REPORT

7th Meeting of the German Nagoya Protocol HuB Network (7. GNP HuB Stammtisch)

30.Juni 2022, 2:00-4:00 pm (online meeting)

On June 30th, 2022 the 7th regular meeting of the GNP HuB network, the "Stammtisch", took place online. This time the topic was Information Technology (IT) solutions for ABS and Compliance. The meeting was moderated by the HuB´s project manager, Elizabeth Karger.

Welcome and project update

Brief overview of the project's progress:

- Melania Muñoz is now collaborating with the GNP HuB project.
- There will be a small planning meeting on July 18 and 19.
- The section "Who is in charge at my institution?" is being expanded.
- If you are not listed yet on the HuB website as a network member and your institution has agreed that we use your logo, please contact the HuB team for implementation on the website.

Impulse presentations on user checks

User checks – what to expect, how to prepare? – Documenting due diligence
Ellen Frederichs, Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN)

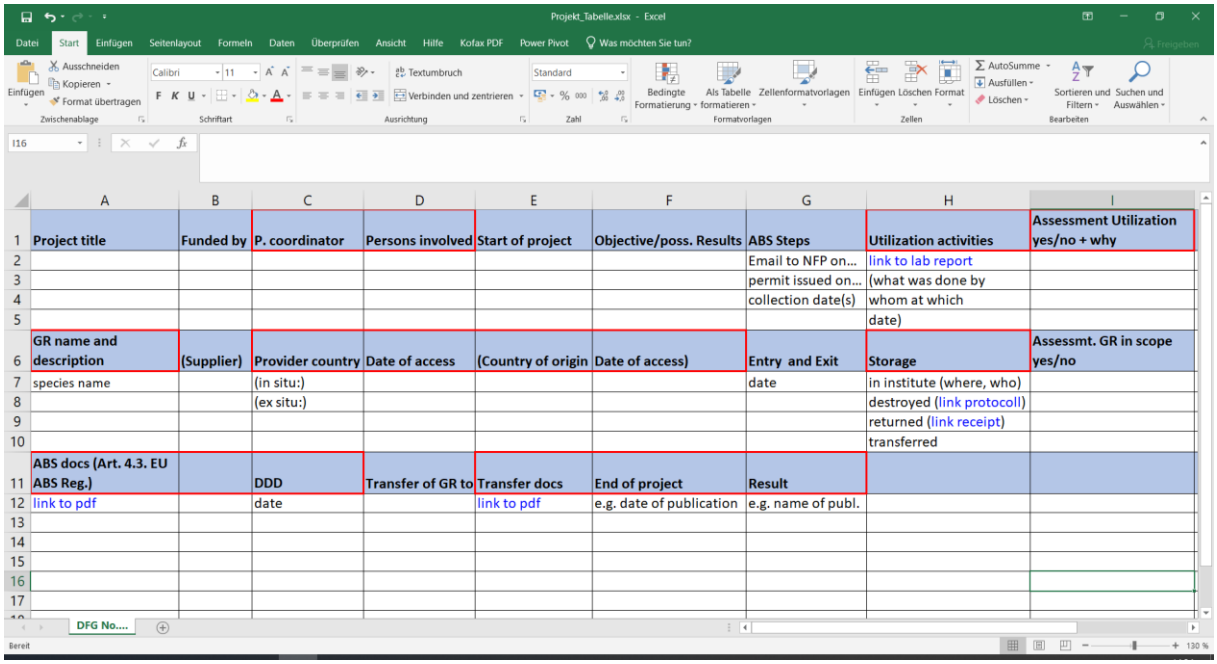
To be prepared for user checks by the national authorities it is necessary to understand what type of activities are under the scope of the Nagoya Protocol and the EU ABS Regulation 511/2014 and to document and prove compliance. These are the questions you will need to answer during the user inspections:

- Which genetic resources (material scope) have been obtained and when (temporal scope)?
- Does the type of research fall within the EU ABS regulations (i.e. research is carried out on the genetic and/or biochemical composition of the material)?
- Which country (geographical scope) does the material come from?
- Do you have any relevant documents related to access of the material: International Recognized Certification of Compliance (IRCC) or Previously Informed Concern (PIC) and Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT).
- Due Diligence measures.

It is important to document all details about the research project: material (kind, origin/suppliers, dates, storing), methodology, responsible researchers, permits from the country where the material

was obtained and documentation about due diligence. It is necessary to keep this information for 20 years after the end of utilization of the material.

An example on how to systematize the documentation required for user checks was shown as an Excel table (see figure 1).



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	**Project title**	**Funded by**	**P. coordinator**	**Persons involved**	**Start of project**	**Objective/poss. Results**	**ABS Steps**	**Utilization activities**	**Assessment Utilization yes/no + why**
2							Email to NFP on...	link to lab report	
3							permit issued on...	(what was done by	
4							collection date(s)	whom at which	
5								date)	
6	**GR name and description**	**(Supplier)**	**Provider country**	**Date of access**	**(Country of origin**	**Date of access)**	**Entry and Exit**	**Storage**	**Assessmt. GR in scope yes/no**
7	species name		(in situ:)				date	in institute (where, who)	
8			(ex situ:)					destroyed (link protocoll)	
9								returned (link receipt)	
10								transferred	
11	**ABS docs (Art. 4.3. EU ABS Reg.)**		**DDD**	**Transfer of GR to**	**Transfer docs**	**End of project**	**Result**		
12	link to pdf		date		link to pdf	e.g. date of publication	e.g. name of publ.		
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									

Figure 1: documentation sample. Source: BfN.

Discussion: Setting up IT systems for ABS and compliance.

One of the participants shared that their institution is starting to set up an IT system that will support the storing of ABS documentation. Such as system is needed to systematize all relevant ABS documentation. However, the task is complex if developed manually. Ideally, this system should be built upon a data base where all documentation is collected centrally and anchored to the institution system. Each department/faculty would have the ability to be linked to the system individually. A key feature would be that all ABS documentation could be uploaded in the system, including lab protocols, email correspondence with authorities, etc, and those entries could be easily found using a search function.

Panel discussion on challenges and solutions

Jan Dierking and Felix Mittermayer, GEOMAR Kiel; China Williams, Kew Gardens; Catherine McCarthy, Wellcome Sanger Institute.

Jan Dierking pointed out the issues identified at GEOMAR: each scientist manages its own documentation and there is no uniform system. The development of a centralized system, with a central contact point, is ongoing. Among the ideas is that the system must must be able to directly transform emails into pdf files as well as send reminders automatically. At the moment, Jan Dierking is the Nagoya Protocol compliance officer and answers questions related to ABS, which has the advantage that one person is the contact point and handles all inquiries. However, the establishment of an ABS officer position is not common at every institution.

China Williams explained how ABS documentation is addressed in the context of Kew Gardens. Several different collections are conserved there and new materials is also collected annually through fieldwork. She is in charge of obtaining necessary agreements for new material. However, digitizing these collections is a challenge. Some of the herbarium has already been digitized, but it will be some time before all of the material is catalogued. A new system to systematize benefit-sharing was also mentioned to be ongoing.

Catherine McCarthy recognizes many parallels with the Wellcome Sanger Institute were personnel training has raised awareness and has helped to minimize risks.

During the Q&A session there was an intense discussion about the level at which the implementation of an IT system for ABS should take place. Furthermore, the tasks of a compliance officers were discussed. It was pointed out that the implementation of IT systems cannot be the task of the compliance officer, it must be at the institutional level. Also, the level of participation and responsibility of individual researchers in the ABS processes was discussed and compared among institutions. In Germany, how the institutions is structured will define the delegation of representation (e.g. the President vs the researcher) and who is the “user” when it comes to fulfilling obligations.

In summary, all participants and panelists agreed that the development of IT systems to address ABS issues would facilitate compliance and processes for users and compliance officers but also support compliance checks at research institutions.