



Work Plan 04/2019-12/2020 – Pacific

October 2019

This work plan is based on the ABS Initiative's [Programme Document 2015-2020](#) and the experiences and outcomes of the activities undertaken under the Initiative's previous work plans (2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18). Responding to [CBD COP Decision XIII/23](#) on Capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer and the clearing-house mechanism, it aims to contribute to the implementation of the strategic framework for capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in collaboration with a broad range of relevant partners.

The selection of activities is based on the available budget for the Pacific region, covering the period from 16 November 2019 to 15 November 2020 and in collaboration with ABS work in the region with the GEF funded and UN Environment implemented Regional Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Project which is executed by the Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). It has been agreed with the SPREP steering committee and project staff, that ABS Initiative will focus primarily on supporting Melanesian sub-regional countries (Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Fiji), with some additional support for Micronesian and Polynesian countries only where it is cost efficient, for regional workshops, by correspondence, or for Cook Islands (as per ARC grant described below).

The work plan is structured along the main processes outlined in the Initiative's Programme Document 2015-2020. Information on the actual contributions of the ABS Initiative is preceding the descriptions of the activities / processes reflected in the work plan.

Implementation of the workplan will be coordinated by the Regional Project Manager Associate Professor Daniel Robinson of UNSW. The support of the ABS Initiative will be supplemented with mutually supportive Australian Research Council (ARC) funding (DP180100507) assigned to A/Prof Daniel Robinson and Dr Margaret Raven (AUD 568,000 for 2018-2022) for the project "Indigenous knowledge futures: protecting and promoting indigenous knowledge." The geographical focus of the project is on Australia (primarily Northern Territory), **Vanuatu and Cook Islands**.

1 Core Implementation Processes: National Support

During the first phase of the project, during visits to Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG and Fiji, the competent national authorities (CNAs) and a number of in-country stakeholders requested support for further capacity-building to improve their partial ABS frameworks and in-country activities.

Update on ABS status in Melanesia and the Region:

Vanuatu and Fiji have ratified the Nagoya Protocol, and are receiving support from the ABS Initiative. Samoa, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and Palau have also ratified the Nagoya Protocol and have benefited from ABS Initiative support in regional workshops and through capacity building support by correspondence.

Vanuatu has a functioning permit system in place and needs some minor legal revisions to the bioprospecting provisions of their law to be Nagoya Protocol compliant.



Fiji has some ABS draft policies and procedures, but these do not appear to be well coordinated with other agencies or effective to date. A mission to meet with the Fiji government will occur in October 2019, and the Fiji Government attended regional ABS contracts training in Nadi in August 2018.

Solomon Islands has been preparing to ratify the Nagoya Protocol, but has been delayed in doing so due to poor coordination between departments. They have been supported by 2 national workshops in Honiara to date, and are now improving collaboration with provincial government offices on ABS and permit granting processes. They are likely to ratify imminently and have employed a research officer in the Division of Environmental Protection.

PNG has developed a roadmap for Nagoya Protocol ratification and implementation with the ABS Initiative and are seeking support through an MOU with ABS Initiative, to hire an in-country consultant to help develop the ABS policy, guidelines and to draft ABS legislation.

In addition, there have been some discussions with regional organisations including the University of South Pacific (USP), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), SPREP and other stakeholders, about regional ABS issues, such as the coordination of regional genebanks and research activities.

The **Cook Islands** have also completed an ABS policy under a UNDP-GEF project and begun working on ABS legislation to support their ratification process, and were supported by the ABS Initiative with a national workshop in Rarotonga in late 2018.

Planned Activities:

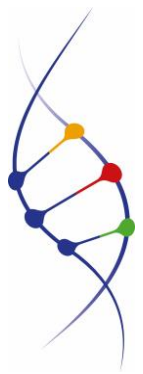
Planned activities will continue to contribute to the three core process in varying degrees. IPLC support in general and specifically in Vanuatu and the Cook Islands will benefit from the ARC grant mentioned above.

Vanuatu: An IPLC focused country visit is planned for November 2019 under the ARC Discovery Grant. An ABS Initiative focused country visit is likely in April or May 2020. Proposed activities:

- *ABS framework:* Support for further development of the bioprospecting provisions of the Act and review of the TK Bill.
- *IPLC participation:* The Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation has recommended local awareness raising/training workshops in provincial locations including on the islands of Tanna/Eromango and Banks. Some ABS Initiative awareness raising has already occurred in Santo, Malekula, Tanna and Aneityum.
- *IPLC participation:* this has been occurring under the ARC Grant in Malekula, Tanna and Aneityum.
- *ABS agreements:* Analysis of biotrade value chains, including kava, tamanu, nangai and noni for ABS relevance and to support compliance. The companies involved in the value chain were visited in 2018 and 2019 when the US-based intermediary biotrade oil company (Concentrated Aloe Corporation) visited their partners in Vanuatu. We are still working to see if there are viable ABS-compliant value chains that can be established with these or other organisations.

Solomon Islands: Following a successful national workshop and consultation in May 2019, there is ongoing interest in provincial and national support for improvement of ABS processes and awareness raising. An ABS Initiative country visit is likely in May 2020. Proposed activities:

- *ABS framework:* Support for further development of the bioprospecting provisions and permitting procedures of the Act and review of the TK Bill (work in progress).
- *IPLC participation:* The Division of Environmental Protection has recommended provincial/local awareness raising/training workshops or activities in Munda or Gizo.
- *ABS agreements:* Biotrade value chains of interest, including tamanu and nangai could be analysed regarding ABS relevance and supported to achieve ABS compliance.



Papua New Guinea: Through an MOU with ABS Initiative, PNG have been seeking an in-country ABS consultant to work on ABS policy and legislation as well as guidelines. UNSW have supported their Roadmap to ABS Compliance, and the development of the ABS consultant proposal to GIZ Pacific (as Local Subsidy). A country visit is likely in mid to late February 2020 when they have hired the consultant and they have started their ABS work.

- *ABS framework:* To help progress ABS procedures and permit systems, and develop an ABS policy so that PNG can ratify the Nagoya Protocol;
- *IPLC participation:* The ABS consultant will do awareness raising, consult with IPLCs about TK protection, and some scoping of BCP interest from communities under the contract, with some support from the Regional Coordinator.

Fiji: In-country support for Fiji is being followed up under the 2018-19 budget in October 2019. We are aiming to support Ministry of iTaukei Affairs PIC/ABS procedures as a minimum, and also Department of Environment if they agree to meet. If support is sought, it would likely include a mid or late-2020 mission. Proposed Activities:

- *ABS framework:* The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs has administrative procedures for ABS that are not Nagoya compliant, for which support has been requested.
- *ABS agreements and IPLC Participation:* The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at USP and the Medical Research Institute at Fiji National University (FNU) have both requested follow-up support relating to template agreements for their foreign partners, and for local prior informed consent (PIC) with communities.

Cook Islands: Daniel Robinson is doing in-country visits to Cook Islands for research under the mutually supportive ARC grant (recently, in September 2019, and likely in July 2020). Proposed Activities:

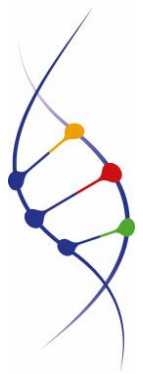
- *ABS framework:* To help further progress ABS procedures and permit systems, analysis of the effects of the Cook Islands TK Act.
- *IPLC participation:* Scoping of BCP interest from communities as well as recognition of custom under the TK Act.
- *ABS agreements:* Follow up analysis of biodiscovery activities relating to the GEF-UNDP national ABS project and the CIMTECH-Koutu Nui Agreement including the related Te Tika activities.

Additional country support can be provided by correspondence upon request from the countries. An additional country visit in coordination with the SPREP Regional ABS Project team may be requested to Palau, FSM or Marshall Islands following requests from their NFPs and CNAs.

1.1 National Institutional and Regulatory ABS Frameworks

Based on the agreed national work packages (see above), tailor-made implementation support and capacity development activities with respect to developing/strengthening national institutional and regulatory ABS frameworks will be conducted in the countries. Apart from the specific support, the following activities will directly contribute to this core process:

Stocktaking of ABS laws, policies and regulations will continue to be undertaken for the broader region in close coordination with the SPREP Regional ABS Project, identifying progress since the ABS Initiative was last in the region (~3 years ago). In addition, support for awareness raising materials will continue to be developed and prepared in relevant local languages of Solomon Islands (Bislama/Pidgin), which is also useful in PNG and Vanuatu where Pidgin/Bislama is widely spoken.



1.2 Effective Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) based on Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) and Comparable Procedures

Specific activities, as agreed in the national work packages (see above), will be supported and implemented in close collaboration with suitable partners in delivery.

1.3 Development of ABS Agreements

Based on the agreed national roadmaps and underpinned by experiences generated during the last years, tailor-made implementation support and capacity development activities with respect to negotiating sound and functioning ABS agreements with users of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge will be conducted in the identified partner countries. Binding, valid and enforceable contracts is the core legal tool for making ABS work on the ground with companies and other users.

1.3.1 Patent Landscape for Pacific island countries

Lead: UNSW



Financing agreement with UNSW

Research including patent landscaping relating to traditional knowledge of medicinal plant species for species found in Vanuatu and Polynesia have been conducted, with some preliminary results for other countries (Samoa and Fiji). These will continue to be generated to inform CNAs about utilisation of genetic resources accessed in their country, to identify potential gaps in regulatory regimes and highlight benefit-sharing potentials if appropriate regulatory systems would be in place. This work will also contribute to regional and international discussions about potential solutions such as databases or patent disclosure requirements. In 2019-2020 this research will focus on patent landscaping activities relating to PNG and Solomon Islands, case studies based on the research, and establishing relationships with key stakeholders in countries to see if there are potential ABS value chains.

2 Auxiliary Processes

While activities under the Initiative's core processes focus on the implementation of ABS and the Nagoya Protocol at country level, auxiliary processes are directed at the broader frame in which these national activities are embedded. Auxiliary processes contribute to regional harmonisation and create synergies at the supranational level by

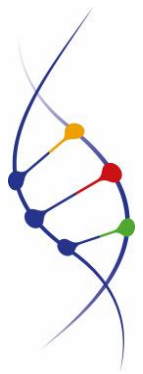
- documenting and disseminating lessons learnt to cooperation countries of the ABS Initiative, and
- developing tools and formats for human capacity development, which will be made available to interested stakeholders worldwide through the ABS Initiative's website and the ABS Clearing-House.

Costs for all auxiliary processes specific to the Pacific region are budgeted in chapter 4 of the workplan. Activities related to auxiliary processes of general relevance are budgeted for in the respective workplan for Africa and therefore listed here without specific detail.

2.1 Regional Harmonisation and Exchange

2.1.1 Participation in relevant (sub-)regional forums

Input and feedback to relevant regional forums will link the national implementation efforts to ABS-related processes at the regional level. Representatives of the ABS team will participate in relevant



conferences, meetings, workshops and trade fairs for networking, agenda setting, promoting ABS and the Nagoya Protocol, and gathering relevant information for further capacity development in Pacific Islands States, such as :

- Relevant regional SCBD, FAO, CGIAR, UNCTAD and WIPO workshops
- CBD Regional Consultation Workshop(s) on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
- Relevant GEF-funded project workshops and steering committee meetings
- Relevant meetings of AU and African sub-regional organisations
- Meetings of the EU ABS Stakeholder Forum

2.1.2 6th Regional ABS Workshop for the Pacific, Noumea, New Caledonia, 27-30 April 2020 (tbc.)

Lead: UNSW



Financing agreements with UNSW and SPREP

A regional workshop targeting ABS stakeholders back-to-back with the 10th Pacific Natures Conference in 19-24 April 2020 in Noumea – organised by SPREP, SPC and IUCN – offers a cost-effective opportunity to discuss implementation status of the countries analysing workable approaches for small administrations, identify gaps and discuss the potential role of regional organisations in implementing the compliance obligations of the Nagoya Protocol.

2.1.3 3rd Oceania Biodiscovery Forum, Brisbane, Australia, July/August 2020 (tbd.)

Lead: UNSW



Financing agreements with UNSW and SPREP

A 3rd Oceania Biodiscovery Forum has been proposed for the second half of 2020 in conjunction with SPREP and the Queensland Government. Similar to the 2nd Oceania Biodiscovery Forum, the meeting would bring together for three days Australian researchers and ABS stakeholders from Pacific Islands States to exchange about applied research, national ABS policies and related permitting processes of the providing countries in the region. Two additional days would be dedicated to the preparations for CBD COP 15 / MOP 5 in Kunming, China in October 2020. Further conceptual work will be initiated once hosting and co-funding by the Queensland Government has been confirmed.

Alternatively, the Forum could be scheduled to take place during the second half of November or early December 2020 to take stock of the outcomes of CBD COP 15 / MOP 5 and discuss resulting implementation challenges and support needs of Pacific Islands States.

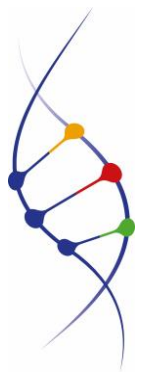
2.2 Interfaces to International Processes

The national implementation of ABS is framed and informed by processes and institutions at the international level. The ABS Initiative will therefore maintain an interface between national activities in its partner countries and relevant international forums and processes, ensuring the exchange of input and feedback through participation in meetings and joint activities with international partners.

2.2.1 Participation in relevant international forums

Representatives of the ABS team will participate in relevant international conferences, meetings, workshops and trade fairs for networking, agenda setting, promoting ABS and the Nagoya Protocol, and gathering relevant information for further capacity development in ACP countries. So far, the following meetings and events have been identified as relevant for the ABS community:


- Nagoya Protocol-related meetings



- Other relevant CBD meetings
- WIPO IGC Meetings, Geneva, Switzerland
- FAO-, CGRFA- and ITPGRFA-related meetings
- Meetings related to WHO-PIP
- UEFT 12th “Beauty of Sourcing with Respect” Conference – Paris, France, June 2020 (tbd.)

2.3 Knowledge Management and Transfer:


Lead: ABS Initiative

 *Further development of the website for documenting processes and experiences in partner countries, highlighting best practices; integrating ABS case documentation*

The ABS Initiative will continue to act as a knowledge broker, reviewing and disseminating lessons learnt at the national, regional and international level and fostering communication and learning among all its stakeholders. As in the past, the Initiative will initiate studies and use its knowledge management tools (such as the website) to compile and disseminate information and knowledge.

2.4 Knowledge Generation for Human Capacity Development (HCD) Tools

Lead: ABS Initiative

 *Further development of the website for documenting processes and experiences in partner countries, highlighting best practices; integrating ABS case documentation*

In close collaboration with the mentioned partners the ABS Initiative is conceptualising, developing and producing the listed tools. For details refer to the ABS Initiative’s workplan for Africa:

- Concept for blended learning tool on ABS agreements (Lead: ABS Initiative)
- ABS CEPA materials for IPLCs (Lead: ABS Initiative and Natural Justice)
- ABS Contract Templates (Lead: ABS Initiative)
- Up-scaling a tool on IT-based application and monitoring system (Lead: ABS Initiative)
- Nagoya Protocol implementation options (Lead: ABS Initiative)
- ABS process simulation (Lead: ABS Initiative and SCBD)

3 Steering and Guiding Processes

3.1 Steering Committee

3.1.1 Joint Regional Steering Committee for the Pacific: tbd.

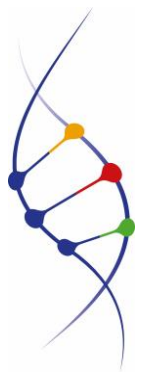
Lead: SPREP

The Joint Regional Steering Committee will provide guidance to the ABS Initiative and other implementing partners on further implementation-oriented support to the relevant stakeholders in the region and agree upon the work plan and budget for 2019-2020.

4 Budget 04/2019 – 12/2020

The budget for implementing the work plan 04/2019 - 12/2020 (see table 1) is structured according to the process landscape of the ABS Initiative..

Co-funding contributions are listed where information is available at this stage of planning. The column ‘Costs’ indicates the expected costs including co-funding contributions for the next planning period.



Overall Pacific Budget: 04/2019-12/2020

No.	Activity	Country	Costs	Cofunding	ABS Initiative core budget
1	Supporting Partner Countries				
1.1	National Institutional and Regulatory ABS Frameworks				
1.0.1	Flexible budget for country support		14.200		14.200
1.0.2	Ongoing processes, roadmap & implement.	Cook Islands	9.016	8.000	1.016
1.0.3	Ongoing processes, roadmap & implement.	Fiji	14.680		14.680
1.0.4	Ongoing processes, roadmap & implement.	Vanuatu	20.132	9.500	10.632
1.0.5	Ongoing processes, roadmap & implement.	Solomon Islands	21.405	1.500	19.905
1.0.6	Ongoing processes, roadmap & implement.	PNG	86.607	25.000	61.607
1.2	Effective Participation of IPLCs				
1.2.1	Development of CEPA materials		11.625		11.625
1.3	Development of ABS Agreements				
1.3.1	Patent landscape analysis		12.900	10.000	2.900
1.3.2	Scoping ABS compliant value chains		14.975	10.000	4.975
1	Sub-Total		205.540	64.000	141.540
2	Auxiliary Processes				
2.1	Regional Harmonisation and Exchange				
2.1.1	Participation and inputs to regional fora		18.423		18.423
2.1.2	6th Regional ABS Workshop	New Caledonia	30.605		30.605
2.1.3	3rd Oceania Biodiscovery Forum	Australia	74.988		74.988
2	Sub-Total		124.016	0	124.016
Total Costs - Implementation			329.556	64.000	265.556
3	Steering and Guiding Processes				
3.1	Steering Committee				
3.1.1	Joint Regional SC Pacific		1.233		1.233
3.2	Project Management				
0	UNSW: Regional Coordination		10.875		10.875
3	Sub-Total		12.108	0	12.108
Sum			341.664	64.000	277.664
Total overhead costs*					36.096
Project costs					313.760
* overhead costs will be covered by donors as stated in the respective financing agreements					