

Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

What is ABS?

Due to modern methods in biochemistry, molecular biology and especially genetic engineering, demand in biological and genetic information is rapidly growing in areas such as agriculture or the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industry. The focus hereby lies on developing countries, as they are especially rich in biodiversity.

The third target of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is “the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources” with the countries of origin:

Access und Benefit Sharing, ABS can be both monetary and non-monetary (e.g. transfer of financial resources, technologies and knowledge, especially of the private sector) and aims to:

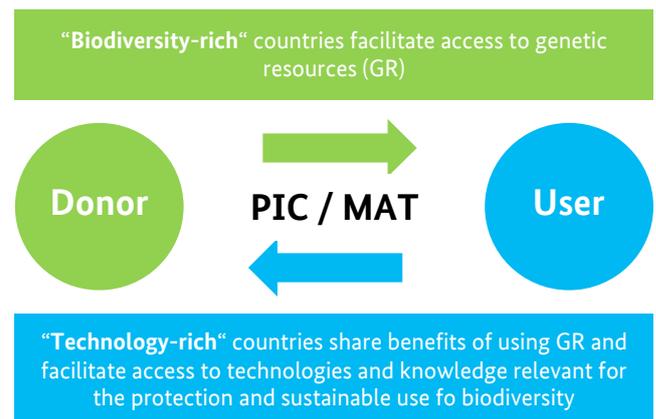
- ensure the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources,
- contribute to poverty alleviation and
- help realize sustainable development.

ABS is based on a **prior informed consent, PIC** issued by the donors. **Mutually agreed terms, MAT** regulate rights and requirements (among others access and usage rights, benefit sharing) between two or more parties.

With regard to the discussion on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, **TEEB**, ABS agreements help in redistributing part of the **economic value of biodiversity** from the users to the donors. By agreeing to benefit sharing, the user of genetic resources contributes to **paying for ecosystem services** and thus creates incentives for donors to protect and use their resources sustainably.

The importance of ABS in development cooperation

193 nations have signed the CBD and committed to developing a legal framework for the access to genetic resources and equitable benefit sharing. After lengthy negotiations, the Nagoya Protocol on ABS was adopted in October 2012. It lays down concrete ABS principles for the CBD and establishes an international mechanism for monitoring the utilization of genetic resources. This should not only prevent biopiracy, i.e. the illegal appropriation of genetic resources and/or connected traditional knowledge, but also ensure adherence to terms set down in ABS agreements.



The CBD member states now have to decide on the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and are faced with the challenge of implementing it in their national law. Regulating and institutional decisions, as well as the formulation of a national ABS strategy, are very important. ABS can only contribute to creating a Green Economy if genetic resources are valorized by establishing application-orientated research facilities, efficient legal frameworks and partnerships with the private industry.



Intervention areas on a national level	Policy goals	GIZ portfolio
Ratification / Implementation	Decision on Nagoya Protocol ratification	Development of suitable communication tools; analysis of the need for adaptation of relevant policies and regulations
Formulation of a cross-sector ABS policy/ strategy	Clarification of the national approach to ABS regulations (e.g. protectionist vs. market-oriented regulations)	Policy advisory work – integration of ABS into other sectors and development of a valorization strategy for GR
Development of national ABS laws and regulations	Creation of legal security	Legal advisory work
Participation of relevant stakeholders	Ensuring support and participation of different stakeholders	Implementation and moderation of dialogue and negotiation processes with participation of all relevant stakeholders
Creating the institutional framework, including identification of the competent national authority	Efficient implementation via clear institutional accountability	Institutional capacity development on a national and sub-national level
Handling of cross-border resources and traditional knowledge	Promotion of benefit sharing with the owners of traditional knowledge	Governance, decentralization, institutional capacity development with indigenous and local communities, bio-cultural community protocols
Handling of cross-border resources and traditional knowledge	Conflict prevention, harmonization and creation of synergies	Capacity development of regional and national organizations and institutions
Valorization of genetic resources (GR)	Conversion of the potential economic value of GR and TK into real income and economic development	Public Private Partnership (PPP), analysis and development of (biotrade) value chains

In addition, pressure is growing on companies in the pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industry, which work with biological resources, to check whether their activities (usage of genetic resources) and value chains are compatible with ABS principles.

programs on the management of protected areas, promoting good governance, decentralization, rural development and the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises.

What do we offer?

GIZ offers a broad portfolio of services that can be adapted to the partners' needs (see table 3). It is based on extensive consulting experience on a local, national and international level, as well as experiences made in implementing the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, a multi-donor initiative lead by BMZ. This shows that ABS is not only a "green" topic but that it **touches upon other intervention areas of development cooperation**, such as

Further information:

Convention on Biological Diversity: www.cbd.int/abs

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA): www.planttreaty.org

Project "Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity": www.giz.de/biodiv

ABS Capacity Development Initiative: www.abs-africa.info

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