

# CAMEROON

# EASY ABS GUIDE

This Easy ABS guide was developed by [the GNP-HuB project](#) in collaboration with the [ABS authorities from Cameroon](#). It aims to help researchers understand the Cameroon's ABS measures and the first steps to become Nagoya-Protocol-compliant. This guide focuses on non-commercial use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

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## ABS general overview

Cameroon's ABS rules **require researchers from outside the national system to follow a general procedure** to obtain an ABS permit for research, bioprospecting, or accessing associated traditional knowledge (aTK), whether from communities, individuals (e.g. traditional healers), or public databases. The same procedure applies to the commercial utilization of genetic resources. In contrast, **a simplified procedure applies to professionals within the national research system**, who only need to submit a declaration form and are not required to obtain Prior Informed Consent (PIC), negotiate Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT), or pay any fees.

For **human or animal health emergency situations**, the procedure is conducted faster and easier, as long as the documents justifying the threat are available.

The **plant genetic resources for food and agriculture** under the [ITPGRFA](#) are excluded of the ABS law, when used for a purpose covered by the treaty.

**Party to the Nagoya Protocol since:**

February 28th, 2017

**Access regulated since:**

July 9th, 2021

**ABS National Focal Point:**

Dr. Dingom Aurélie Taylor Patience, Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development. [dingom25@gmail.com](mailto:dingom25@gmail.com), [cameroon.abs@gmail.com](mailto:cameroon.abs@gmail.com)

At the end of the process, all documents should be submitted as physical files.

Users that don't have the corresponding ABS permits must **regularized utilization** requesting a retro-active permit. This brings the beneficial effect of clarifying the conditions of access and establish the terms for benefits-sharing.

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# What is the scope of the ABS measures for non-commercial research?

## What genetic resources are covered?

- native
- introduced (non-native)
- domesticated
- endemic
- wild
- cultivated

Microorganisms are considered under the scope of the ABS measures in Cameroon, including human microbiota.

## What non-commercial academic research activities are covered?

- taxonomy
- species identification/ barcoding
- phylogeny
- evolution
- biogeography
- population genetics
- gene function
- gene expression
- genome sequencing
- others: inventory of genetic resources; biotechnology; DNA/RNA/protein sequencing; request intellectual property rights; teaching (e.g. technology transfer using specific genetic resources from Cameroon).
- genome editing
- gene characterization
- biochemical characterization
- bioprospection

## What areas in the country are covered?

- all country
- just within protected areas
- ex situ collections:
  - within the country
  - outside the country

Notes: ABS measures cover current utilization of previously acquired genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge, even if it was collected before 2021.

## Are there exceptions to any of the three previous questions?

- Biological resources whose use is not considered utilization of genetic resources.
- Biological resources and aTK used or exchanged among Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in traditional, cultural, spiritual or customary settings.

**Table 1. Types of ABS permits:**

Research activities	Type of permit	Competent National Authority	Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and bioprospecting by <b>users outside the national research system</b></li> <li>- Utilization of genetic material for <b>commercial purposes</b> (research and development products)</li> <li>- <b>Transfer of genetic material outside</b> the country.</li> <li>- Access to <b>traditional knowledge</b> from the public database by foreign users.</li> <li>- <b>Change in the use or purpose</b> granted in the initial PIC</li> <li>- <b>Regularization for professionals</b> who already use a genetic resource.</li> <li>- <b>Request intellectual property rights</b></li> </ul>	Type 1: ABS permit for GR	Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development  <a href="mailto:cameroon.abs@gmail.com">cameroon.abs@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:dingom25@gmail.com">dingom25@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:adingom@yahoo.com">adingom@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:mfantasylvie@yahoo.com">mfantasylvie@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:mfantasylvie@gmail.com">mfantasylvie@gmail.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Payment receipt*</li> <li>- Stamped application: letter of intent addressed to the CNA, to which the required documents are attached.</li> <li>- Duly completed application form, available in <a href="#">English and French</a>**</li> <li>- Research permit***</li> <li>- Attachments (detailed in Table 2)</li> <li>- PIC – granted by the CNA.</li> <li>- MAT – agreed with the CNA or local research institute. Template available in <a href="#">English and French</a>.</li> </ul>

In Cameroon, PIC and MAT are not sufficient to be Nagoya Protocol compliant. You need to obtain an ABS permit, which is granted by the Competent National Authority once PIC and MAT are finalized.

Research activities	Type of permit	Competent National Authority	Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access to <b>aTK belonging to local and indigenous communities</b>;</li> <li>– <b>Request intellectual property rights</b></li> </ul>	Type 2: ABS permit for aTK	Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development <a href="mailto:cameroon.abs@gmail.com">cameroon.abs@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:dingom25@gmail.com">dingom25@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:adingom@yahoo.com">adingom@yahoo.com</a>	The same for type 1, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PIC – granted by IPLCs</li> <li>– MAT – agreed with IPLCs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bioprospecting and research in Cameroon by <b>users belonging to the national research system</b></li> </ul>	Type 3: ABS declaration	<a href="mailto:mfantasylvie@yahoo.com">mfantasylvie@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:mfantasylvie@gmail.com">mfantasylvie@gmail.com</a>  Permits can be requested via email or through the <a href="#">ABS online system</a> . But, at the end all documents should be submitted as physical files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Declaration form, available in <a href="#">English and French</a>**</li> <li>– Research permit***</li> <li>– Attachments (detailed in Table 2)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Emergency situations</b> that threatens or harms human or animal health</li> </ul>	Type 4: ABS permits for health emergencies		Same as Type 1, but the process will be faster.

The facilitated declaration regime doesn't apply to international collaborations in which materials are sent abroad or research is conducted outside Cameroon.

In such cases:

- The foreign partner must request an ABS permit (Type 1) as the user.
- A MAT must be agreed upon with the local partner as the provider.
- Local researchers cannot act as both provider and user simultaneously.

\* Any request for an ABS Permit for the **export of samples** for commercial and non-commercial purposes shall be accompanied by a receipt for the payment of fees, for the study of files: 200,000 CFA francs for natural persons and 500,000 CFA francs for legal persons. In the event of **transfer of research results for commercial purposes**, the applicant has to pay the corresponding fee, which is 2,000,000 CFA francs.

Payment must be done in person to the National Environmental and Sustainable Development Fund, located at MINEPDED (Ministerial Building No. 2), 8th floor, door 843. **Or, by bank transfer** to:

- Name of the account: The National Environmental and Sustainable Development Fund
- Account N° 68876265001;
- IBAN: CM2110001068656887626500130;
- Name of bank branch: BICEC La Vallée-Yaoundé.

In both cases, a receipt of payment is automatically issued by the public treasury and/or by the territorially competent collector.

\*\* First via email or the [ABS online platform](#) and when finalized, a physical file must be submitted to:

ATTENTION TO:  
 Dr. DINGOM Aurélie Taylor Patience  
 Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development  
 Ministerial Building N°2, 20th May Boulevard P.O. Box 320 Yaounde  
 Yaounde, Centre  
 237, Cameroon

\*\*\*Granted by Ministry of Research and Scientific Innovation: <https://minresi.gov.cm>

Contact person at the ABS National Committee:  
 Dr NGONKEU MANGAPTCHE Eddy Léonard, Head of Division, Scientific and Technical Cooperation Division.  
 Email: [ngonkeu@yahoo.fr](mailto:ngonkeu@yahoo.fr)

**Table 2. Attachments according to the type of permit:**

Attachment	ABS Permit (Types 1 & 4)	aTK ABS permit (Type 2)	Declaration (Type 3)
– Detailed project proposal	YES	YES	YES
– A legalized photocopy of the National Identity Card (for nationals) or passport (for foreigners), legalized within three (3) months of application	YES	YES	YES
– Proof of membership of the national research system	NA	NA	YES
– Legalized documents for legal persons (including the legal name);	YES	YES	NA
– A certified photocopy of the National Identity Card of the legal representative of the legal person	YES	YES	NA
– A certificate of registration for legal persons;	YES	YES	YES
– Formal partnership between academic institutions <sup>§</sup>	YES	YES	NA
– Ethical clearance <sup>§§</sup>	YES	YES	YES

<sup>§</sup> Material Transfer Agreement (MTA), collaboration agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the legal representatives of the research institutions

<sup>§§</sup> If the research is carried out on human-microbiota. Granted by the Ministry of Public Health

National Committee for Human Health Research Ethics (CNERSH)

Technical Secretariat

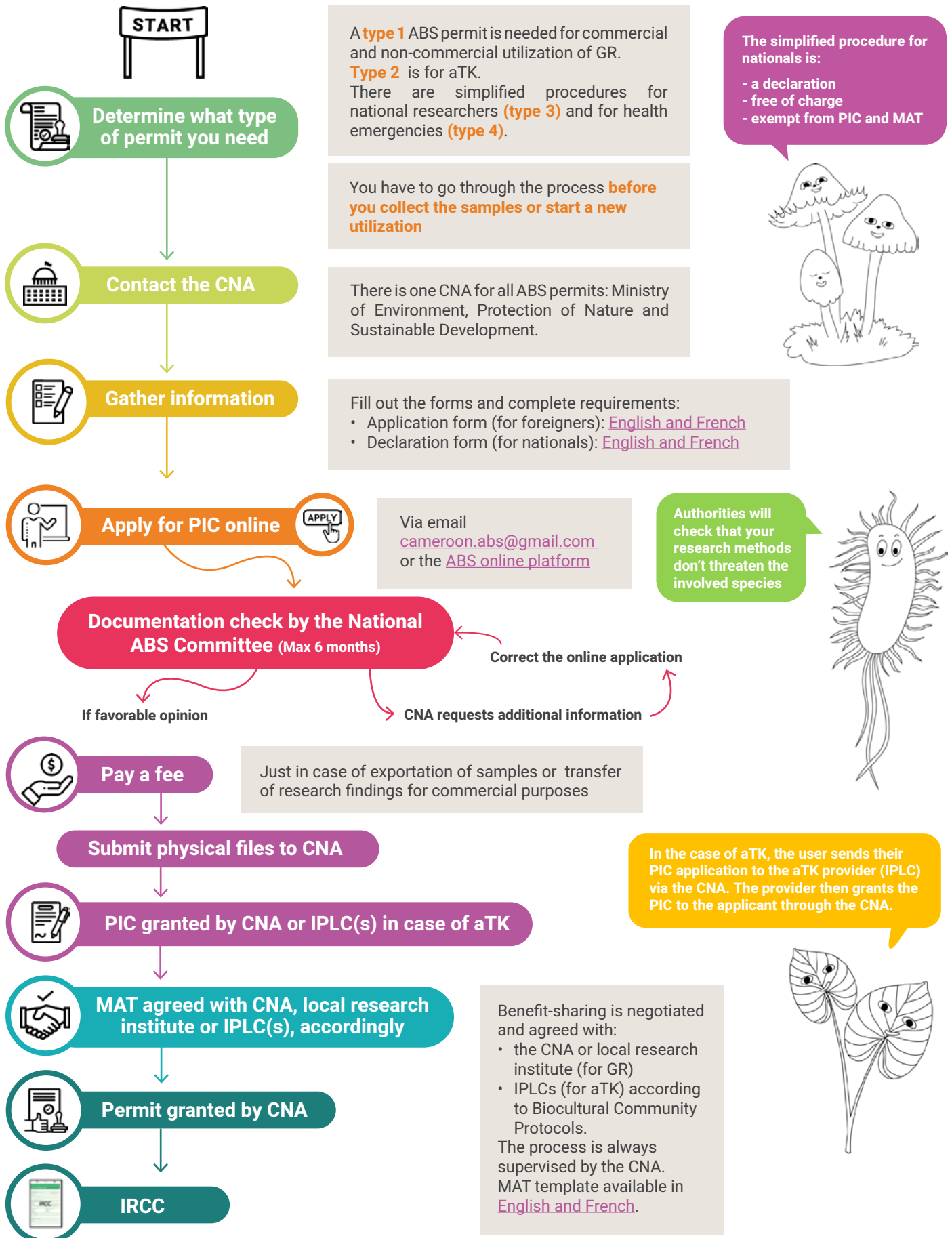
Email: [setcominae@gmail.com](mailto:setcominae@gmail.com)



CAMEROON



# ABS procedure for utilization of GR, derivatives or/and aTK



## Relevant links:



ABS procedures [English and French](#)



ABS Decree N° 2023/07526.  
[English and French](#)



Guidelines on benefit-sharing for conservation  
[English and French](#)



ABS Law N° 2021/014.  
[English and French](#)

## How long does it take, on average, to obtain an ABS permit?

■ 3-6 months

## Validity of the permit

### How long is the permit valid for?

The permit is valid for five years, but other time considerations must be kept in mind:

- Once is granted, the PIC is valid for one year. Within this year, his/her holder should trigger the negotiations of the MAT. Beyond this time the PIC is not valid. If the user is still interested, a new request should be submitted.
- The duration of MAT is 3 years. It should be executed within the 3 years after the agreed start date and once all required permits are in place.
- The research can continue after the PIC and MAT have expired, but only within the five-year validity period of the ABS permit

### Is an extension possible? Or is a new permit needed after the expiration date?

A new permit is required.

Also keep in mind:

- Any change in the intended use of the material requires a new PIC, new MAT, and a new ABS permit.
- If any intellectual property rights (IPRs) are generated during the permit period, the resulting benefits must still be shared with the provider as long as the IPRs remain in force.

### In which cases a new permit is necessary?

- to finish sampling
- to finish data analysis
- to finish laboratory work
- to finish and publish scientific papers



## Are there other non-ABS - permits needed? Which ones?

- The **research permit** issued by the Ministry of research and innovation for the part of research done locally.
- **Exportation permit** issued by the Ministry of Forest and World wildlife.
- **Ethical clearance** issued by the Ministry of Public Health, when research relates to human microbiota or human health.

## Do the national ABS measures address traditional knowledge? If yes, how?

Yes! If aTK is obtained from public databases by foreign users, a type 1 permit is needed, and if aTK is obtained from a local or indigenous community, a type 2 permit is needed. The procedure is the same in both cases, but in the last, the PIC request is addressed to the aTK Holder (IPLCs), through the CNA, according to a biocultural community protocol or to a customary law; and the corresponding IPLCs grant the PIC. Then, the MAT is negotiated between the user and the IPLCs, under the supervision of the CNA. Once PIC and MAT are granted, the CNA issues the ABS permit.

## Keep in mind! Country-special features and practical considerations

**A cooperation with local partner is necessary** to obtain the research permit (which is a requirement for the ABS permit). This partnership should be legally established by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/ Material Transfer Agreement (MTA)/Collaborative Agreement with the legal representative (the Vice-Chancellor or Rector). The research permit is granted for the local components of the research.

**Access in ex-situ collections.** Cameroon's ABS measures also cover any new utilization of previously acquired genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge. This may be seen as a restriction on distribution to third parties and could result in researchers facing difficulties when describing new species from Cameroon<sup>1</sup>.

According to Cameroon's legislation, utilization is defined as exploring the properties of organisms, the aTK or derivatives to produce further scientific knowledge and information or to develop commercial products

## Benefit-sharing

What kind of benefits does the country usually request from non-commercial research projects?

- Sharing of research results:
  - Scientific publications
  - Research report(s)
  - Talks or workshops
- Training for local researchers
- Involvement of local researchers in the project publications
- Donation of equipment, reagents and/or materials
- Admittance to *ex situ* collections
- Access to databases
- Other(s): Scholarships, collaboration between laboratories, technology transfer, encourage that a part of research be carried out in Cameroon, and others included in the Annex 1 of the Nagoya Protocol.

Note: Not all of these non-monetary benefits are mandatory for every permit. The user and provider can agree on which ones will be shared.

<sup>1</sup> To officially publish new species names, the nomenclature codes (e.g. the International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes (ICNP) Rule 30) may require biological vouchers to be deposited in ex-situ collections, which must be freely distributable to third parties with no restrictions.

