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Biodiversity matters

NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY AUTHORITY, CHENNAI



FROM THE CHAIRPERSON'S DESK



We are pleased to share the second issue of the 'Biodiversity Matters' newsletter covering an update on the activities of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA). As an initiative towards 'Ease of Doing Business', NBA has launched e-filing of ABS applications through a specifically designed web portal. We are confident that this initiative would be extremely useful for stakeholders by reducing the processing time and facilitating easy filing of applications.

NBA is constantly striving for strengthening the implementation of various provisions of the Biological Diversity Act 2002, through involvement of experts and stakeholders. In this regard, meetings of Expert Committees were organized on Invasive Alien Species, Access and Benefit Sharing & utilisation of funds realised from trade of red sanders. Awareness and capacity building activities were continued under various projects viz. UNEP-GEF-MoEFCC ABS Project, CEBPOL and GIZ.

We look forward to your continued cooperation and feedback.

B. Meenakumari
Chairperson

Contents

From the Chairperson's Desk	1
Update on Activities in NBA	2
Projects underway at NBA	5

Launch of e-filing of ABS application

The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) with support of National Informatics Centre has developed the online portal for filing application. The ABS e-filing was launched on 30th March 2017 by the Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) which allows the



applicant to file their ABS applications with NBA for seeking approval for carrying out various activities. This online portal is user-friendly and will provide a step-by-step guidance for choosing and filing correct application form, providing tool tips, pop up messages for easy filing with mandatory columns. The process of filing the ABS applications will be easier for the applicants and reduce the processing time at NBA Secretariat paving way to timely disposal of the applications.



Update on Activities in NBA

Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

The NBA is mandated to regulate activities of access to biological resources and/ or associated knowledge for research; bio-survey and bio-utilization; commercial utilization; obtaining IP rights; transfer of results of research and transfer of accessed biological resources and/ or associated knowledge. During this reporting period, (January 2017- March 2017) NBA has received 229 applications from different stakeholder for varied activities mentioned above of which 82 applications were cleared and 6 agreements were signed. Apart from this, NBA has also signed 44 agreements from the applications received during previous year.

Benefit sharing realized

During this period, the NBA has realized a sum of Rs.10.428 Crores as benefit sharing.

Out of the Benefit Sharing amount realized on the access of Red Sanders, NBA has distributed a sum of Rupees 3.00 crores to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department through Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Boards as per the recommendation of the expert committee on Red sanders with the approval of the Authority.

NBA has released Rs 32.00 lakhs to the Tamil Nadu SBB for distributing among the beneficiaries in four southern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu out of the realized benefit sharing component from M/s Pepsico Holdings India Pvt Ltd and P. S. Ganesan & sons, Tuticorin towards access of sea weeds in the year 2009-2010.

Generating the Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance (IRCC)

Under the Article 17 of the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, Parties are required to issue a permit or its equivalent at the time of access as evidence that access to genetic resources was based on prior informed consent and that mutually agreed terms were established. Since India is being a party to the Nagoya Protocol, NBA uploaded the approvals granted to access the biological resources and associated knowledge in the ABS CH platform developed by the CBD secretariat. The software generates Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance. Since India is being a party to the Nagoya Protocol, NBA has uploaded 47 approvals granted in the ABS CH platform and generated Internationally Recognized Certificate of Compliance during 2016-2017.

Expert Committee (EC) on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)



Applications seeking prior approval for access to biological resources and/ or associated knowledge for research, bio-survey and bio-utilization and commercial utilization, transfer of results of research, for obtaining Intellectual Property Rights for invention based on research or information on biological resources and transfer of accessed biological resources to third parties, received by the NBA are evaluated by this expert committee which made suitable recommendations for consideration of the Authority. During the year, the committee met five times viz., 38th Meeting on 18th May 2016, 39th Meeting on 26th Sep 2016, 40th Meeting on 19th Nov 2016, 41st Meeting on 6-7th Feb 2017, 42nd Meeting on 7th Mar 2017 and evaluated around 360 applications on access and benefit sharing and provided recommendations to the Authority. Besides, the EC provided techno-legal inputs on various generic issues such as accessing non-Indian biological resources, applicability of BD Act on the claim of improved design without using biological resources and modalities for levying upfront payments.

Further, the meeting of the Sub-Committee Constituted by the Expert Committee on ABS to deal with the issues related to the Violation of the provisions of the BD Act met two times and submitted their report in the main committee for examination. Thereafter, the report of the sub-committee was placed before the Authority meeting along with recommendation of the main committee. The Authority has considered the report and decided to refer the report to the Ministry for further action.



41st Authority Meeting

The forty first Authority Meeting of the NBA was held on 27th March, 2017 at Indus Conference hall, MoEFCC, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. Meenakumari, Chairperson, NBA. Some of the important items discussed and deliberated in the meeting includes proceedings of the 41st meeting of Expert Committee on ABS held on 6th & 7th February, 2017, Proceedings of the 42nd meeting of Expert Committee on ABS held on 7th March, 2017, the report of the Expert Committee on Red Sanders, report of the National Institute of Ocean Technology on

alleged harmful effects of the seaweed (*Kappaphycus alvarezii*) in the southern coastal districts of Tamil Nadu, exempting IPR applications filed prior to the year 2004 from the purview of the BD Act, Proceedings of 6th Meeting of the Expert Committee on Agro-biodiversity held on 28th September 2016, Proceedings of the Twelfth Meeting of the Expert Committee on Normally Traded Commodities, the scheme of engagement of consultants and the scheme for introduction of internship for students, research scholars/fellows and All India Service Probationers in NBA.

Consultation Meeting with Officials of Union Territories

The consultation meeting with nominated officials of Union Territories was convened on 18th January, 2017 at NBA, Chennai to discuss matters relating to delegation of powers and functions of NBA in respect of Union Territories under Section 22(2) of the Biological Diversity Act. Under the provisions of the Act, Union Territories do not have biodiversity boards. However the NBA shall exercise the powers and perform the functions of State Biodiversity Board for the Union Territories (UTs). The meeting



primarily focussed on the need and urgency of implementing Biological Diversity Act, 2002 in the Union Territories and prospects of forming "Biodiversity Councils" therein to delegate the power of NBA. Representatives from Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Puducherry and NCT of Delhi attended the meeting. In the meeting, it was decided that the Union Territories shall convey their concurrence along with indicative list of officials to NBA for further necessary action.

Meeting of the Expert Committee on Red sanders to develop a comprehensive policy for utilization of the benefit sharing realized by the NBA on access of Red Sanders wood



In the 32nd Authority Meeting held in December 2014, it was decided that an Expert Committee should be formed to develop a comprehensive policy for utilizing the amount realized by the NBA/SBB as benefit sharing from the export of Red Sanders towards protection, conservation, sustainable use of Red Sanders. Subsequently, an "Expert Committee on Red Sanders" was constituted in March 2015. This Expert Committee met four times viz 8th meeting held on 8th & 9th July, 2016, 9th meeting held on 11th & 12th August,

2016, 10th Meeting held on 14th & 15th February, 2017, 11th meeting held on 28th February, 2017 and discussed the various issues.

Further, the Expert Committee on Red Sanders formed a drafting committee to prepare the final report of the EC. Accordingly, meeting of the drafting committee of the EC for drafting the final report of the expert committee on Red Sanders were held seven times i.e 30.08.2016, 16.09.2016, 06.10.2016, 19.10.2016, 12.11.2016, 12.12.2016 and 18.01.2017 and prepared the report of the EC.

The draft report of the EC was discussed in the 11th meeting of the EC and approved the report after discussing certain issues. Thereafter, the EC on Red Sanders has officially submitted the report on Red Sanders to NBA on 28th February, 2017. The report of the EC was considered by the 41st Authority and authority approved the report.

Meeting of Core Expert Group to fine-tune the draft notification on designation of check points and user country measures to implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access and benefit sharing

Pursuant to the decision taken in the 32nd Authority meeting of NBA, NBA forwarded the notification on Designation of Check Points and User Country Measures to implement Nagoya Protocol on ABS to the MoEFCC with request to issue the said notification as an executive order. MOEFCC has informed that since the issue is considered under CEBPOL's work plan, the draft notification communicated to this Ministry may be reconsidered and revised if required, in the light of the outcome of the work under CEBPOL. Accordingly, a Core Expert Group was constituted to re-examine and fine tune the draft notification on designation of check points and user country measures to implement the Nagoya protocol in India, in the light of the report submitted by the CEBPOL.

Subsequently, an informal discussion meet amongst few members of the CEG was held on 6th February, 2016. During the meet, the members discussed various issues and revised draft notification on user country measures and check points. Thereafter, in pursuance of the decision taken in the meeting held between MoEFCC and Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion on 23rd August, 2016, A nominee of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi has been inducted as Member of the CEG vide this office order dated 22nd November, 2016.

Further, the Meeting of the CEG was held on 3rd March, 2017 at New Delhi and discussed the various issues relating to designation of check points and user country measures.

First meeting of the Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species



The first meeting of the Expert Committee (EC) on invasive Alien species was held on 12th January 2017 at the NBA, Chennai. This committee was constituted to prepare the comprehensive list of invasive alien species for India, prioritization of species that are most harmful, and development of implementable strategies for their effective management. The committee discussed on varied issues; need for standardization of terminology for discrimination of various kinds of introduced species, increasing threat posed by invasive alien species to Indian biodiversity,

impacts of invasive alien species in protected area network, need for an Action Plan for the prevention, control, eradication and management of invasive alien species, urgent need to manage the invasive alien species in Islands, need to create awareness among all the stakeholders to minimize the impacts of alien invasion on biodiversity. Based on the discussions, the committee made few recommendations for a way forward in the context of Invasive Alien Species in India.



PROJECTS UNDERWAY AT NBA



सत्यमेव जयते



Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change
Government of India

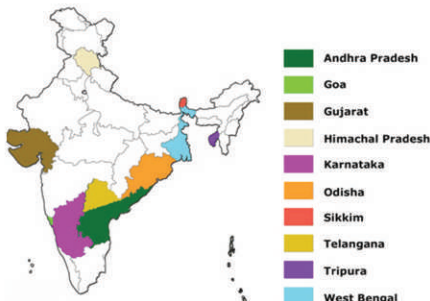
UNEP - GEF - MoEFCC ABS Project

Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions



The UNEP - GEF - MoEFCC project on ABS is to increase the institutional, individual and systemic capacities of stakeholders to effectively implement the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the Rules 2004 to achieve biodiversity conservation through implementing Access and Benefit Sharing Agreements in India.

This project is currently being implemented in the ten provincial states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal.



Highlights of the events under the project

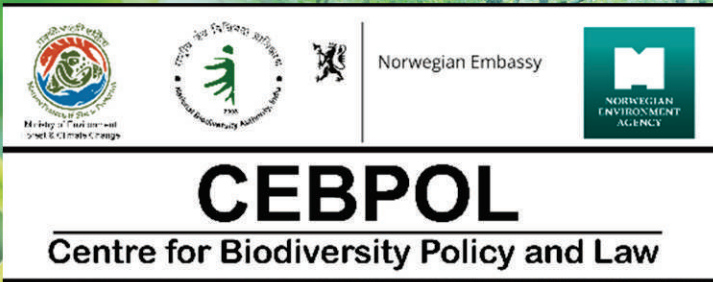
An Educational Exhibit was put-up at the 104th Indian Science Congress (ISC) held at Sri Venkateshwara University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh during 03 to 04 January, 2017. Team from NBA and State Project Units of Telangana and Andhra



State Biodiversity Boards explained the objectives and processes involved in implementation of BD Act 2002 and Rules 2004 among the stakeholders including scientific community from across India, academicians, teachers, youth and school children from the states of Andhra and Telangana.

The Project Management Unit, UNEP-GEF, NBA participated in the National Conference on Tree Improvement held between 2 and 3 February, 2017 at the campus of the Institute of Wood Science and Technology, Bengaluru. The Project Manager Mr Ishwar Poojar gave an invited talk on BD Act 2002 and Rules 2004 alongside ABS mechanism with experiences of the project at the Conference. The program was inaugurated by the veteran Professor (Rtd) of Botany Dr H Y Mohan Ram from JNU, Delhi.

The project Management Unit, UNEP-GEF, NBA jointly with MP Biodiversity Board participated in Bhopal Vigyan Mela 2017 held between 3 and 6 March, 2017 at the BHEL Dasara Grounds, Bhopal. During the Mela the information relevant to BD Act 2002 and Rules 2004 alongside ABS mechanism were disseminated among the scientific community from across India. Youth and School going children from Madhya Pradesh. During the Mela exhibition used both print and audio-visual media to communicate the issues relevant to the act and biodiversity conservation. The exhibit put-up by NBA and MP Biodiversity Board won a second best pavilion among the 110 exhibits set-up by various agencies.



Indo - Norwegian collaborative Program

Government of India in collaboration with the Norwegian Government has established "Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law (CEBPOL)" in the NBA, Chennai, towards strengthening the biodiversity policy and conservation related issues in India. This Centre of excellence is focusing on biodiversity policies and laws that cater to the needs of national and international rule-making and subsequent implementation on issues of biodiversity.

Highlights of the events under the CEBPOL project

Policy Dialogue on "Mainstreaming biodiversity into the agricultural sector" held on 20th January, 2017 at New Delhi.

Under the theme Mainstreaming Biodiversity a national level consultative meeting on Mainstreaming Biodiversity into the Agricultural sector was organised on 20th January at PUSA, New Delhi. More than 37 delegates have participated from various agriculture related research organisations viz CABI, MSSRF, Bioversity International, PPV&FRA, World Agroforestry Centre, NBPGRs, NBIGRs and also officials from MoA&FW and MoEFCC participated in the deliberation. To increase the food basket of our country, it was recommended to adopt ecologically intensified agricultural farming practices and to mainstream biodiversity into various schemes, programmes, projects and plans of the Agricultural Ministry.

Professor Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog presided over the discussion meeting and emphasised to adopt organic farming practices towards increasing the biodiversity wealth of our country. Dr. Meenakumari, Chairperson, NBA and Dr. Amita Prasad, Additional Secretary, MoEFCC delivered the Key note address. Dr. C. Thomson Jacob, CEBPOL, NBA coordinated the event.

Radio Outreach and Awareness campaign for World Wetlands Day 2017 supported by CEBPOL

Two events; first is the Radio outreach and an Awareness campaign by NBA and supported through the CEBPOL program, under the thematic area "Interface with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Organisations" was carried out for the World Wetlands day 2017. In partnership with a prominent radio station with a multi-city presence, NBA ran information snippets on wetlands, their role in disaster management, and ways and means to protect them, over the period ranging from 1 day to two weeks spread over a month (1st Feb - 2nd Mar 2017) in five cities across the country - Chennai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram.

NBA also implemented a school outreach and awareness raising exercise on 2nd Feb 2017. Over 300 schools in the Chennai City Corporation limits received translated copies of the Ramsar handouts for student use through their school libraries. School administrators and Municipal Councilors were requested to support the effort by organising/being part of a small event during the morning assembly to spread the key messages.



Experience Sharing Workshop on Access and Benefit Sharing and Invasive Alien species, held on 8-11th March, 2017 at Chennai



The experience sharing workshop on ABS and Invasive Alien species, was held on 8-11 March, 2017 at NBA, Chennai. The Norwegian delegates (Ms. Maja Stade Aaronaes, Dr. Inga Elise Bruteig, Dr. Ulf Hanno Pichl, Ms. Toril Loennechen Moen, Ms. Astrid Berge and Dr. Sunniva Margre the Due Aagaard) the Indian experts on ABS (Dr. R. S. Rana, Prof. M. K. Ramesh, Dr. Mangal Rai, Dr. Oommen V. Oommen, Dr. Sharan Gouda) and the NBA/CEBPOL team participated in this workshop. There were presentations made by all the Norwegian and Indian delegates followed by a field trip being organized to Hyderabad to understand the ABS mechanism at grassroots level. There was also a parallel session being held on Invasive alien species and Access and benefit sharing wherein, information were shared about current status and trends in invasive alien species research and ABS mechanism being implemented in India and Norway.



Workshop on ABS held on March 24, 2017 at Ahmedabad

An Awareness Workshop on the Guidelines for Access to Biological Resources under the Biological Diversity (BD) Act, 2002 was organized at Hotel Starottel, Ahmedabad on March 24, 2017. The workshop was organised by BCIL with support from DBT and CEBPOL, NBA in collaboration with Gujarat State Biotechnology Mission (GSBTM), Government of Gujarat.



The workshop was aimed at creating awareness about the provisions of the BD Act, 2002 and in particular, the 'Guidelines on Access to Biological Resources and Associated Knowledge and Benefits Sharing', 2014 in order to facilitate regulatory compliance. It also served as an interactive platform for clarifying issues regarding ABS among participants and enabled getting valuable feedback regarding the problems faced by the applicants.

Prof. M. K. Ramesh, NLSIU Bangalore, Shri T. Rabikumar, Secretary NBA, Dr. Shivendu K. Srivastava, Member Expert Committee on ABS, Dr. Rupam Mandal, and Dr. Prabha Nair from CEBPOL were the key resource persons at the workshop. The workshop was attended by more than 90 participants which included scientists from public and private sector engaged in research utilizing biological resources, IP officials from industry, institutes and government agencies.



Indo-German Access and Benefit Sharing Partnership Project

The ABS Partnership Project aims at strengthening the capacities of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs), Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs), as well as commercial user groups of biological resources for the effective implementation of ABS mechanisms in India.

Highlights of the event held under the project during this reporting period:

Operational Planning Workshop held on 16-18th November 2016

An Operation Planning workshop was held from 16-18th

November 2016 at National Biodiversity Authority to chalk out activities under the project. Dr. Meenakumari, Chairperson and Mr. Rabikumar, Secretary of National Biodiversity Authority along with Chairpersons and Member Secretaries of three project states viz: Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand and Dr. Konrad Uebelhör, Director, Indo-German Biodiversity Programme of GIZ and ABS project personnel jointly prepared the Operational Plan of activities for 2017. Dr. Hartmut Meyer, Global ABS Capacity Development Initiative, GIZ was the resource person and moderated the workshop.





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Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change
Government of India



Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) Under the GOI-UNDP

'Strengthening Natural Resource Management Project'

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is currently piloting a global partnership, the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) that seeks to address the biodiversity finance challenge in a comprehensive manner. BIOFIN methodology is currently being implemented in 31 countries that supports countries with a methodology that provides innovative steps to measure current biodiversity expenditures, assess financial needs, identify the most suitable finance solutions and provides guidance on how to implement these solutions to achieve their national biodiversity target.

The BIOFIN methodology takes shape through three assessments that culminate in a Biodiversity Finance Plan. The steps include:

- i. **The Biodiversity Finance Programme and Institutional Review (PIR)** looks into the programme and institutional context for biodiversity finance in the country and establishes the key stakeholders to involve.
- ii. **The Biodiversity Expenditure Review (BER)** is an analysis of public and private expenditures in the country that benefit biodiversity. The assessment establishes past, present and projected expenditures on biodiversity. The Financial Needs Assessment (FNA) estimates the finance required to deliver national biodiversity targets and plans, usually described in the NBSAPs.
- iii. **The Biodiversity Finance Plan (BFP)** identify and prioritizes a mix of suitable biodiversity finance solutions to reduce the biodiversity finance gap.





			Norwegian Embassy	
<h1>CEBPOL</h1> <h2>Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law</h2>				

NBA invites articles, photographs with brief write-up on biodiversity and related aspects for publication. Please write to: The Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority, 5th Floor TICEL Biopark, CSIR Road, Taramani Chennai- 600 013 or to ccbcbpol@nbaindia.org or support@nbaindia.org

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