

AUDA-NEPAD ABNE Information Manual

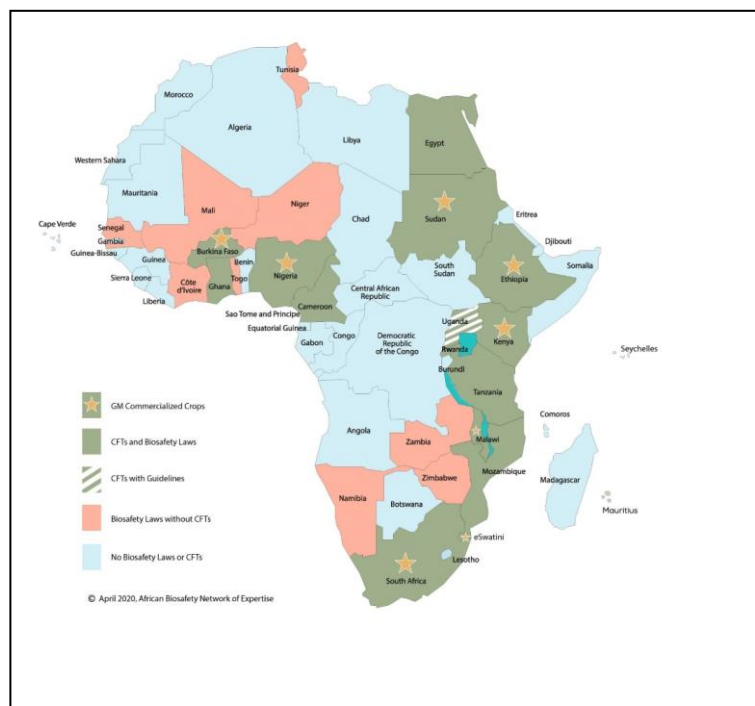


Figure 1: Outlook of biosafety regime in Africa

ABNE, an African Union programme that provides world class biosafety regulatory support services towards Africa's socio-economic development

Contact Us

Head Office:

B.P. 17204, Hann Maristes 2
Lot No 25R, Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 33 859 18 79

Burkina Faso Office

Université Ouaga 1 Joseph Ki-Zerbo
06 B.P. 9884 Ouagadougou 06
Burkina Faso
Tel : +226 50 33 15 01

East Africa Office:

Jumuia Place, Nairobi
Kenya

Email: abne@nepad.org
Website: <http://nepad.org>

1.0 BACKGROUND

The African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE) is a programme under AUDA-NEPAD, which serves as a biosafety resource network for regulators, policy makers and other stakeholders. ABNE is engaged with AU Member States in biosafety policy alignment and regulation in Africa since its inception in 2010

ABNE was conceptualized under the NEPAD Agency's Consolidated Plan of Action and fulfills the recommendation of the High-Level African Panel on Modern Biotechnology. It was approved officially in 2008 by the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST), to promote advancement of science and technology for agricultural development in Africa.

2.0 ABNE's mandate - continental and global agenda

ABNE draws his overall mandate from the African Union Agenda 2063 and serves as a tool for the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) to contribute to a concrete realisation of the seven major aspirations encapsulated in the AU Agenda 2063 as spelt out in Figure 1 below.

ABNE is the technical program of the AUDA-NEPAD that is specialised in building the biosafety regulatory capacity that is required to deliver the AUDA-NEPAD mandate within the Africa continent through the development and utilization of new and emerging technologies to improve agricultural productivity (including crops, livestock, fishery), nutrition, environmental sustainability and health.

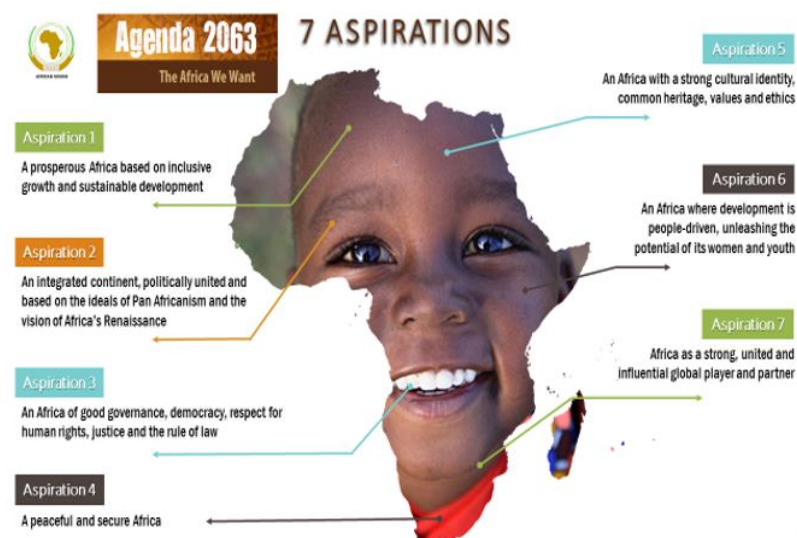


Figure 1: AU Agenda 2063 – The 7 major Aspirations

By focusing on the creation of an enabling environment in Africa for the development and utilization of technologies to improve agricultural productivity, food and nutrition, health and the environment, ABNE has indubitably contributed to the attainment of the global United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those targeted to Zero Hunger (SDG2), Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG3) and the development of suitable crops as part of urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG13).

3.0 Vision, Mission, and Objectives

ABNE has identified six strategic objectives to be implemented in line with its Vision and Mission. Implementation of each of

these strategic objectives would be guided by a set of core values and guiding principles.

Vision

An African Union programme that provides world class biosafety regulatory support services towards Africa's socio-economic development

Mission

To provide support for the development of functional biosafety regulatory systems that enable access to beneficial technologies while protecting human health and the environment

Strategic objectives

ABNE's strategic objectives are to:

- ✚ Strengthen, expand and enhance political will and commitment
- ✚ Support development and implementation of relevant policies and regulations for modern biotechnology and emerging technologies
- ✚ Strengthen capacity of regulatory systems for management of modern biotechnology and emerging technologies
- ✚ Expand the range of regulatory support services for modern biotechnology and emerging technologies
- ✚ Enhance public participation in regulatory processes
- ✚ Maintain management and organizational excellence as the institutional pillar to carry the programme

4.0 ABNE Services

Building functional biosafety regulatory systems is not a linear nor a uni-directional project. Many types of services are to be provided to make the system workable. Figure 4 below shows the ABNE service delivery platform.

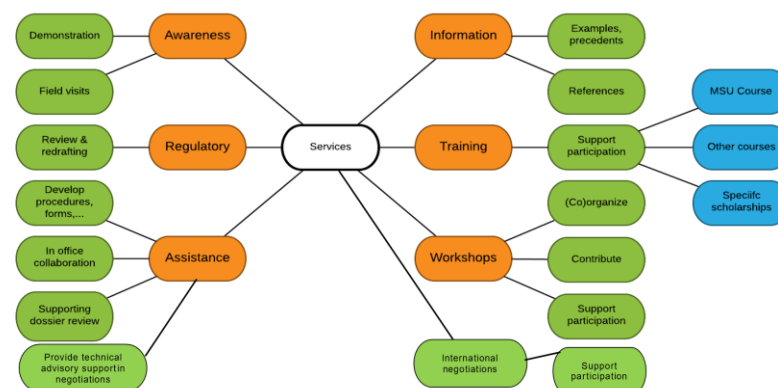


Figure 4: Matrix of ABNE service delivery platform

Five key services provided by ABNE to AU member states include

- ✚ Transformative Capacity Strengthening;
- ✚ Integrated Educational Study Tours and Seeing-is-Believing;
- ✚ Biosafety Resource Base/Web-based learning, and Networking;
- ✚ Short Biosafety Courses (1-2 Weeks);
- ✚ High Level Policy Advocacy, International Negotiations, Technical Consultancy; and
- ✚ Complementary Services with other AUDA-NEPAD programmes such as African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH).

These services contribute to four AU Agenda 2063 IMPACT PILLARS - Wealth creation, Inclusive prosperity, Transformed capacities and Environmental sustainability. These services are further explained below:

Transformative Capacity Strengthening or Capacity Building for Sustainable Development

A fundamental goal of capacity strengthening is to enhance the ability of Regulators and Policy makers from African Union Member countries to evaluate and make informed choices in use of Science, Technology and Innovation of biotechnology and other emerging technologies. Approaches employed include- workshops, seminar presentations, case study group evaluations and discussion.

Integrated Educational Study Tours and Seeing-is-Believing

To enhance capacity building efforts, ABNE service provision organizes stakeholder integrated study tours for policy makers, scientists, legal personnel from African Member states to provide opportunities for them to visually assess the practical aspects of the relevant science, technology and innovations of interest. Previous study tours have been conducted in Africa, South Africa, United States, South America and India where the technologies of interest have been commercialized, and more recently to African countries with advanced commercialization of pertinent technologies.

Short Biosafety Courses

On an annual basis and through facilitation of ABNE, African Regulators and Policy makers attend several short courses conducted by Michigan State University or African Universities that include - Food safety- ensuring a safe food supply for the global Community; Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property Management, Technology Commercialization and Product Stewardship; Agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety, Addressing Public Concerns on the National Biotechnology and Biosafety. In addition, in partnership with Michigan State University, ABNE and African Universities, Africa policy makers and regulator train Regulators and policy makers in courses

covering, food safety, environmental safety, Biotechnology and Biosafety Legal and Policy, Biosafety Communication.

High- Level Policy Advocacy

High Level Policy Advocacy is an important tool for facilitating objective policy change to spur socio-economic transformation of Africa. ABNE utilizes this approach where Policy makers need to make informed choices but are hampered by unavailability of balanced technical and scientific information required to make informed choices. High level policy advocacy is used where technical and scientific information need strong policy support to inform policy deliberations in an objective and relevant way. However, it is noteworthy that providing accurate, relevant, and policy neutral information can be especially challenging in highly controversial policy issues.

Biosafety Resource Base- Web-based learning, Networking

ABNE has broad resource network on its website- covering diverse topics in biosafety including- legal and policy, food safety, environmental safety, biosafety communication that are freely accessible to stakeholders. In addition, ABNE will be conducting online Biosafety courses for regulatory staff from African Union Member State on request. Furthermore, ABNE provides support to member states at international negotiations related to governance of modern biotechnology and emerging technologies.

Complementary Services with other AUDA-NEPAD programmes and Technical Consultancy

ABNE also offers complementary services through other AUDA-NEPAD programmes such as the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH), an African Union initiative that supports authorities from member countries to create and implement harmonized standards in medicine regulations. ABNE also facilitates technical consultancy services for Africa Union

Member States in specialized areas to address specific country needs.

5.0 Partnerships and Linkages

ABNE provides technical services in biosafety to African Union Member countries leveraging on partnerships and linkages with partner organizations drawing on their comparative strengths and advantages. Partnership and linkages have advantages of cost-effectiveness, complementation of skills in project implementation, promotes ownership, sustainability and commitment, without which the results are unlikely to be sustainable. Improved coordination is critical to the pursuit of functional and effective collaboration and partnerships.

Partnerships and Alliances

The ABNE services to African Member countries recognizes that the ultimate implementation takes place at country level. As such it establishes elaborate clear direct linkages with countries (national governments and other national players including private sector, academia and civil society). Furthermore, ABNE collaborates with other players, stakeholders and interest groups, including and especially the African Union Organs (i.e. African Union Commission (AUC- that designs continental policies); the Regional Economic Communities (RECs- that implement translated continental development policies and frameworks) and various AU Technical agencies and Organs; multilateral partners, private sector and civil society at all levels. ABNE also collaborates with in-country NEPAD Units and Offices. Partnership with African Institutions of higher learning is also being pursued.

International treaties/agreements

In addition to partnerships and alliances, ABNE operates and provides technical services to Africa Union Member Countries

in regard and adherence to International Treaties/Agreements guided by International Laws. Such international frameworks ensure coordination and harmony among member's countries in pursuit of socio-economic transformation of the African continent. Key of these are Convention on Biological Diversity, Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, a number of agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO) that are relevant to the Protocol, such as the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), as well as Plant specific international treaties and Agreement – the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

6.0 Communication and outreach

It is known that any new change and innovation brings fear to human being as they tend to stick to the comfort of what they are used to. Genetic engineering in the same way has been so far associated with huge controversies that hindered the expected level of adherence by African farmers to new agricultural tools available on the market over the past two decades.

Important communication efforts are needed at country and continental levels to facilitate public understanding and acceptance of new technologies such as modern biotechnologies and gene drive as part of the toolbox available to effectively address development challenges especially in the agricultural and health sector. Similarly, at the international level, there is a critical need to consolidate positions that express African countries' views and choices on the development and use of new agricultural technologies and products.

In that regard, ABNE, while embracing AUDA-NEPAD broader strategic plan on communication, drives a specialized programme on biosafety communication to prompt and maintain public interest and effort for the safe adoption and use of innovative agricultural and health tools and products within the African Union Members states. A fully informed and engaging public is a key part to delivering on the major objectives and aspirations encapsulated in the African Union Agenda 2063.

7.0 Resource and capacity

Staffing

ABNE is governed by the AUDA-NEPAD department of Knowledge Management, Programme Evaluation and Centres of Excellence (KMPE), as the 'Centre of Excellence on Rural Resources and Food Systems' and advised by a Technical Advisory Committee and a Management Committee (figure 3). The Head of ABNE is responsible for the management of the day-to-day activities of ABNE and is also a member of the Management Committee. The Head is supported by an administrative and finance team while technical services are provided by programme officers covering the following areas of expertise: Biosafety, Biotechnology, Food safety, Scio-economics, Legal and policy matters, Biosafety communication.

8.0 Outlook of biosafety regime in Africa

Outlook of biosafety regime in Africa has evolved over the years regarding advancement in the establishment of functional biosafety regulatory systems for safe adoption and use of modern biotechnology. Figure 5 below highlights the profile of

Africa at the inception of ABNE programme through to the current profile.

9.0 How to access ABNE services

As per its mandate, ABNE supports African countries to build functional biosafety regulatory systems, from developing biosafety framework to capacity strengthening activities. However, each country is fully responsible for making a decision on a specific technology.

When a country decides to harness biotechnology or other related emerging technologies and wishes to call upon AUDA-NEPAD technical support, top officials can send an official letter to AUDA-NEPAD CEO clearly requesting such support. The support can then be channeled through ABNE, which makes sure the regulatory requirements both at national and international levels are fully met.

Official requests can be submitted to the following address:

AUDA-NEPAD CEO

P O Box 1234; Halfway House; Midrand, 1685, Gauteng, Johannesburg, South Africa

Tel : +27 11 256 3600

For more information on AUDA-NEPAD ABNE, email us at abne@nepad.org

or visit AUDA-NEPAD Website at <https://www.nepad.org/programme/african-biosafety-network-of-expertise-abne>