CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
   ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE
   MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA
   PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY
Fourth meeting
Bonn, 12-16 May 2008
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

REPORT OF THE 2007 SURVEY OF BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE USERS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   In its decision BS-I/3, 1/ the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP) decided to review the implementation of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) at its second meeting and requested the Executive Secretary to submit a progress report to that meeting. This was done with a view to developing a longer-term programme of work for the BCH**.**

2.   Accordingly, at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Executive Secretary circulated the results from an internal review of the BCH. 2/ The internal review was based on a survey of BCH users undertaken by the Secretariat during August and September 2004.

3.   As a result, the Parties to the Protocol adopted a multi-year programme of work which is comprised of 5 programme elements and is contained in the annex to decision BS-II/2. 3/ The objective of the 5th programme element, 'Review of activities', is to "Ensure that the programme of work is achieving the goals of the Biosafety Clearing-House effectively". The possible activities set out in the multi-year programme of work are: a) "Continue to review the operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House, including through the use of targeted follow-up surveys and usability studies" and b) "Conduct a second review of the Biosafety Clearing-House, and compare improvements against existing baseline data". The timeframe set for these activities was for consideration at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

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4.   At its third meeting, 4/ the Parties to the protocol requested the Executive Secretary to undertake a new survey of BCH users to compare improvements against existing baseline data, and to submit this information for consideration by the Parties at their fourth meeting as part of the review of the implementation of the Protocol envisaged in the medium-term programme of work.

5.   A BCH survey was accordingly launched on 1 December 2007 and made available from the home page of the BCH. A Notification was sent by the Executive Secretary inviting all National Focal Points (NFPs) for both the Cartagena Protocol and the BCH to participate in the survey. An analogous message was also sent by email to over 1400 registered BCH account-holders who are not NFPs. By 31 January 2008, 82 questionnaires had been completed and submitted.

6.   What follows in this document is a detailed breakdown of the results as well as a comparison of improvements against the previous existing baseline data (where available). The results are collated herein for consideration during the review of the BCH at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The note by the Executive Secretary on operation and activities of the Biosafety Clearing-House' 5/ (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/3) also summarizes the main trends the survey results reveal.

II.   RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

7.   Note that when comparable data are available in the results of the 2004 questionnaire, improvements against that baseline data are provided in parentheses.

Identification of the respondents

8.   The questionnaire was intended for the following categories of BCH users: general users who access the BCH to find biosafety information (sections I and II), BCH account-holders who create and manage records through the BCH's Management Centre (section III) and information technology (IT) experts (section IV).

Question 0: at the beginning of the survey, participants were asked to identify themselves in accordance with one of the above user categories. This question was answered by all 82 respondents as follows:

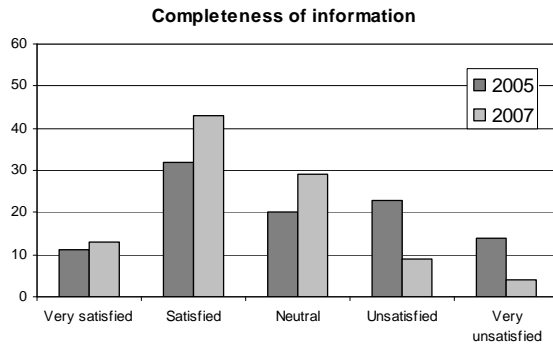| Q0:	%
I am a general user	63%
I use non-Internet options (e.g. offline version of the BCH available on CD-ROM)	4%
I manage and create records through the BCH Management Centre	41%
I am an IT expert involved in the development of national BCH	16%

4/   Convened in Curitiba, Brazil, March 2006.
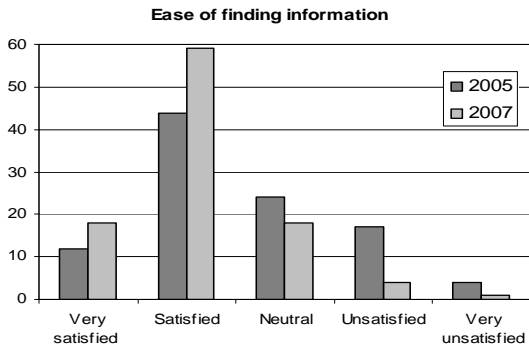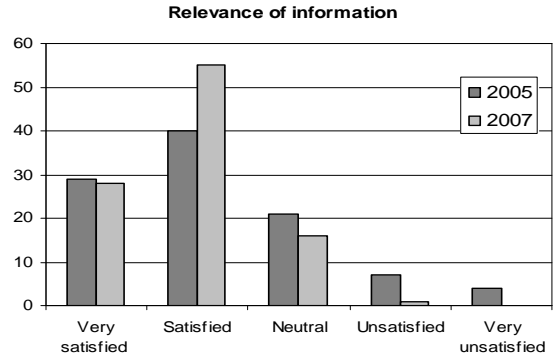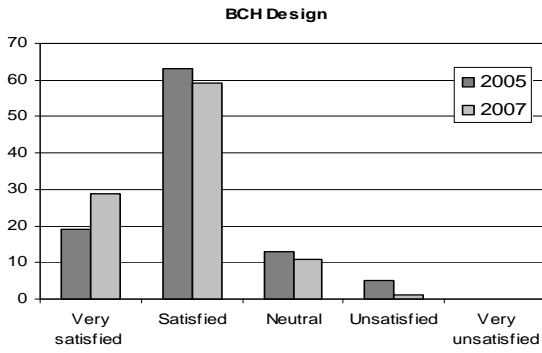5/   Available at http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/bs/mop-04/official/mop-04-03-en.pdf

Finding information

9.   This section targeted all general users who access the BCH to find biosafety.

Question 1 (answered by all 82 respondents): "In general, how satisfied are you when using the *Central Portal of the BCH* to find information?" and a list of elements was supplied for consideration. The answer options offered were: *Very Satisfied* (VS), *Satisfied* (S), *Neutral* (N), *Unsatisfied* (U), *Very Unsatisfied* (VU), *Not applicable/ Do not know* (NA).

Q1	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Overall design	29% (+10%)	59% (-4%)	11% (-2%)	1% (-4%)	0% (0%)	0%
First use experience	18% (+5%)	49% (+1%)	20% (-5%)	4% (-10%)	2% (+2%)	7%
General user-friendliness of the BCH	18%	54%	27%	0%	1%	0%
Organization of information and navigation tools in the homepage	20%	63%	15%	1%	1%	0%
Relevance of information	28% (-1%)	55% (+15%)	16% (-5%)	1% (-6%)	0% (-4%)	0%
Reliability of site performance	22%	57%	15%	4%	0%	2%
Support and assistance provided by the Secretariat	23%	50%	12%	6%	0%	9%
Completeness and quality of information	13% (+2%)	43% (+9%)	29% (+9%)	9% (-14%)	4% (-10%)	2%
Usefulness of the National Reports Analyzer in the 'Reporting' subsection	16%	40%	24%	0%	1%	18%
Ease of finding information through the search interfaces	18% (+6%)	59% (+13%)	18% (-6%)	4% (-13%)	1% (-3%)	0%
Usefulness of the recently introduced "Country group" feature	24%	41%	23%	0%	0%	11%
Usefulness of the multiple choice feature	30%	49%	15%	0%	0%	6%
Organization of search results	20% (+15%)	60% (+6%)	17% (-8%)	2% (-3%)	0% (-1%)	1%
Completeness of information in the records	13%	44%	24%	15%	4%	0%
Overall quality of information in the records	12%	48%	24%	9%	6%	1%
Usefulness and organization of the Biosafety Information Resource Centre (BIRC) (http://bch.cbd.int/database/resources/)	21%	45%	23%	5%	0%	6%
Usefulness and organization of the LMO-UIds Registry (http://bch.cbd.int/database/organisms /uniqueidentifiers/)	26%	45%	21%	2%	0%	6%
Usefulness and organization of the Organisms Registry (http://bch.cbd.int/database/organisms/ organismslist.shtml)	23%	51%	18%	1%	0%	6%
Usefulness and organization of the Gene Registry (http://bch.cbd.int/database/organisms /genes/)	22%	49%	20%	1%	0%	9%
Overall helpfulness of the 'Resources' section	21%	55%	17%	1%	0%	6%
Overall quality of the help section	17%	49%	18%	2%	0%	13%
Usefulness of the Glossary (http://bch.cbd.int/resources/glossary.shtml)	27%	40%	21%	1%	0%	11%
Organization of the Site Map (http://bch.cbd.int/resources/sitemap.shtml)	24%	40%	18%	1%	0%	16%
Usefulness of the FAQ subsection (http://bch.cbd.int/help/faq.shtml)	18%	48%	18%	0%	0%	16%
Usefulness of the BCH Training Modules (http://bch.cbd.int/help/trainingModules/)	38%	43%	7%	4%	0%	9%
Usefulness of the BCH Training Site (https://bchtraining.cbd.int/member/training-signin.aspx?returnurl=%2fdefault.shtml)	38%	44%	5%	2%	0%	11%
Average	*22%*	*49%*	*18%*	*3%*	*1%*	*6%*

BCH Design

Relevance of information

Ease of finding information

Completeness of information

Question 2 (answered by 3 respondents) asked users who had reported utilizing non-Internet options (e.g. the offline version of the BCH available on CD-ROM) about their level of satisfaction with this service. The answer options were: *Very Satisfied* (VS), *Satisfied* (S), *Neutral* (N), *Unsatisfied* (U), *Very Unsatisfied* (VU), *Not applicable/ Do not know* (NA).

Q2	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Usefulness of the non-Internet options	33%	33%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Support and assistance provided by the Secretariat on non-Internet options	33%	33%	0%	0%	0%	33%

User information

10.   This section targeted all general users who access the BCH to find biosafety information. It was answered by 82 respondents.

Question 3: "For what purposes do you usually use the BCH?" Respondents were requested to indicate all answers that apply.

Q3	%	
To access scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms	85%	(+11%)
To assist your Government or institution to fulfill obligations under the Protocol	63%	(+21%)
To find out which LMOs have been released in a particular area	65%	(+13%)
To learn about available capacity-building activities	43%	(-5%)
To access the roster of experts	33%	(+5%)
As a tool for academic research	30%	(+1%)
As a general resource for a broad range of biosafety information (including other relevant websites, organizations, bibliographic records, etc.)	59%	(-6%)
To look for updates to earlier information	50%	(-1%)
Professional development	41%	(+9%)
To find a link to something else	24%	(-4%)
Other (please specify): ...	7%	(-5%)

Question 4: "What types of information available through the BCH are you most interested in using?" Respondents were requested to indicate all answers that apply.

Q4	%	
National contact information (including National Focal Points, Competent National Authorities, etc.)	63%	(-4%)
Laws and regulations	79%	(+58%)
Decisions and declarations	74%	(-7%)
Risk assessments	72%	(-4%)
Living modified organisms (including the LMO registry)	66%	(-4%)
Capacity-building activities	48%	(-15%)
Roster of biosafety experts	41%	(-9%)
Biosafety news items	46%	(+14%)
Biosafety Information Resource Centre	50%	
Directory of Organisations involved in Biosafety Activities	37%	
Other (please specify): ...	2%	

Question 5: "Which of the following factors affect your ability to access information through the BCH?" Respondents were requested to indicate all answers that apply.

Q5	%
None – I can easily access information through the BCH.	78%
Access to computer with internet connection	11%
Cost of Internet access	9%
Quality of Internet access	15%
Lack of training	7%

Question 6: "The UNEP-GEF BCH project and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity run periodical training workshops for use of the BCH. Please indicate if you have participated in one of these workshops, and any suggestions for improvements".

Q6.	%
Yes, I have attended a BCH training workshop run by the CBD Secretariat.	29%
Yes, I have attended a BCH training workshop, but it was run by another organisation	7%
I have provided training on the BCH to others.	21%
No, I have not attended a BCH training workshop, but I would like to in future.	29%
No, I have not attended a BCH training workshop and I do not intend to.	13%

Question 7: "Which Web browsers do you use?" Respondents were requested to indicate all answers that apply.

Q7	%
Internet Explorer	74%
Firefox or Netscape (Mozilla)	20%
Safari	2%
Opera	1%
Other (please specify): …	2%

Question 8: "What is your access speed to the Internet?"

Q8	%	
56 kbps or less	4%	(-19%)
Cable / DSL	23%	(+9%)
ISDN	2%	(-2%)
LAN (office, high speed)	54%	(0%)
I have no Internet connection	0%	(-1%)
I don't know	13%	
Other (please specify): …	4%	(+1%)

Question 9 "What is your occupation / profession?" Participants were requested to indicate all answers that apply.

Q9	%
Government Civil Servant	48%
BCH National Focal Point	27%
BCH National Authorised User	12%
Biosafety regulator	11%
Program Manager	10%
Clerical/Secretarial officer	2%
IT Professional	11%
Capacity-building organization	4%
Member of Inter-governmental organization	2%
Member of non-governmental organization	1%
Industry representative	9%
Academic researcher	18%
Student	5%
Other (please specify): …	12%

Question 10: "How experienced would you say you are as an Internet user?"

Q10	%
Expert	23%
Good	50%
Novice	27%

Question 11 "How long is it since you last used the BCH website?"

Q11	%
Under 1 month	72%
1 to 6 months	18%
6 months to 1 year	5%
1 to 3 years	5%
I do not use the BCH website	0%

Question 12: "How often do you usually access the BCH website?"

Q12	%
Once a week or more often	34%
2 to 3 times a month	34%
About once a month	16%
Every 2-3 months	11%
A few times a year	4%
Once a year or less often	0%
I do not use the BCH website	1%

Creating and managing information

11.   This section targeted only BCH account-holders who create and manage records through the "Registering Information" section. It was answered by 34 respondents.

Question 13: "Please indicate what type of BCH account you have"

Q13	%
National Focal Point	65%
National Authorized User	15%
Capacity-Building Organization	6%
Biosafety Expert	6%
General User	9%

Question 14: "Please comment on your experiences with the following elements when using the "Registering Information". A list of elements was supplied for consideration. The answer options offered were: *Very Satisfied* (VS), *Satisfied* (S), *Neutral* (N), *Unsatisfied* (U), *Very Unsatisfied* (VU), *Not applicable/ Do not know* (NA).

Q14	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Overall design ("look and feel")	24% (-1%)	71% (+15%)	6% (-3%)	0% (-6%)	0% (-3%)	0%
First use experience	9% (-14%)	53% (+16%)	38% (+5%)	0% (-3%)	0% (-3%)	0%
Ease of logging on	32%	56%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Ease of registering new records	15% (-16%)	62% (+14%)	18% (+11%)	3% (-4%)	0% (-7%)	3%
Ease of updating/editing existing records	18% (-10%)	56% (+8%)	18% (+8%)	3% (-4%)	0% (-7%)	6%
Ease of validating records	21% (-18%)	56% (+21%)	18% (-5%)	0% (0%)	0% (-4%)	6%
Support and assistance provided by the Secretariat	26% (-28%)	47% (+18%)	12% (-4%)	6% (+2%)	0% (-4%)	9%
Average	*21%*	*57%*	*17%*	*2%*	*0%*	*3%*

Question 15: "Please comment on your experiences with the Common Formats and Controlled Vocabularies when registering information in the BCH". A list of elements was supplied for consideration. The answer options were: *Very Satisfied* (VS), *Satisfied* (S), *Neutral* (N), *Unsatisfied* (U), *Very Unsatisfied* (VU), *Not applicable/ Do not know* (NA).

Q15	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Level of detail in the Common Formats	18%	44%	26%	0%	3%	9%
Flexibility of Common Formats in terms of categories of information	15%	44%	26%	3%	3%	9%
Helpfulness of instructions for completing the Common Formats	21%	47%	21%	3%	0%	9%
Completeness of Controlled Vocabulary	9%	41%	32%	3%	3%	12%
Average	*15%*	*44%*	*26%*	*2%*	*2%*	*10%*

Question 16: "Please rate the Common Formats below individually". The answer options were: *Very Satisfied* (VS), *Satisfied* (S), *Neutral* (N), *Unsatisfied* (U), *Very Unsatisfied* (VU), *Not applicable/ Do not know* (NA).

Q16	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Contact Details Reference	24%	56%	9%	0%	0%	12%
Organism (Non-modified)	15%	29%	21%	3%	0%	32%
Inserted Gene	15%	26%	26%	6%	0%	26%
National Focal Point	38%	44%	9%	0%	0%	9%
Competent National Authority	38%	44%	9%	0%	0%	9%
National Database or Website	32%	44%	9%	3%	0%	12%
National Law, Regulation or Guideline	32%	44%	9%	3%	0%	12%
Bilateral, Regional or International Agreement or Arrangement	24%	29%	18%	3%	0%	26%
Decision on LMO under Advance Informed Agreement	24%	32%	12%	9%	0%	24%
Decision on LMO FFP under Article 11	21%	38%	12%	9%	0%	21%
Other Decision, Declaration or Notification	18%	38%	12%	6%	0%	26%
Risk Assessment	15%	41%	15%	15%	3%	12%
LMO – Unique Identification	21%	38%	18%	0%	0%	24%
Capacity-Building Needs and Priorities	12%	56%	12%	0%	0%	21%
Capacity-Building Opportunity	9%	56%	15%	0%	0%	21%
Capacity-Building Project	12%	53%	18%	0%	0%	18%
Academically-Accredited Biosafety Course	6%	41%	24%	0%	0%	29%
Biosafety Expert	24%	35%	18%	3%	0%	21%
Report on Biosafety Expert Assignment	18%	32%	15%	0%	0%	35%
Biosafety Information Resource	18%	41%	12%	0%	0%	29%
Biosafety Organization	15%	47%	15%	0%	0%	24%
Socioeconomic Consideration	9%	26%	29%	3%	0%	32%
Average	*20%*	*41%*	*15%*	*3%*	*0%*	*22%*

Interoperability

12.   This section targeted only information technology (IT) experts. It was answered by 13 respondents. Participants were requested to comment on their experiences with different elements when using interoperability mechanisms to register information in the BCH.

Question 17: "Preferred way of submitting information to the BCH".

Q17	%
Option 1: Using the BCH Management Centre	54%
Option 2: Using offline methods (e.g. email, fax, etc.)	0%
Option 3: Requesting the BCH to regularly download XML records from our national site: (i.e. crawling)	31%
Option 4: Directly sending XML records to the BCH using the BCH Web Service	15%

Question 18: "If you are using the Web Service (option 4), which SOAP implementation are you using?"

Q18	%
Java (Apache Axis)	31%
Microsoft .NET	23%
Microsoft SOAP Toolkit	0%
Python (SOAP.py)	0%
Perl (SOAP::Lite)	8%
PHP (Pear)	8%
Other (please specify):	0%

Question 19: "What is your preferred way of making your BCH information available at the national level?"

Q19	%
Through a national BCH based on Hermes.	38%
Through a national website which utilizes the BCH Ajax Plug-In.	8%
Through a national website which collects information through the BCH Web Service.	23%
Through a national website which displays information from a local source.	31%

Question 20: "Please indicate your views on the following". A list of elements was supplied for consideration. The answer options were: *Very Satisfied* (VS), *Satisfied* (S), *Neutral* (N), *Unsatisfied* (U), *Very Unsatisfied* (VU), *Not applicable/ Do not know* (NA)..

Q20	VS	S	N	U	VU	NA
Range of choice of the interoperability mechanisms	38% (+5%)	46% (-11%)	15% (+15%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	0%
Range of solutions provided by the Secretariat which enable countries to disseminate their information at the national level (Hermes & BCH Ajax Plug-In)	38%	46%	8%	8%	0%	0%
Ease of registering new information	31% (+31%)	62% (-27%)	8% (-3%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	0%
Support and assistance provided by the Secretariat	31% (+11%)	62% (+2%)	8% (-12%)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	0%