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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 THE  
BENEFITS ARISING FROM THEIR UTILIZATION

Second meeting

Cancun, Mexico, 4–17 December 2016

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

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

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (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 Protocol. The ABS Clearing-House is accessible online at <http://absch.cbd.int>.
2. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol adopted decision NP-1/2, including the modalities of operation of the ABS Clearing-House (contained in annex to the decision).
3. The first meeting of the Parties also decided to establish an informal advisory committee (IAC) 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 its ongoing development (para. 2). The committee was also to address technical issues related to feedback received, including issues related to the internationally recognized certificate of compliance and the checkpoint communiqué and report on the outcomes of its work to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its second meeting (para. 3).
4. Accordingly, the first meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House was held in Montreal, Canada, from 28 to 30 October 2015, including a joint session with the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on 30 October 2015. Further, the Committee held online discussions from 20 November 2015 to 15 January 2016. The second meeting of the Committee was held in Montreal, Canada, from 20 to 22 June 2016. The reports of both meetings are made available as information documents UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/INF/2 and UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/INF/3.

\* UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/1/Rev.1.

5. In decision NP-1/2, the Executive Secretary was requested to implement the ABS Clearing-House, with available resources, and in accordance with the modalities of operation and feedback received, in particular from Parties (para. 7) and to promote the use of the ABS Clearing-House in supporting capacity-building for the implementation of the Protocol (para. 12).

6. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol also requested the Executive Secretary to further refine the modalities of operation, taking into account progress made, advice provided by the IAC, and feedback received, in particular that of Parties, for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its second meeting (para. 5). In addition, it decided to consider, at its second meeting, the intervals to review the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House (para. 6).

7. Finally, at its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to provide information on operational costs, including funding and additional resource requirements, as well as on collaboration with relevant instruments and organizations for the exchange of relevant data (para. 13) in his report on progress on the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its second meeting.

8. Section II of the present note takes stock of progress made in the implementation and administration of the ABS Clearing-House. Section III provides an overview of the main features and functionalities of the ABS Clearing-House that have been implemented for the constitution of the internationally recognized certificate of compliance and the checkpoint communiqué. Section IV proposes a possible way forward for refining the modalities of operation and reviewing the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House. Section V presents priorities for the future implementation and administration of the ABS Clearing-House. Section VI provides information on operational costs of the ABS Clearing-House, including funding and resource requirements. Finally, section VII contains 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 second meeting.

## **II. PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE**

9. This section takes stock of progress made by the Secretariat of the Convention in the implementation and administration of the ABS Clearing-House on the basis of (a) the functions assigned to it in accordance with the modalities of operation; (b) feedback received, in particular that of Parties; (c) other requests to the Executive Secretary made by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its first meeting; and (d) technical guidance provided by the informal advisory committee since the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.<sup>1</sup>

### **A. Progress made in the central portal and databases of the ABS Clearing-House**

10. Since the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, and particularly following the first meeting of the IAC, in October 2015, efforts in the implementation of the ABS Clearing-House have focused on improving the central portal and databases of the ABS Clearing-House with a view to making it more intuitive and user-friendly. The new version of the ABS Clearing-House was launched on 22 April 2016.<sup>2</sup> The following provides a summary of the main improvements.

#### *1. Modifications to address compatibility issues for the most used modern browsers*

11. Adjustments to the technologies used and coding practices have been made to help ensure that ABS Clearing-House web pages are rendered cleanly and display in a consistent way across most modern and commonly used web browsers.

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed information on progress made can be found in the documents prepared for the meetings of the IAC: [UNEP/CBD/ABS/CH-IAC/2015/1/2](#) and [UNEP/CBD/ABS/CH-IAC/2016/1/2](#).

<sup>2</sup> Information on the changes made was communicated to Parties, non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders through notification 2016-054 of 27 April 2016 available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2016/ntf-2016-054-abs-en.pdf>

*Optimization of website loading speed*

12. A number of actions have been taken to optimize the website and improve loading speed, in particular for users with slower Internet connections, such as storing locally frequently used data, optimizing queries and resources, and prioritizing the visible portion of web page content in the browser screen when the page first loads.

*Introduction of responsive design*

13. In recognition of the increasing popularity of mobile technology, work has been undertaken to ensure that the website responds more intelligently to mobile devices, such as tablets and smart phones, and adjusts to smaller screen sizes.

*Improvements to webpage design*

14. Since the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the design of the ABS Clearing-House has undergone many improvements to make it more user-friendly. This includes: (a) changes to the design, branding elements, and navigation with a view to enhancing visual integration and improve the user experience across CBD websites; (b) changes to the record overview and country information in the homepage, including by incorporating a new map and providing a direct link to country profiles; and (c) definitions of frequently used technical terms and additional information placed in pop-ups;

*Improvements to search function and layout*

15. Changes have been made to the search function with a view to making it faster and more efficient. The ABS Clearing-House is transitioning to a more powerful search engine, which will better organize and search for information, including the information contained within files attached to records such as PDF and Word documents. The search layout has been updated to accommodate the more powerful search engine and allow for more intuitive searching, using free text in addition to predefined filters to retrieve more precise search results.

*Implementation of a user notification system*

16. A user notification system has been developed to help keep users informed of the status of their records with a view to helping countries manage the process to publish and update records. User notifications are now available in the Record Management Centre, under the “Requests & Notifications” tab. Requests or notifications are triggered by user-driven events or predefined rules in the ABS Clearing-House, such as new requests for publication, approved requests, recalled or cancelled requests, rejected requests, as well as various other reminders and alerts.

*Online designation of publishing authorities and national authorized users*

17. The national focal point (NFP) can log in to the ABS Clearing-House and directly designate the publishing authority (PA) and one or more national authorized users (NAUs). This functionality is accessible from the Record Management Centre, under the “User Management” tab. The PA can also assign and make changes to the NAUs for their country.

*Developments in the creation of separate ABS Clearing-House environments*

18. Separate environments are necessary to allow simultaneous and continuous development, testing, and training without impacting each other. There are four separate ABS Clearing-House environments: (a) the official website (<http://absch.cbd.int>); (b) the training website (<http://training-absch.cbd.int>); (c) the development website; and (d) the staging website (to allow complete testing of shared web services and libraries).

*Server infrastructure improvements*

19. Improvements have been made to the infrastructure of CBD information technology (IT) systems in order to improve loading speed, stability and scalability of the clearing-houses and web applications. The Secretariat has also doubled the capacity of all back-end servers, boosting overall performance and response in times of high demand. A system for automated testing and monitoring of web applications,

servers and databases has been set up to ensure that the critical IT infrastructure is functioning properly at all times.

**B. Progress made in enhancing integration of the ABS Clearing-House as part of the CBD clearing-house mechanism**

20. Since the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, improving integration of all the components of the central clearing-house mechanism (CBD clearing-house mechanism, ABS Clearing-House and Biosafety Clearing-House) and enhancing linkages among all CBD websites have been an important area of work of the Secretariat, with a view to providing an effective and efficient IT system and a coherent user-experience. This work has informed many of the changes made to the central portal and databases of the ABS Clearing-House.

21. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 19, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop a web strategy to ensure that all information common or relevant to the clearing-house mechanism, the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House, as well as other platforms developed under the Convention, can be accessed centrally to avoid duplication.

22. Additionally, the Secretariat has been developing an internal corporate communication strategy which includes branding and visual identity guidelines for CBD products, including its websites.

23. The joint session of the IAC to the ABS Clearing-House and the IAC to the clearing-house mechanism held on 30 October 2015 provided advice on the preliminary draft of the website strategy prepared by the Executive Secretary.<sup>3</sup>

24. The updated web strategy for the Convention and its Protocols<sup>4</sup> and the communications strategy<sup>5</sup> will be considered under item 12 of the provisional agenda of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.<sup>6</sup> Both strategies will impact the design and future operation of the ABS Clearing-House and inform future developments and priorities.

**C. Progress made in providing common formats for submitting information to the ABS Clearing House, reviewing existing common formats and developing further common formats**

25. On the basis of feedback received and technical guidance provided by the IAC, the Secretariat improved the following common formats:

(a) Legislative, administrative or policy measures (ABS measures), including the section on identification of the different elements of the measure and implementation of an ABS measures country matrix for displaying information on national legal frameworks in the country profile;

(b) Permit or its equivalent constituting an internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC);

(c) Information for the checkpoint communiqué (CPC).

26. Details of the main features and functionalities that have been implemented in the ABS Clearing-House for the IRCC and CPC are provided in section III below.

27. New common formats have been developed to enable the submission of: (a) capacity-building initiatives (activity/project/programme); (b) capacity-building resources, as part of the Virtual Library; (c) model contractual clauses, codes of conduct, guidelines, and best practices and/or standards; and (d) community protocols and procedures and customary laws.

28. At the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the Executive Secretary was requested to make the guidelines and the format for the interim

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the guidance provided, see UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/INF/2, paras. 75-77.

<sup>4</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/13/14/Add.1.

<sup>5</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/13/14.

<sup>6</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/13/1/Add.1/Rev.1.

national report available through the ABS Clearing-House (decision NP-1/3, annex II), taking into account the need to avoid duplication in the submission of information already made available through the ABS Clearing-House, and to include the option of submitting information offline in the appropriate format (decision NP-1/3, para. 2). Following guidance from the IAC, the common format for submitting the interim national report for the Nagoya Protocol has been made available in the ABS Clearing-House.

29. In an effort to improve clarity, the Secretariat has also created a new category of records to identify SCBD records (meetings, notifications, press releases, statements and news) and has made changes to the way national contacts (organizations or individual persons) are managed and referenced in other records.

**D. Progress made in populating the ABS Clearing-House, providing timely technical assistance and receiving feedback**

30. Since August 2014, the Secretariat, with financial support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund and the European Union, has carried out an outreach and engagement campaign to encourage participation in the ABS Clearing-House, raise awareness, collect feedback and carry out targeted surveys, and provide capacity-building and technical assistance, particularly to Parties, as well as non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders.

31. The following summarizes the main activities carried out by the Secretariat since the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol as well as progress made in populating the ABS Clearing-House.

*Designation of publishing authorities and promotion of the submission of national information by Parties to the Convention and, in particular, by Parties to the Protocol*

32. As part of the outreach and engagement campaign, national focal points and publishing authorities from at least 123 countries were contacted to promote the publication of national records in the ABS Clearing-House and, when applicable, advance the designation of PAs and NAUs.

33. As of 9 September 2016, the Executive Secretary has received 79 designations of PAs, 60 of which came from Parties to the Protocol. At the same date, a total of 171 NAUs had been designated for the ABS Clearing-House from 60 countries.

*Promotion of the use of the ABS Clearing-House among, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders and organizations*

34. The Secretariat has been engaging with partners, relevant organizations, representatives from indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders for registering reference records, with a view to making the ABS Clearing-House the central repository of knowledge for access and benefit-sharing.

*Capacity-building for the ABS Clearing-House*

35. The Secretariat has organized a number of activities to build capacity for the ABS Clearing-House:

(a) Webinars for PAs, NAUs and national focal points on the ABS Clearing-House, complemented by continuous support and follow-up via telephone, email and Skype;

(b) Trainings and side events at relevant CBD meetings, such as the Ad Hoc Inter-sessional Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation;

(c) Activities for raising awareness and building capacity on the ABS Clearing-House were also held during relevant meetings or workshops organized by the Secretariat or partner organizations, and through webinars.

36. Annex I provides an overview of capacity-building activities for the ABS Clearing-House carried out since the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

37. In addition, the following resources to support capacity-building and awareness-raising for the ABS Clearing-House have been developed:

(a) An ABS Clearing-House training website (<https://training-absch.cbd.int/>) was established as an isolated environment to allow users to register test records in the ABS Clearing-House;<sup>7</sup>

(b) An “About the ABSCH” section has been added to the website to provide general information and help, including frequently asked questions and downloadable step-by-step guides on how to publish information and use various features of the website ([absch.cbd.int/about](https://absch.cbd.int/about)).

38. With support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the Secretariat is currently developing an e-learning module to be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations. The module will enable partners and others to easily include a component on the ABS Clearing-House in their capacity-building activities and initiatives.

*Provision of timely technical assistance and follow-up, on demand*

39. The Secretariat provides continuous support and guidance to Parties, other Governments, capacity-building partners and other users of the ABS Clearing-House through Skype, emails or telephone. A live chat help desk service has also been installed on the website to allow immediate interaction with Secretariat staff for technical support and guidance. This service has received very positive feedback from users.

*Use and publication of information in the ABS Clearing-House*

40. Between October 2014 and September 2016, a total of 24,459 users visited the ABS Clearing-House, out of which approximately 9,490 were new users (approximately 38.8%).

41. By 9 September 2016, a total of 505 records had been published in the ABS Clearing-House by countries and other users, including 373 national records (263 from Parties and 110 from non-Parties) and 132 reference records. Of the 132 reference records available in the ABS Clearing-House: 84 are Virtual Library records (resources, literature, articles and others); 38 records are capacity-building initiatives; eight records are included under the category “model contractual clauses, codes of conduct, guidelines, best practices and/or standards”; and two records are included under the category “community protocols and procedures and customary laws”.

42. As of 9 September 2016, approximately 37.6 per cent of Parties had published national information in the ABS Clearing-House.

43. The table below details the total number of national records published and the number of Parties and non-Parties to the Protocol that have contributed different types of national records to the ABS Clearing-House.

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<sup>7</sup> The training website is identical to the ABS Clearing-House website, but provides a safe environment for users to test the functionalities of the Clearing-House and practice publishing, editing and deleting records before submitting their official records to the live version. Like the production website, users require the appropriate roles (“national authorized training users” or the “training publishing authority”) to submit records to the training website. Currently, these training roles are managed and granted by the Secretariat on demand. This system enables the Secretariat to monitor the use of the training website and gather feedback from users.

**Table 1. Number of national records published and number of Parties to the Nagoya Protocol and other Governments that have published national records in the ABS Clearing-House (as of 9 September 2016)**

<i>Type of information</i>	<i>Number of records published</i>	<i>Number of Parties to the Protocol that published records</i>	<i>Number of non-Parties that published records</i>
Competent national authorities	45	28	5
ABS measures	70	21	1
Checkpoints	21	9	0
Permits or their equivalent constituting an internationally recognized certificate of compliance	38	4	0
Checkpoint communiqués	0	0	0
National websites or databases	19	15	0

44. In addition, 171 countries (83 from Parties and 88 from non-Parties) have designated a national focal point on ABS and the information is available on the ABS Clearing-House.

45. The following graphs below depict the trends of publication for national and reference records in the last biennium. It also includes detailed breakdown of national records (competent national authorities, checkpoints, legislative, administrative or policy measures on access and benefit-sharing, permits or their equivalent constituting an internationally recognized certificate of compliance). The number of records published in the ABS Clearing-House has increased over time, particularly during the last trimester.

**Figure 1. Number of national and reference records published (as of 9 September 2016)**

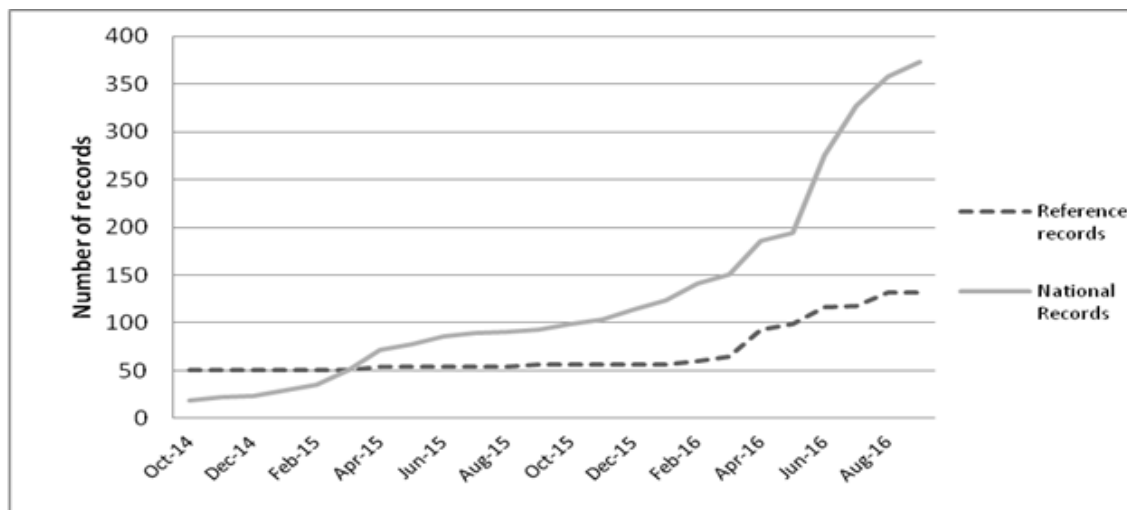
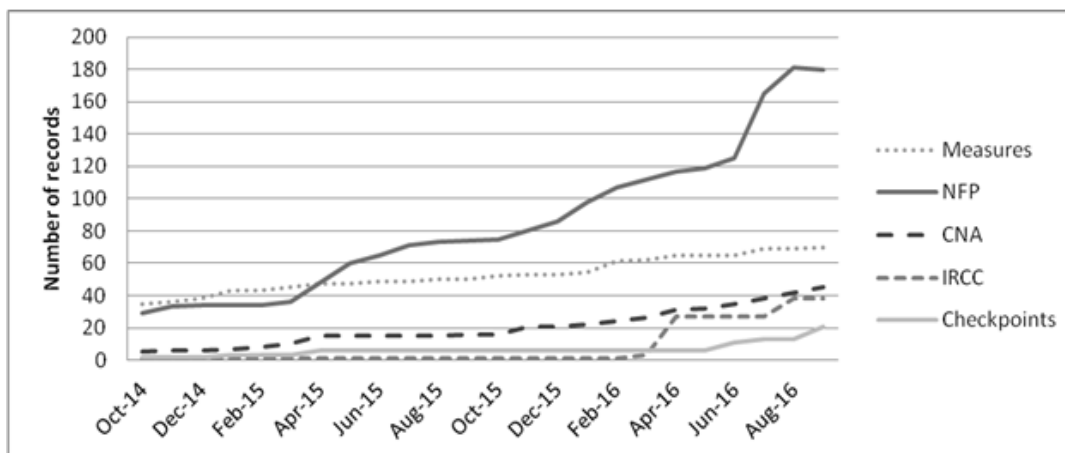


Figure 2. Number of national records published by type of information (as of 9 September 2016)



### *Feedback received on the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House*

46. As part of the outreach and engagement campaign, the Secretariat conducted a survey to collect feedback from Parties and other Governments with a view to assessing needs for training and technical support as well as receiving feedback on the usability of the ABS Clearing-House. A total of 21 PAs and three NAUs took part in the survey between January and April 2015.

47. The feedback received through the survey, the IAC and other means, including direct contact with Parties and other users, informed many of the improvements made to central portal and database of the ABS Clearing-House, described in section A, as well as capacity-building efforts undertaken by the Secretariat.

### **E. Progress made in promoting the use of the ABS Clearing-House for supporting capacity-building for the implementation of the Protocol**

48. At the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the Executive Secretary was requested to do the following:

(a) Promote the use of the ABS Clearing-House for supporting capacity-building for the implementation of the Protocol (decision NP-1/2, para. 12);

(b) Promote and facilitate, in collaboration with relevant organizations, coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the strategic framework by, inter alia, providing relevant tools and information through the ABS Clearing-House (decision NP-1/8, para. 10 (a));

(c) Ensure that information on capacity-building and development needs, opportunities and activities can be submitted to and accessed from all platforms under the Convention so that access and benefit-sharing capacity development activities are integrated into the global capacity development activities under the Convention (decision NP-1/8, para. 10 (b)).

49. On the basis of advice of the first meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on Capacity-building, held in Montreal, Canada, from 15 to 17 September 2015, and from the joint session of the informal advisory committees to the CBD clearing-house mechanism and the ABS Clearing-House, the Secretariat implemented the common formats for submitting capacity-building initiatives and resources in the ABS Clearing-House.

50. Parties, other Governments, indigenous and local communities, and relevant stakeholders, in particular capacity-building providers were then invited to share information on capacity-building



initiatives and capacity-building resources through the ABS Clearing-House by notification 2016-071 of 3 June 2016.<sup>8</sup>

**F. Progress made in making the ABS Clearing-House operational in the six official languages of the United Nations**

51. The mechanism to support and manage the process of making all clearing-houses operational in the six official languages of the United Nations is currently under development. The translation of the ABS Clearing-House has been initiated under a manual process, starting with the submission forms for the common formats following the order of priorities defined by the first meeting of the IAC.<sup>9</sup>

**G. Progress made in facilitating the exchange of information with other databases or systems**

52. In accordance with paragraph 1(c) of the modalities of operation, the Secretariat has developed an application programming interface (API) to facilitate interoperability and the exchange of information with other databases and systems, in particular the databases of Parties, as well as the databases of other instruments and organizations. The API is meant to allow the seamless integration of the data and functions available in the ABS Clearing-House to best fit the needs, workflows and technologies of other systems.

53. Currently, basic aspects of the API have been documented for developers, including examples and sample code, and are available online at <https://api.cbd.int/developers/>. The API can be used to avoid duplication in the submission of information to the ABS Clearing-House and, at the same time, create information systems that are fully compatible with the ABS Clearing-House. This can 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.<sup>10</sup>

54. The Secretariat is working with Parties, other Governments and partner organizations to provide technical assistance and advice in the development of national systems and regional clearing-houses using the API. Experiences and lessons learned from the development of these systems will contribute to capacity-building and help promote the use of the API.

**H. Progress made in the collaboration with relevant instruments and organizations for the exchange of relevant data**

55. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to provide information on collaboration with relevant instruments and organizations for the exchange of relevant data in his report on progress on the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House (decision NP-1/2, para. 13). The IAC at its first meeting considered the progress made by the Secretariat regarding collaboration with instruments and organizations.<sup>11</sup> Below is a brief summary of the areas of collaboration and the advice of the IAC on this matter.

*Global Information System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

56. Pursuant to the Memorandum of Cooperation and the Joint Initiative signed between the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Secretariats exchanged information on the development of the ABS Clearing-House and the consultations being carried out on the Global Information System with a view to strengthening the implementation of both ITPGRFA and the Nagoya

<sup>8</sup> For more information on capacity-building initiatives and resources, see the report on progress on the implementation of the strategic framework for capacity-building and development for the Nagoya Protocol (UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/8).

<sup>9</sup> See paragraph 66 of the IAC report (UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/INF/2).

<sup>10</sup> For example, whenever a permit is granted at national level, subset information required to constitute an IRCC could be automatically transmitted and made available in the ABS Clearing-House through the API for its publication by the publishing authority.

<sup>11</sup> See paragraphs 30-33 of the IAC report (UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/INF/2).

Protocol in a mutually supportive manner. The possibility of including information regarding the membership of Parties and other Governments to ITPGRFA in the country profile was discussed by the IAC and the experts agreed to revisit this issue at a later stage.

*Global Catalogue of Microorganisms of the World Federation for Culture Collections (WFCC)*

57. Initial discussions were held with WFCC in order to assess possible linkages between the Global Catalogue of Microorganisms and the ABS Clearing-House, particularly in relation to the internationally recognized certificate of compliance and the checkpoint communiqué. The IAC advised the Secretariat to continue exploring means of enhancing collaboration to facilitate the exchange of information as further experience was acquired in monitoring the utilization of genetic resources through the ABS Clearing-House.

### **III. PROGRESS MADE ON ISSUES RELATED TO THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE AND CHECKPOINT COMMUNIQUÉ**

58. As of 16 August 2016, four Parties had published permits or their equivalent constituting an internationally recognized certificate of compliance (IRCC): Mexico, Guatemala, South Africa and India. A total of 35 permits were made available by India. Three of the IRCCs cover access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. Parties and non-Parties are also making progress in establishing checkpoints; however, no checkpoint communiqués have been published.

59. In paragraph 3 of decision NP-1/2, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided that the IAC would address technical issues related to feedback received, including issues related to the internationally recognized certificate of compliance and checkpoint communiqué (CPC).

60. At its first meeting, the IAC noted that the issue of using the IRCC to cover traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources might deserve further consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.<sup>12</sup> At its second meeting, the IAC discussed the main features and functionalities implemented in the ABS Clearing-House for the constitution of the IRCC and the CPC. The following reflects the common understanding of the IAC on the IRCC, CPC, and the process of monitoring the utilization of genetic resources.

#### **A. The internationally recognized certificate of compliance**

61. Parties requiring prior informed consent (PIC) are to provide for the issuance of a permit or its equivalent at the time of access as evidence of the decision to grant PIC and of the establishment of mutually agreed terms (MAT) (Article 6, para. 3(e)). This information is to be made available to the ABS Clearing-House in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 2(c).

62. Article 17, paragraph 2, provides that a permit or its equivalent issued in accordance with Article 6, paragraph 3(e), and made available to the ABS Clearing-House, shall constitute an internationally recognized certificate of compliance.

63. Article 17, paragraph 3, further establishes that the internationally recognized certificate of compliance shall serve as evidence that the genetic resource which it covers has been accessed in accordance with PIC and that MAT have been established, as required by the domestic access and benefit-sharing legislation or regulatory requirements of the Party providing PIC.

#### *Confidentiality*

64. The ABS Clearing-House does not host confidential information. Article 17, paragraph 4, provides that the internationally recognized certificate of compliance shall contain some minimum information when it is not confidential. Technically, in the ABS Clearing-House, this has been implemented by making the fields listed in Article 17, paragraph 4, mandatory but allowing the possibility of identifying the following fields as confidential: the provider; the person or entity to whom PIC was

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., para. 57.

granted; the subject-matter or genetic resources covered by the permit or its equivalent; and the indication whether the permit or its equivalent covers commercial and/or non-commercial use.

#### *Transmission of information*

65. Once the information on the permit or its equivalent is published in the ABS Clearing-House, an internationally recognized certificate of compliance is constituted. The ABS Clearing-House will then send a copy of the IRCC by electronic means to: (a) the national focal point and the competent national authority or authorities of the country responsible for issuing the permits or its equivalent; (b) the provider, if this information is not confidential; and (c) the person or entity to whom PIC was granted, if this information is not confidential.

#### *Updating, amending or revoking the IRCC*

66. The IRCC plays an important role in securing legal certainty about the utilization of the genetic resources along the value chain. Therefore, special conditions apply for updating, amending or revoking the IRCC in the ABS Clearing-House.

67. A variety of circumstances can be conceived whereby it would be in the interest of the issuer and holder of a permit or its equivalent to modify an IRCC. For example, access could be granted for soil or water samples or other situations where the genetic resource or species has not yet been identified. Depending on the national legislation, a new permit could be issued or the previous permit could be amended in order to include the species once identified. Also, a permit could be issued for a limited period of time. After that time, the country could decide not to renew the permit or to renew it by extending the validity of the previous permit or by issuing a new one, depending on the circumstances.

68. In such cases, the ABS Clearing-House provides the following options:

- (a) Submitting information on a new permit, including the possibility of linking to the previous IRCC so that they can be displayed together;
- (b) Updating or amending an existing IRCC. A new version of the IRCC would then be constituted and the previous version would no longer be valid;
- (c) Revoking an existing IRCC so it is no longer valid.

69. In order to provide for legal certainty and traceability, the reason for the update of the record is required.

#### *Transparency and traceability of the IRCC*

70. Each IRCC will include a link referring to the online record on the ABS Clearing-House. In order to have certainty about the latest valid version of an IRCC, a user of the ABS Clearing-House can follow the link provided in the certificate and compare the information. With a view to ensuring transparency and traceability, the ABS Clearing-House holds previous records on the permit or its equivalent in archived form and the status of each record is displayed on the record as well as information outlining the reason for the update of the record.

### **B. The checkpoint communiqué**

71. Checkpoints are to collect and receive relevant information related to PIC, to the source of the genetic resource, to the establishment of MAT, and/or to the utilization of genetic resources, as appropriate (Article 17, para. 1(a)(i)), including from the internationally recognized certificate of compliance, when such a certificate is available. In accordance with Article 17, paragraph 1(a)(iii), such information collected or received by the checkpoint is to be provided to relevant national authorities in the country where the checkpoint is located, to the Party providing PIC and to the ABS Clearing-House, as appropriate.

72. The ABS Clearing-House, through the checkpoint communiqué, provides a tool to facilitate the transmission of information to all actors involved. It enables the collection of the following information:

(a) The IRCC (or when there is no IRCC, information made available on PIC, MAT or the source of the genetic resources) as provided by the user;

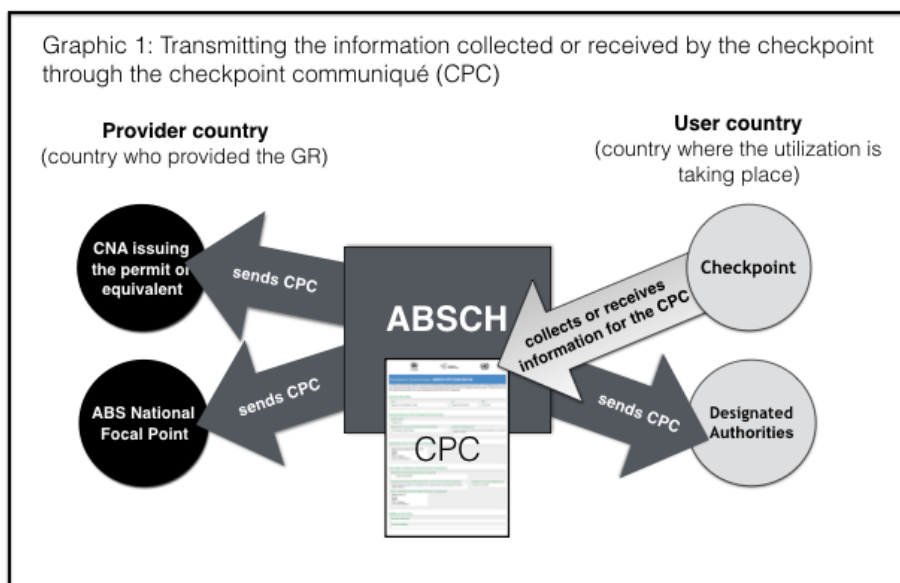
(b) The intended use of the genetic resource, including the type of use (commercial, non-commercial), and the person or entity making information available to the checkpoint on the utilization of the genetic resource.

### *Confidentiality*

73. The ABS Clearing-House does not host confidential information. Article 17, paragraph 1 (a) (iii) of the Protocol provides that the information collected or received by the checkpoints is to be provided to relevant national authorities, to the Party providing PIC and to the ABS Clearing-House, as appropriate and without prejudice to the protection of confidential information. Technically, in the ABS Clearing-House, this has been implemented by limiting the number of mandatory fields which are required for publishing the CPC to the following: the “source of the genetic resource”; the “subject-matter or genetic resources relevant to the information collected or received”; and the “short description of the information collected or received by the checkpoint relevant to the utilization of genetic resources, including the type of use”. Text fields offer sufficient flexibility to those registering the information for the CPC to provide the necessary information to assist provider countries to monitor the utilization of their genetic resources while ensuring that no confidential information is entered in the ABS Clearing-House.

### *Transmission of information*

74. When the checkpoint communiqué is published in the ABS Clearing-House containing the information collected by the checkpoint, a copy is automatically sent by electronic means 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 to whom PIC was granted, if this information is not confidential. The following graphic describes the flow of transmission of information through the checkpoint communiqué.



## **C. Monitoring the utilization of genetic resources**

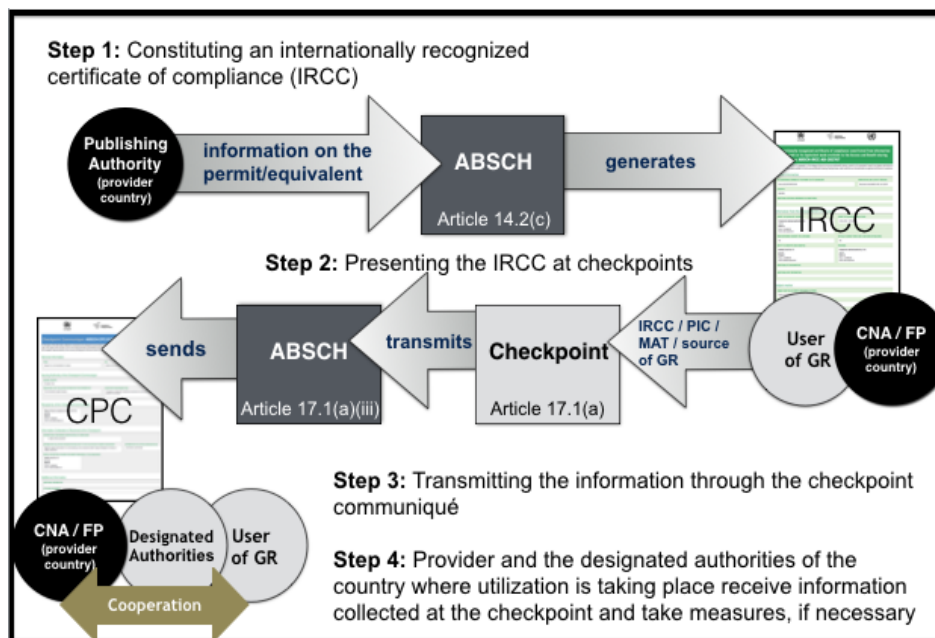
75. For the monitoring system to work, the country providing the genetic resource and that has issued the permit should receive the information collected or received by the checkpoints. Without prejudice to the protection of confidential information, the checkpoint is to collect the information provided by the

user; subsequently, this information is to be transmitted to relevant authorities, as foreseen by Article 17.1 (a) (iii) of the Protocol.

76. The provider country is the best placed to assess whether access to the genetic resource was obtained in accordance with the ABS measures and whether the genetic resource is being used in accordance with PIC and MAT. The provider country, once it receives the reference to the IRCC and the information on how the genetic resource is being used, will be able to consult the original national permit containing all confidential information and compare this information against the information provided by the checkpoint communiqué and decide to take appropriate measures or contact the user in case of doubt or discrepancy.

77. Designated authorities of the user countries will also receive the information coming from their own checkpoints about how genetic resources are being used within their jurisdiction. This allows provider countries and user countries to establish a channel of communication that will help all involved to ensure compliance with ABS measures and to cooperate in cases of alleged violation.

78. The following graphic summarizes the different steps in monitoring the utilization of genetic resources.



#### IV. MODALITIES OF OPERATION AND INTERVALS TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE

79. In decision NP-1/2, the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to further refine the modalities of operation, taking into account progress made, the advice given by the IAC and feedback received, in particular that of Parties, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its second meeting.

80. The IAC at its second meeting considered this issue and noted that there was no need to further refine the modalities of operation in preparation for the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. It advised that the Secretariat could further refine the modalities of operation of the ABS Clearing-House in the light of experience acquired with the implementation of the ABS Clearing-House during the next biennium, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its third meeting.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

81. The IAC also considered the proposal by the Secretariat to develop joint modalities of operation to enhance coherence in the implementation and operation of all the components of the central CBD clearing-house mechanism in preparation for the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the ninth meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the third meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol.

82. The IAC was of the view that joint modalities of operation could be considered for common elements of the three clearing-houses. However, it was pointed out that specific modalities of operation for the ABS Clearing-House would still be needed for its specific functions related to the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The IAC suggested that it could provide advice on the joint modalities of operation to be developed, as well as those specific to the ABS Clearing-House, prior to their consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its third meeting.<sup>14</sup>

83. With respect to the consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, at its second meeting, of the intervals to review the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House (decision NP-1/2, para. 6), the IAC supported the proposal put forward by the Secretariat that the review of the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House could be part of the assessment and review process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Protocol established by Article 31 of the Protocol.<sup>15</sup>

#### **V. PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE AND OPERATIONAL COSTS**

84. As the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol advances and the number of Parties to the Protocol increases, the ABS Clearing-House will need to continue adapting to the needs of Parties, in particular, as well as the needs of other users. As new experience is gained by Parties in operationalizing the provisions of the Protocol, in particular with those related to monitoring the utilization of genetic resources, adjustment and refinements to the functionality of the ABS Clearing-House may be necessary.

85. With this in mind, the IAC at its second meeting considered priorities for future implementation of the ABS Clearing-House.<sup>16</sup>

86. The IAC emphasized that Parties need to make all relevant information available to the ABS Clearing-House, in accordance with Article 14, to support the global implementation of the Protocol. In this regard, the IAC stressed the Secretariat's important role in providing support and training to Parties to help them publish information in the ABS Clearing-House, and that these efforts should continue to be a priority. The IAC also invited the Secretariat to explore the possibility of setting targets as a means to incentivize more Parties to publish their available national information on the ABS Clearing-House.

87. The IAC also noted that, in implementing and administering the ABS Clearing-House, the Secretariat should give priority to activities and functionalities that support Parties in their implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

88. Regarding future implementation of the ABS Clearing-House, the IAC agreed that the maintenance of current functionalities should be prioritized over the development of new features.

89. The IAC advised the Secretariat to take into consideration a number of high-priority goals and activities for future implementation and administration of the ABS Clearing-House in the next biennium (2017-2018). The outcomes of discussions are reflected in annex II and the reasoning behind the priority goals is summarized below.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., para. 58.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., para. 59.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., paras. 60 to 64.

*Goal 1: Population and increased use of the ABS Clearing-House*

90. As of 9 September 2016, 37.6 per cent of Parties have published national information in the ABS Clearing-House (CNAs, checkpoints, and/or ABS measures). According to the information made available to the Secretariat: 18.8 per cent of Parties have published all their available national information in the ABS Clearing-House. A total of 10.6 per cent of Parties have published some of the national information available but not all, and 20.0 per cent of Parties have not published any of their available national information. For a number of Parties, there is no information available on whether they have established CNAs, checkpoints, or ABS measures that could be published in the ABS Clearing-House.

91. On the basis of the information made available by Parties on progress made towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 16, the Secretariat is currently engaging with Parties and non-Parties with national information available to support its publication on the ABS Clearing-House.

92. The ABS Clearing-House plays a critical role in the implementation of the Protocol and requires the participation of Parties, non-Parties, indigenous and local communities, as well as relevant stakeholders to publish relevant information on the ABS Clearing House. An important target for Parties to the Nagoya Protocol over the next biennium could be to pay particular attention to ensuring that all national information, as it becomes available, is published in a timely fashion with the end goal of reporting to the Parties to the Protocol at their third meeting that 100 per cent of available national information, in accordance with the Protocol, has been made available on the ABS Clearing-House.

93. Non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders should also be encouraged to make relevant information available on the ABS Clearing-House.

94. With a view to achieving this objective the Secretariat could play a key role in supporting and engaging with Parties as a priority, as well as with non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders. Such support could include: (a) regular follow-up with countries to encourage the submission of information by Parties in particular, but also by non-Parties and others, for the population of the ABS Clearing-House; (b) providing technical assistance through Skype, e-mails, telephone and the online live chat help desk service; (c) carrying out capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for the ABS Clearing-House, as well as supporting capacity-building activities carried out by partners; and (d) translating training and capacity-building materials, and incorporating feedback received and possible changes to the ABS Clearing-House, as needed.

95. As the number of Parties to the Protocol increases, the number of users of the ABS Clearing-House will also increase as well as the need for awareness-raising, capacity-building and timely technical support. Continued support and engagement is essential in order to ensure that Parties, non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders populate the ABS Clearing-House with up-to-date and reliable information.

96. For the Secretariat to be able to ensure follow-up and provide support to Parties, non-Parties and others, dedicated human resources will be required.

97. In addition, as implementation of the Nagoya Protocol advances the need to enhance the exchange of information with other databases or systems will also increase. General awareness-raising and technical support to facilitate and promote the use of the API will be needed. The Secretariat will also continue to explore interoperability and collaboration between the ABS Clearing-House and other instruments and relevant databases and systems.

*Goal 2: Translation and functionality for operationalizing the ABS Clearing-House in the six official languages of the United Nations*

98. Bearing in mind the urgency of making the ABS Clearing-House operational in the six official languages of the United Nations, advancing on issues related to translation is a top priority. Currently, work to develop the mechanisms and procedures to manage this process is under way and, although they are not yet complete, there is a manual process in place which will continue to advance the translation of the ABS Clearing-House in the meantime. Translation of the ABS Clearing-House web pages will

continue incrementally in the order of priority defined by the IAC.<sup>17</sup> The progress made through the manual translation process will be subsumed by the translation management mechanism once the development is completed.

*Goal 3: Maintain and improve functionality of the ABS Clearing-House*

99. The ABS Clearing-House exists in a dynamic IT environment and the linkages between systems can be complex, thus, making it difficult to assess the full impact of any changes. In a shared and complex environment frequent maintenance, testing, optimizing and bug fixing is essential to keep the ABS Clearing-House running sustainably, effectively and efficiently. As the core functionality stabilizes, the Secretariat will work to better address issues affecting a smaller percentage of ABS Clearing-House users such as browser compatibility and speed of the website. As the database grows, improved tools for organizing and finding information will also become more important. However, maintaining current functionality, addressing the needs of Parties and populating the ABS Clearing-House will remain the top priorities.

*Goal 4: Enhance the integration of the ABS Clearing-House as part of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention*

100. The goal of enhancing integration is to reduce costs, distribute benefits, avoid duplication, and increase efficiency. Enhancing integration will have impacts on the IT resources and infrastructure, the knowledge management processes (such as IAC meetings, controlled vocabulary or the development of new shared common formats), as well as, on the user experience, design, and branding. Due to the fundamental role of the ABS Clearing-House in the implementation of the Protocol, during the next biennium work done in this regard will ensure that the necessary specific functionalities of the ABS Clearing-House are strengthened and not compromised.

## **VI. FUNDING AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

101. Progress made during this biennium (2015-2016) in the implementation and development of the ABS Clearing-House has been possible thanks to the exceptional effort put forth by the Secretariat as well as the availability of dedicated ABS Clearing-House staff as follows:

(a) A Programme Officer (P-3) for the ABS Clearing-House funded by the European Union responsible for the design, management and coordination of all aspects of the ABS Clearing-House;

(b) An Associate Programme Officer (P-2) for the ABS Clearing-House funded by the European Union and Switzerland during 2015 and from the core budget during 2016 and responsible for providing information technology;

(c) Two individual contractors to assist with outreach, capacity-building and providing technical support for Parties, non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders and to encourage participation in and population of the ABS Clearing-House. One individual contractor was hired in October 2015 with funding from the European Union, and a second contractor was hired in March 2016 with funding from the Japan Biodiversity Fund.

102. Availability of sufficient human resources is necessary to carry out the activities and goals planned for the next biennium. In addition to the support provided by Secretariat IT staff, the following staff is required to ensure the proper functioning of the ABS Clearing-House:

(a) Regularization of the post of the Programme Officer (P-3) for the ABS Clearing-House;

(b) Creation of a General Service position to provide administrative support for the ABS Clearing-House and to encourage the population and use of the ABS Clearing-House by supporting the capacity of Parties in particular, as well as non-Parties, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders. Continuity of knowledge and experience, which cannot be ensured through the hiring of individual contractors, is essential to ensure good quality support for Parties and others.

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<sup>17</sup> See UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/INF/2, para. 66.



103. The following provides a summary of the funding and resource requirements for the biennium 2017-2018:

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Core budget 2017-2018</b>	<b>Voluntary funds 2017-2018</b>
	<i>(United States dollars)</i>	<i>(United States dollars)</i>
I. Human resources		
ABS Clearing-House Officer (P-3)	342,500	
Associate Programme Officer (P-2)	262,000	
Technical support and outreach (G-6)	146,600	
II. Translation of the ABS Clearing-House website	40,000	
III. Informal advisory committee (1 meeting)	45,000	
IV. Capacity-building activities and materials		50,000
Subtotal	836,100	50,000
Programme support costs (13%)	108,693	6,500
<b>V. Total cost</b>	<b>971,793</b>	<b>56,500</b>

**VII. ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL AT ITS SECOND MEETING**

104. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at its second meeting may wish:

(a) To welcome the progress made by the Executive Secretary in the implementation of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House and capacity-building activities for the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House;

(b) To take note of the indicative goals and priorities for future implementation and administration of the ABS Clearing-House for the next biennium;<sup>18</sup>

(c) To request the Executive Secretary to take into account the goals and priorities referred to in paragraph (b) above when implementing the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, in line with available resources, and in accordance with the modalities of operation and feedback received, in particular that of Parties;

(d) To take note of the progress made on issues related to the internationally recognized certificate of compliance and the checkpoint communiqué;

(e) To express appreciation for the technical guidance provided by the informal advisory committee with respect to the resolution of technical and practical issues arising from the ongoing development of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House;

(f) To decide 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 third meeting;

(g) To request the Executive Secretary:

<sup>18</sup> See UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/2/3, annex II.

- (i) To further refine the modalities of operation of the ABS Clearing-House taking into account progress made, the advice given by the informal advisory committee, and feedback received on the implementation and operation of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, in particular that of Parties, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at its third meeting;
  - (ii) As part of the exercise of refining the modalities referred to in paragraph (i) above, to develop joint modalities of operation for the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the ABS Clearing-House for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at their ninth meeting and the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at their third meeting with a view to enhancing coherence in the implementation and operation of the common elements of all components of the central CBD clearing-house mechanism;
- (h) To decide to review the implementation and operation of the ABS Clearing-House as part of the assessment and review process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Protocol established by Article 31 of the Protocol;
- (i) To welcome the efforts by Parties, non-Parties, and indigenous and local communities to make information available in the ABS Clearing-House;
  - (j) To urge Parties that have not yet done so to publish all mandatory information available at the national level on the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol, as soon as possible, with a view to having all existing information available in the Clearing-House by the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol;
  - (k) To encourage non-Parties, international organizations, indigenous and local communities, and relevant stakeholders to provide relevant information to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, as soon as possible;
  - (l) To request the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to encourage the publication of information and use of the ABS Clearing-House by providing technical support for Parties and non-Parties, as well as indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate;
  - (m) Invites Parties, and non-Parties, international organizations, regional development banks and other financial institutions to provide financial resources for enabling Parties to actively participate in the ABS Clearing-House.

*Annex I***CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE (2015-2016)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date and place</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Thirteen introductory webinars to the ABS Clearing-House in four different languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese)	From September 2014 to April 2015	117 participants from 52 countries
Hands on training side event on the ABS Clearing-House at the margins of SBSTTA 19	4 November 2015	
Presentation on the ABS Clearing-House International Chamber of Commerce conference on “Working out ABS”	28-29 September 2015 (Paris)	
A session on the ABS Clearing-House was included in the regional workshop for the CBD clearing-house mechanism organized by Belgium and Benin	February 2016 (Benin)	12 countries from the African region
Training workshop on the ABS Clearing-House prior to the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation	Sunday, 1 May 2016 (Montreal, Canada)	13 countries were represented (publishing authorities and national focal points)
Side event on the ABS Clearing-House at the margins of the first meeting of SBI	Wednesday, 4 May 2016 (Montreal, Canada)	36
Presentation on the ABS Clearing-House at the thirtieth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore	May 30 to 3 June 2016 (Geneva, Switzerland)	
Workshop on the ABS Clearing-House in support of GEF project for advancing the Nagoya Protocol in countries of the Caribbean region organized by IUCN	21-22 July 2016, Kingston, Jamaica	20
A component on the ABS Clearing-House was included in two regional workshops organized by the Secretariat on traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use	14-18 December 2015 (Saint John's, Antigua and Barbuda) 23-27 May 2016 (Panama City, Panama)	85

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date and place</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
A component on the ABS Clearing-House was included in the training workshops organised by the Secretariat jointly with IDLO on establishing legal frameworks to implement the Nagoya Protocol	11-16 July 2016 (the Hague), for English-speaking African countries and the Caribbean 18-22 July 2016 (Bali, Indonesia) for Asia and the Pacific 5-9 September 2016 (Antigua, Guatemala) for Latin America	60
Webinar for users of genetic resources, organized with the International Chamber of Commerce	5 October 2016, online	

## Annex II

**INDICATIVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION AND  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE  
BY THE SECRETARIAT**

High priority goals and activities	Order of implementation
<b>Goal 1: Population and increased use of the ABS Clearing-House</b>	high
<i>Outreach and engagement:</i>	
Continue proactive engagement and outreach campaign	high
Provide on-demand technical support (Skype, email, phone, live chat help desk)	high
Promote and disseminate capacity-building resources for the use of the ABSCH	medium
<i>Capacity-building:</i>	
Development of an e-learning module	high
Development of step-by-step guides (with translation)	high
Support training, as needed	medium
Develop new capacity-building common formats (e.g. opportunities)	low
Improve the display of information on capacity-building for the Nagoya Protocol	low
<i>Interoperability and collaboration:</i>	
Raise awareness and provide technical support for the use of the API	medium
Facilitate the exchange of information with national databases or systems	medium
Explore collaboration with relevant instruments and organizations (e.g. ITPGRFA, InforMEA, WFCC)	low
<b>Goal 2: Translation and functionality for operationalizing the ABS Clearing-House in the six official languages of the United Nations</b>	high
Implement manual translation of the ABSCH (common formats and webpages)	high
Develop a translation mechanism for the CHM (including the ABS Clearing-House)	medium
<b>Goal 3: Maintain and improve functionality</b>	high
Perform general website maintenance (ongoing)	high
Improve existing functions and fix bugs in accordance with feedback received	high

<b>High priority goals and activities</b>	<b>Order of implementation</b>
Optimize the website, in particular for slow Internet connections	high
Improve search engine and tools to manage common vocabularies and keywords	medium
Implement new features as necessary and in accordance with IAC feedback	medium
Improve browser compatibility	low
Improve responsiveness for other devices (mobile and tablets) and small screen sizes	low
Develop tools to manage information on organizations and consolidate databases	low
Develop report analyzer (in collaboration with the Biosafety Clearing-house based on the tools developed for it)	low
<b>Goal 4: Integration with the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention</b>	medium
Support backend integration and efficiencies in maintaining shared IT infrastructure	high
Support development of integrated and automated testing and monitoring of web applications and related services to ensure the IT infrastructure is functioning properly	medium
Complete work on development environment	medium
Support development and implementation of SCBD website and communications strategy	medium
Ensure records submitted through the CHM are made available on the ABS Clearing-House, and vice versa	low
Develop joint modalities of operation for the CBD clearing-house mechanism, the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House	low

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