

## Convention on Biological Diversity

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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE MEETING  
OF THE PARTIES TO THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON  
ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND THE FAIR AND  
EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS ARISING FROM  
THEIR UTILIZATION

Fourth meeting – Part II  
Montreal, Canada, 7–19 December 2022  
Agenda item 9

### **REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE OPERATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) Clearing-House was established by Article 14, paragraph 1, of the Nagoya Protocol as part of the clearing-house mechanism under Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It aims to enable the sharing of information related to access and benefit-sharing and the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The ABS Clearing-House is accessible online at <http://absch.cbd.int>.
2. At its third meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to continue work on the ABS Clearing-House following the goals and priorities for its further implementation and administration contained in the annex to the decision, and in accordance with the modalities of operation and feedback received, in particular that of Parties and of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (decision NP-[3/3](#), para. 12).
3. The Informal Advisory Committee was established by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to assist the Executive Secretary with the implementation of the ABS Clearing-House and to provide technical guidance with respect to the resolution of technical and practical issues arising from the ongoing development of the ABS Clearing-House.
4. At the third meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, Parties decided that at least one meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee would be held in the intersessional period (decision NP-3/3, para. 8). Accordingly, the Committee met from 2 to 4 December 2019, in Montreal, Canada; the report of that meeting has been made available as document [CBD/NP/ABSCH-IAC/2019/1/3](#).
5. Also at the third meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, in decision NP-3/3, paragraph 6, Parties endorsed the joint modalities of operation for the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, contained in the annex to decision [14/25](#) of the Conference of the Parties, which are complementary to the modalities of operation of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol in decision NP-[1/2](#).

6. The present document aims to assist Parties in evaluating the progress made and in identifying possible actions to further improve the ABS Clearing-House. Against this background, section II of the document presents the progress made in the operation of the ABS Clearing-House since the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. Section III proposes priorities for the future development and administration of the ABS Clearing-House.

7. Finally, section IV contains suggested elements of a draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its fourth meeting.

## II. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE

8. The present section takes stock of progress made by the Secretariat, Parties and other users in the operation of the ABS Clearing-House following the indicative goals and priorities for its future implementation, in accordance with the modalities of operation and feedback received, particularly from Parties and the Informal Advisory Committee, since the third meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol and as requested in decision NP-3/3, paragraph 12.

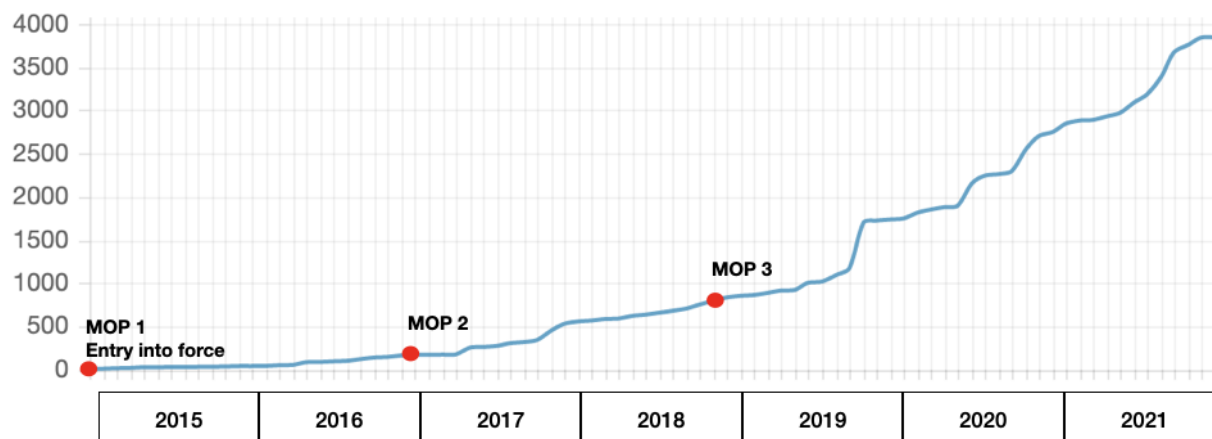
### Goal 1. Population and increased use of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House

#### *Outreach and engagement*

9. The importance of increasing the amount and use of the information contained in the ABS Clearing-House, particularly the national information that Parties must make available in accordance with the Protocol, has been stressed by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol through the numerous decisions that continue to underscore the crucial link between the ABS Clearing-House and the successful implementation of the Protocol. These decisions also highlight the importance of ensuring that all Parties have the capacity to use and populate it with their required information.

10. Since the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the total number of national records has increased steadily, as shown in figure 1 below, and in particular, the number of internationally recognized certificates of compliance (IRCC) records has tripled. This large increase in IRCC records is mainly due to the active publication of these records by three Parties.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1. Increase in the number of national records published on the ABS Clearing-House**



11. Table 1 below shows the percentage of Parties that have published national records by region. From this table we can see that the African and Asia-Pacific regions have to date published fewer national records than other regions, in particular with regard to information on competent national authorities (CNA),

<sup>1</sup> The top three countries publishing IRCCs are India, France and Spain.

ABS measures (MSR) and procedures (PRO), and checkpoints (CP). The table further indicates that in all regions apart from the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG), less than 20 per cent of Parties have made use of the checkpoint communiqué (CPC)<sup>2</sup> common format. Also, less than 20 per cent of Parties, across all regions except for Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), have made use of the common formats for internationally recognized certificates of compliance (IRCC)<sup>3</sup> and ABS procedures (PRO). The common format for ABS procedures is relatively new; it was introduced on the ABS Clearing-House in 2018 in response to feedback from users requesting better guidance on the steps required to access genetic resources. This common format helps to support and encourage user compliance and has been warmly welcomed by users for the practical and straightforward information it can provide on steps, entry points, and the prerequisites related to accessing genetic resources.

**Table 1. Percentage of Parties that have published national records, by region\***

Regions	NFP	CNA	MSR	PRO	IRCC	NDB	CP	CPC
<b>Africa (46 Parties)</b>	100%	46%	43%	15%	13%	20%	1%	0
<b>Asia-Pacific (40 Parties)</b>	95%	25%	18%	1%	13%	15%	10%	1%
<b>Central and Eastern Europe (12 Parties)</b>	100%	83%	83%	8%	17%	25%	58%	0
<b>GRULAC (17 Parties)</b>	89%	78%	56%	22%	50%	39%	22%	0
<b>WEOG (17 Parties)</b>	100%	78%	88%	18%	6%	76%	76%	24%

\* Record types shown: NFP = national focal point; CNA = competent national authority; MSR = Legislative, administrative or policy measure (“ABS measure”); PRO = ABS procedure; IRCC = internationally recognized certificate of compliance; NDB = national website or database; CP = checkpoint; CPC = checkpoint communiqué.

12. For Parties, as well as non-Parties, a key prerequisite to publication of national information and participation in the ABS Clearing-House is the designation of a country’s publishing authority (PA). As of November 2021, 23 Parties<sup>4</sup> had not designated a publishing authority. The Secretariat continues regular outreach to encourage publishing authority designations, and ABS national focal points are reminded that they may assume this role and that publishing authority designations can be done simply either by using the “user management” function in the “submit” section of the website or by confirming the publishing authority details with the Secretariat via email ([absch@cbd.int](mailto:absch@cbd.int)).

13. The number of reference records also has been steadily growing, particularly records on community protocols and procedures and customary laws, which have more than tripled since November 2019. The

<sup>2</sup> Making information gathered from checkpoints available may depend on, for example, a country’s progress in implementing the Protocol, and/or the level of utilization of genetic resources in that country.

<sup>3</sup> Parties are required to publish an IRCC when ABS permits, or their equivalents, are available. The fact that a Party has not published an IRCC does not necessarily indicate non-compliance with the Protocol, or ineffective ABS systems. For example, a Party may not yet have issued any ABS permits, or a Party may decide that access to their genetic resources is not subject to prior informed consent or mutually agreed terms and therefore does not require the issuance of an ABS permit.

<sup>4</sup> Parties that have not designated a publishing authority: Afghanistan, Chad, Greece, Kiribati, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Palau, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, Syrian Arab Republic, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu and United Republic of Tanzania.

development of many of these community protocols and procedures and customary laws has been supported by the UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project. The Secretariat has worked with the Global ABS Project to support capacity-building for indigenous peoples and local communities at events such as the “Custodians of Nature” webinar series, held in August 2020, and by encouraging and supporting indigenous peoples and local communities and others to make relevant information available on the ABS Clearing-House.

14. The ABS Clearing-House has been configured to use Google’s website analytics service (<https://analytics.google.com>), which provides key metrics and insights related to how the website is being used. The number of visitors to the ABS Clearing-House has been growing steadily since its launch, with the number of visitors having tripled every two years since its launch in 2014. On each visit, about half of all visitors spend more than a minute and navigate between several web pages.

15. The top ten countries with the most visitors are the United States of America, France, Japan, Germany, Canada, Brazil, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Republic of Korea, Ireland and India.

16. In terms of the types of devices used to access the website, the number of visitors who viewed the website from a mobile device (cell phone or tablet) for the most part has hovered between 2 and 10 per cent and the vast majority of visitors use a desktop or laptop computer. However, the number of visitors using a mobile device has risen to about 15 per cent over the last year (January – November 2021).

17. Additional tables related to the key website analytics and the population of the ABS Clearing-House, for both national and reference records, can be found in annex I to the present document. Annex II contains a summary of key points from the global ABS monitoring workshop held in Bonn in 2019 (see paras. 20 and 21 below) and further details on the use of the internationally recognized certificate of compliance and the checkpoint communiqué.

#### *Capacity-building*

18. During the present reporting period the Secretariat conducted 13 regional remote awareness-raising and/or capacity-building activities for the use of the ABS Clearing-House and engaged in five face-to-face trainings at workshops and other related events.<sup>5</sup>

19. Experience in operationalizing national ABS frameworks and making use of ABS Clearing-House tools like the internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC) and the checkpoint communiqué (CPC) and increasing understanding of the system for monitoring utilization of genetic resources through the ABS Clearing-House have been flagged as particularly important topics for capacity-building and are mentioned in decision NP-3/3, paragraph 11.

20. In response, the Governments of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund), the European Union, and the Government of Germany (through the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, BfN) generously provided resources for the Secretariat to organize a global capacity-building workshop focused on monitoring the utilization of genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol. The workshop was held in Bonn, Germany, from 30 September to 2 October 2019 and provided representatives of 54 countries, as well as ABS experts, with an opportunity to share information on challenges and successes related to monitoring utilization of genetic resources.

21. The report of the workshop and related information can be found on the meeting web page: <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/NP-CB-WS-2019-01>. To support a common understanding of the topic, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, developed a short animated video to explain in a simple and practical manner how ABS monitoring through the ABS Clearing-House

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<sup>5</sup> Workshop on the ABS Clearing-House held in the margins of the third meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Egypt, November 2018); Community of Practice Workshop on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing for European, CIS, Arab and Asian countries (Turkey, April 2019); 12th Pan African Workshop on Access and Benefit-sharing (South Africa, September 2019); ABS Clearing-House interoperability training in India (December 2018) and Kenya (October 2019).

works. The short video is available for download in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish on the ABS Clearing-House.<sup>6</sup>

22. The Secretariat continues to provide proactive outreach and technical support for the use of the ABS Clearing-House to Parties and other users of the ABS Clearing-House in the same manner as has been done in the past. The outreach is primarily focused on welcoming new Parties and providing them with assistance and information to get started using the ABS Clearing-House; responding to requests for technical support; and providing regular outreach to encourage the publication of information, in particular information on permits, ABS measures and procedures, publishing authorities and competent national authorities.

23. In order to continue to improve the capacity-building resources developed by the Secretariat, a new data-driven knowledge base system has been built. The migration of the Biosafety Clearing-House provided an opportunity to develop a system that could store this information in a better way where it can be reused, searched, tagged, updated, and translated more efficiently. More information on this improvement is found below in the subsection on maintenance and improvements of functionality.

24. Outreach and technical support continue to be provided by phone, live chat, and e-mail. However, a positive effect of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is that it has helped bring colleagues working remotely closer together through the general increase in use of collaborative communication tools that support screen sharing and videoconferencing. As the use of tools like Zoom, Teams, and WhatsApp becomes commonplace, connecting with and providing online outreach and technical support to users of the ABS Clearing-House is becoming easier and more efficient.

#### *Interoperability and collaboration*

25. The Secretariat continues to work on the interoperability mechanisms, including through improving documentation and examples for the use of the application programming interface (API). The Secretariat continues to provide on-demand support to Parties and others wishing to use these mechanisms to exchange ABS Clearing-House information with relevant databases, websites, permitting systems and relevant information technology systems.

26. During this last intersessional period, by seizing the opportunity to piggyback on related events, the Secretariat was able to provide two in-person training activities<sup>7</sup> related to the use of the API and linking national permitting systems to the ABS Clearing-House.

27. The Secretariat continues to share experience and raise awareness related to the ABS Clearing-House by participating in discussions and exploring collaboration with related initiatives and organizations such as the Global Information System (GLIS) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture,<sup>8</sup> InforMEA, and the High Seas Treaty Dialogues<sup>9</sup> in relation to the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction agreement (BBNJ) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

### **Goal 2. Translation and functionality for operationalizing the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House in the six official languages of the United Nations**

28. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, at its third meeting, and the Informal Advisory Committee to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House recognized the importance of the translation of the common formats and of making them available in the six official languages of the United Nations. In particular, decision NP-[3/1](#), on the assessment and review of

<sup>6</sup> <https://absch.cbd.int/database/VLR/ABSCH-VLR-SCBD-240572>.

<sup>7</sup> ABS Clearing-House interoperability training in India (December 2018) and Kenya (October 2019).

<sup>8</sup> The Secretariat presented the ABS Clearing-House at and participated in the fourth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System, held remotely on 20 and 21 April 2021.

<sup>9</sup> The Secretariat presented experience related to the ABS Clearing-House and participated in the session held remotely on 20 and 21 October 2021.

the effectiveness of the Nagoya Protocol, requested the Executive Secretary to prioritize the translation of the ABS Clearing-House.

29. The Secretariat continues to work on the translation of the ABS Clearing-House website, and improving the mechanisms in place to facilitate translation, as an urgent priority. All offline common formats were recently translated into the six official languages of the United Nations, and approximately 85 per cent of the website has been translated into all UN languages.

### **Goal 3. Maintenance and improvement of functionality**

30. Since the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, most maintenance and improvements have focused on functionality and other elements common to both the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House. A summary is provided below.

#### *Home page*

31. As part of the process of better aligning and integrating the Biosafety Clearing-House with the ABS Clearing-House, and based on the results of user interviews and a questionnaire, more modern and user-friendly home pages have been developed for both clearing-houses. The new home page for the ABS Clearing-House uses a simplified design and focuses on key features such as the map, announcements, and updated records.

#### *Common formats*

32. In line with the joint modalities of operation and the need for commonality and integration among the Secretariat's three clearing-houses, the shared common formats, such as "Virtual library resources" and "Capacity development initiatives", have been revised for better alignment.

#### *Search*

33. The Secretariat has improved the way the search organizes and indexes information, which increases the speed and usefulness of the free text searching and allows for ordering of results based on relevance. An "all records" search results tab has been added that displays combined results across record categories on the same page, as well as a feature to allow users to print, sort and group records, export them to a spreadsheet format, and save and share search results. We have also included a matrix view, which continues to be improved, but the initial version offers users with multiple possibilities to generate search results in a tabular form.

34. The search now allows for additional "sub-filters" specific to a record type to be applied, allowing for more targeted search results. In addition, active search filters can be temporarily disabled or can be used in a negative or exclusionary way, giving users greater control to find the information they need. Based on advice from the Informal Advisory Committee, several additional filters and improvements to the existing filters have been planned and will be implemented in due course.

35. Contacts, previously visible only when referenced in other records, have been added as a stand-alone record type in the search. In addition, a section has been included so that when any individual record is viewed, it will also show where that record has been referenced in other ABS Clearing-House records. For example, when looking at a contact record, links would be provided to any IRCC records that have also referenced that particular contact. The Secretariat is exploring ways to deter contact information, like emails and phone numbers, found on the ABS Clearing-House, as on other CBD clearing-houses and websites, from being used for unintended purposes such as for spam.

#### *Submit section*

36. Draft records and PDF copies of draft records can now be shared. This feature can help to facilitate communication between different national users during the review and approval process when publishing records.

#### *Help and documentation*

37. To assist users, several new help tools and materials have been developed; they include:

(a) *New and expanded website tours:* These are available on the *Country Profiles*, *Submit* and *Search* pages and provide a walk-through of each page, identifying key functions;

(b) *Improved contextual help:* By clicking the question mark icon at the top of the page, users can access guidance material specific to the page they are looking at;

(c) *Knowledge base:* this section improves and expands on the former “About the ABSCH” section of the website. The knowledge base provides an organized system to maintain, translate and organize help articles and information. This system can also be easily shared and integrated into other websites and clearing-houses managed by the Secretariat.

#### **Goal 4: Integration with the clearing-house mechanism**

38. Integration has been a high priority area of work over the last intersessional period, not only for the ABS Clearing-House but also for the other clearing-houses managed by the Secretariat and highlighted in decisions 14/25, NP-3/3 and CP-9/2, which emphasized the need to strengthen coherence and integration between the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House and endorsed the joint modalities of operation for the three clearing-houses.

39. The completion of the migration and merging of the Biosafety Clearing-House into the ABS Clearing-House platform and the alignment of these two systems have been the top priority for the Secretariat. The impact of this prioritization on the ABS Clearing-House has meant that some planned work has been delayed. However, significant achievements have been made in terms of improving the functionality and usability of many of the common clearing-house functions. In addition, collaboration and coordination between the units responsible for operation of the clearing-houses within the Secretariat have also increased significantly.

40. In addressing issues related to clearing-house functionality and the improvement of usability and consistency, the Secretariat carried out a three-part review of the website’s user experience (UX). This review included (a) an examination of the current clearing-house website user interfaces (UI), and of the complexity of the actions and the number of steps or “clicks” needed to accomplish common tasks; (b) interviews with ABS Clearing-House users; and (c) an examination of the current organization of the “help” features and documentation available.

41. The review has provided clarity on ways to improve functionality and maintain consistency as the Secretariat continues to implement the joint modalities and integrate, administer, and develop the clearing-houses of the Convention. In addition to the several improvements mentioned above, such as the common knowledge base to organize help and website documentation, the initial development of a toolkit of standard user interface (UI) guidelines for the clearing-houses has been undertaken by the Secretariat. This toolkit will provide several benefits, such as the promotion of standard design patterns ensuring a consistent look and feel across all relevant website interfaces, increased efficiency when developing new functionality, and decreased costs related to the development and maintenance of trainings, help manuals, documentation, and translation.

### **III. PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE**

42. As the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol continues to advance and the number of Parties to the Protocol increases, the ABS Clearing-House must continue learning from practical experience and adapting to the needs of Parties and other users. As experience is gained by Parties in operationalizing the provisions of the Protocol, especially those related to monitoring the utilization of genetic resources, as summarized in annex II below, refinements to the common formats and adjustment to certain functionality of the ABS Clearing-House will be necessary.

43. Events such as the global monitoring workshop held in Bonn in 2019, have been particularly useful for sharing experiences and highlighting challenges with the operationalization of the Protocol. Similarly, the Informal Advisory Committee has also been an essential and productive forum to provide guidance and technical solutions to help address challenges and clearly there is need to continue the discussions to ensure

that the ABS Clearing-House continues to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol in the best possible manner.

44. It is envisioned that the Informal Advisory Committee will hold at least one meeting, and informal online discussions as needed, and report on the outcomes of its work to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at its fifth meeting.

45. The priorities for future development and administration, as found in the annex to decision NP-3/3 and reproduced in annex III below, represent ongoing work or specific tasks that continue to be relevant; therefore Parties are invited to again consider these priorities as the basis for future work.

#### **IV. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF A DRAFT DECISION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOL AT ITS FOURTH MEETING**

46. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol may wish to consider the following draft decision:

##### *The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol*

1. Welcomes progress made by the Secretariat in the development and administration of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House;

2. Welcomes the efforts made by Parties, non-Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders to make information available in the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House;

3. Recalls decision NP-3/3, paragraph 3, in which Parties that have not yet done so are urged to publish all mandatory information available at the national level on the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House in accordance with the obligations in Article 14, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, as soon as possible, considering that the publication of mandatory information in the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House is essential for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol;

4. Also recalls decision NP-3/3, paragraph 4, which urges Parties to provide information on their national access and benefit-sharing procedures through the voluntary common format on procedures, as available in the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House;

5. Further recalls decision NP-3/3, paragraph 9, which invites Parties, non-Parties, and relevant organizations to make use of the interoperability mechanisms of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House to facilitate information exchange with their relevant databases, websites and information technology systems, decision NP-3/3, paragraph 10, which invites Parties, non-Parties, and relevant organizations, as appropriate, to include capacity-building activities related to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House in their relevant capacity-building activities, plans and projects in coordination with the Executive Secretary, and decision NP-3/3, paragraph 11, which invites Parties, non-Parties, relevant international organizations, regional development banks and other financial institutions, as appropriate, to support capacity-building activities related to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, including the Protocol's system for monitoring the utilization of genetic resources;

6. Invites Parties, non-Parties, relevant international organizations, regional development banks and other financial institutions, as appropriate, to support capacity-building activities, including those related to setting up national access and benefit-sharing permitting systems and other relevant information technology systems that make use of the interoperability mechanisms of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House;

7. Requests the Executive Secretary to continue to develop and administer the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House following the goals and priorities for the further development and administration of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House as found in the annex to decision NP-3/3, in accordance with the modalities of operation and feedback received, particularly that of Parties and of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House.



*Annex I*

### KEY WEBSITE ANALYTICS AND POPULATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE

Table 2 shows the increase in the number of national records over time. The table breaks down the information by Party status as well as indicates the total number of Parties to the Protocol at the end of each period. The increase in the population of the various reference records since 2015 is shown in table 3 and the common statistics from Google Analytics related to the use of the ABS Clearing-House are shown in table 4.

**Table 2. Number of national records published in the ABS Clearing-House**

Record type	Records contributed by	As of Nov. 2015 69 Parties <sup>10</sup>	As of Nov. 2017 104 Parties	As of Nov. 2019 123 Parties	As of Nov. 2021 132 Parties
Competent national authority (CNA)	Non-Parties	0	4	3	4
	Parties	4	23	45	62
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>109</b>
Legislative, administrative or policy measure (MSR)	Non-Parties	1	15	11	11
	Parties	4	46	60	64
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>353</b>
ABS procedure (PRO)	Non-Parties	N/A	N/A	1	1
	Parties	N/A	N/A	4	17
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>
Internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC)	Non-Parties	0	0	0	0
	Parties	1	10	19	25
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>1 114</b>	<b>3 180</b>
National website or database (NDB)	Non-Parties	1	1	2	3
	Parties	4	18	28	40
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>54</b>
Checkpoint (CP)	Non-Parties	0	0	1	3
	Parties	2	15	20	32
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>72</b>
Checkpoint communiqué (CPC) <sup>11</sup>	Non-Parties	0	0	0	0
	Parties	0	0	3	5
	<b>Total records</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>49</b>

<sup>10</sup> Total number of Parties to the Protocol.

<sup>11</sup> The CPC numbers for November 2021 exclude one additional country that had published an “internal” CPC related to the use of its own genetic resources.

**Table 3. Number of reference records published in the ABS Clearing-House**

<b>Record type</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2015</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2017</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2019</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2021</b>
Community protocols and procedures and customary laws	0	2	10	32
Model contractual clauses, codes of conduct, guidelines, best practices and/or standards	1	26	29	31
Capacity-building initiatives	0	36	73	94
Virtual library resources (including awareness-raising and capacity-building material)	24	43	100	120
ABS Clearing-House announcements	-	-	4	28

**Table 4. Statistics from Google Analytics related to the use of the ABS Clearing-House**

<b>Google analytics</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2015</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2017</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2019</b>	<b>As of Nov. 2021</b>
Unique visitors (users)	11 669	43 772	149 598	384 811
Page views	106 658	394 698	880 766	1 432 490
Sessions	29 581	116 746	291 581	591 874
Average session duration (minutes)	6.10	5.30	4.17	2.42
Average page views per session	3.61	3.38	3.02	2.36
Bounce rate	60.53%	54.28%	58.63%	69.36%

*Annex II***EXPERIENCE GAINED RELATED TO MONITORING THE UTILIZATION OF GENETIC RESOURCES, INCLUDING ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE AND CHECKPOINT COMMUNIQUEÉS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE****Global Capacity-building Workshop on Monitoring the Utilization of Genetic Resources under the Nagoya Protocol**

Capacity-building for the Protocol's system for monitoring the utilization of genetic resources was flagged specifically in decision NP-3/1, paragraph 21 (c), and decision NP-3/3, paragraph 11. To develop capacity for this topic the Secretariat organized the global capacity-building workshop on monitoring the utilization of genetic resources under the Nagoya Protocol held in Bonn from 30 September to 2 October 2019. Annex I to the workshop report highlighted the outcomes and key messages that shed light on the current level of experience, and challenges Parties face, related to the system for monitoring utilization of genetic resources under the Protocol. Some key points from that report are summarized below:

- (a) Many countries lack understanding of the Protocol's system for monitoring utilization of genetic resources;
- (b) Many countries are still in the early stages of establishing operational ABS systems and lack the necessary capacity and financial resources to make the Protocol operational;
- (c) Some countries face issues related to internal communication, coordination and capacity to publish and maintain up-to-date records on the ABS Clearing-House;
- (d) There is a lack of understanding on what exactly can be considered as a permit in the context of ABS and if and when that information should be published in the ABS Clearing-House as internationally recognized certificates of compliance;
- (e) Challenges related to capacity and the time needed to make the information available prevented some countries from publishing the information;
- (f) During the discussions on permits and procedures, it became clear that using electronic databases and information technology systems for permitting and managing permits would be highly desirable. Many countries expressed interest in setting up electronic permitting systems;
- (g) There is a lack of understanding regarding the role and function of checkpoints and checkpoint communiquéés in the monitoring systems, and a lack of resources and capacity to establish checkpoints.

The full report as well as several detailed country presentations from the workshop are available on the meeting web page at <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/NP-CB-WS-2019-01>.

**Analysis of internationally recognized certificates of compliance and checkpoint communiquéés made available through the ABS Clearing-House**

The ABS Clearing-House's internationally recognized certificate of compliance and the checkpoint communiquéé play key roles in the Protocol system to facilitate monitoring the utilization of genetic resources outside the provider country. Over the last reporting period only a few Parties used these tools; given the importance they play in the implementation of the Protocol, additional information on the use of these tools has been compiled below.

*Internationally recognized certificates of compliance*

As of November 2021, 3,180 internationally recognized certificates of compliance (IRCCs) have been published in the ABS Clearing-House by 25 Parties, although at least 56 countries have indicated in their interim national reports that access to genetic resources is subject to prior informed consent (PIC) and therefore may be required to provide information, if available, on their ABS permits, or equivalents, on the

ABS Clearing-House. However, of those twenty-five Parties, five have published over 90 per cent of all IRCCs,<sup>12</sup> and one Party has published 70 per cent of all IRCCs.

Regarding the subject matter of the IRCCs, where this information is not confidential, plants make up 54 per cent of the subject matter, followed by microorganisms at 15 per cent, animals at 10 per cent, wild species at 3 per cent and fungi at 1 per cent. Seven IRCCs have indicated the subject matter is related to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. In 38 per cent of all IRCCs, the subject matter is kept confidential.

In terms of the type of use allowed, in 38 per cent of the cases it is kept confidential, 32 per cent allow commercial use, and 30 per cent allow non-commercial use.

About 32 per cent of IRCCs keep confidential the information on the user (the entity that was granted prior informed consent). In all cases where the user is kept confidential, the subject matter and types of use allowed are also kept confidential.

Of the cases where the user is known, the top users are from Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. However, of all the IRCCs where the user is known, about 86 per cent may be considered “internal”, meaning that prior informed consent has been granted to a user that is utilizing the genetic resource inside the jurisdiction of the IRCC publisher.

If we examine the 14 per cent of cases where the user or users are not confidential and are “external” or “international”, meaning the user and provider are from different countries, the top 10 countries that users are from are Germany (65), the United States of America (46), France (27), the United Kingdom (19), Belgium (17), Japan (14), Switzerland (10), the Republic of Korea (10), the Netherlands (8) and Spain (7). There are 10 “collaborative” IRCCs that include users from two or more countries.

Finally, 8 per cent of IRCCs indicate that the associated ABS permits have expired.

#### *Checkpoint communiqués*

As of November 2021, five Parties<sup>13</sup> have published 49 checkpoint communiqués (CPCs).

The top provider countries identified in CPCs, in order of frequency, are France, Viet Nam, Spain, South Africa, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Benin, Cameroon, Ecuador, Greece, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Switzerland, Uganda and Zambia.

Most of the CPCs have been published without referencing an IRCC, which may indicate that some Parties may have issued permits, or their equivalents, but have not yet made them available through the ABS Clearing-House as IRCCs. Only 12 of the CPCs include information on an IRCC.

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<sup>12</sup> As of November 2021, the top 5 Parties having published IRCCs are India (2,226), France (498), Spain (109), Kenya (78) and South Africa (38).

<sup>13</sup> These Parties are Denmark (6), Germany (28), Japan (5), the Netherlands (5) and the United Kingdom (5). One additional country has published an “internal” CPC related to the use of its own genetic resources (i.e., the user and provider country are the same). This case of issuing an internal CPC was discussed by the Informal Advisory Committee and it was recommended that CPCs not be issued in those cases; therefore these types of records are not included in the analysis.

*Annex III*

**GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE BY THE SECRETARIAT<sup>14</sup>**

**Goal 1. Population and increased use of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House**

*Outreach and engagement*

- (a) Ensure that each Party has designated its publishing authority;
- (b) Encourage and assist with the publication of all available national information, in particular competent national authorities, access and benefit-sharing measures, access and benefit-sharing procedures, and internationally recognized certificates of compliance, as necessary;
- (c) Engage with indigenous peoples and local communities and other relevant stakeholders and organizations to encourage submission of reference records;
- (d) Provide regular ABS Clearing-House announcements on updates and changes as well as related information for ABS Clearing-House users, in particular national focal points, publishing authorities and national authorized users;

*Capacity-building*

- (a) Disseminate and promote the use of the ABS Clearing-House capacity-building resources, including the e-learning module and step-by-step guides;
- (b) Translate capacity-building resources developed by the Executive Secretary for the ABS Clearing-House and make them available in all official languages of the United Nations;
- (c) Continue to provide face-to-face training (subject to available funding), as well as remote training upon request, as needed;
- (d) Collaborate with partners developing capacity-building projects to ensure they include relevant activities to support and promote the use of the ABS Clearing-House;
- (e) Raise awareness of the ABS Clearing-House among indigenous peoples and local communities and other relevant stakeholders, such as the business and scientific communities;
- (f) Raise awareness of the ABS Clearing-House in relevant international forums dealing with ABS-related issues;

*Interoperability and collaboration*

- (a) Continue to raise awareness and support capacity-building regarding the use of the interoperability mechanisms such as the application programming interface (API) including by providing relevant documentation, such as lessons learned and examples;
- (b) Facilitate the exchange of information with relevant national databases and systems;
- (c) Explore how the Bioland Tool for National Clearing-House Mechanisms can be used to facilitate the exchange of information related to access and benefit-sharing;
- (d) Continue to collaborate with relevant instruments and initiatives (such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture–Global Information System, InforMEA, World Federation for Culture Collections);

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<sup>14</sup> Reproduced from decision NP-3/3, annex.

**Goal 2. Translation and functionality for operationalizing the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House in the six official languages of the United Nations**

- (a) Continue the translation of the ABS Clearing-House as a top priority;
- (b) Ensure that mechanisms and standard procedures remain in place to enable website translation to continue in a timely fashion;

**Goal 3. Maintenance and improvement of functionality**

- (a) Maintain and improve functionalities and finalize remaining issues;
- (b) Finalize documentation of the application programming interface, the main mechanism for interoperability;
- (c) Improve search functionality in order to sort and group records, as well as explore, analyse and present the published information in meaningful ways, including information related to capacity-building and making use of maps, charts and graphs, as appropriate;
- (d) Improve management of the common vocabularies (thesaurus), including how information is tagged with keywords to improve the retrieval of information;
- (e) Enhance website analytics to include tracking downloads and views of individual records and the files attached to them and provide national users with the relevant analytics and information;
- (f) Improve functionality to allow the easy updating of records that include references to older versions of records;

**Goal 4. Integration with the clearing-house mechanism**

- (a) Continue to support the implementation of the CBD web strategy;
  - (b) Support the integration of the central clearing-house of the Convention and the Biosafety Clearing-House with the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House under a single platform in order to ensure a coordinated approach to web development and related information technology infrastructure.
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