



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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LIAISON GROUP ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR BIOSAFETY

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Agenda item 3.4 of the provisional agenda *

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND POSSIBLE REVISION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL

1. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision BS-I/5 on capacity-building, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted an Action Plan for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and agreed to undertake a comprehensive review and possible revision of the Action Plan at its third meeting.

2. In order to facilitate this process, it may be necessary for the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to consider and adopt at its second meeting a framework for the review including details regarding: the scope of the review, the process to be followed, the background information to facilitate the review and the anticipated outcomes of the process.

3. The present note is intended to facilitate discussion and input from the Liaison Group on the draft terms of reference for the review, to enable the Executive Secretary to prepare the final draft to be forwarded to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties of the Protocol for its consideration.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE REVIEW

4. The Action Plan was adopted at the time when the Protocol had just entered into force and when few countries had assessed and submitted to the Biosafety Clearing-House their capacity-building needs and priorities. Since the preparation of the Action Plan, a number of developments have taken place, including the following:

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(a) Countries, especially developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition have gained more experience in dealing with biosafety issues and understanding of their obligations under the Biosafety Protocol and are in a better position to articulate their specific capacity needs and the actions needed to address them.

(b) A number of countries have assessed and communicated to the Biosafety Clearing-House information regarding their capacity-building needs and priorities, which information was not available at the time the current Action Plan was developed.

(c) A number of biosafety capacity-building projects, including the GEF-funded projects and various bilateral programmes have been initiated. As a result, some of the priority elements identified in the Action Plan have probably been addressed and new more urgent priorities have emerged.

(d) Operational experience has been gained and lessons learned in implementing the Action Plan, which might help to inform and improve its future implementation.

5. In light of these and other developments, it is important to review and if necessary to revise the Action Plan to reflect the prevailing circumstances, to respond to the unmet needs and priorities more effectively and to take advantage of the emerging experience and lessons learned.

3. POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE LIAISON GROUP

6. The Liaison Group is invited to consider the draft terms of reference for the review and provide comments and advice for their improvement to enable the Executive Secretary to prepare the final draft to be forwarded for consideration the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties of the Protocol at its second meeting.

ANNEX

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND POSSIBLE REVISION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL

A: Objectives and Scope of the Review

1. The purpose of the review is to examine the way and the extent to which the Action Plan has been implemented, analyze the gaps and lessons learned in its implementation and consider the need for updating and streamlining it, if necessary. The ultimate objective is to ensure that the Action Plan is current, relevant and provides a coherent and effective framework for biosafety capacity-building efforts consistent with the needs and priorities of Parties and other Governments.
2. The review will include the following components:
 - (a) Assessing the progress and effectiveness of the measures taken to implement the Action Plan including what worked well, the best practices identified, and the lessons learned.
 - (b) Identification of the gaps in the implementation of the Action Plan and the unmet and emerging needs requiring urgent intervention.
 - (c) Re-examination of the scope, appropriateness and significance of the different components of the Action Plan in relation to the needs and priorities of countries, taking into account the achievements made so far, experience gained and lessons learned.
 - (d) Identification of measures to improve the delivery of capacity-building initiatives and to enhance their effectiveness in responding to the needs and priorities of countries.

B: Process of Collecting Information to Facilitate the Review

3. The review will be undertaken through self-assessments and submissions by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to the Secretariat regarding their initiatives to implement the Action Plan, including the achievements made, the constraints and limitations encountered as well as the unmet needs and gaps. Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations will be invited to indicate their desired changes to the Action Plan and to provide other relevant information and recommendations that would help to enhance its implementation.
4. The Executive Secretary will prepare and disseminate a short questionnaire to assist Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations in submitting information that would facilitate the review and possible revision of the Action Plan. Examples of possible questions which respondents may use as a basis for providing their submissions include the following:
 - (a) What elements of the Action Plan have been most successfully implemented in your country/region? What specific activities have been undertaken and what have been the main achievements? What factors have contributed to that success?
 - (b) What have been the main gaps and weaknesses in the implementation of the Action Plan? What factors/ constraints have led to this?
 - (c) In your view, what elements of the Action Plan should be removed or modified and why?

(d) What new elements and actions should be added to the Action Plan?

5. On the basis of the submissions by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, the Executive Secretary will prepare a synthesis report which will provide the background material for the review by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The report will include, *inter alia*, the following components:

(a) Overview of the progress made in implementing the Action Plan, including the extent of coverage of its different elements, the major remaining gaps and constraints

(b) A summary of the prevalent unmet and emerging needs requiring urgent action.

(c) A summary of the emerging experience, lessons learned and existing opportunities that could be taken into account while reviewing the Action Plan.

(d) A synthesis of the suggestions by Parties, Governments and relevant organizations on the desired changes and improvements to the Action Plan including a prioritized list of actions that could be taken.

(e) An analysis of possible measures to improve the delivery of capacity-building initiatives and to enhance their effectiveness in responding to the needs and priorities of countries.

C: Expected Outcomes of the Review

6. It is expected that the review process will result in a more coherent, pragmatic and effective Action Plan that will help to catalyze action at different levels and set the direction for future biosafety capacity-building efforts. It is also hoped that a number of strategic recommendations will be made to improve the scope and delivery of biosafety capacity-building initiatives to ensure that they are responsive to priority needs of the countries.

7. It is further anticipated that the review process will help to identify critical issues requiring urgent attention, key areas that need to be strengthened and changes needed to improve the capacity-building efforts for the effective implementation of the Protocol.
