

OPERATIONAL MODALITIES FOR THE BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING NETWORK

Mandate and Functions

1. The primary purpose of the network is to facilitate and enhance active interaction and sharing of knowledge, views, experiences and lessons learned among individuals, organizations and donor agencies interested in promoting biosafety capacity-building and research, in a timely, organized and effective manner. The specific functions and activities/ services of the network will include the following:

- (a) Helping to strengthen linkages and interactions between different organizations or individuals involved biosafety capacity-building activities, in order to promote synergies and better coordination and collaboration.
- (b) Facilitating informal but systematic interactions to foster sharing and leveraging of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned with a view to enhancing mutual learning and maximum use of available knowledge and experience.
- (c) Enabling different players to keep each other informed about their ongoing or planned activities in order to avoid duplication of effort and to optimize the allocation of resources.
- (d) Fostering linkages between on-the-ground experience and action and the relevant policy processes at the national, regional and global levels.
- (e) Facilitating the establishment of collaborative partnerships or twinning arrangements and foster the pooling of resources and expertise.
- (f) Mobilizing expertise and information resources available through the network to provide technical assistance to Parties to the Protocol, upon request.

Membership and Participation in the Network

2. The network will be open to representatives of interested governments and relevant organizations that are implementing or funding capacity-building projects for the effective implementation of the Protocol.

3. Potential participants interested in joining the network will be invited to express their interest to the Secretariat and/or register through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

4. Members of the network will be encouraged share voluntarily their relevant information and experience through network and to advancing the goal and objectives of the network.

Administration and Functioning of the Network

5. In accordance with decision BS-I/5 of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Protocol, the network will be administered by the Executive Secretary of the Protocol and will be implemented primarily through the Biosafety Clearing-House, which will serve as the “network hub”.

6. The Steering Committee elected at the coordination meetings will provide overall policy guidance to the operations of the network and to oversee the implementation of its activities. Members of the Steering Committee will serve for a period of two years, renewable once. In order to maintain institutional memory, at least one third of the members will be retained when a new committee is elected. The Steering Committee will work mainly through the internet-based tools established for the network.

7. The network will operate primarily through Internet-based tools, including: e-mail listservs, bulletin boards, electronic discussion forums and electronic conferences, will be the primary means of interaction between the network members.

8. A restricted (password-protected) website will be established to allow exchange of views and information among members of the network and facilitate networking and access to information about the network activities. An e-mail listserv will also be established for all members to all dissemination of information and comments relevant to all members. A bulletin board may also be to allow ongoing posting of views, comments and new information on different biosafety issues. In addition, thematic or issue-specific e-mail listservs or electronic discussion forums may also be established as required, to allow exchange of information and dialogue on specific themes/ topical issues over a defined period time.

9. Partner organizations will be encouraged to volunteer in co-sponsoring or moderating specific thematic discussions or managing issue-specific e-mail listservs. The discussion forums may, as appropriate, result in specific products (e.g. reports/ proceedings), which may also be published as hard copies and made available to interested countries.

Responsibilities of the Secretariat

10. The Secretariat will service the network by:

- (a) Developing and maintaining communication tools for the network, including a restricted website, e-mail listservs and electronic discussion forums for members of the network.
- (b) Facilitating communication, interaction and exchange of information among members of the network.
- (c) Maintaining records of the network membership and disseminating relevant reports and other outputs of its activities.
- (d) Preparing progress reports and other relevant documentation for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.
- (e) Undertaking other activities as requested by the network, subject to availability of funding.

Regional and thematic sub-networks

11. Thematic sub-networks or taskforces may be established to address specific issues or undertake specific activities and to avoid overloading the main work programme of the Network. The sub-networks may provide an effective mechanism for interested organizations working on specific issues or thematic areas to consult with each other on their plans and activities, and to discuss practical ways and means of ensuring that the activities are mutually supportive.

12. Specific sub-networks will be established by, and will report progress of their activities to, the regular general coordination meetings of the network members. Members of the network would be requested to administer such sub-networks, when established and provide to the Secretariat only the relevant reports and other outputs that need to be shared broadly among all the network members.

13. Members may also establish regional and sub-regional nodes of the network or strengthen linkages with existing relevant regional and sub-regional networks dealing for biosafety capacity-building, within the overall framework of the Biosafety Capacity-Building Network, to address region-specific requirements. The lead organizations for the regional and sub-regional network will provide to the Secretariat the relevant information and report that need to be shared broadly among all the network members.

Funding of the Network

14. In accordance with the core principles of the Coordination Mechanism, implementation of the network will involve as minimal additional resource requirements as possible. Most of the core activities of the network, such as maintenance of the network website and communication tools will be implemented within the budget of Secretariat. Other activities of the network requiring additional resources will be funded, *inter alia*, through voluntary contributions from the members and willing sponsors/ donors.

Periodic Review of the Network

15. The operations of the network including the effectiveness of its activities, outputs and impact will be reviewed after three years and thereafter after every five years along the same schedule for the review of implementation of the Protocol.
