



**Webinar**  
**“How to get started”**  
**Thursday, 14 May, 2020 at 10h CET Microsoft Teams**

Points raised after the presentation of Pierre du Plessis: *Using the AU Guidelines for the Coordinated Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Africa to develop national ABS measures*

- **Integration of various instruments (e.g. MTA, MoU) that exist at national level in ABS contracts:** first, it is key to make a decision about whether you allow respective institutions at the national level to continue using legal instruments that are in place at national level, such as for instance Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs). Second, it is key to check that the respective institutions meet all of the requirements of the ABS system. When people are using them to transfer resources for sequencing, what exactly are the provisions around the use of that sequencing information (who get its, where is it deposited, who has access to it, what are the conditions for using it, etc.). If you do not want them to continue using these instruments, then you need to stop them from doing that (by law if necessary or through persuasion if that is easier) and get everyone to sign a standardised national approach. Alternatively, one can help them to upgrade their agreements. If you are happy that their agreements meet the national aims, then it is your right in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol that you designate these providers as CNAs. Overall, it is crucial to reflect on the adequacy of those other instruments and to take a decision whether you allow them to continue, or whether you prohibit those organisations from using those agreements and oblige them to use a standardised national agreement.
  
- **Role of ABS national focal points in bringing together other stakeholders (local communities, CSOs, young people, holders of genetic resources etc.):** ideally, the ABS national focal point would have the resources and support to raise very wide awareness about ABS rules, rights and obligations within a country. Unfortunately, in many countries resources are quite constraint. It is especially difficult in African contexts to get the message across to all communities for various reasons: partly because you would need to do a lot of translation into the local language, partly because of the logistical challenges of accessing those communities, partly because of constraints on e.g. availability of media to reach those communities. However, resources are scarce everywhere and they are probably going to be scarcer going forward after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. This is where the ABS Clearing-House (ABSCH) has a key role to play : by putting measures on the ABSCH, you are signaling to all users who are seeking legitimate access that there is a process in your country. If in response to that, you start getting applications for access and utilisation, you can use those actual examples to then raise awareness of the community who provides those particular resources, of the national researchers involved in the project and of the national providers who will be supplying the resources, etc. In the absence of resources to do a wide awareness-raising programme, you can use these examples and use them to raise further awareness.

- **Using the African Union ABS Guidelines at national level :**The African Union Commission calls on the AU Member States to consider and review the African Union Guidelines on ABS in national implementation processes.
- **Status of the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund:** the fund, which mainly aimed to support ABS pilot projects, is depleted. A GEF brochure provides details (see [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/NPIF\\_brochure\\_-\\_English.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/NPIF_brochure_-_English.pdf) )
- **Sharing experiences on ABS contracts on clinical trials in line with WHO and COVID-19 under article 8(b) of the Nagoya Protocol** will be considered in the next webinar.

Links :

- The ABS Clearing-House: <https://absch.cbd.int/>
- Simply Explained (ABS Monitoring System): <http://www.abs-initiative.info/abs-simply-explained/>
- Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund: [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/NPIF\\_brochure\\_-\\_English.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/NPIF_brochure_-_English.pdf)