Oceania Biodiscovery Forum

Eskitis Institute, Brisbane, 19-23 November 2012



Organised by
the Australian Government, the ABS Capacity Development Initiative and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Hosted by Griffith University

The Australian Government established the National Biodiscovery Forum series in 2009, providing biodiscovery stakeholders with opportunities to exchange ideas, understanding and experiences.

In 2012 we're pleased to extend the series and invite Pacific nations to join their Australian counterparts at the first-ever Oceania Biodiscovery Forum. This has been made possible through support from GIZ and their Access and Benefit Sharing Capacity Building Initiative.

The forums aim to foster mutual understanding and collaboration between all participants – whether from state or federal government bodies, academic or research institutions or industry. These forums are designed to encourage all parties involved to realise the potential of biodiversity research and create a thriving, global industry.

Biodiscovery – research and development on the discoveries of biodiversity research – has huge economic potential for the region if we can support research and bridge the gap between research and product development.

The signing of the Nagoya Protocol marks a new era in the global relationship between providers and subsequent users of genetic resources. The challenge is for researchers, industry and all levels of government to develop, adopt and begin to use global standards for the use of genetic resources.

With the framework of the Protocol in place, we need a simple, consistent and efficient system that provides certainty for users and providers of genetic resources and any traditional knowledge associated with those resources. We need a system that encourages biodiversity research, investment and innovation that will benefit everyone.

Flinders University's Centre for Marine Bioproducts Development in South Australia and the Australian Government co-hosted the second National Biodiscovery Forum in 2011.

The forum revealed participating research scientists had a strong interest in the commercialisation of their work, but at the same time had a lack of knowledge on how to pursue this – and what companies and investors were really looking for. The first Oceania Biodiscovery Forum will focus on these questions.

Australian Government
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Griffith UNIVERSITY
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The Oceania Biodiscovery Forum will pursue the following outcomes:

• A better understanding of the commercialisation process – while the regulatory steps are reasonably well known, what makes research attractive for investors?

• A better understanding of the benefits of biodiversity research and development – with the lottery a better bet than a blockbuster drug, what makes it worthwhile to provide access?

• A better understanding of the needs of those that provide genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge – why is there a reluctance to share resources with researchers?

• A better understanding for those who provide resources and associated traditional knowledge on how to design effective and efficient Prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAC) procedures and documents.

Day 1 and 2 (19-20 November 2012) will have three presentation themes:

• Regional case studies of research leaving the lab – what are some real-life strategies for a successful transition from research to product development?

• Industry perspectives on the Protocol and their needs– what turns research into an attractive commercial proposition? What are the must-haves?

• A consultation process for stakeholders on implementation and ratification of the Nagoya Protocol in Australia – what framework can best provide certainty for all stakeholders?

Presentations will address a number of questions:

• To make research attractive to investors, what is required from resource providers and from researchers?

• To participate in the emerging global system, what is required of governments?

• To allow access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, what are the needs of provider countries and communities?

Day 3 (21 November 2012) will provide an opportunity to continue discussions of the previous days, and for a guided tour of the host Eskitis Institute.

The Institute works towards the development of new strategies to prevent and treat disease with an emphasis on multi-disciplinary research and collaboration within the Institute and with national and international partners.

Research at the Institute is supported by the unique Nature Bank resource, a storehouse of chemical diversity served from the natural world. Nature Bank is an integrated drug discovery platform encompassing a library of over 200,000 optimised natural product fractions derived from a diverse collection of over 45,000 samples of plants and marine invertebrates.

Eskitis is also home to the Queensland Compound Library, an automated library of nearly 400,000 pure compounds from Australian chemists.

Day 4 and 5 (22-23 November 2012) will focus on capacity development for stakeholders from Pacific Island States:

Prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAT) are the cornerstones of any access to genetic resources for utilisation in research project. Therefore participants will discuss and elaborate on key elements which need to be included in PIC and MAT ensuring a fair and equitable relationship between provider and user of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

Access and Benefit Sharing

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