



Convention on Biological Diversity

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**Informal Advisory Committee on
the Biosafety Clearing-House
Thirteenth meeting**
Montreal, Canada, 9–11 December 2025
Agenda item 6
Adoption of the report

Report of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House on the work of its thirteenth meeting

Introduction

Attendance

1. The following members of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House attended the thirteenth meeting of the Committee:¹

Parties

African States

Lilian Chimphepo
Hatem Ben Belgacem
Amandin Rutayisire

Asia-Pacific States

Anita Anthonysamy
Maria Lorelie U. Agbagala
Rizwan Irshad

Eastern European States

Galina Mozgova
Angela Lozan
Odeta Pivorienė

Latin American and Caribbean States

Diego Miguel Galvis Rey
Gandhi Emanuel Ponce Juárez
Farah Aligour

Western European and other States

Daniela Wahler
Birgül Özen
Tim Strabala

Chair of the Compliance Committee

Yan Liu

¹ The following members were not able to attend the meeting: Theo Prins (European GMO Initiative for a Unified Database System (EUGinius), Masami Takeuchi (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Sarah Lukie (CropLife International) and Satoshi Nakano (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

Organizations

Ruel Maningas (Korea Institute for Promoting Asia Biosafety Cooperation)
Antje Lorch (European Network for Ecological Reflection and Action)

Alex Owusu-Biney (United Nations Environment Programme) (online)
Jane Richardson (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

2. During the discussion on scientific information in the Biosafety Clearing-House and collaboration with biosafety-related organizations (item 3 (c)), Sarah Lukie connected online and made a presentation remotely.

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

3. The meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 9 December 2025, by a representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

4. In her opening remarks, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Jihyun Lee, welcomed members to the meeting and expressed her appreciation for the invaluable support that they provided to the Secretariat and their advice with respect to the development and improvement of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

5. At the invitation of the Secretariat, the members introduced themselves.

Item 2

Organizational matters

(a) Election of officers

6. The Informal Advisory Committee elected Tim Strabala as Chair of the meeting.

7. The Chair delivered opening remarks and thanked the Committee for the trust that it had placed in him. He expressed his confidence that the Committee would be successful in fulfilling its mandate and supporting the Secretariat in addressing its mandate regarding the Biosafety Clearing-House.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

8. The Informal Advisory Committee adopted the agenda of the meeting as contained in document [CBD/CP/BCH-IAC/13/1](#). A specific discussion on a review of the work of the Committee, to be considered under agenda item 4 on other matters, was included in the agenda.

(c) Organization of work

9. The Informal Advisory Committee approved the organization of work proposed by the Secretariat, as contained in annex I to the annotated provisional agenda.²

Item 3

Status of the Biosafety Clearing-House

(a) Latest developments and current activities

10. The Secretariat provided an update on the status of actions taken with respect to the recommendations adopted at the twelfth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee and an overview of work related to the Biosafety Clearing-House carried out since the twelfth meeting of

² [CBD/CP/BCH-IAC/13/1/Add.1](#).

the Committee. Information on the status of various activities envisaged for the current intersessional period was presented.

11. The overview included a presentation and demonstration by the Secretariat on the new Bioland tool template for developing national biosafety websites. The Secretariat delivered a presentation on the new application programming interface (API) to support users with pre-existing websites.

12. The Committee commended the Secretariat for the progress associated with ongoing developments on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the new Bioland template for national biosafety websites.

13. The Secretariat gave a presentation on ongoing and upcoming work related to improving the quality and completeness of information on the Biosafety Clearing-House, including the new functionality to support Parties in keeping their information up to date. The Informal Advisory Committee discussed the possibility of simplifying the modalities for the “Timeframe for confirmation or updating of information” section, including by standardizing the time period for the reconfirmation process. The members engaged in productive discussions on improving the quality of reference and national records on the clearing-house and made recommendations related to future work in that regard.

14. A representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provided an update on the closure of the UNEP-Global Environment Facility (GEF) project for sustainable capacity-building for effective participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH III Project). The Committee commended the project and reiterated the need to maintain its outputs and raise the visibility of the network of regional advisers on the clearing-house.

(b) Decisions adopted at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol in relation to the Biosafety Clearing-House

15. The Secretariat provided a brief introduction on the main elements of the decisions taken that related to the work of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

16. A representative of the Secretariat provided an update on the national reporting process under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Informal Advisory Committee expressed its appreciation for the presentation and several members highlighted the challenge with respect to meeting the reporting deadline, given that GEF funding had not been disbursed to many eligible Parties. This meeting was particularly useful in enabling the sharing among countries of experiences on reporting and the accessing of GEF funding for biosafety projects in general and for activities related to the Biosafety Clearing-House more specifically.

17. A representative of the Secretariat gave a presentation on the clearing-house mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity and knowledge management and its relation to the Biosafety Clearing-House, with a particular focus on the programme of work for the clearing-house mechanism. The Committee cautioned against the application of artificial intelligence and use of large language models within the context of scientific information.

(c) Scientific information in the Biosafety Clearing-House and collaboration with biosafety-related organizations

18. Representatives of the Secretariat provided an update regarding the scientific information on the clearing-house and the status of collaborative activities undertaken with various biosafety-related organizations. In the presentation, approaches taken to the updating, improvement and validation of scientific records on the Biosafety Clearing-House were outlined. Representatives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Federal Office of Consumer

Protection and Food Safety of Germany and CropLife International gave brief presentations on activities associated with other relevant databases related to the Biosafety Clearing-House.

19. In response to the request from the Secretariat on exploring possibilities for facilitating information-sharing and linkages between the Biosafety Clearing-House and other relevant databases, a member of the Committee provided information on the crop ontology database.³ Useful information from that database could be included on the Biosafety Clearing-House.

20. The Committee acknowledged the substantial progress made in enhancing the scientific information available through the Biosafety Clearing-House and put forward additional recommendations, which are presented in annex I below.

Item 4

Other matters

21. The Committee stressed the importance of raising the profile of the Biosafety Clearing-House as well as the importance of its work in advancing the overall implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, while emphasizing the key role of the Biosafety Clearing-House as a repository of biosafety-related information.

22. The Committee emphasized the importance of continuing efforts to update information on the Biosafety Clearing-House and raise awareness related to the clearing house.

23. The Committee considered its operational procedures and agreed to continue to engage in work on a number of activities with a view to improving its effectiveness through the dedicated online forum as specified in annex II below.

24. A member of the Committee provided an update on the work under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and related cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, emphasizing the relevance of the Aarhus Convention to Article 23 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the role of the Biosafety Clearing-House as an important tool for facilitating public awareness. The member indicated that the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) might be of relevance to the Biosafety Clearing-House with regard to information-sharing and public participation.

25. The Committee emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Moreover, the Committee identified the need to establish a mechanism through which the FAO GM Foods Platform and the Biosafety Clearing-House could coordinate and publish information on relevant new events that could be considered for inclusion in both databases.

Item 5

Conclusions and recommendations

26. The Chair introduced and summarized the results of the discussions.

Item 6

Adoption of the report

27. The Chair introduced the draft report of the meeting, which was adopted, as orally amended.

³ <https://cropontology.org/>.

Item 7

Closure of the meeting

28. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was closed at 3.24 p.m. on 11 December 2025.

Annex I

Recommendations adopted by the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House at its thirteenth meeting

The Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House recommends that the Secretariat:

Recommendations related to interoperability for national websites and other users

- (a) Finalize the new Bioland tool template for national biosafety websites for deployment to all interested users, with particular attention given to former Hermes users, and include the development of a comprehensive rollout strategy and the production of supporting help materials in all six official languages of the United Nations;
- (b) Increase awareness of the embed feature and the application programming interface (API) enabling all users to exchange relevant information to and from the Biosafety Clearing-House and use it in their respective websites and applications;

Recommendations related to functionalities

- (c) Continue to improve record maintenance functionality, including through automated notifications and the creation of a dedicated workspace on the Biosafety Clearing-House, in order to support Parties in keeping their records accurate, complete and up to date, with priority given to:
 - (i) Enhancement of clarity and functionalities with respect to the user-initiated process to update, edit and delete information from the Biosafety Clearing-House;
 - (ii) Automation of the detection of broken uniform resource locators (URLs);
 - (iii) Identification of missing required information;
 - (iv) Implementation of a procedure for alerting national users to review records under the “Timeframe for confirmation or updating of information” section;
- (d) Continue the review of reference records on the Biosafety Clearing-House for consistency and accuracy, including deletion of duplicate entries;
- (e) Investigate the possibility of using automated translation tools to support the translation of records from languages other than the six official languages of the United Nations;

Recommendations related to portals and forums

- (f) Complete the development of a simple portals and forums landing page;
- (g) Continue to improve the functionality of forums, including by allowing for rich text entries and improving guidance on how to use the quoting feature;
- (h) Further develop and improve the Sampling, Detection and Identification portal by ensuring that it facilitates access to technical information on relevant tools, methods and resources and explore further linkages to biosafety-related databases with a view to supporting activities related to detection and identification;
- (i) Continue to use the Biosafety Clearing-House forum structure as an online interactive workspace for use in training workshops, meetings and events convened by the Secretariat;

Recommendations related to capacity-building and training

- (j) Continue capacity-building on the Biosafety Clearing-House and develop strategies to strengthen the engagement of Parties and other users with the platform;

- (k) Enhance awareness of Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) records and encourage users to submit and update relevant information on active capacity-building initiatives and projects;
- (l) Explore the possibility of including relevant news-related elements and content from biosafety national websites in BCH news (BCHN) and provide a more prominent link to BCH news;
- (m) Continue to promote the outputs of the UNEP-GEF project for sustainable capacity-building for effective participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH III Project) and explore modalities for institutionalizing the regional advisers network approach through the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism established under the Convention;

Recommendations related to collaborations with other organizations

- (n) Continue to collaborate and facilitate information-sharing among the Biosafety Clearing-House, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) databases, the European GMO Initiative for a Unified Database System (EUGenius) and other relevant databases;
- (o) Continue the joint mapping exercise related to modified trait categories among the databases of the Biosafety Clearing-House, FAO and OECD with a view to aligning the categories among the three databases;
- (p) Encourage cooperation among national authorities responsible for the various biosafety-related databases for the purpose of aligning the information reported through the respective platforms;

Recommendations for minor improvements

- (q) Improve the search functionality of the Biosafety Clearing-House, including by allowing users to sort search results by a specific field within each common format;
- (r) Rename the “Trait(s)” column in the genetic element registry as the “Category | Trait(s)” column;
- (s) Mark the status of Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) records “Completed” once they have passed their indicated “End date”;
- (t) Increase the visibility of the detection methods databases on the Biosafety Clearing-House and include relevant descriptive materials;
- (u) Improve complementary accessibility among the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House.

Annex II

Intersessional work of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House arising from its thirteenth meeting

The Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House, through its dedicated online forum, will endeavour to:

- (a) Develop an outreach plan for the Biosafety Clearing-House with a view to raising the profile of the platform as a tool for information exchange and the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, including by exploring opportunities for participation in events and side events related to the Biosafety Clearing-House hosted on the margins of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
 - (b) Seek out and recommend the addition of new linkages with additional databases relevant to the Biosafety Clearing-House and, in particular, to the detection and identification of living modified organisms;
 - (c) Identify further issues for consideration.
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