



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

Distr.  
GENERAL






24 May 2023

ENGLISH ONLY

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT  
GROUP ON SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS  
FOR BROAD AND REGULAR HORIZON SCANNING,  
MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

First meeting  
Montreal, Canada, 11-14 July 2023

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## 1. Opening and Registration

The First meeting of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment will be held in Montreal, Canada from Tuesday, 11 July to Friday, 14 July 2023. The meeting will start at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, 11 July 2023, and registration of CBD participants will take place at the venue at between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

## 2. Venue

The meeting will be held at:

### **The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

8th Floor Conference Room (Suite 800)

413 St-Jacques Street West

Montréal, Québec

Canada, H2Y 1N9

Tel: +1-514-288-2220

Fax: +1-514-288-6588

Metro station Square-Victoria, line no. 2 (Orange)

Note that access to the 8th floor is restricted. CBD staff will assist with accessing the 8th floor at key times. However, in case of need, kindly announce your presence to our receptionist on the **6th floor (Suite 620)**, and they will arrange for your access to the 8th floor.

## 3. Working language

The meeting will be held in English.



## 4. Meeting Documents **CBD**

Documents will be made available at:

<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SYNBIO-AHTEG-2023-01>

In order to minimize the environmental footprint of the meeting and in line with the UN policy towards greener meetings, participants are kindly reminded to bring their own copies of the documents, or to use paperless versions, as there will be no extra copies made available on site during the meeting. WIFI access will be provided.

## 5. Precautionary Sanitary Measures

While COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted in Canada, as per January 2023 guidelines - the WHO continues to recommend the use of masks by the public in specific situations, irrespective of the local epidemiological situation, given the current spread of the COVID-19 globally. Masks are recommended following a recent exposure to COVID-19, when someone has or suspects they have COVID-19, when someone is at high-risk of severe COVID-19, and for anyone in a crowded,

enclosed, or poorly ventilated space. Participants are requested to bring their own masks. Hand sanitizer will be made available at the entrance of the meeting room.

## 6. General information on access to Montreal

Montreal is serviced by Montreal-Trudeau International Airport (15 km from downtown). Taxis and a bus (No. 747) are available at the airport. The information on rates is as follows.

<b>Bus:</b>	<b>One way trip</b>
Montreal-Trudeau Airport/Downtown (several locations) STM Express bus No. 747 (runs 24 hrs a day)	CAD \$11 (Fares can be purchased from the automated dispensers at the international arrivals level. The \$11 fare can also be paid in cash <b>with exact change in coins only</b> on board the bus and is valid for bus and metro for 24 hours. More information: <a href="https://www.stm.info/en/info/networks/bus/shuttle/747-yul-montreal-trudeau-airport-downtown-shuttle">https://www.stm.info/en/info/networks/bus/shuttle/747-yul-montreal-trudeau-airport-downtown-shuttle</a>
<b>Taxis:</b> Montreal-Trudeau to Downtown	Fixed rates: CAD \$48.40 for arrivals from 5AM to 11PM and CAD \$55.65 for arrivals from 11PM to 5AM

## 7. Visa information



Participants from countries listed in the **annex** below require a visa which requires biometrics (photo and fingerprints) for entry into Canada and are strongly advised to contact the nearest Canadian diplomatic or consular mission **as soon as possible** in order to secure the required entry visa in a timely manner, prior to departure. **Please note that airline companies will not allow boarding in the absence of a valid visa.**

Information on visa procedures for entry into Canada, including online visa application can be found on the web site of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>

Information on the list of relevant Canadian diplomatic/consular missions abroad can be found at the following link: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/apply-where.asp>.

### **Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) from visa exempt countries**

Travelers from visa-exempt countries must obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) to fly to or transit through Canada. If you have a valid eTA, you will not be required to provide biometrics. Travelers are required to have an eTA before they can board a flight to Canada. Exceptions include U.S. citizens and travelers with a valid Canadian visa. Canadian citizens, including dual citizens, and Canadian permanent residents cannot apply for an eTA.

Applying for the eTA is an online process which takes only a few minutes to complete. The eTA will be valid for 5 years or upon expiry of your passport. There is a fee of CAN \$7.00 for the electronic travel authorization (eTA).

The eTA link is as follows: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>

### **Countries requiring Visa and Biometrics**

All countries requiring a visa must also provide biometrics are listed in the annex below, information on Biometrics can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/biometrics.asp>.

On-line visa application:

**Anyone can apply online for a visa to enter Canada.** However, you are required to provide biometrics and still need to present yourself at a Visa Application Centre to provide this information. An application will not go forward without the biometric information. The CIC will send you a biometric instruction letter by email through your MyCIC account when they receive your application. Read and print this letter and bring it, along with your passport or other travel document, to a visa application centre (VAC) to give your biometrics. Find your closest VAC.

Important: Please continuously check your MyCIC visa application account for any incoming e-mails, queries, requests for more information, and responses from the visa office.

**Please submit your visa application as early as possible to allow sufficient time to process your request. You can verify approximate visa processing times for your country at the following link:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/check-processing-times.html>

To facilitate the issuance of visas, the Secretariat will issue, upon request, invitation letters to be attached to the visa applications.

### **8. Health information**

As of 5 January 2023, all air travelers, 2 years of age and older, arriving from the People's Republic of China must show a negative COVID-19 test result, taken no more than 2 days before their departure, to the airline in order to board their flight. For all other travelers, proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, pre-boarding testing, and using the ArriveCAN App are not required. However, using the ArriveCAN App may save time at the border/customs and carrying proof of vaccination is recommended in case of need.

Further details on COVID-19 recommendations for travel are available at: <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid>.

### **9. Hotel information**

Participants are kindly reminded that they **must make their own hotel reservations and should do so as soon as possible.**

Below is the link to ICAOs list of hotels located in the vicinity of the CBD Secretariat, ICAO or close to a Metro (subway) station.

<http://www.icao.int/Meetings/Pages/List-Of-Hotels.aspx>

Further information on hotels in Montreal is available on the web site of Tourisme Montreal at the following link: <https://www.mtl.org/en/Accommodations>

## 10. Payment of the Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA)

The relevant portion of DSA will be disbursed to funded participants on the first day of the meeting in the form of a prepaid credit card (Swiss Bankers card). **These funded participants are kindly requested to bring their passports and boarding passes on the first day of the meeting.** These will be photocopied and returned to participants during the meeting. It is advisable that participants have some cash at hand to cover expenses that may occur between their arrival and the moment at which they are provided with the prepaid credit card from which they will access their DSA. Please note that the funds can take up to 24 hours to be loaded on the cards.

**IMPORTANT:** If you were provided with a Swiss Bankers card for a previous meeting, please inform the Secretariat and bring it with you to the meeting (if it is still valid) so that it may be reused. Please make sure you remember the PIN, otherwise contact the bank to request that they reset the PIN.

### **Swiss Bankers Contacts:**

Swiss Bankers Prepaid Services Ltd, Customer Service  
(forgotten PIN numbers, card replacements or transaction claims)

**Tel: +41-31 710 12 15**

Email: [info@swissbankers.ch](mailto:info@swissbankers.ch)

Opening hours:

Mon-Sun: 8.00-22.00 Swiss time. Closed on Swiss bank holidays.

## 11. Official languages

There are two official languages in Canada: English and French. French is the official language of Quebec; however, English is widely spoken in Montreal.

## 12. Weather and time zone information



In July, the average temperatures in Montreal typically range between +26°C in the daytime and +14°C at night. Please bring appropriate clothing for summer conditions. The current weather conditions may be found at <http://worldweather.wmo.int/en/city.html?cityId=634>.

The standard time zone for Montreal is EDT (Eastern Daylight Time) which is GMT/UTC -4 hours.

## 13. Electricity

The electrical currents are 120 Volts, 60 Hertz and plugs are as shown below.



## 14. Currency

The currency in Canada is the Canadian Dollar (CAD \$). The current exchange rate as of 24 May 2023 is USD \$1 = CAD \$1.36 and €1 = CAD \$1.46 (source: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com), rates are subject to change).

Currency exchange facilities are readily available in banks and hotels.

## 15. Disclaimer

The CBD Secretariat disclaims all responsibility for medical, accident and travel insurance, for compensation for death or disability compensation, for loss of or damage to personal property and for any other loss that may be incurred during travel time or the period of participation. In this context, it is strongly recommended to secure international medical, accident and travel insurance for the period of participation prior to departure.

## Annex – Country list for visas

### COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES WHOSE CITIZENS REQUIRE **VISAS AND BIOMETRICS** IN ORDER TO ENTER CANADA AS VISITORS (AS LISTED ON THE WEBSITE OF IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA)

Citizens of the following countries and territories require a visa and biometrics (photo and fingerprints) to **visit** or **transit** Canada:

<b>A</b>	<b>E (cont'd)</b>	<b>M</b>	Saudi Arabia
Afghanistan	Eritrea	Madagascar	Senegal
Albania	Eswatini	Malawi	Serbia
Algeria	Ethiopia	Malaysia	Seychelles
Angola		Maldives	Sierra Leone
Antigua and Barbuda	<b>F</b>	Mali	Somalia
Argentina	Fiji	Marshall Islands	South Africa
Armenia		Mauritania	South Sudan
Azerbaijan	<b>G</b>	Mauritius	Sri Lanka
	Gabon	Micronesia, Fed. States of	Sudan
<b>B</b>	Gambia, the	Moldova	Suriname
Bahrain	Georgia	Mongolia	Syrian Arab Republic
Bangladesh	Ghana	Montenegro	
Belarus	Grenada	Morocco	<b>T</b>
Belize	Guatemala	Mozambique	Tajikistan
Benin	Guinea	Myanmar	Tanzania, United Republic of
Bhutan	Guinea-Bissau		Thailand
Bolivia	Guyana	<b>N</b>	Togo
Bosnia and Herzegovina		Namibia	Tonga
Botswana	<b>H</b>	Nauru	Trinidad and Tobago
Brazil	Haiti	Nepal	Tunisia
Burkina Faso	Honduras	Nicaragua	Türkiye
Burundi		Niger	Turkmenistan
<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	Nigeria	Tuvalu
Cabo Verde	India	North Macedonia	
Cambodia	Indonesia	<b>O</b>	<b>U</b>
Cameroon	Iran, Islamic Republic of	Oman	Uganda
Central African Republic	Iraq		Ukraine
Chad	Israel	<b>P</b>	Uruguay
China		Pakistan	Uzbekistan
Colombia	<b>J</b>	Palau	
Comoros	Jamaica	Palestinian Authority	<b>V</b>
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	Jordan	Panama	Vanuatu
Congo, Republic of the		Paraguay	Venezuela
Costa Rica	<b>K</b>	Peru	Viet Nam
Côte d'Ivoire	Kazakhstan	Philippines	
Cuba	Kenya		<b>Y</b>
	Kiribati	<b>Q</b>	Yemen
<b>D</b>	Korea, Democratic People's Republic of	Qatar	
Djibouti	Kuwait		<b>Z</b>
Dominica	Kyrgyzstan	<b>R</b>	Zambia
Dominican Republic		Russian Federation	Zimbabwe
	<b>L</b>	Rwanda	
<b>E</b>	Lao, People's Democratic Republic of		
East Timor	Lebanon	<b>S</b>	
Ecuador	Lesotho	Saints Kitts and Nevis	
Egypt	Liberia	Saint Lucia	
El Salvador	Libya	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	
Equatorial Guinea		Sao Tomé e Príncipe	

