



CCAMLR

COMM CIRC 08/158
SC CIRC 08/71

Friday, 19 December 2008

Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area in preparation for ATCM XXXII

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**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
AND THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

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**Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on
Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area
in preparation for ATCM XXXII**

Belgium has requested that the attached information, in relation to the abovementioned meeting to be held in Baarn, The Netherlands, from 3 to 5 February 2009, be circulated to all Members.

Dr D.G.M. Miller
Executive Secretary

Attch.

**Intergovernmental meeting of experts on Biological Prospecting
in the Antarctic Treaty Area
in preparation for ATCM XXXII**

3 – 5 February 2009, Baarn, The Netherlands

Provisional information sheet

1. Background

The International Polar Year (IPY) is a turning point in the increasing scientific and political interest in biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area. In the course of the IPY, the Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database¹ was submitted to Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) XXXI by Belgium. The content of this database demonstrates there is commercial interest in Antarctic genetic resources. This interest is likely to increase in the future. Little is known about the impact of this increase in commercially orientated research in Antarctica.

Biological prospecting has been considered by the ATCM since 1999. During this time, Parties have been interested in the free availability of scientific observations and results, options for sharing of benefits besides the free availability of scientific observations and results, the environmental impacts, and the need to keep up with policy developments in other fora.

In 2007, the ATCM XXX established an informal open-ended web-based Intersessional Contact Group (ICG) to examine the issue of biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area, in particular “to identify issues and current activities related to biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area with a view to assisting the ATCM in considering the matter, including, if appropriate, working modalities.” Several Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs) participated actively in the ICG. The report of the ICG was presented to the ATCM XXXI (WP 4) for discussion.

Although ATCM XXXI could not agree terms of reference for further intersessional work, several ATCPs noted the need to move forward and for more intersessional work on biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the proposed informal meeting is to consider the issues raised by biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area, with a view to assisting ATCPs prepare co-sponsored Working Papers in order to support a more informed, structured and focused discussion at the ATCM XXXII.

The informal meeting will provide an opportunity to:

- Enhance conceptual understanding of biological prospecting and related terms;

¹ The database is accessible on <http://www.bioprospector.org/bioprospector/antarctica/home.action>

- Develop a comparative analysis of existing international instruments related to biological prospecting;
- Review the Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database, taking into account activities in the field of biological prospecting in respect of which advance notice has been given in accordance with Article VII.5 AT and any answers of SCAR to the questions posed to it by ATCM XXXI; and
- Analyze the components of the ATS to consider whether they provide an adequate framework for managing biological prospecting activities in the Antarctic Treaty area (a gap analysis).

The following documents will be made available for the meeting:

- Draft Working Paper on Concepts, including a Comparative Analysis (lead: Sweden);
- Draft Revised Working Paper on the Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database (lead: Belgium)
- Draft Working Paper on a Gap Analysis of the ATS (lead: the Netherlands); and
- Draft Information Paper on Relevant Developments Outside the ATS (lead: UNU).

Previous ATCM papers on biological prospecting and excerpts from the relevant parts of the reports of previous ATCMs will also be made available for the meeting, including:

- ATCM XXXI WP-4, Report of the ATCM Intersessional Contact Group to examine the issue of biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area (Netherlands);
- ATCM XXXI WP-11, An update on biological prospecting in Antarctica, including the development of the Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database (Belgium);
- ATCM XXIX IP-13, In search of a legal regime for bioprospecting in Antarctica (France);
- ATCM XXIX IP-112, Argentine activities of bioprospecting and bioremediation in Antarctica (Argentina);
- ATCM XXIX IP-116, Recent Trends in the Biological Prospecting (UNEP);
- ATCM XXVIII WP-013, Biological Prospecting in Antarctica (New Zealand and Sweden);
- ATCM XXVIII IP-008, Biological Prospecting in Antarctica (Spain);
- ATCM XXVIII IP-093, Recent Developments in Biological Prospecting Relevant to Antarctica (UNEP);
- ATCM XXVII IP-106, Industry Involvement in Antarctic Bioprospecting (UNEP);
- ATCM XXVI IP-47, Bioprospecting in Antarctica: An Academic Workshop (New Zealand);
- ATCM XXVI IP-75, The International Regime on Bioprospecting: Existing Policies and Emerging Issues for Antarctica (UK and Norway)
- ATCM XXV WP-043, Biological Prospecting (UK); and
- ATCM XXIII IP-123, SCAR.

CCAMLR papers

In 2008, for the first time, CCAMLR discussed bioprospecting.

- CCAMLR-XXVII/BG/36, Biological prospecting in the Antarctica Treaty area: a role for CCAMLR (IUCN).

3. Outputs

The expected outputs will include:

- A better understanding among the ATCPs of key aspects of biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area;
- A better understanding among the ATCPs on ways to address issues related to biological prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area;
- Better informed working papers that will be submitted by ATCPs to the ATCM XXXII; and
- An information paper on the proceedings of the meeting that will be submitted to the ATCM XXXII.

There will be no formal report. Copies of papers will be available to participants, but may not be further circulated without the author's agreement.

4. Organisational features

The meeting will be hosted by the Netherlands and will take place from 3 to 5 February 2009 in Groeneveld Castle, Baarn. Baarn is about 35 km from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. Full details on how to get there, hotel accommodation etc. will be presented at a later stage. Castle Groeneveld is a no smoking venue.

The meeting has an informal character. Participants will be free to express personal views without prejudice to government positions.

The meeting is made possible by voluntary contributions from Belgium, Finland, Sweden, The Netherlands and UNEP, and is open to all Antarctic Treaty and CCAMLR Parties and to invited observers and experts.

English will be used as the working language.

5. Support for Participants from Developing Nations

There is a limited amount of funding available for participants from developing countries, Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. This assistance will cover a round-trip air ticket on the most economical and direct route to/from Amsterdam and includes the UN Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for the duration of the Meeting.

The United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) will be arranging the travel for those participants that are eligible for assistance. If you need such assistance, please indicate this to UNU no later than 15 November 2008 by contacting Rahera Noa at noa@ias.unu.edu

In the allocation of the available assistance funds, Consultative Parties will take precedence over non-Consultative Parties.

**Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area
-- Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts --
Baarn, 3 - 5 February 2009**

Tuesday 3 February 2009

09:30 Transport to meeting venue and registration
10:00 Opening by Chair (Vincent van Zeijst)
10:10 Welcoming Remarks (*representative from the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (tbc)*)
10:30 Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area (Alan Hemmings, Gateway Antarctica Centre for Antarctic Studies and Research, University of Canterbury)
11:10 Coffee break
11:40 Scientific Perspective on Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area (Ad Huiskes, SCAR)
12:20 Business Perspective on Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area (William H. Baum (*tbc*))
13:00 Lunch
14:00 Introduction of draft working paper by Sweden on the use of terms relating to biological prospecting
15:00 Tea break
15:30 Consideration of draft working paper by Sweden on the use of terms relating to biological prospecting
17:30 Reception followed by Dinner hosted by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
21:00 Transport to hotels

Wednesday 4 February 2009

09:30 Transport to meeting venue
10:00 Developments Outside the Antarctic Treaty System with respect to Biological Prospecting (Sam Johnston, UNU)
10:40 The Multilateral System under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Jane Bulmer, IUCN)
11:20 Coffee break
11:50 The Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database (Marjo Vierros, UNU)
12:30 Lunch
13:30 Introduction of draft working paper by Belgium on the Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database
14:30 Tea break
15:00 Consideration of draft working paper by Belgium on the Antarctic Biological Prospecting Database
17:00 Transport to hotels

Thursday 5 February 2009

09:30 Transport to meeting venue
10:00 Introduction of draft working paper by the Netherlands on regulatory gaps in the Antarctic Treaty System with respect to biological prospecting
11:00 Coffee break
11:30 Consideration of draft working paper by the Netherlands on regulatory gaps in the Antarctic Treaty System with respect to biological prospecting
13:30 Lunch
14:30 Follow-up and Closure of the Meeting
15:00 Transport to hotels