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Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

Operation and activities of the Biosafety Clearing-House

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Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present document contains an overview of the activities undertaken by the Secretariat pursuant to decision [CP-11/3](#), in which the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety requested the Executive Secretary: (a) to continue to maintain the Biosafety Clearing-House and to make necessary improvements to it, including those recommended by the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House and those requested by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, and to the functionalities of various parts of the platform, so as to avoid creating new thematic pages; (b) to continue to translate pages of the Biosafety Clearing-House, including new features and content as they are developed, to ensure the availability of the platform in the six official languages of the United Nations; (c) to develop a customized biosafety national website template using the Bioland tool and to make it available to Parties wishing to build a national biosafety website with linkages to the Biosafety Clearing-House; (d) to continue to develop capacity-building materials and to provide training on the new functionalities of the Biosafety Clearing-House; and (e) to continue to collaborate with other biosafety-related databases and organizations.

II. Progress on the implementation and administration of the Biosafety Clearing-House

A. Major improvements and developments in the Biosafety Clearing-House

1. Development of a customized biosafety national website template using the Bioland tool

2. In response to the request contained in subparagraph 10 (c) of decision [CP-11/3](#) and on the basis of the mock-up designed following feedback from the user survey conducted in 2024,¹ the Secretariat is developing a customized biosafety national website template using the Bioland tool.

3. New websites built using the template will replace websites built using the Hermes tool, which was the national website tool that the Secretariat previously provided to Parties. While existing links

* [CBD/CP/MOP/12/1](#).

¹ See [CBD/CP/MOP/11/INF/3](#).

with Hermes national websites will remain temporarily, the Hermes tool will be gradually phased out and ultimately retired once the new website template is made available.

4. The Secretariat is currently conducting a pilot project in which members of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House are testing an initial version of the new template. The goal is to test and evaluate the template, receive feedback from the pilot countries and conduct additional rounds of development to ensure that the template is robust and meets the needs of Parties.

5. Parties that were previously provided with a national website using Hermes² will be directly engaged, and the Secretariat will provide guidance and support to all interested Parties on creating a national website using the new template.

2. Development of capacity-building materials and training activities

6. In response to the request contained in subparagraph 10 (d) of decision [CP-11/3](#), the Secretariat has continued to develop and update capacity-building materials and to provide training on the Biosafety Clearing-House, including by updating and creating articles and help videos in the knowledge base.

7. In December 2024, the Secretariat published a step-by-step video guide on how to submit and publish the fifth national report through the Clearing-House. The video has been made available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

8. The Secretariat has provided training and guidance on capacity-building on the Biosafety Clearing-House at a number of workshops and events. For example:

(a) The Secretariat participated in a training course for Caribbean States on risk assessments of living modified organisms, held in Saint John's from 2 to 6 December 2024, during which it provided training on the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(b) At the invitation of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Secretariat actively participated in a webinar on enhancing regional Biosafety Clearing-House nodes for effective biosafety information-sharing, held on 26 March 2025;

(c) The Secretariat participated in an international training course on risk assessments of living modified organisms, held in Brasília from 2 to 6 June 2025, during which it provided training on the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(d) The Secretariat provided training on the Biosafety Clearing-House to customs officers at a workshop on the detection and identification of living modified organisms and the role of customs officials in implementing the Cartagena Protocol, held in Ljubljana from 22 to 26 September 2025;

(e) As described in document CBD/CP/MOP/12/9, on cooperation with international organizations, conventions, and initiatives, the Secretariat was involved in various trainings and workshops in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme under the Global Environment Facility project on support for the preparation of the fifth national report on the

² Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas (The), Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, European Union, Fiji, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, which comprised the joint organization and delivery of regional workshops for African States and Latin American and Caribbean States, which were held in October and November 2025, and Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States and Central and Western Asian States, which were held in January 2026. Through the same collaboration, the Secretariat also provided in-country technical support to Parties requesting additional assistance with the finalization and publication of the fifth national report on the implementation of the Protocol, as well as detailed training to various stakeholders on the use of the Clearing-House, including in Maldives, in June 2026, and Seychelles, in July 2026;

(f) The Secretariat provided direct, online capacity-building support to Parties, upon their request, as indicated in document CBD/CP/MOP/12/9, including the following: an introductory session on the Biosafety Clearing-House with stakeholders in Pakistan in April 2025; a biosafety stakeholder awareness-raising session for Trinidad and Tobago in February 2026 to support the preparation of its fifth national report; and an education and awareness session on the Cartagena Protocol for Guyana in April 2026.

3. Development of other features and functionalities

9. In response to the request contained in subparagraph 10 (a) of decision [CP-11/3](#), the Secretariat has continued to maintain the Biosafety Clearing-House and to make necessary improvements to it, including those recommended by the Informal Advisory Committee and those requested by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, and to the functionalities of various parts of the platform.

10. The Secretariat has performed structural maintenance to the Biosafety Clearing-House to improve the speed and reliability of the platform, including in the following ways:

(a) A portion of the Clearing-House back end, previously hosted on the web server of the Secretariat on its premises, was migrated to the cloud, which has resulted in greater redundancy, especially during periods of peak demand, and helps to ensure a more robust and reliable system;

(b) The server that powers the Clearing-House search function was upgraded through a migration to a multi-node cluster, which helps to guarantee high availability for search operations and other related sections of the Clearing-House, enhancing overall user experience and system stability.

11. The Secretariat has also made several improvements and enhancements to the functionality of the Clearing-House, including the following:

(a) Improvements have been made to the notifications that users receive from the Clearing-House, including the introduction of notifications for recipients of shared drafts when a record has been published and for the owner of a record when another record with which it is linked has been edited or deleted;

(b) A system has been implemented for communicating changes with respect to deleted records, in particular when they are referenced in other records published through the Clearing-House;

(c) Improvements have been made to the search functionality of the Clearing-House, including by allowing users to sort search results by a specific field within each common format;

(d) Tagging based on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has been integrated into the system, replacing the previous tagging system that was based on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which streamlines and modernizes the tagging process and contributes to better data categorization and retrieval;

(e) Improvements have been made to forums and portals hosted on the Clearing-House, including the creation of a simple landing page for all forums and portals,³ and the forum structure has been successfully used as an online interactive workspace for use during training workshops;

(f) An application programming interface is now available through which users can link their website or database directly with the Clearing-House, and provisional documentation on using it has been made available.⁴

12. In line with the joint modalities of operation, the teams responsible for the Biosafety Clearing-House, the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House and the clearing-house mechanism continue to work collaboratively on various issues related to improving the functionality and data quality of the three platforms. That work includes, inter alia, the recent migration of the clearing-house mechanism to its new platform and the alignment of common formats across the three clearing-houses.

13. As highlighted in the progress report on the implementation of the knowledge management strategy in response to decision [16/9 B](#),⁵ the Secretariat has proposed a future strategy for the clearing-house mechanism and knowledge management, including improved interconnections between the various digital products, as well as better support to Parties in their use and access of the clearing-houses.

14. While the clearing-houses benefit from a collaborative approach and shared systems, resources for information technology development are limited, owing to the fact that only one full-time developer works on the Biosafety Clearing-House, the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, the clearing-house mechanism and the online reporting tool. The limited development resources are concentrated on critical priorities, in particular maintaining system stability and ensuring the smooth and timely submission of the fifth national reports.

4. Translation of Biosafety Clearing-House pages

15. In response to the request contained in subparagraph 10 (b) of decision [CP-11/3](#), the Secretariat has continued to ensure the availability of the platform in the six official languages of the United Nations. Translation is an ongoing activity and needs to be conducted at regular intervals, given that changes are constantly made to the pages of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

B. Key elements arising from the fifth assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and midterm evaluation of the implementation plan and the capacity-building action plan for the Protocol

16. At its present meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will consider the fifth assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Protocol and the midterm evaluation of the implementation plan and the capacity-building action plan for the Protocol. To facilitate the process, the Secretariat prepared a comparative analysis,⁶ which provides information on progress towards the goals of the implementation plan and the capacity-building action plan, including Goal A.2 on the Biosafety Clearing-House.

17. The following objectives of the implementation plan relate to that Goal: Parties provide accurate and complete mandatory information in the Biosafety Clearing-House in accordance with their obligations under the Protocol (A.2.1); and Parties publish any non-mandatory biosafety-related information through the Biosafety Clearing-House (A.2.2).

18. The analysis of information showed that progress towards Goal A.2 can be demonstrated in the sharp increases in active users of and visits to the Biosafety Clearing-House, as well as in the increase of Parties having published mandatory information through the Clearing-House. The launch

³ <https://bch.cbd.int/en/portals>.

⁴ <https://developer.cbd.int/clearing-house/bch/>.

⁵ [CBD/SBI/7/11](#).

⁶ [CBD/SBI/7/6/Add.1](#).

of the Clearing-House on its new platform, the development of extensive help materials and the organization of multiple capacity-building events to support users in becoming familiar with the new interface have helped to increase the use of the Clearing-House.

19. The proportion of Parties that reported having published mandatory information through the Biosafety Clearing-House has increased compared with the baseline. Most of the increase is attributable to Parties reporting that they published information partially. For several categories of information, however, the number of Parties that reported having published information fully has fallen compared with the baseline.

20. It was also noted that some discrepancies exist between the information reported by Parties in their fifth national reports and the information published through the Biosafety Clearing-House. For example, in numerous cases, information on illegal and unintentional transboundary movements reported in the fifth national reports had not been made available through the Clearing-House.

C. Thirteenth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House

21. The Secretariat convened the thirteenth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House from 9 to 11 December 2025, to review progress made since the previous meeting, in May 2023, and to seek further guidance on several areas, including ways to improve the functionalities of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

22. The Committee made a series of recommendations, as set out in its report on the work of its thirteenth meeting,⁷ related to interoperability for national websites and other users, functionalities, portals and forums, capacity-building and training, and collaborations with other organizations. The Secretariat has been working on the implementation of those recommendations.

23. At the same meeting, the Committee set out its own intersessional work,⁸ with a view to raising the profile of the platform as a tool for information exchange and the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol. The Committee intends to use its dedicated online forum in the Biosafety Clearing-House to develop an outreach plan and to identify and recommend new links with additional relevant databases.

D. Status of information in the Biosafety Clearing-House

24. The Secretariat continues to manage the Biosafety Clearing-House on a daily basis and monitor the accuracy and completeness of records in the context of urging Parties to ensure that necessary information, such as summaries of risk assessments to accompany records on decisions related to introduction into the environment, is made available through the Clearing-House and that the records therein are kept up to date.

25. The Secretariat reviews and validates reference records for publication through the Biosafety Clearing-House, such as records on living modified organisms, genetic elements, organisms, biosafety virtual library resources and capacity-development initiatives. While the scientific records in the Clearing-House receive considerable attention, a backlog of records on living modified organisms, genetic elements and organisms remain to be published, partly as a result of the extensive research and review that are required to complete mandatory information fields, in particular when submitters provide limited information or when limited information is publicly available. In some cases, confidential business information is cited as the reason for which the information is not provided, despite relevant details being publicly available from other sources. In other cases, the publicly available information is incomplete or heavily redacted, which makes it difficult to locate vital information, such as protein coding sequences, vectors used in transformation processes and transformation event identifiers. For the Clearing-House to remain an important resource on

⁷ [CBD/CP/BCH-IAC/13/3/Rev.1](#), annex I.

⁸ *Ibid.*, annex II.

scientific information on biosafety, it is essential that sufficient technical details are readily available to support the timely review, validation and publication process.

26. Furthermore, many biosafety experts records are outdated and include information on experts who may no longer be actively engaged in the field of biosafety. To enhance the quality of information contained in the roster of experts, the Secretariat is aiming to assist Parties in reviewing, updating and maintaining those national records so that the information is accurate, relevant and up to date.

27. In decision [CP-11/3](#), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol urged Parties to make all required information systematically available on the Biosafety Clearing-House, including legal measures for implementing the Protocol, decisions on the import or release of living modified organisms and cases of unintentional or illegal transboundary movements, and requested Parties to review their national records published in the Clearing-House for accuracy, including by verifying that the information made available on the Clearing-House was up to date and complete. Further, in notification No [2025-001](#), Parties were requested to review their national records in the Clearing-House and make any necessary updates.

28. The work of the Compliance Committee under the Cartagena Protocol has contributed greatly to ensuring the accuracy, completeness and consistency of records in the Biosafety Clearing-House. In accordance with its cyclic organization of work, the Committee periodically reviews the consistency between information in national reports and that in the Clearing-House to ensure that Parties fulfil their obligation to make mandatory information available, as required under the Protocol. The Compliance Committee held its twentieth and twenty-first meetings from 27 to 29 May 2025 and from 10 to 12 June 2026, respectively, in Montreal, Canada.⁹

29. Since the eleventh meeting of the Parties, the number of records published or updated through the Biosafety Clearing-House has increased considerably. The table below provides a summary of information on the number of those records, by type, as at 1 November 2024 and 7 July 2026.

Number of records published and updated in the Biosafety Clearing-House, excluding national reports, submissions and contacts

<i>Record type</i>	<i>Number of records</i>		<i>Increase (percentage)</i>
	<i>As at 1 November 2024</i>	<i>As at 7 July 2026</i>	
National records			
National focal points (Protocol, Biosafety Clearing-House, emergency measures contacts (Article 17))	.. ^a	342	.. ^a
Competent national authorities	312	398	28
Supplementary Protocol competent authority	17	21	24
Biosafety laws, regulations, guidelines and agreements	1 072	1 246	16
Countries' decisions or any other communications	2 676	3 165	18
Risk assessments generated by a regulatory process	2 467	3 094	25
National biosafety websites or databases	134	151	13
Biosafety experts	339	380	12

⁹ See www.cbd.int/meetings/CP-CC-20 and www.cbd.int/meetings/CP-CC-21 for the documents for the meetings.

Record type	Number of records		Increase (percentage)
	As at 1 November 2024	As at 7 July 2026	
Reference records			
Biosafety virtual library resources	1 580	1 652	5
Biosafety organizations	370	409	11
Laboratories for detection and identification of living modified organisms	76	79	4
Living modified organisms	987	1 029	4
Genetic elements	853	955	12
Organisms	266	289	9
Risk assessment generated by an independent or non-regulatory process	32	36	13
Capacity-development initiatives	420	431	3
BCH news	566	593	5
Total	12 167	13 928	14

Abbreviation: BCH, Biosafety Clearing-House.

^a Owing to the changes made to the various national contact databases during the migration process, the Secretariat is unable to generate accurate data for this metric. The total number of records also excludes the national contacts.

30. Submissions pursuant to notifications related to the Cartagena Protocol continue to be received directly through the Biosafety Clearing-House. Since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, submissions have been received and published through the Clearing-House in response to notifications Nos. [2025-001](#), [2025-017](#), [2025-065](#), [2025-136](#), [2026-010](#) and [2026-038](#). As at 7 July 2026, 157 submission records had been published in that manner since that eleventh meeting, 103 of which were from Governments and 54 were from organizations. Given the success of the submissions process through the Biosafety Clearing-House, submissions pursuant to notifications related to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization are now being received through the clearing-house mechanism.

31. Online discussions and forums related to the Cartagena Protocol continue to be convened through the Biosafety Clearing-House, including the following:

- (a) Open-ended Online Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management (21 April to 9 May 2025);
- (b) Online Forum on Capacity-building for Biosafety (14 to 18 July 2025);
- (c) Online discussions of the Network of Laboratories for the Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms (24 November to 5 December 2025);
- (d) BCH on BCH Forum (ongoing);
- (e) Discussion forum for the Compliance Committee (exclusive to members of the Committee);
- (f) Online forum of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House (ongoing; exclusive to members of the Committee).

III. Collaboration with other biosafety-related organizations

32. In subparagraph 10 (e) of decision [CP-11/3](#), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to continue to collaborate with other biosafety-related databases and organizations.

33. The Secretariat actively coordinates with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to strengthen links among the Biosafety Clearing-House, the FAO GM Foods Platform and the OECD BioTrack Product Database. Governments submitting decision and risk assessment records related to living modified organisms for commercial use may choose to have the records forwarded to FAO and OECD for possible inclusion in the FAO GM Foods Platform and the BioTrack Product Database, respectively. Established in September 2022, this automated notification system continues to function and provides FAO and OECD with information on relevant records that are being published through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

34. The Secretariat has also conducted a joint mapping exercise to explore potential coordination of the modified trait categories among the databases of the Biosafety Clearing-House, FAO and OECD. The Secretariat is finalizing an initial mapping of the modified trait categories of the Biosafety Clearing-House to the categories in the FAO GM Foods Platform and the OECD BioTrack Product Database.

35. The Secretariat continues to provide direct links with the CropLife International Detection Methods Database and the European Union Reference Laboratory for Genetically Modified Food and Feed. Detection method information is dynamically integrated from the two databases. When a user submits a living modified organism record, detection methods from the other databases are automatically appended, and information on detection methods is visible when viewing a living modified organism record that has associated detection methods in either database.

36. The Secretariat has been improving modalities for seamless links among other websites and databases using a new application programming interface. The tool is already being used by the European Commission Joint Research Centre to display information from the Biosafety Clearing-House in the GMOMETHODS and GMO-Matrix databases of the European Union Reference Laboratory for Genetically Modified Food and Feed. The Secretariat is therefore reviewing the ways in which the new application programming interface could be used to support direct links with other biosafety-related organizations.

IV. Draft decision

37. In view of the above, and taking into consideration the recommendations of the Compliance Committee under the Cartagena Protocol relating to the Biosafety Clearing-House, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol

1. *Welcomes with appreciation* the work of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House, including the recommendations made at its thirteenth meeting¹⁰ and the support provided by the Committee for the development of the customized biosafety national website template using the Bioland tool;

2. *Welcomes* progress towards Goal A.2 of the implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety,^{11,12} in particular the increase in Parties publishing mandatory information

¹⁰ [CBD/CP/BCH-IAC/13/3/Rev.1](#), annex I.

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2226, No. 30619.

¹² Decision [10/3](#), annex.

through the Biosafety Clearing-House, and the ongoing efforts made by Parties to maintain accurate and complete information in the Clearing-House;

3. *Encourages* Parties to continue to review their national records systematically, with a view to ensuring that the information made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House is up to date and complete;

4. *Reminds* Parties of their obligation to publish the final decisions taken regarding the import or release of living modified organisms and corresponding summaries of risk assessments through the Biosafety Clearing-House, in compliance with Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol;

5. *Requests* Parties to review the biosafety experts national records published through the Biosafety Clearing-House and associated with each Party, with a view to ensuring that the list of experts is up to date, outdated records are removed and all relevant experts are included;

6. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to make available and submit scientific information through the Biosafety Clearing-House, ensuring that sufficient technical detail is readily provided to support the timely review, validation and publication of records;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To continue to maintain the Biosafety Clearing-House and to make any necessary improvements to it, including those recommended by the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(b) To continue to update and publish reference records in the Biosafety Clearing-House and to support Parties in updating the biosafety experts national records referred to in paragraph 5 above;

(c) To make the new customized biosafety national website template available to all Parties wishing to develop a national biosafety website, support Parties using the Hermes national website tool in transitioning to the new template and provide capacity-building materials and training on the new template;

(d) To continue to collaborate with other biosafety-related databases and organizations.
