

Minutes of the Project Board Meeting

Project name: UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project (Nagoya Protocol)
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Place: Virtual – Zoom Platform
Date: 2 December 2020
Subject: 4th meeting of the Steering Committee
Implementing: Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS
Project Team based: Istanbul and Panama Regional Hubs

1. General opening and introduction

In his capacity as Chairperson of the Project Board for UNDP-GEF project “Strengthening human resources, legal frameworks, and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol” (Global ABS project), Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager of Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and Central Asia (IRH), welcomed the participants to the fourth meeting of the steering committee, including UNV and all country participants (Albania, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Mongolia, Tajikistan, South Africa and Sudan).

Gerd Trogemann explained that the Global ABS Project is one of many Global GEF projects that the Istanbul Regional Hub and, after a brief description of the project, he highlighted that this year has been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic which has forced all of us to adapt to a completely different environment and with very uncertain and demanding circumstances. He expressed his thanks to all for the efforts done during this period, including the project, which due to the pandemic, received a second and exceptional no-cost extension of 6 months, with 23 June 2021 becoming the end date of the project. Currently the project is in its final stage of implementation where several countries have already concluded, and the few remaining ones should be just finalizing the last activities.

The Chairman also recognized the Project Manager, Alejandro Lago, and the team for the visible progress achieved, which has been well documented as the project enters its final year of implementation in 2020 and looking forward to the future for post project conclusion work on ABS.

2. Presentation & Discussion on 2020 Progress and 2021 Workplan (documents 2, 3, 4 and 5)

Mr. Alejandro Lago, Manager of the UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project, made the presentation (contained in documents 6). He first provided the bigger picture, linking the ABS with the Agenda 2030, the SDG’s and the alignment with the UNDP Strategic plan, and signaling the efforts that the project has been made in communicating the horizontal connection of ABS into the SDGs and Agenda 2030. He then when through the progress made within the project’s components in 2020, summarizing the progress report (document 3). He highlighted that 5 countries have approved ABS legal measures and that most of the targets of the project have been achieved and the few remaining’s are connected with the activities still pending in some countries that currently are finalizing the implementation of the project.

Component 4 (Implementing a Community of Practice and South-South Cooperation Framework on ABS):

- Community of Practice on ABS implemented and operating at regional and global level was launched in February 2019. Has been very active providing services clearly beyond the limit of the 23 project countries.

In regard to the fourth component of the project and the creation of a community of practice on ABS (the Global ABS Community), Alejandro Lago summarized the main event that the project had this year: The Global ABS Conference, “The ABS that we ALL need”, which was celebrated to take advantage of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol (29 Oct - 25 Nov). The Conference was co-organized with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and in collaboration with the Governments of Japan and Jordan. It was divided in 5 sessions with a total of 888 unique participants (the sum of the participants of the different sessions without counting the same participant several times if the person followed more than one session). The ABS conference brought the following achievements:

- Written statement from the UNSG and video statements from: UNEP Executive Director, HRH Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan, Ministers of Environment of Japan, Jordan and South Africa, CEO of the GEF, UNDP Deputy Director BPPS, representatives from biotech companies, researchers, and indigenous peoples.
- 21 hours of Conference with 63 panelists from 32 different countries.

The project team successfully managed to mitigate all the risks identified in prodoc and throughout implementation. In 2020 the new risk introduced related to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic has occurred and the project evaluated the impact of COVID 19 at the global and national level and reprogrammed all physical activities that could not be conducted into other alternative activities. It then requested of a second and exceptional no cost extension of the project (end date June 2021) and supported internal mobilization of funds for additional activities at the national level. Details are provided in Annex 3 and Lessons learned in Annex 4.

The priorities for 2021 will be as follows:

- Finalization and launch of the second publication
- Design of the pilot project on blockchain (pending on results of evaluation of proposals)
- Terminal Evaluation – informed the participants that they may be contacted by those evaluating the project and appreciated their support if needed.
- Closing event
- Final Steering Committee (end of May)
- End of the GEF project in 2021 (23rd of February national level; June 23rd at the global level)
- Exit Strategy, including a proposal of a second phase – contact to potential donors.

Alejandro Lago thanked and recognized the hard work of the national teams for the continuous efforts to push the implementation of the project, with special mention for the colleagues in Honduras who not only had to deal with the pandemic, but also with natural disasters as well. Thanked the Global team, both current and past members who left this year, for the support given to the countries with a very high level of commitment and delivering always good results. He also thanked the UNV for their incredible work, especially in the organization of the Global ABS Conference. Also, to the UNDP Global ABS Lead, Mr. Santiago Carrizosa, for all his support. Finally, thanked the Chair as well as the Programme Unit in IRH, whose critical support has been key to the success of the project.

3. Component 4 Presentation – UNV

Agustina Rato described the main achievements of the of the UNV support to the implementation of the project in Latin America through volunteerism (as contained in document 7). This additional funds (USD425,000) and support from UNV ended in December 2019. From 2017 to 2019, UNV mobilized 13 UN Volunteers in five countries of the region (Honduras, Panama, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Uruguay), through different modalities, like UNV International specialists, national specialists, and youth volunteers, supporting 5 Ministries of Environment in the data collection and management of Access and Benefit

Sharing information to improve transparency and reporting to each country's CHM mechanisms. Augustina Rato also highlighted the design, implementation and reporting of Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) surveys. These surveys provided policy makers and national ABS focal points with the necessary information on the current state of knowledge of national ABS legal frameworks and the national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. In total, 495 KAP assessments were implemented in Panama, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and 72 online surveys applied in Uruguay. The information was then used to develop awareness raising and information campaigns in the country. More than 3,500 people were informed, trained, and empowered on the national regulations governing the access and used of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. It is important to remark that from its design, the UNV component kept a special focus on the strengthening of capacities of Indigenous peoples and local communities, as custodians of the world's genetic resources, with remarkable examples, such as the support to the Emberá-Ipetí community in Panamá in the development of their Biocultural Community Protocol (79 members of the community supported in the discussions and elaboration of the BCP and 1 national volunteer was mobilized in the community to develop the protocol).

The UNV Component also pushed forward the "Training of Trainers" workshops on ABS, to maintain the generated capacities and support awareness raising on ABS beyond the project, and to strengthen the national volunteer networks. These workshops were developed in the region and involved more than 400 local volunteers that were informed and trained on the Nagoya Protocol, ABS, SDGs and 2030 Agenda and volunteerism for change, generating a multiplier effect in their own communities after the project closure. Also, 3 Training of Trainers online modules, developed with the support of UNV and the IKIAM University in Ecuador, will be soon available through the Global ABS Community. Finally, she mentioned the remarkable support of 11 UN Online Volunteers, who supported document translation, graphic design and mapping of organizations and experts that use genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Her full presentation presented at the meeting are contained in document 7.

4. *Discussions and Inputs from Senior Beneficiaries Representatives*

The Chair thanked all the participant countries and mentioned that for the approval of the Progress Report for 2020 and the Annual Work Plan for 2021, any comments or concerns to the documents presented to them and any observations they want to make, towards the exit strategy and a second phase were welcome.

Mongolia (CO)

Ms. Khishigjargal Kharkhuu, Programme Officer in charge of the ABS Project, began her presentation by highlighting the key points in Mongolia that, for a project with a small budget has achieved very good results and favorable comments from the stakeholders. First, she mentioned the development of the ABS legislation, that, since 2011 the legislation was in draft, but through this ABS Global project they successfully completed the development of the legislation with the support of law amendments and regulations as well as the model contracts which were submitted for approval. Currently the legislation is under discussion with the Parliament and they hope that by February 2021 the adoption of this ABS law is completed. Second, she referred to the awareness raising activities which they performed several of these activities including a series of consultations with respective sector experts and researchers as well as short TV interviews with experts and also videos, brochures, handouts for the local communities. As a result of these awareness raising activities over 800 stakeholders, from which around 500 were female stakeholder were trained in the legislation. From a symposium on Biotechnology that was conducted in 2018 to discuss the ABS law, where ideas were exchanged by experts in potential bioprospecting activities in this area and then exchanged plans for the future. The third achievement she mentioned was in terms of improving the knowledge of the ABS procedures in relevant sectors such as Agricultural, Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology. Some of them had already used genetic resources law on livestock sector, for example in the Agricultural sector for breeding activities but since the main law on ABS was not introduced, they were

expecting this law which was essential for them and they were very supportive of the project. She also mentioned the work supporting the development of sectoral guidelines, including codes of conduct and contractual models, bioprospecting potentials as well as the draft Ethical Codes of Conduct for different sectors with different information about the ABS procedures. As a result of this project training was offered to local administrative areas in order to implement the ABS procedures in local communities which were also trained in Biocultural Protocols, with more than 300 members involved in the consultation process for the ABS law and how to negotiate the use of genetic resources. Finally, the learning activities not only local but through Community of Practice workshops in the European countries was very useful for the National Team to continue the activities of ABS in the future. A special mention was made to the Indian experience in ABS monitoring and the Traditional Knowledge database which is key to expand the development and more concrete of the Traditional Knowledge database in Mongolia. All Database on Traditional knowledge will be completed now with the additional activities approved for the project in Mongolia.

India (CO and government counterpart)

The Chairman gave the floor to Dr VB Mathur, Chairman of the National Biodiversity in India. Dr Mathur initiated his presentation appreciating how much can be learned in such short time and recognizing the cross-learning experience has been great. With regards to India, the achievements highlighted started with the establishment of partnerships within the country, as there is a lot of law involved in ABS, they reached a partnership with the top law school of the country, where hundreds of thousands of students attend each year. As a result of this partnership, they can reach out to the faculty, the researchers, young advocates and practicing lawyers who have a linkage with this school. Also, since there is a big forestry setup in India, and since ABS and forestry are very closely linked, a partnership with the Indian Council for Forestry Research and Institutions, which has a lot of Institutions all over the country and through which they were able to reach the Scientists as this Scientific community needs a lot of knowledge, lot of information and as a lot of misgivings they have in the ABS front as they want to publish and other related activities but they need to be informed what are the principles on ABS and how they need to do it. Third, with Agriculture, a partnership with the National Agriculture Research Institute, through which they were able to reach providers and practitioners and farmers and a huge amount of capacity building is taking place. On Capacity building they were able to hold many workshops in different parts of the country were conducted where hundreds of people were trained. He highlighted that, even with the pandemic, which is back affecting everyone, they were able to organize many virtual training programs over the last 9 months. Lastly, in the issue of knowledge products which are the contributions that will come out of the projects such as a handbook for researchers on ABS, a compliance monitoring manual for the corporates, and other products were formally and informally developed. India was the within the first in develop ABS guidelines since 2014 and are currently been modified based on the knowledge and lessons learned from projects on ABS like this one and others, with a lot of inputs for improving the understanding and restabilising the principles and foundations of ABS, the guidelines are almost completed and will be shared upon approval. To conclude, with regards to Mr. Lago's mentioned of the exit strategy and a proposal for a second phase, he wanted to express his opinion in favour of a second phase as ABS project needs to continue. As it was mentioned during the Global ABS Conference by the Executive Secretary of the CBD, ABS is like a small child that his hand needs to be hold tightly. There is a post 2020 framework being developed and ABS is very relevant in this development, post pandemic, as when countries start to receive stimulus and recovery packages ABS is also very relevant. He finished his intervention by mentioning that the added value of this project is what has been learned from other countries and that the importance to protect the Traditional Knowledge with ABS and mentioning that with this project more was achieved than in 2014 as well as mentioned that the partnership with Biofin is also available to take into consideration for a second phase.

The Chairman thanked Dr Mathur and gave the floor to Ms. Ruchi Pant, Head, NRM & Biodiversity, UNDP India, and focal point of the project who wanted to intervene, and she mentioned the additional activities approved for the project to incentivise compliance to the ABS legislation in India as sometimes the Industry looks at it as a kind of Tax, and Dr Mathur's idea of incorporating a voluntary team to accomplish this. Also

mentioned that the timeline of end of February may be too narrow for them, proposing some more time to achieve as sometimes this type of activities take a lot of time to be approved. The Chair thanked Ms. Ruchi and mentioned to Mr. Lago that the global facility with Biofin also is managed in IRH to keep in mind as Dr Mathur's mentioned.

Tajikistan (CO)

Mr. Trogemann gave the floor to Ms. Nargizakhon Usmanova – Team Leader on Climate Change, Disaster, Risk Management, Energy and Environment – UNDP Tajikistan who began her intervention by mentioning that also in the meeting with her were the colleagues from the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre. She mentioned that the UNDP GEF Global ABS Project in Tajikistan has been a breakthrough specially in terms of the work on the ABS legislation mechanism and it has been very much welcomed by National Stakeholders and counterparts. They have been able to engage the National Parliament into the development of the ABS legislation, the draft law has passed several parliamentary rounds of parliamentary hearings and is currently under consideration of the government. It has been very successful in their country as the concept of ABS and associated legislation is very new. Also, they have been successful with the strengthening of the National Capacities, established the National ABS Clearing House portal which is currently an online authorization system available to apply and have access to a database of genetic resources and information on traditional knowledge according to Nagoya Protocol and ABS. Also, an important achievement is that they have built trust between users of genetic resources and worked with indigenous communities to conduct KAP surveys on the Nagoya Protocol, is an experience that was the first of its kind. They will continue this work within the framework of the National Institutions, also highlighting that as part of the project success is also exemplified by the fact that the project facilitated key agreements for the use of genetic resources. Other partners beside the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre which were very productive experiences were the Academy of Sciences and Research Institutions that the project has worked with. The project supported 2 BCPs developed with Indigenous Communities. It is estimated that 1300 people at the local level have been trained in capacity building initiatives and awareness raising on Nagoya Protocol and ABS principles and associated legal framework that is going to be adopted in the country. She concluded by mentioning that there is a big aspiration to continue the work with ABS and that they expect that the legislation will be approved by the end of the year. Thanked for the experience of participating in regional activities such as with India and with Latin American countries as well as the Global ABS Conference.

Albania (CO)

The Chair gave the floor to Ms. Elvita Kabashi, Programme Officer – Head of Environment - UNDP Albania, who initiated her presentation by first thanking Mr. Lago for creating such a good atmosphere to work within the project as well as mentioning that also joined to the meeting are Ms. Elvana Ramaj –Nagoya Protocol focal point for the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and Ms. Silvamina Ashabani, colleague that has been with the oversight of the project. Her first point was to highlight that even with the pandemic and lockdown, with the support of the project, was made possible the amendment of the Law on Biodiversity Protection. Through this amendment the Albanian legal framework is completed to meet the obligations arising from the Nagoya Protocol. The amended Law was approved in the Parliament in April 2020. Based on the amendments mentioned with the support of the project, they are under process the drafting of the secondary legislation.

She then mentioned that for the first time in Albania, through the support of the project, were established the first Experimental field of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants at the Agricultural University of Tirana which was inaugurated almost a month ago and they hope that this can engage the private sector with the scientific community. She also indicated that the project supported '9 national CSOs through the Low value Grant scheme in the thematic "Collaboration with CSOs to raise the capacities in the conservation of species that has genetic and bioprospecting (marketing and research) values and potential for fair and equitable benefit sharing", involving women associations. Another key mention was the development an initial study

in operational, management and organizational aspects for establish the National GenBank on Animals and to outline the main directions for the development of the legal framework and instrument for their linkages with the Regional and European GenBank Network for Animal Genetic Resources. As a complement to what was mentioned earlier by Mr. Lago, she mentioned the Training on Access and Benefit Sharing in Albania for the relevant stakeholders. The trainings were carried out in 5 regions including participants from all the relevant institutions and stakeholders. In total, 60 participants were trained during those sessions. It was prepared the strategy for initiating research and bio-discovery partnerships and engaging the private sector in ABS complaint value chains. were identified the needed awareness raising activities related to Climate and Biodiversity for selected stakeholders. Finally, she mentioned that the country is in process the development of a roadmap and exit strategy to support the implementation and further development of the ABS system under the Nagoya Protocol on ABS in Albania and requested that the Project Manager to support the draft of their project

South Africa (government counterpart)

The Chair then gave the floor to Ms. Lactitia Tshitwamulomoni, Deputy Director - Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries who mentioned that she wanted to participate earlier but had some problems with the platform, but she will rush through her presentation. She started by mentioning the challenges they had at the beginning of the project which they started late, partially because the person they had selected to coordinate the project had to be replaced. On the first component the key deliverables from the activity Technical input to the ongoing amendment of Chapter 6 of NEMBA (National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004) were: Establishment of National Technical Task Team and the Gap Analysis on existing national & provincial legislation relevant to ABS, including recommendations on the harmonization of the ABS regulatory environment in South Africa, however, for the Coordination of National Technical Task Team Meetings, as others have mentioned due to the delay in NEMBA Bill approval process this activity had to be replaced. A 5-Day Training on ABS Contract Law targeting communities, industries, academia, research institutions and government officials was held from 30 November to 4th December. On the second component the key deliverables were the Development of BIOPANZA (Bio prospect network) website, Situational Analysis on South African Enterprises within bioprospecting/bio trade sector implementing ABS in order to understand how the sector applies ABS in their business model and the Operational Feasibility Study on the National Compound Library. Unfortunately, due to the COVID19 Pandemic, for Component 2 the Development of ABS Communication Strategy and the Local Communities has been postponed to 2021. On the third component, the Development of Biocultural Community Protocol for 6 Traditional Authorities in Vhembe District Municipality including Training on Negotiation Skills has been delayed and the conclusion has been postponed to 2021. A lesson learned on this is the fact that planning for BCPs is not something you can do within 8 months to one-year timeframe due to the lengthy process. On the fourth component the key deliverables achieved are the Publication of South Africa's Chapter on ABS Case Study (ABS is Genetic Resources for Sustainable Development first publication), Capacity Building Support to BABS Team on ABS Clearing House under the Nagoya Protocol and the contributions to the second ABS publication has been completed.

The Chair thanked Ms. Lactitia apologized for the time inconvenience and ask her to please share her presentation with the project team which she has done and was used to complement her presentation in these minutes.

Sudan (government counterpart)

Dr. Khitma EL Awad Mohammed, Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) acknowledged that for Sudan, the project ended in December 2019, but it did not stop the work in ABS, the biggest result of the project was that it built the capacity to continue the work on ABS and they have established an interim committee to play the role of National Competent Authority work until the legal

framework is approved. This committee has been able to issue a great number of access permits for research purposes. The project achieved several outcomes, one of them is the legal framework which they hope is to be approved at the end of this year or early 2021, with hopes that the pandemic does not affect this process. Also, they developed the biodiscovery strategy, the TK guidelines, and built the national capacities by conducting a number of workshops for lawyers and technical people to establish and negotiate ABS agreements. Also, 4 community protocols were developed and will be launched next week that should be included in the presentation of the Project Manager and the project progress report. The additional activities approved will include the closing workshop scheduled for this current month, to present the legal framework that is been submitted for approval and other important topics. There will also be some laboratory analysis on identified genetic resources with hopes of commercial opportunities for these resources. She also endorsed their support for a second phase, expressed the intentions of implementing their guidelines on TK to protect their traditional knowledge and developing more partnerships to build the capacity trust between users and providers.

Dominican Republic (CO)

Maria Eugenia Morales, Programme Officer and Focal point of the project in the Dominican Republic, mentioned that the country has concluded all the implementation of the UNDP-GEF Global ABS project and confirmed that it has been an outstanding work alongside the colleagues of the Ministry of Environment embracing all the work since day one. This initiative has contributed to boost the ABS products and work in the Dominican Republic. There is a very interesting work been conducted on ABS by the government which has expanded to a wide array of stakeholders and partners on different institutions who now understand and work on this subject. It has been a very interesting and substantive work because, at least in their country, it was very vaguely diffused before and now, to be able to interact and understand what the role of the communities is, understanding their rights and consider them as strong allies and partners to continue capacity activities. Third she wanted to mention the fact that they have a new government since August and there have been some important changes in the institutions, but that, with the ABS team, headed by Ms. Marina Hernandez at the Ministry, they have been able to make visible the ABS work and aim to include this work in the 2030 Agenda. They are confident that all results will be followed up accordingly. She wanted to thank Santiago Carrizosa and Alejandro Lago for their support to the project. Mentioned that the good practice that has come out of the work in partnership with the Ministry of Environment is a great example of that opportunities that come out of these global initiatives should continue.

Ecuador (CO)

Monica Andrade, Programme Officer and Focal Point of the project in Ecuador mentioned that In Ecuador in terms of regulations, the following were developed:

- Regulation for research and genetic resources access.
- Regulation for germplasm banks management.
- Virtual Window for research on biodiversity.

In Ecuador, the final even took place one week before the PB meeting. Even though progress has been observed in proposals preparation for regulations and technical instruments; there is still challenge of issuing them, in a formal way, especially considering the country will have elections in 2021. As it is known, elections always represent a challenge. These proposed regulations and Virtual Window must be part of new National Government agenda, that will take office in Ecuador, in May 2021. Likewise, it is gratifying to know the advances in building trust between users and providers of genetic resources, in the world. In this regard, in Ecuador, 2 publications were launched, one scientific and the other educational, which summarize the research that has been carried out by Inabio, the National Herbarium and Alma College of the United States, in San José de Payamino Community, in the Ecuadorian Amazon. That community granted the first Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Ecuador, as a historical milestone for the

country. Likewise, in terms of the Global ABS Project she reported the progress that has been made in strengthening indigenous peoples and local communities. The achievements mentioned were:

- 5 Biocultural Community Protocols and a guide for their development and application.
- 22 workshops with the participation of more than 1,800 people, on Nagoya Protocol, national regulations on the protection of traditional knowledge.
- Taxonomic identification of botanical samples related to traditional knowledge of 150 plant collections, made in different parts of the country, to be incorporated into Voluntary Repository of traditional knowledge managed by Senadi.

Finally, also in support of indigenous peoples strengthening and in coordination with the ABS Community of Practice, Ecuador developed 4 educational modules of Training of Trainers, face-to-face and interactive in Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources and the application of Nagoya Protocol in Ecuador, which will remain online, both in the aforementioned Community of Practice and in the Ikiam Amazon Regional University, for use of indigenous peoples, but also researchers, students, private sector and those interested in the subject. Monica Andrade concluded with thanking the Project Manager, Alejandro Lago and the entire professional team that has carried out this global challenge and wished success in negotiations for a project second phase, which will benefit the whole world.

This concluded the project board members participation.

5. Quality Assurance Presentation

The Chair gave the floor to Mr. Abusabeeb Elsadig - Regional Programme Coordination, RBM and QA Specialist – Istanbul Regional Hub who initiated his presentation by giving a brief explanation of what is the role and purpose of the Quality Assurance on projects at UNDP. He mentioned that quality assurance builds on the 3 phases of the project- design, implementation and closing. The focus is on 7 areas: **Strategic** (weather they are broad, take advantage of opportunities and based on theories of change and results of change), **Relevance** (targeted groups are been systematically engaged in the project implementation and been kept involved as stakeholders), **Principled** (addressing social and environmental and human rights and that standards issues are not bringing any negative or unintended results in these areas), **Management and Monitoring** (project's activities are monitored and tracked on a regular basis), **Efficiency** (resources are been mobilized to achieve the intended results, weather the project inputs are procured and delivered on time with the appropriate efficiency required), **Effectiveness** (whether the project outputs are contributing to the achievement of the project outcomes and intended results in the bigger picture), and **Sustainability and National Ownership** (how stakeholders and national partners are engaged, and contributing to decision making in the project, how the transition and phase out arrangement are been done).

He also mentioned other elements such as risk profile and addressing risk issues throughout the implementation, follow up on decisions made by the Steering Committee, governance mechanism, reporting on the monitoring and implementation of activities, making sure that the reports are results oriented, etc.

6. Concluding remarks

The Chair gave the floor to Alejandro Lago to address the comments made by the countries with a special emphasis in the exit strategy developing as this was addressed by all 8 countries during their presentations. In regard to the question from India requesting more time for their additional activities, consultations with colleagues in HQ would need to take place as in the approved extension, countries committed to end in February 2021. The decision will be communicated to India bi-laterally. Regarding the second phase, the

pandemic made it very difficult to address the possibility of a second phase with donors concentrating on other issues, therefore the extension granted to the project was also quite strategic, not only to allow the countries to finish implementing, but to be on a most favorable context to search for a second phase. In 2021, possibility of potential funds under GEF 7 will be explored. For countries that expressed interest in a second phase, the project will start gathering documentation and preparing a basic plan to start to contact potential donors to sponsor a second phase. This information should be prepared by the end of this year to enable starting these conversations at the beginning of next year to avoid gaps between both phases.

Gerd Trogemann reiterated the commitment to support the project and any negotiations on a second phase as this has clearly been expressed as an objective by the members of not only the present steering committee, but on previous steering committees as well. He also remembered the countries that the project will undergo a Terminal Evaluation starting January 2021. The Chair also reminded the countries that the end of the project for the countries is February 23 and that the project ends on June 23, 2021.

The Chair thanked all the participating countries congratulating them as well as the project team and all who support the project for the great work, for their commitment in this ABS project and reflected his hopes for the ABS work to continue on a second phase.

7. Project Board decision

- The 2020 Annual Progress Report alongside the Results Framework are approved and endorsed
- The global Annual Work Plan for 2021 is approved
- Preparation of an exit strategy, including a proposal of a second phase of the Global ABS Project

Prepared by: Jose Antonio Rayos Diaz 29-Dec-2020
Jose Antonio Rayos, UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project Associate

Cleared by: Alejandro Lago 29-Dec-2020
Alejandro Lago UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project Manager

Cleared by: Abusabeeb Elsadig 30-Dec-2020
Abusabeeb Elsadig - Regional Programme Coordination, RBM and QA Specialist – Istanbul Regional Hub

Approved by: Gerd Trogemann 07-Jan-2021
Gerd Trogemann, Manager, Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, Chair of the Project Board

List of documents

1- Agenda
2- Project Progress Report
3- Project Annual Work Plan for 2021
4- Project presentation for the Steering Committee
5- Minutes of the approval of additional activities
6- Presentation of Alejandro Lago
7- Presentation of Agustina Rato

Annex 1: List of Participants

Institution/Country	Name, Title and Role in Board
Project Board	
UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub Representative	Gerd Trogemann Manager Istanbul Regional Hub – Chair
UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub Representative	Abusabeb Elsadig – Representing UNDP’s Project Assurance Role
UNV Representative	UNV - Agustina Rato - UNV International and knowledge management and communications officer in the Global ABS Project – Project Partner UNV Representative for Component 4
Representing the RBA region	
South Africa	Ms. Janice Golding - Focal Point: Nature, Climate & Energy Ms. Lactitia Tshitwamulomoni, Deputy Director - Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) – Senior Beneficiary Representative
Sudan	Dr. EL Khitma EL Awad Mohammed – Senior Researcher - Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR)- Senior Beneficiary Representative
Representing the RBAP region	
India	Ms. Ruchi Pant, Head, NRM & Biodiversity, UNDP India - Senior Beneficiary Representative Dr. VB Mathur, Chairman of the National Biodiversity Authority – Government Counterpart
Mongolia	Ms. Khishigjargal Kharkhuu - Programme Officer (NRM & Environmental Governance) - Senior Beneficiary Representative
Representing the RBEC region	
Albania	Ms. Elvita Kabashi – Programme Officer – Head of Environment - UNDP Albania - Senior Beneficiary Representative Ms. Elvana Ramaj – Head of Biodiversity Unit at the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Directorate - Ministry of Tourism and Environment Ms. Silvamina Ashabani – Ministry of Environment - Senior Beneficiary Representative
Tajikistan	Ms. Nargizakhon Usmanova – Team Leader on Climate Change,

	Disaster, Risk Management, Energy and Environment – UNDP Tajikistan - Senior Beneficiary Representative
Representing the RBLAC region	
Dominican Republic	Ms. Maria Eugenia Morales – Programme Specialist – UNDP Dominican Republic - Senior Beneficiary Representative Ms. Marina Henandez - Officer In Charge – Genetic Resources Department of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources – Dominican Republic – Government Counterpart
Ecuador	Ms. Monica Andrade – Coordinator of the Energy and Environment Section – UNDP Ecuador - Senior Beneficiary Representative
From UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project	
Alejandro Lago	Project Manager
Petra Valastinova	Project Finance Associate
Agustina Rato	UNV Regional Coordination Officer, Global ABS Project
Maricarmen Hernandez	UNV Communications
Jose Antonio Rayos	Project Associate
Others	
Santiago Carrizosa	Global Adviser on ABS and Senior Technical Advisor – Ecosystems and Biodiversity, BBPS