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ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE CBD WEB SITE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

I. Introduction

1. In response to the provisions in paragraph 4 and 12 of Decision VI/19, the Secretariat devoted resources to further developing the information tools, features and resources on the web site of the Convention on Biological Diversity (www.biodiv.org) in order that it provide support for the elaboration of initiatives in support of the three programme elements of the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness:

a. The development of a global network on communication, education and public awareness;

b. The exchange of knowledge and expertise;

c. Capacity-building for CEPA.

2. The present document has been prepared in advance of the meeting of the consultative working group of experts on education and public awareness convening at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 27 to 29 October 2003 in order that the group may review the progress of the conception, design and deployment of the tools and resources that are included in the web site enhancement. The group is invited to provide suggestions for further development of the enhancement project in its role in supporting the objectives of the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness.

3. The web site enhancement initiative takes as its point of departure the elements of the programme of work outlined in the Annex to Decision VI/19. The tools and resources included in this initiative comprise the following:

a. The aggregation of information tools and resources which currently exist on the web site of the Secretariat into distinct portals targeted at the information needs of groups identified in the Secretariat's corporate communications strategy as important audiences not only for the CEPA initiative, but for all work conducted by the Convention.

b. The creation of a series of online brochures presenting educational and explanatory information on biodiversity, biosafety, the work of the Subsidiary Body on Science,

Technology and Technical Assessment (SBSTTA), the work of the Clearing-House Mechanism and other aspects of the work of the Convention, as models of the kinds of communication tools to be created by other Parties to the Global Initiative.

c. In support of programme element one - the development of a global network on communication, education and public awareness – deployment of an electronic portal which aggregates information on CEPA, facilitates cooperation between partners in the Global Initiative and provides support for the capacity-building initiatives of partners.

d. As part of the development of a communication strategy for the Secretariat, the creation of an information-rich Press and Media Portal as a focal point of reference and a resource centre for journalists and others in the media who are interested in biodiversity topics.

e. The deployment of electronic communication mechanisms in support of other CEPA programme initiatives, notably the CEPA demonstration projects including the school outreach effort such as the Schools Twinning project, The School Outreach Programme and others.

II. Details of individual elements of the web site enhancement initiative

Creation of portal pages for targeted groups

4. In response to the request contained in Decision VI/19 paragraph 4 (e), the Secretariat developed a corporate communications strategy which addressed, among others, the issues and strategies surrounding the use of the Secretariat's web site (www.biodiv.org) as a tool to realise not only the corporate communication goals of the Secretariat but also the objectives of the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness. Developed with the assistance of a private sector promotional agency partner, the strategy identified a number of key groups with whom the Secretariat would attempt to strengthen communication and increase awareness of the work of the Convention and its relevance to their lives. The most important groups included the media, students and teachers, members of local communities and indigenous groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

5. In order to better support the Secretariat's communication outreach strategies to these groups, the entry points for users on the home page of the Secretariat's web site were redesigned to direct these users to targeted portals that lead each group to pages that aggregate relevant information resources and tools. On each of the targeted entry points, existing information resources were edited to better serve the needs of each of the groups. In some cases, this involved the crafting of metadata written in the language of the target group, to better explain detailed terms and concepts on the site. In others, this involved rewriting introductory text and content in order to achieve greater clarity of explanation for non-expert audiences. For example, the content and information tools required for the student and teacher pages require considerable redrafting. In all cases, message redrafting was conducted carefully to ensure that the content conveyed messages consistent with the message design drafted in consultation with the promotional agency partner.

Online Brochures

6. In support of the above portal initiative, focused on the goals of the corporate communications strategy, and mindful of the goals outlined in programme elements 2 and 3 of the Global Initiative, the Secretariat undertook to provide resources, strategies and guidance to parties seeking to develop multimedia materials to facilitate a greater public awareness of the key objectives and guiding principles of the Convention, including, but not limited to: the importance of biological diversity, the ecosystem approach to conservation, the need for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources, and the role of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the 2010 Goals. The Secretariat developed a series of "online brochures" that make use of graphic design, the principles of popular science journalism, and the variety of multimedia presentation

technologies in order to render the concepts outlined in the Corporate Communication Strategy, including those articulated above, understandable and accessible to a general audience.

7. The text describing these was drafted in collaboration with the private sector promotional agency partners involved in the articulation of the corporate communication strategy, verified by experts in science journalism and education, and designed to be viewed as part of a multimedia presentation. The "online brochures" are compatible with a variety of technological platforms, and can be viewed by a variety of users including those whose access to the World Wide web is via broadband and low bandwidth connections and those who possess computers with CD-ROM drives. The format of the presentations allows for their easy export to PowerPoint, and can even be printed on transparencies and projected on an overhead. The brochures are due to be published in advance of COP-7 and are intended to serve as a model for the design of public awareness materials to be used by the Parties. The first set of these "online brochures" will deal with the following topics:

a. What is biological diversity and how does the Convention work to preserve it?

b. What is meant by biosafety and how does the Cartagena Protocol assist countries in realizing its principles?

c. How do biodiversity and biosafety issues relate to people's lives? Why should people care and what can they do?

d. What is the role of scientific knowledge in preserving biological diversity, and how does the Convention harness this knowledge?

e. What are the challenges of building networks and facilitating technical cooperation, and how does the Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention facilitate this?

f. What are the information requirements for living up to the commitments of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and how does the Biosafety Clearing-House facilitate these?

CEPA Portal – an electronic portal and alternative information dissemination mechanism

8. In support of programme element one, outlined in the annex to Decision VI/19, the web site enhancement includes the development of the electronic portal through which elements of the programme of work for the global initiative will be outlined, best practices will be exchanged, and Parties can share tools for capacity-building on Communication, Education and Public Awareness. A draft of the navigation structure for the portal is available as annex 1 to this document. The portal is deployed at www.biodiv.org, includes a distinctive entry point from the home page, and contains the following tools and information-exchange features:

a. Documentation, content, and information-exchange tools relating to the current and forthcoming Secretariat demonstration projects, including the school outreach programs, encompassing both the one developed with McGill University and the initiative developed in partnership with the Jane Goodall Institute (Roots&Shoots). The portal will present the experience of each of the demonstration projects, including documentation and toolkits, in order to illustrate the best practices required for Parties to develop capacities in these areas. The portal will present brief video clips of the experiences, as a demonstration of the possibilities to be realised from convergent media.

b. A database and directory of the Secretariat's partners involved in the Global Initiative. The database includes links to the web resources of the partners, and provides characterization of the expertise of each of the partners in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge as outlined in programme element 2 of the Global Initiative.

c. A Communication, Education and Public Awareness projects database populated by partners and educational experts, containing case studies and examples of the best practices and initiatives in support of the programme of work for the global initiative. Registered users may enter project data, which is then rendered searchable via an advanced search

engine. A project discussion forum will use reader news technology to permit registered users to conduct discussions on submitted projects, as well as to view archived discussions. A draft of the essential functionality for this application is included with this document as annex 2.

d. A database summarising the results of the Secretariat's analysis of national actions on the programme of work for the global initiative for CEPA. This tool will disseminate the results of the Secretariat's review and analysis of national-level CEPA related activities as presented in the 2nd national reports, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), interim reports and relevant project papers.

e. A searchable database of the Roster of Experts for CEPA. The searchable database currently contains information on 48 experts from 23 countries. The extensive dataset includes important contextual information on experts including their disciplines of specialization, languages of competence, educational qualifications, a summary of relevant work experience, and information on recent publications.

f. A searchable database of Communication, Education and Public Awareness resources available on the World Wide Web. The database currently contains 30 web sites devoted to resources on CEPA. Additional functionality to the database currently under development will include more detailed information on these resources, including characterization of the types of information on each web site.

g. A mentorship mechanism, where experts will be able to mentor novices on specific initiatives, programmes and activities. Participants will be encouraged to submit information on biodiversity education needs, and the Secretariat will attempt to match their needs with available expertise.

h. The Secretariat initiated discussion with McGill University's School of Computer Science, Faculty of Education and School of the Environment to establish partnerships aimed at developing web-based educational materials for students of different ages and their teachers, and assist the Secretariat in preparing the education pages to be hosted on the CEPA web site. It is envisaged that these web pages would become the prototypes for education/public awareness pages of the CBD National Focal Points in collaboration with their national education institutions and other related government authorities. Together, the CBD site and the national sites would then be integral parts of the global communication, education and public awareness network of biodiversity-related exchanges between communities, showcasing local initiatives and creating a database of educational material on biodiversity. The CBD Secretariat would be at the center of the network, recognized as the source of expertise and creating a standard of best practice.

Press and Media Portal

9. In support of the request in paragraph 4 (e) for the development of a corporate communication strategy for the Secretariat, the web enhancement project includes the creation of a Press and Media Portal in which the information resources and tools of relevance to journalists and the media are aggregated. This Press Portal will be accessible not only from the pages of the CEPA portal, but also from all pages of the web site of the Secretariat. The space will be employed by the Secretariat according to the goals and objectives of the corporate communications strategy to convey the basic information on biodiversity and the activities of the Secretariat. A draft navigation framework for the Press and Media Portal is attached to this document as annex 3. The Press and Media Portal contains the following elements:

a. A summary of the most relevant news items from news sources around the world relating to the thematic and cross-cutting issues of the programmes of work for the Convention. The summary will be searchable and will allow journalists and the media to refer to the Press

Room for the most important items on biological diversity, thus reinforcing the centrality of the work of the Convention.

b. Documents on biological diversity and the work of the convention written for the non-expert will be available in a searchable format. Users will be able to locate documents according to theme.

c. The portal will provide access to a database of speeches and presentations delivered by the Executive Secretary and other Secretariat staff.

d. The Portal will provide direct access to the database containing the Roster of Experts for all thematic areas of the Convention's work. By facilitating the rapid identification and location of experts for interview, the Secretariat will underline and reinforce its role as a key resource for expertise and knowledge on biological diversity.

e. A searchable database of all press releases issued by the convention.

f. Access to the global calendar of biodiversity events and the calendar of SCBD meetings.

g. Information on how to obtain press accreditation for all SCBD events

h. An ability to subscribe to email news lists through with press releases and announcements of events and statements are made.

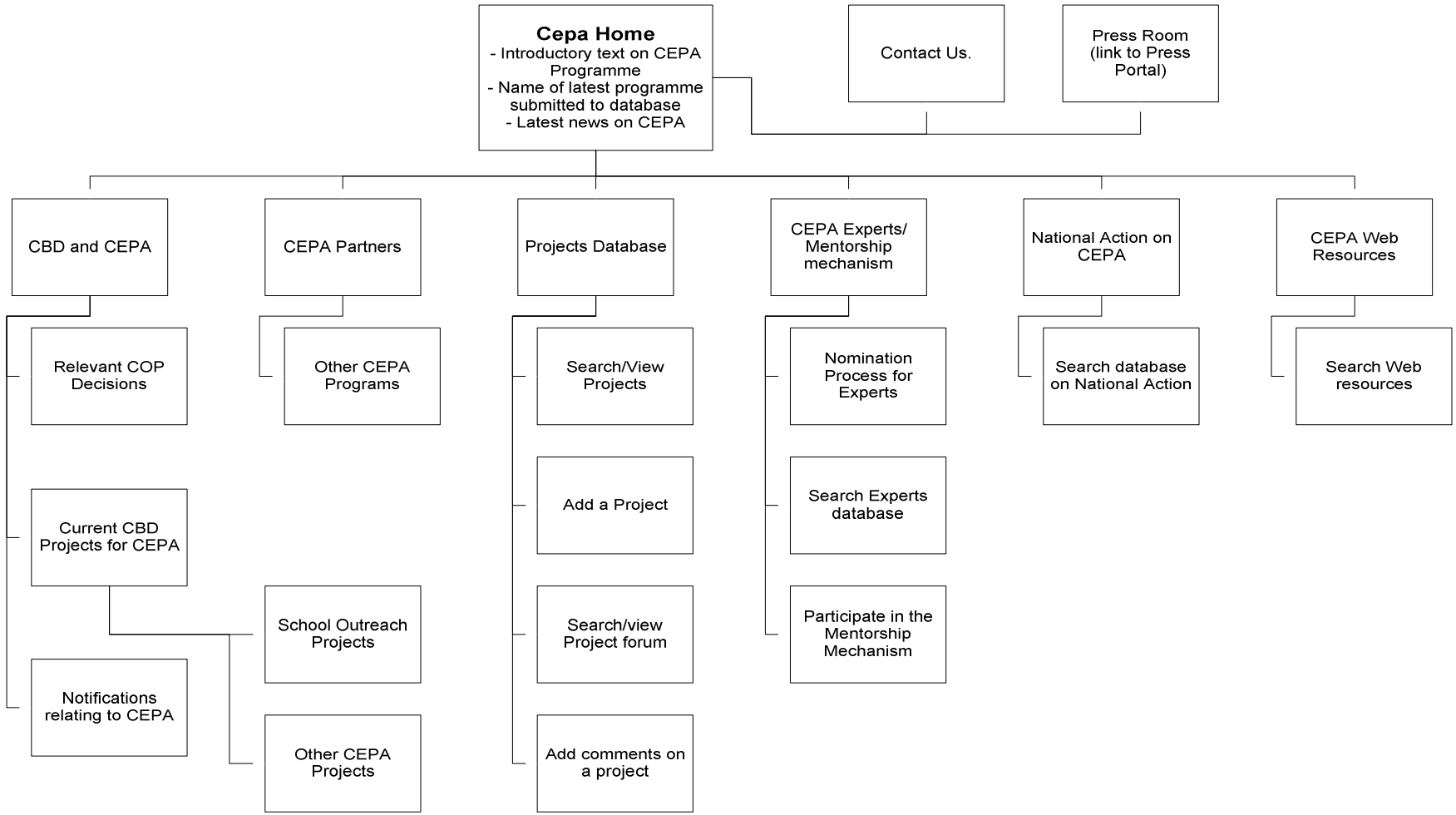
III. Challenges for the project and next steps.

10. The web enhancement project, like the other aspects of the programme of work for the Global Initiative on CEPA, has been impeded by the level of funding accorded to the project. The initiatives described in this document have been and are being accomplished through a variety of innovative approaches adopted by the Secretariat. The pace of implementation of the feature set outlined in this report can be increased through a greater provision of funds.

11. The web enhancement project could serve a more effective role in support of the CEPA initiative should there be a clear statement of what constitute the key components of CEPA and the inter-linkages between these components and their respective individual contributions to the achievement of the overall global initiative on CEPA. Such clarification would permit further development of the architecture design for the web site initiative.

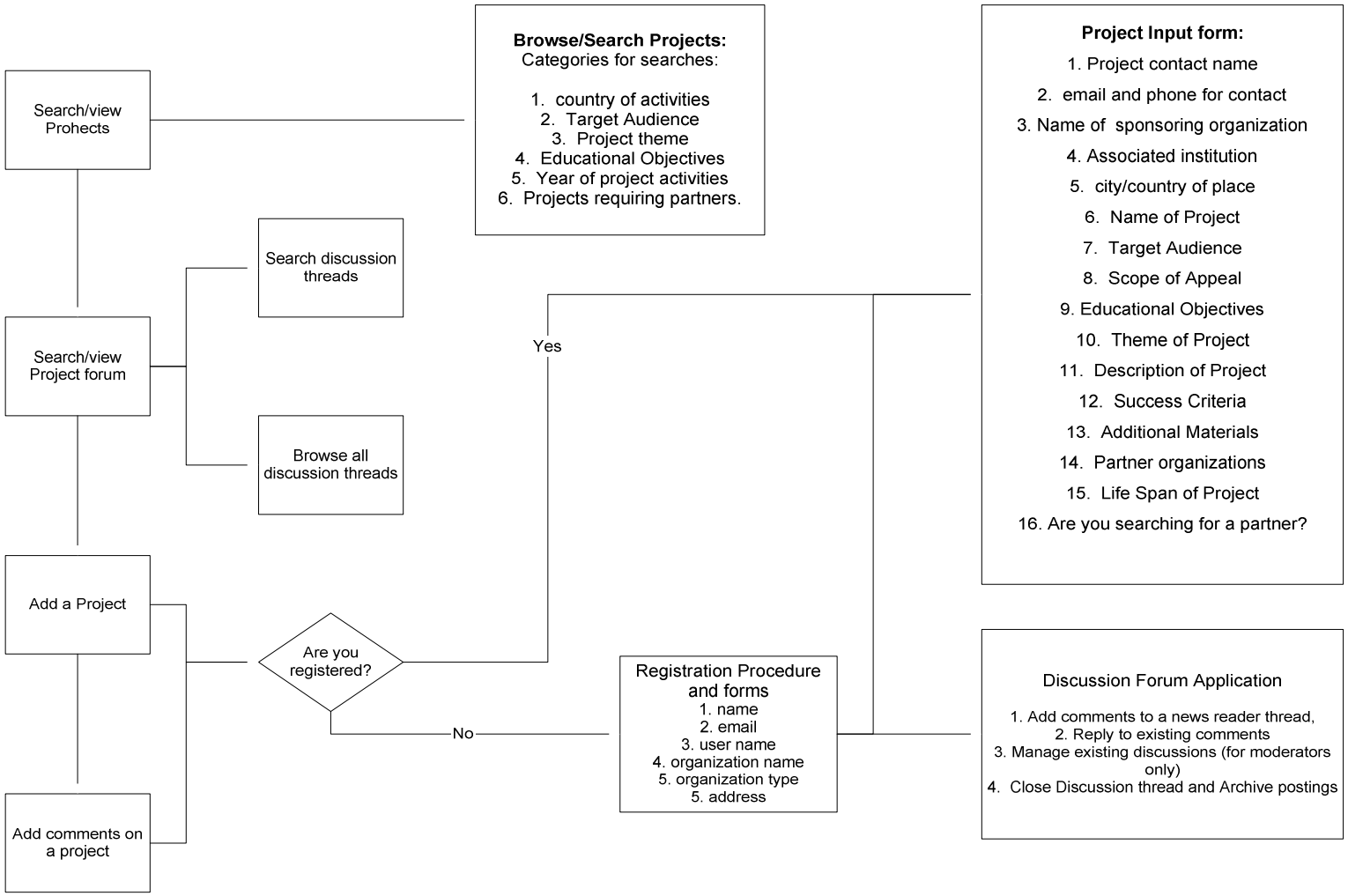
Annex 1

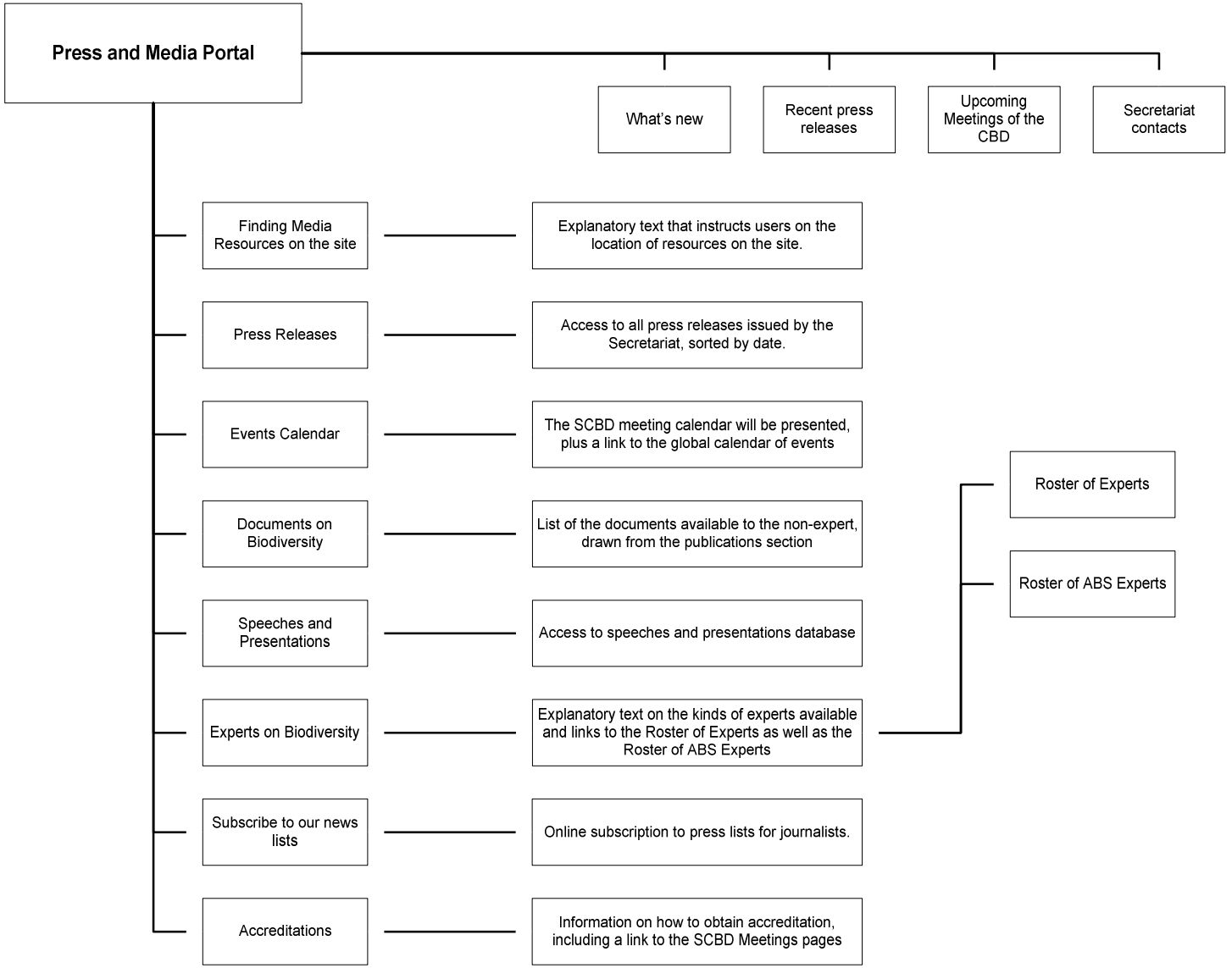
DRAFT CEPA PORTAL NAVIGATION



Annex 2

CEPA PORTAL: DATABASE SECTION



Annex 3

CEPA PORTAL: PRESS AND MEDIA PORTAL