



# Access & Benefit Sharing

## Whose biological diversity is it?

The Convention on Biological Diversity recognises the sovereign rights of States over their natural resources in areas within their jurisdiction. This means that countries have the authority to control physical access to their genetic resources--but they also should endeavour to create conditions to facilitate such access for environmentally sound uses. Parties also have the obligation to take appropriate measures with the aim of sharing the results of research and development and benefits derived from their commercial use. This is one of the three fundamental objectives of the Convention.

Genetic resources, whether from plant, animal or micro-organisms, may be used for a variety of purposes ranging from basic research to use in products. Users of genetic resources may include research institutes, universities and private companies operating in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture, cosmetics and biotechnology.

Benefits derived from genetic resources may include the results of research and development carried out on genetic resources, the transfer of technologies which make use of those resources, participation in biotechnological research activities, or monetary benefits arising from the commercialisation of products based on genetic resources.

## Why it is important:

- An international regime can ensure that biodiversity-rich developing countries obtain a fair and equitable share of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources originating from their territory by setting out a clear and transparent framework for access and benefit-sharing.
- The sharing of benefits, through technology transfer, research results, training and profits can contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in biodiversity rich developing countries.
- Access to genetic resources in exchange for fair and equitable sharing of benefits can contribute to further research and development contributing to human well-being through their use in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, agriculture and many other sectors.
- Access to genetic resources is also essential to ensure a better understanding of the world wide web of life by encouraging taxonomic research.

## What the CBD is doing:

At its fifth meeting, in 2000, the Conference of the Parties established a subsidiary body, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS), with the mandate to develop guidelines and other approaches to assist Parties with the implementation of the access and benefit-sharing provisions of the Convention.



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The Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization were adopted in 2002 to assist Parties when establishing administrative, legislative or policy measures on access and benefit-sharing and/or when negotiating contractual arrangements for access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.

In 2004, the Conference of the Parties mandated the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to elaborate and negotiate an “international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing” in order to effectively implement the relevant provisions of the Convention. In 2006, the Working Group was urged to complete the negotiation of the international regime as soon as possible and no later than 2010. At its ninth meeting, the Conference of Parties (COP 9) is expected to agree on a road map for the adoption of the international ABS regime at COP 10, in Nagoya, Japan, to be held in 2010.

For more information:

ABS: [www.cbd.int/abs](http://www.cbd.int/abs)

COP decisions: [www.cbd.int/abs/decisions.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/abs/decisions.shtml)

International regime [www.cbd.int/abs/regime.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/abs/regime.shtml)

Bonn Guidelines [www.cbd.int/abs/bonn.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/abs/bonn.shtml)



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Convention on Biological Diversity

