



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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### **Information workshop on the work of the ad hoc technical expert groups on indicators, synthetic biology and risk assessment** Nairobi, 11 May 2024

#### **Briefing note\*\***

**Note by the Secretariat**

## **I. Introduction**

1. As announced in [notification 2024-017](#), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is convening an information workshop on the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups (Expert Groups) on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and on Synthetic Biology and Risk Assessment, undertaken during the 2023-2024 intersessional period. This document presents its background, objectives and organization of work.
2. This workshop will be held from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 11 May 2024 in room CR-3 &4 of the United Nations Compound in Nairobi, prior to the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. The workshop will be held in English.
3. As indicated in the above-noted notification, participation in the workshop is open to all registered participants in the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. The workshop will be streamed for online viewing, which is accessible via [registration at this link](#).

## **II. Background**

### **A. Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**

4. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity through its decision 15/5, and its terms of reference are contained in annex II to the decision. The overall purpose of the Expert Group is to provide technical advice on the monitoring framework.
5. The Expert Group developed the guidance included in CBD/SBSTTA/26/2 and in the information document CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/14. The Expert Group has recently held a number of informational webinars which can be viewed on their website.<sup>1</sup> The Expert Group also worked with other groups to produce a number of other information documents described in annex II of this note.

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\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

<sup>1</sup> [www.cbd.int/conferences/indicators-ahteg](http://www.cbd.int/conferences/indicators-ahteg).

6. In addition, the Expert Group provided a report on its work to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its twenty-fifth meeting, including proposals for questions and options for answers for the binary indicators. On this basis, the Subsidiary Body developed its recommendation 25/1 which included further guidance to the Expert Group.

7. The Subsidiary Body at its twenty-sixth meeting will be invited to consider the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under Item 3 of the agenda, and to make recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth meeting.

## **B. Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment**

8. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted decision CP-10/10 on risk assessment and risk management, which welcomed the analysis of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment (AHTEG) on the topics of living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives and living modified fish according to decision CP-9/13, annex I, and endorsed the AHTEG's recommendation that additional voluntary guidance materials be developed to support case-by-case risk assessment of living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety agreed to develop these additional voluntary guidance materials as per annex I of the same decision. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided to establish an AHTEG to work in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to the decision. It also requested the Executive Secretary to convene online discussions of the Online Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management to review an outline of the additional voluntary guidance materials and to support the work of the AHTEG. Likewise, the same decision invited Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant organizations to submit to the Executive Secretary information relevant to the work of the AHTEG, and invited Parties to also submit information on their needs and priorities for further guidance materials on specific topics of risk assessment of living modified organisms, including a rationale following the criteria set out in decision CP-9/13, annex I.

9. During the intersessional period, two rounds of discussions were held in the Open-ended Online Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management collecting views to serve as a basis for the meetings of the AHTEG, which convened two face-to-face meetings in Montreal, Canada. The first meeting of the Group was held from 1 to 3 November 2023;<sup>2</sup> the second meeting of the Group was held from 27 February to 1 March 2024<sup>3</sup>.

10. The Subsidiary Body at its twenty-sixth meeting will be invited to consider the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and to make recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol at its eleventh meeting. List of relevant meeting documents is contained in annex III to this note.

## **C. Multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology**

11. The fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted decision 15/31 on synthetic biology, which established a process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology. The same decision also established a multidisciplinary ad hoc technical expert group on synthetic biology to support the process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment. Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and relevant organizations were invited to

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment on its first meeting ([CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2023/1/4](#))

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment on its second meeting ([CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2024/1/3](#))

provide the Executive Secretary with relevant information on trends in new technological developments in synthetic biology to inform the horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment.

12. During the intersessional period, two rounds of discussions were held in the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology collecting views to serve as a basis for the meetings of the multidisciplinary AHTEG, which convened two face-to-face meetings in Montreal, Canada. The first meeting of the Expert Group was held from 11 to 14 July 2023<sup>4</sup>; the second meeting of the Group was held from 29 January to 2 February 2024<sup>5</sup>. The multidisciplinary AHTEG also held a virtual meeting from 10 to 12 October 2023.

13. The Subsidiary Body at its twenty-sixth meeting will be invited to consider the outcomes of the horizon scanning process contained in the final report of the multidisciplinary AHTEG, and to make recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth meeting and, as appropriate by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol at its eleventh meeting and by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at its fifth meeting. Further, the Subsidiary Body is also requested to consider the report on effectiveness of the horizon scanning process and to make a recommendation on the need to extend that process. List of relevant meeting documents is contained in annex III to this note.

### III. Workshop objectives

14. The purpose of the workshop is to communicate the outcomes of the above noted meetings of the Expert Groups with participants at the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body so that it can inform deliberations under their respective agenda items 3, 5, and 6 of the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

15. The organization of work for the workshop is contained in annex I below. The workshop will consist of plenary presentations by the Co-Chairs and other members of the Expert Groups, to be followed by question-and-answer sessions.

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<sup>4</sup> Report of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment on its first meeting ([CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/3](#))

<sup>5</sup> Report of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment on its second meeting ([CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/3](#))

## Annex I

### Organization of work

<i>Time</i>	<i>Workshop Activities</i>
<b>9.30–9.40 a.m.</b>	<b>1. Opening remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of the Subsidiary Body</li> <li>• Acting Executive Secretary</li> </ul>
<b>9.40–10.20 a.m.</b>	<b>2. Indicators for the monitoring framework</b> <i>To be moderated by the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on key outcomes by the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on indicators for the monitoring framework</li> <li>• Presentation on proposed disaggregations related to ecosystems</li> <li>• Questions and answers</li> </ul>
<b>10.20-10.35 a.m.</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>10.35–11.20 a.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on the linkages with the traditional knowledge indicators</li> <li>• Presentation from the Co-Chairs of the Technical Expert Group on financial reporting</li> <li>• Presentation on monitoring access and benefit-sharing</li> <li>• Questions and answers</li> </ul>
<b>11.20–12 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel discussion on building capacity and improving data</li> <li>• Questions and answers</li> </ul>
<b>12-1 p.m.</b>	<b>Lunch break.</b> The cafeteria is open to participants.
<b>1–1.30 p.m.</b>	<b>3. Risk assessment</b> <i>To be moderated by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment</i>  Presentation of the draft additional voluntary guidance materials to support case-by-case risk assessment of living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives
<b>1.30–2.30 p.m.</b>	Questions and answers & panel discussion
<b>2.30–3 p.m.</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>3–4 p.m.</b>	<b>4. Synthetic biology</b> <i>To be moderated by the Co-Chairs of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of key outcomes of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology, including outcomes of the first horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment step</li> <li>• Review of the process</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refined methodology for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment</li><li>• Literature review of trends and issues in synthetic biology (2012–2023)</li></ul>
<b>4– 4.30 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Questions and answers</li></ul>
<b>4.30 – 5 p.m.</b>	<b>Summing up and closing remarks</b>

**Annex II****List of documents related to the work of the Expert Group on indicators for the monitoring framework**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
CBD/SBSTTA/26/2	Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
CBD/SBSTTA/26/2/Add.1	Advice from the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on the wording of the binary questions in the monitoring framework
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/11	Scientific and technical review of the traditional knowledge indicators
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/12	Study on access and benefit-sharing indicators as they relate to Target 13 and Goal C of the Framework
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/13	Report of the online discussions of the Liaison Group on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as it relates to Target 17
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/14	Summary of views on the metadata and explanatory note prepared by the ad hoc technical expert group on indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/18	Report of the expert meeting on developing a methodology for headline indicator 7.2 on pesticide use under the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/19	Summary of advice on the existing capacity, gaps and needs related to the monitoring of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework prepared by the ad hoc technical expert group on indicators for the Framework
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/20	The study on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Indicator D.3 on Private Funding
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/21	Guidance from the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation regarding indicators for Target 20
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/XX (TBC)	<i>Title to be confirmed</i> “Comments received on the outputs of the Expert Group received prior to SBSTTA 26”
CBD/IND/AHTEG/2024/6/2	Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at its sixth meeting See <a href="#">all Expert group meeting reports at this link</a>

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CBD/TSC/IAG/2024/1/2	Third meeting of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation
CBD/FM/TEG/2024/1/2	Second meeting of the Technical Expert Group on Financial Reporting
CBD/FM/TEG/2023/1/3	First meeting of the Technical Expert Group on Financial Reporting

**Annex III****List of documents related to the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
CBD/SBSTTA/26/5	Risk assessment and risk management
CBD/SBSTTA/26/5/Add.1	Additional voluntary guidance materials to support case-by-case risk assessments of living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives
CBD/CP/RA/AHTEG/2024/1/3	Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment on its second meeting

**Annex IV****List of documents related to the work of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
CBD/SBSTTA/26/4	Synthetic biology
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/4	Additional prioritized trends and issues in synthetic biology
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/5	Draft Literature Review of Trends and Issues in Synthetic Biology (2012–2023)
CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/6	Synthesis of peer review comments on the outcomes and methodology of the horizon scanning process
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/3	Report of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment on its second meeting