helps users to comply with national ABS requirements**, by providing the necessary information in a single location and in a clear, standardized format
- The ABS Clearing-House **helps provider countries monitor** how their genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge are utilized
- **The ABS Clearing-House can be used by anyone** looking for information on ABS implementation, including national governments, indigenous and local communities, businesses, research institutions, and other relevant stakeholders
- The Virtual Library of the ABS Clearing-House can serve as a **central repository for reference material, capacity-building resources, and awareness-raising materials on ABS**
- The Secretariat is always available to provide **technical support and assistance**, as needed, to find and publish relevant information in the ABS Clearing-House

Work of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing

Article 14 of the Nagoya Protocol established the ABS Clearing-House as part of the clearing-house mechanism of the CBD. The online platform of the ABS Clearing-House was launched on 12 October 2014, following the modalities of operation adopted by Parties to the Protocol at their first meeting (COP-MOP 1).

Since the launch of the ABS Clearing-House, the Secretariat, with financial support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund and the European Union, has been carrying out an outreach and engagement campaign to encourage participation in the ABS Clearing-House, raise awareness, collect feedback, and provide capacity-building and technical assistance, particularly to Parties, as well as non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders. To ensure that the ABS Clearing-House is well populated, governments are encouraged to continue their efforts and publish up-to-date and relevant information on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in their country. As of 28 November 2016, 28 countries had published information on domestic ABS requirements on the ABS Clearing-House. Additionally, 50 internationally recognized certificates of compliance had been constituted by the ABS Clearing-House, following the issuance of national permits providing evidence that genetic resources were accessed legally in the provider country.

COP-MOP 2 will examine progress made since its first meeting and agree on a way forward for the next biennium.

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Important links

- Convention on Biological Diversity: www.cbd.int
- Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing: www.cbd.int/abs
- UN Biodiversity Conference, Cancun, Mexico, 2016: www.cbd.int/cop2016
- The Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House: <https://absch.cbd.int>
- Awareness-raising material on ABS: www.cbd.int/abs/awareness-raising

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