

Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

**The German Research  
Foundation (Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft,  
DFG) and its Committee  
on “Biodiversity Research,  
Access to Genetic  
Resources and Benefit-  
Sharing”**

Committee on “Biodiversity Research, Access to Genetic  
Resources and Benefit-Sharing” / Roswitha Schönwitz  
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**DFG**

## *Overview*

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## Introduction

- The approval of CBD in 1992 was the first step of a new approach to the biodiversity resources and their use, which includes the national sovereignty principle, mutually agreed terms and sharing benefits of the use of biodiversity.
- This new approach is a legal but also a moral commitment, which DFG includes in its institutional policies; for that reason, DFG follows the international regime on ABS and tries to build a bridge between that regime and the scientific community.

## DFG Projects

DFG supports since 1920 scientific projects in general, some of them are CBD-relevant projects and most of them are taking place in developing countries, with high biodiversity and small research budgeted.

## Funding of CBD-relevant DFG projects in Developing Countries

- International collaboration is supported according to the principle of mutual responsibility between the national and international partners.
- Only scientists working in German research institutions can apply for DFG Projects. The counterparts in the host country are cooperation partners.
- The projects funding may cover all expenses necessary to conduct the project in a foreign country, including support of the cooperation in the host country if the host is not able to provide own resources.

## Experiences with CBD-relevant DFG projects

- Scientists normally have long-standing cooperation with their counterparts, because these are relationships based on trust and mutual interests.
- Scientists need to spend more and more time on obtaining permits research permits, and export licenses, sometimes without clarity of the rules.

- Most of the applicants and the referees are not aware of the CBD regulations, including the International Regime on access to genetic resources and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)
- The international discussions on the CBD and its implementation at the national level in the states are on-going processes, which are not well understood and passed on the scientific community. Scientists normally are not familiar with these issues.

## DFG Key Questions

- How to collaborate with the CBD implementation
- How to support CBD-relevant scientific research balancing two different points of view:
  - Developed countries: They have the research sources (people, money, centres) and they are afraid that the international regulations will stop their chances for basic research
  - Developing countries: There are in situ resources and the countries are scared that others world steal their resources (biodiversity, traditional knowledge, genetic resources)

## DFG Strategy

As a strategy of work and also a place of sharing information, learning lessons and opinions, DFG established on 2002 its ***“Committee on Biodiversity Research, Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing”***

## DFG Committee: Main Task

- To safeguard the continued and long-term realization of Biodiversity-related projects of basic research, in particular regarding access to genetic resources in developing countries;
- To assist and to provide guidance for researchers and research projects in planning, managing and undertaking biodiversity-related basic research abroad; and,
- To support those research projects in exploring and using the potential for a mutually beneficial cooperation with their counterparts, entities and stakeholders abroad.

## DFG Committee: Members

- Scientists from natural sciences (mainly from the area of taxonomy and systematic research) as well as legal and human science.
- Engaged in an exchange of views with German federal agencies in biodiversity issues, specially CBD and FAO Treaty.
- Agencies specialized in development cooperation, research and educational development cooperation.
- It is an open working group.

## DFG Committee: Results and Achievements

- An assessment of projects and experiences with the view of identifying best practices and learning lessons.
- To provide guidelines applicable to DFG projects with CBD-context.
- Exchange of experiences among existing and future projects.

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