

Europe Biobank Week Congress 2025 -- Session 3A: One Health: Non-human Biobanking

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How to “do” the Nagoya Protocol: common misconceptions and practical advice for access and benefit-sharing compliance

The Nagoya Protocol (NP) on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization (ABS) has been in force for over a decade and governs the access to and exchange of genetic resources (GR) between countries and researchers.

Biobanks and collections of non-human genetic resources play a key role in long-term preservation, and the responsible distribution of genetic resources (i.e. microorganisms, plants, animals), playing a critical role in supporting compliance with the NP. In turn, compliance with the Nagoya Protocol, promoting equitable access and sustainable sharing of genetic resources, is fundamental to the One Health approach, as it ensures transparent transnational collaboration in biodiversity stewardship, a prerequisite for safeguarding the global and interconnected health of humans, animals, plants and ecosystems.

Nevertheless, despite years of NP implementation, a significant lack of awareness and uncertainty still persists among researchers regarding its application. Common misconceptions include the belief that ABS is impossible, that researchers from countries non-signatories of the NP, like the US, are exempt, or that the country of origin of a microbiological genetic resource is determined by where it is cultivated and analyzed.

We will address these and other misconceptions and clarify best practices for NP implementation, highlighting common challenges in accessing genetic resources from provider countries. Additionally, we will provide guidance on compliance for researchers, biobank and collection managers as they navigate ABS requirements.

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