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PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION

**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND
PARTICIPATION CONCERNING THE SAFE TRANSFER, HANDLING AND USE OF LIVING
MODIFIED ORGANISMS (ARTICLE 23)**

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision BS-IV/17, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol agreed to develop a programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms. In paragraph 2 of the same decision, Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations were invited to submit to the Executive Secretary, at least twelve months before the fifth meeting, their views on the possible elements of a programme of work. The Executive Secretary was also requested to prepare a synthesis of the submissions and develop a draft programme of work for consideration at the fifth meeting of the Parties.

2. Pursuant to the above decision, the Executive Secretary invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, through notification 2009-055 (SCBD/BS/UN/jh/67565) dated 26 May 2009, to submit views on possible elements of the programme of work. Subsequently, the Secretariat received submissions from the following Parties to the Protocol: Burundi, the European Community and its Member States, Liberia and Malaysia. Two organizations, the African Union Commission and the Global Industry Coalition, also made submissions. All the submissions received have been reproduced and made available as information document UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/5/INF/xx.

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3. The present note presents a synthesis of the views and information submitted by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations and a draft programme of work based on the submissions as well as relevant information contained in the first national reports and documents on public awareness, education and participation made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

4. Section II of the note summarizes the views submitted by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations regarding the possible elements of the programme of work, including its operational objectives, scope of activities and outputs and modalities of implementation. Section III reviews the experience and lessons learned from similar programmes of work under other international treaties and relevant processes. The final section IV presents conclusions and recommendations, including considerations that may need to be taken into account in the finalization and implementation of the programme of work. The proposed draft programme of work is presented in the annex.

II. SYNTHESIS OF THE VIEWS CONTAINED IN THE SUBMISSIONS MADE BY PARTIES, OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

5. In response to paragraph 2 of decision BS-IV/17, Parties, other Governments and organizations made a number of suggestions regarding the possible elements of the programme of work, including its operational objectives, scope of activities and outputs and the modalities of implementation. This section summarises the general comments that were submitted. The specific views with regard to the objectives and scope of activities and outputs and the modalities of implementation have been incorporated in the draft programme of work contained in the annex.

6. The following general comments were made:

(a) Parties and other stakeholders with a valuable basis for deciding on their own approach with regard to the effective and efficient mechanisms for public awareness, education and participation are crucial to addressing the complexity and controversy associated with modern biotechnology. The need is especially greater in societies with limited resources and capacity for sustained programs, including the necessary tools and facilities to engage key stakeholders.

(b) There are a number of common problems among Parties with respect to public awareness, education, and participation. A comprehensive program of work is necessary to identify and address these common problems in a concerted manner.

(c) A comprehensive program of work should facilitate the sharing of examples of national approaches to promoting public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs. This in turn will go a long way towards assisting Parties to put in place systems at the national level to implement their Protocol obligations.

(d) The programme of work should provide information and tools to enable Parties to make choices on how to meet their obligations to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs rather than dictating how they must proceed. It should provide a list of options, including those considered by Parties and other Governments as best practices.

(e) Parties are obligated to consult the public in decision-making, in accordance with their own laws and regulations. Thus, while best practices should be shared and options for further collaboration explored, the manner in which the public is informed and involved in decision-making should be determined by individual nations. In this regard, the programme of work should not endeavour to harmonize particular approaches to public participation in decision-making but rather encourage

sharing of information and experiences on the different approaches to assist Parties to develop or improve their own approaches.

(f) Public participation makes decisions more effective, meaningful and legitimate by integrating and weighing an expansive collection of values, assumptions, and interests in decisions. Insights from different stakeholders play a critical role in achieving a holistic understanding of GMOs, and how they may affect human and animal health, environment, eco-systems, and social and economic systems.

(g) In all public information, communication and participation activities, the best available information must be presented and debated publicly, openly, and transparently by scientists, in the media and in public participation events or forums. It also is necessary to make sure that the content provided to the public meets its needs and can be effectively accessed by them.

(h) The BCH should serve as one of the important mechanisms to inform and educate the public about LMOs.

7. With regard to the operational objectives, it was suggested that the programme of work should:

(a) Assist all Parties to reach a high level of public awareness and participation in a systematic and cost-effective manner, taking into account local practices and administrative systems;

(b) Identify good practice examples of public awareness, education and participation and analyse the specific advantages and disadvantages of these methods and tools in order to provide Parties and other stakeholders with a valuable basis for deciding on their own approaches.

III. EXAMPLES AND EXPERIENCES FROM OTHER MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL TREATIES AND PROCESSES

8. A number of multilateral environmental agreements have developed programmes of work or strategic plans to implement their provisions on public awareness, education and participation. These include: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). This section gives an overview of the nature and scope of those programmes of work and strategic plans and the relevant experiences with their development and implementation.

A. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

9. Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity requires Parties to promote and encourage understanding of the importance of, and the measures required for, the conservation of biological diversity and cooperate with other States and international organizations in developing educational and public awareness programmes. In 2002, the Conference of the Parties adopted, in its decision VI/19, a programme of work for a Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). The main elements of the CEPA programme are:

(a) Global networking on CEPA, which involves, *inter alia*, establishment of a global CEPA network an electronic portal to stimulate moderated electronic discussions on issues of interest and provide access to relevant projects, publications and other resources; creation of national and regional CEPA networks; and promotion of synergy between existing networks relevant to CEPA.

(b) Exchange of knowledge and expertise among CEPA professionals, including through: sharing available knowledge about tools and criteria for best practices, collecting and exchanging CEPA case-studies and providing access to copyright free graphics and materials to Parties for adaptation.

(c) Capacity-building for CEPA, *inter alia* through: creating and delivering training programmes (e.g. courses, help desks, coaching, manuals, check lists, exchange on application of methods; establishing a system for professional exchanges; promoting twinning programmes; and establishing partnerships with journalists and broadcasters.

B. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

10. Under Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Parties are required to promote and facilitate: (i) Education and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects; (ii) Public access to information; (iii) Public participation in addressing climate change and its effects; and (iv) Training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel. Parties are also required to cooperate in and promote: (i) the development and exchange of educational and public awareness materials; and (ii) the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national institutions and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field.

11. In 2002, the Parties adopted a five-year New Delhi work programme on Article 6 (decision 11/CP.8) which was amended in 2007 (Decision 9/CP.13). A review of the implementation of work programme prepared in 2007 provides a number of lessons learned which may be useful in informing the development and implementation of the programme of work on public awareness, education and participation on living modified organisms.¹ For example, it was recognised that:

(a) Establishment of a national climate change committee with a dedicated outreach unit or information centre is useful in addressing climate change issues effectively.

(b) Providing a legal framework for public awareness, access to information and participation is important.

(c) Sponsoring competitions and awards on climate change is an effective means of raising public awareness.

(d) Many Parties have shifted their objective from creating awareness of the problems to gaining and maintaining support for implementing solutions while attempting to change behaviour.

(e) The success of the New Delhi work programme lies in its flexible and country-driven approach, which recognizes that no single strategy for raising awareness or building capacity is appropriate for all countries.

(f) A lack of teaching materials and qualified teachers on climate change issues are major barriers to the implementation of educational programmes.

(g) To ensure continuity in building local capacities, some Parties have developed 'training-of-trainers' programmes aimed at creating a pool of trainers and experts. Some universities already undertake climate change research and related training.

¹ See document FCCC/SBI/2007/22 at: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbi/eng/22.pdf>

(h) The three main sources of information on the environment and climate change are television, newspapers and the Internet but there is increasing coverage of climate change in newspapers, and information campaigns are often carried out through the radio.

(i) Civil society and religious groups play an important role in raising awareness, advocating policies on climate change, conducting training, facilitating the participation of civil society groups and implementing projects.

(j) It is important to evaluate existing tools and identify baseline indicators to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of awareness and education activities, e.g. to determine the extent to which awareness has been raised among the target groups and the extent to which this has resulted in action.

(k) It is important for the awareness and education programmes to have defined time frames and milestones; specific references to the needs of target population groups; measurable indicators of level of implementation; concrete elements to facilitate regional cooperation; and adequate financial and technical resources.

(l) Regional cooperation can complement but not replace efforts at the national level, but promoting cooperation at the subregional and regional levels can help reduce operational costs, increase efficiency of resource use and improve access to technical assistance and experts.

B. Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

12. The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) adopted its first programme of actions for promoting communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) in 1999 (Resolution VII.9). After a review process, based on the National Reports from Parties, an updated five-year CEPA programme (2003-2008) was adopted in November 2002 and subsequently the third CEPA Programme (2009-2015) was adopted at 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties in November 2008 in Nairobi. The third CEPA programme aims at:

(a) Effectively using CEPA to promote the value of wetlands, including through: sustained national and subnational campaigns, programmes and projects; and integration of CEPA into relevant policies, plans and work programmes to implement the Convention.

(b) Establishing an enabling environment for the effective implementation of CEPA by putting in place mechanisms such as national CEPA frameworks and action plans, CEPA focal points, CEPA Task Forces and networks for exchange of information, expertise and resources.

(c) Using the CEPA framework and its tools to motivate and enable new actors to be actively involved in the implementation of the Convention, including through: training and capacity-building of individuals and key groups to effectively participate and developing mechanisms to ensure multi-stakeholder participation.

D. Aarhus Convention

13. The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) requires its Parties to guarantee the rights of public access to information, public participation in environmental decision-making and public access to justice on environmental matters. In 2005, the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted an amendment to the Convention (the Almaty Amendment) which incorporates a new Article on public participation in decision-making on deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of

genetically modified organisms. Under the new article, each Party is required to lay down, in its regulatory framework, arrangements for early and effective information and public participation for decisions on whether to permit the deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of genetically modified organisms to give the public an adequate opportunity to express an opinion on such proposed decisions. Those arrangements should be complementary and mutually supportive to the provisions of their national biosafety frameworks and consistent with the objectives of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

14. Prior to the adoption of the Almaty amendment, the Parties in October 2002 adopted non-binding Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with Respect to Genetically Modified Organisms. They are aimed at: (i) providing guidance to Parties on the development of national legal frameworks and on practices with respect to access to information, public participation and access to justice concerning genetically modified organisms; (ii) Encouraging the development of a common approach to access to information, public participation and access to justice with respect to genetically modified organisms; (iii) Fostering good practices for public participation in decision-making; and (iv) Promoting and facilitate public awareness, education and participation in decision-making on activities involving genetically modified organisms.² The guidelines provide examples of good practice with respect to: public notice and access to information on genetically modified organisms, processes for public participation and decision-making, collection and dissemination of information on genetically modified organisms by the public authorities and provision for access to justice with respect to genetically modified organisms.

15. In their first national implementation reports, a number of Parties to the convention highlighted the need to:

- (a) Establish adequate legislative, regulatory or administrative frameworks and ;
- (b) Develop detailed procedures and guidelines to translated the legal, regulatory and administrative requirements into actual practice;
- (c) Implement the provisions of the Convention effectively in transboundary contexts;
- (d) Ensure that public authorities take responsibility for the quality and level of public participation;
- (e) Provide for appropriate levels of discussion and feedback in the course of public participation, including where consultation is organized through electronic means;
- (f) Ensure that members of the public are afforded appropriate opportunities to participate effectively in decision-making processes, inter alia by establishing sufficiently broad standing criteria in the context of appeals procedures;
- (g) Remove or reduce practical barriers to access to justice, such as financial barriers, access to legal services and lack of awareness among the judiciary.

² The Aarhus Convention GMO guidelines are available at:
http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/old_site/development/devdocuments/Aarhusguidelines.pdf

IV. CONCLUSION AND ELEMENTS OF A POSSIBLE DECISION

16. Effective and efficient mechanisms for public awareness, education and participation are crucial to addressing the complexity and controversy associated with the safety of modern biotechnology. A number of Parties currently face challenges in fully implementing Article 23 of the Protocol. A global programme of work will go a long way towards assisting those Parties to put in place national systems and programmes to promote public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms.

17. The present note has summarized the views submitted by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations regarding the possible elements of the programme of work and the experience and lessons learned from similar programmes of work under other international treaties and relevant processes as summarised in this note provide a good background material which Parties are invited to use to review and finalise the proposed draft programme of work contained in the annex.

18. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol may wish to:

(a) Adopt the programme of work on programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms as contained in the annex.

(b) Invite Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to implement the programme of work and share their experiences and lessons learned through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

(c) Undertake an intermediate review of progress of the programme of work at its seventh meeting and a comprehensive assessment and review of its effectiveness and impact at the ninth meeting.

(d) Request the Global Environment Facility to provide financial resources to eligible Parties to facilitate the implementation of the programme of work.

(e) Invite bilateral and multilateral agencies and relevant organisations to provide additional support to Parties to strengthen their capacities to implement the programme of work.

*Annex***DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION CONCERNING THE SAFE TRANSFER, HANDLING AND USE OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS****I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Article 23 of the Protocol requires Parties, on their own and in cooperation with other States and international bodies, to promote and facilitate public awareness and education, including access to information, regarding the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs). It also requires Parties to consult the public in the decision-making process, to make public the final decision taken and to inform public about the means of access to the Biosafety Clearing-House.

2. In its decision BS-IV/17, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, taking into account the initial experience of Parties described their first national reports, underscored the need for a cohesive and focused approach to public awareness, education and participation. In this regard, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol agreed to develop a programme of work on public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.

3. This programme of work draws from the submissions that were made by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations as well as relevant information contained in the first national reports and documents on public awareness, education and participation available in the Biosafety Clearing-House.

4. Public awareness, education and participation are crucial to the effective implementation of the Protocol, especially in view of the complexity and controversy associated with modern biotechnology. However, many Parties, especially developing country Parties and Parties economies in transition, face a number of challenges with respect to promoting public awareness, education, and participation. A clear, focused and outcome-oriented programme of work would facilitate the process of identifying and addressing the common needs and challenges in a concerted manner. It would also facilitate the identification and exchange of examples of good practice and experiences with the use of different methods and tools.

II. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

5. The ultimate goal of the proposed programme of work is to contribute to greater cooperation and co-ordination, exchange of information and experiences and improvement of the capacities of Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to effectively promote public awareness and education, including access to information to ensure the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.

6. The work programme aims to:

(a) Contribute to raising the profile and visibility of the Protocol at national, regional and global levels.

(b) Mobilize support for the implementation of the Protocol through promoting public awareness, education and participation.

(c) Catalyse collaboration and partnerships between Parties and key stakeholders to promote broad public awareness, education and participation.

(d) Strengthen the capacities of Parties and key partners to effectively promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation.

(e) Establish strong and effective mechanisms to facilitate communication and exchange of biosafety information among different stakeholders.

7. The programme of work will contribute to the implementation of the [draft] Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2011-2011), in particular the operational objectives to raise the profile of the Protocol by increasing its public awareness and visibility of the Protocol. The strategic plan aims, *inter alia*, to achieve the following outcomes ensure that by 2010:

(a) All Parties would have designed and implemented education and communication strategies resulting increased awareness of biosafety issues and the safe use and handling of living modified organisms by the general public, in particular farmers;

(b) Biosafety issues and the Protocol relevant activities would be regularly covered by local as well as international media; and

(c) Biosafety would have been introduced in relevant curricular of academic or training institutions.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

8. The implementation of the programme of work will be guided by the following operational principles and approaches:

(a) Demand-driven approaches, responsive to the needs and priorities of Parties.

(b) Collaborative and synergetic approaches, including cooperation with relevant MEAs.

(c) Non-prescriptive, only providing guidance to enable Parties to make choices on how to meet their obligations to promote public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs.

(d) Pragmatic approaches, commensurate with the available resources.

(e) Complementarity (building upon and adding value) to activities of other MEAs.

(f) Cost-effectiveness through strategic partnerships and collaborative activities.

(g) Flexible and adaptive country-driven approaches, recognizing that no single approach or strategy is appropriate for all countries.

IV. PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

9. This programme of work contains the following elements:

- (a) Element 1: Capacity-building to promote public awareness, education and participation
- (b) Element 2: Public awareness and education
- (c) Element 3: Public access to information and sharing of experiences
- (d) Element 4: Mechanisms for public participation

10. The operational objectives, activities and expected outcomes for each of the above elements are described in the appendix below. The timeframes and the actors responsible for implementing the different activities are also outlined in the appendix.

V. MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

11. The activities proposed above in will be carried out by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations with the support of the Secretariat. The activities will be implemented, as appropriate, at national, regional and global levels. The modalities and the specific actors responsible for the different activities are outlined in the appendix.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

12. The progress, effectiveness and impact of the work programme will be monitored and evaluated using the time frames, milestones and indicators of success highlighted in the matrix contained in the appendix.

APPENDIX

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION CONCERNING THE SAFE TRANSFER, HANDLING AND USE OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Programme Element 1: Capacity-building for the promotion of public awareness, education and participation				
Goal				
To strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of Parties to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.				
<i>Operational objectives</i>	<i>Suggested activities</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Actors</i>
1.1 To put in place enabling frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Assess capacity-building needs and priorities of Parties with respect to public awareness, education and participation and identify measures to meet those needs. (b) Take stock of existing programmes and mechanisms relevant to public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms. (c) Establish or strengthen legal and policy frameworks to catalyse and facilitate public awareness and access to information. (d) Prepare and implement biosafety outreach strategies and communication plans. (e) Establish and/or strengthen electronic communication networks for stakeholders involved in public awareness and education concerning living modified organisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Improved understanding of the country needs and measures to address those needs. (b) Studies and/or surveys carried out to identify the needs of Parties with respect to public awareness, education and participation. (c) Parties and other relevant stakeholders are implementing biosafety outreach strategies/communication plans. 		
1.2 To develop the institutional mechanisms to promote and facilitate public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Designate focal points responsible for promoting and overseeing public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms. (b) Establish biosafety outreach units and information centres at the national level. (c) Establish advisory committees on public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms. 			

<i>Operational objectives</i>	<i>Suggested activities</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Actors</i>
	(d) Promote collaboration and synergies with relevant international agreements and processes involved in public awareness, education and participation, including the Aarhus Convention.			
1.3 To develop the professional capacity of personnel involved in promoting public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.	<p>(a) Identify existing experts on biosafety education and communication and add them to the roster of experts</p> <p>(b) Develop and deliver training programmes for biosafety educators and communicators at global, regional and national levels.</p> <p>(c) Establish a system to foster the development and exchange of biosafety training and guidance materials including toolkits, training aids and templates for action plans in order to facilitate the work of relevant officials.</p> <p>(d) Promote professional exchanges, twinning programmes and fellowships for staff responsible for promoting public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms.</p> <p>(e) Develop ‘training-of-trainers’ programmes aimed at creating a pool of trainers and experts on public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms.</p>	<p>(a) Experts in biosafety education and communication identified and added to roster of biosafety experts in the Biosafety Clearing-House.</p> <p>(b) Increased number of biosafety educators and/or communicators at various levels.</p> <p>(c) support tools (including guidelines, best practice handbooks, etc) developed and made widely available.</p> <p>(d) Biosafety educators and communicators receiving ongoing profession</p> <p>(e) Guidance materials and other national support and guidance.</p>		
1.4 To strengthen the use of media to promote public awareness, education and participation concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.	<p>(a) Develop national media strategies and plans to foster effective use different channels (including radio, television, print media, newswire, social media and others), as appropriate, to raise public awareness.</p> <p>(b) Maintain media contact, including through press-related activities and dissemination of media outreach materials.</p> <p>(c) Organise regional media training workshops on biosafety.</p>	<p>(a) Improved media coverage of biosafety issues.</p> <p>(b) Improved understanding and articulation of biosafety issues by the media.</p> <p>(c) The media is playing a key role in raising public awareness of issues and fostering active public participation.</p>		

Programme Element 2: Public awareness and education				
Goal: To promote broad public awareness and education of issues concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms				
<i>Operational objectives</i>	<i>Suggested activities</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Actors</i>
2.1 To promote public awareness concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Conduct awareness baseline surveys to ascertain the level of awareness and evaluate peoples' perception of the issues regarding LMOs. (b) Develop national public awareness plans and programmes, taking into account the survey results. (c) Foster cooperation and coordination of public awareness and education activities by governments civil society and industry. (d) Produce and disseminate biosafety awareness materials in easy-to-understand language tailored to specific target audiences. (e) Publish and disseminate newsletters on biosafety. (f) Provide access to copyright free graphics and materials which Parties can adapt and use in the public awareness and education activities. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (g) Establish systems to facilitate timely announcement in local newspapers, town halls/public notice boards, national websites and other means, of field trial and commercials releases of LMOs. (h) Organise public awareness seminars and workshops on biosafety for targeted audiences. (i) Encourage the use of radio to promote awareness of biosafety, especially among farmers and rural communities. (j) Translate the Protocol and biosafety awareness materials into local languages. 			
2.2 To promote awareness and education concerning living modified organisms through formal education institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Integrate biosafety into secondary and post-secondary school curricular. (b) Encourage universities to develop and offer academic programmes, including continuing education courses, in biosafety. (c) Develop educational packages on biosafety for schools to promote awareness and education of young people on biosafety issues. (d) Develop e-learning modules on biosafety. (e) Ensure that libraries of educational institutions offer a wide range of relevant educational materials on biosafety. (f) Sponsor competitions and awards, such as "Biosafety Essay Competitions" and other similar contests for school children, to raise awareness of biosafety issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Biosafety issues integrated into school curricular. (b) A number of schools have academic programmes/courses on biosafety. (c) Educational packages on biosafety made available to schools. (d) E-learning modules on biosafety developed and deployed (e) Libraries and educational institutions offer a wide range of relevant educational materials on biosafety. 		

Programme Element 3. Public access to information and sharing of experiences

Goal: To improve public access to information concerning the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms

<i>Operational objectives</i>	<i>Suggested activities</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Actors</i>
3.1 To promote wider public access to biosafety information through the Biosafety Clearing-House and national websites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Carry out assessments to determine the information needs of different stakeholder groups/ target audiences. (b) Leverage the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) as the primary means of accessing and disseminating information on biosafety. (c) Review the information available through the BCH and assess its level of accessibility to the public/non-experts and determine whether it meets the public expectations. (d) Inform the public about the available the means of access to information in the BCH, including the national nodes and offline mechanisms. (e) Synchronize and/or link the BCH national nodes with other relevant clearing-houses such as the Aarhus Convention clearing-house. (f) Establish and/or improve national websites to facilitate broader and timely access to biosafety information by different stakeholders. (g) Set up regional or sub-regional biosafety information centers to facilitate the timely dissemination of biosafety information. (h) Inform the public of their right to access information under the Protocol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Biosafety information is easily accessible by the public through the BCH (b) The number of tools to facilitate access to information and relevant information for all stakeholders is increased. (c) Access to information related to biosafety in an appropriate timeframe and quality of/user-friendly information submitted to and retrieved from the BCH is improved. (d) The public has a few relevant mechanisms to access more information on biosafety issues 		

<i>Operational objectives</i>	<i>Suggested activities</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Actors</i>
<p>3.2 To facilitate exchange of experiences and lessons learned with regard to public awareness, education and participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Carry out a study to document good practices and lessons learned in promoting public access to information concerning LMOs in different countries. (b) Use the BCH to exchange case studies on good practices and lessons learned in promoting public awareness, education and participation concerning LMOs. (c) Share experiences with the use of different communication tools (e.g. printed material, radio and television programmes, newspapers and cultural performances for community outreach). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The public is aware of, and is regularly using the BCH, its national nodes and other relevant information mechanisms. (b) Increased number of simple biosafety information materials available to public. (c) Information materials are accessible in many languages. (d) All stakeholders have access to relevant online and offline biosafety information. (e) Parties and other stakeholders have access to updated information. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (d) Organize regional and subregional forums to facilitate share experiences with promoting public awareness, education and participation concerning living modified organisms. (e) Establish regional and subregional networks to foster virtual discussions and exchange information and lessons learned on national approaches to public participation in decision-making concerning LMOs. (f) Establish a system to facilitate the development and exchange of educational and public awareness materials. (g) Establish a system to facilitate the development and exchange of educational and public awareness materials. 			

Programme Element 4. Mechanisms for public participation				
Goal: To promote public participation in decision-making regarding living modified organisms				
<i>Operational objectives</i>	<i>Suggested activities</i>	<i>Expected Outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Actors</i>
4.1 To establish mechanisms and procedures to consult and involve the public in the decision-making process regarding LMOs and to make the results of such decisions available to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Establish or strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to facilitate public participation in decision-making regarding living modified organisms. (b) Put in place mechanisms to notify the public, in a timely manner, about planned public consultations and opportunities to participate in decision-making regarding new LMO applications (e.g. announcements on national websites and/or local newspapers). (c) Establish platforms (e.g. public hearings, e-forums, etc) to facilitate public comments, feedback and appeal regarding applications for field trials and commercial releases of living modified organisms. (d) Establish or strengthen mechanisms/bodies to monitor and foster regular, transparent and objective public consultation and participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The public is well informed about the right to participate in decision-making processes regarding LMOs. (b) Timely and informed participation of the public in decision-making processes. (c) Safeguards established to ensure regular, transparent and objective public consultation/ participation. 		
4.2 To promote sharing of experiences, resource materials and information on public participation in decision-making regarding living modified organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Identify, document and exchange through the BCH information on good practices and lessons learned in promoting public participation in decision-making regarding living modified organisms. (b) Prepare and disseminate a good practice handbook in public participation to serve as a practical resource for public officials responsible for organizing public participation processes. (c) Promote synergies in the application of the Almaty Amendment to the Aarhus Convention and the Lucca Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with Respect to Genetically Modified Organisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Stakeholders are participation in the development of capacity-building initiatives. (b) Capacity-building initiatives have been consistently implemented with consent of the public. (c) Most stakeholders involved in capacity-building initiatives have completed training efforts in public participation. (d) Best practices and lessons learned of public participation are made available 		
