



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.: General
30 August 2026

Original: English

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety Twelfth meeting

Yerevan, 19–30 October 2026

Item 11 of the provisional agenda*

**Cooperation with international organizations, bodies
established under other conventions, and initiatives**

Cooperation with international organizations, bodies established under other conventions, and initiatives

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The Implementation Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety¹ and the complementary Capacity-building Action Plan² contain Goal B.4, which is aimed at ensuring that Parties enhance cooperation and coordination on biosafety issues at the national, regional and international levels. Accordingly, the present note provides an overview of the cooperation activities undertaken by the Secretariat to support Parties in achieving that Goal, including cooperation undertaken with other organizations, conventions and initiatives with a view to creating synergies among biosafety-related programmes in general and ensuring the effective implementation of the Protocol in particular.

2. Additional information on collaboration activities conducted in relation to specific areas of the biosafety programme of work is further reported on, where relevant, in the respective pre-sessional documents that have been made available for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol.

II. Overview of ongoing cooperation activities

A. Green Customs Initiative

3. The Secretariat continued to collaborate as a partner in the Green Customs Initiative, the objective of which is to enhance the capacity of customs and other relevant border control authorities to monitor and facilitate legal trade and to detect and prevent illegal trade in environmentally sensitive goods and commodities covered by several trade-related conventions and multilateral environmental agreements.

4. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat participated in the nineteenth and twentieth coordination meetings of the partners of the Green Customs Initiative. At each meeting, partners of the Initiative shared an overview of relevant activities undertaken since the previous meeting and of

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

¹ Decision [CP-10/3](#), annex.

² Decision [CP-10/4](#), annex.

those planned for the following year, with a view to coordinating capacity-building activities, identifying opportunities for collaboration and agreeing on a workplan.

5. A representative of the secretariat of the Green Customs Initiative participated online in the global 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 (for more information on the workshop, see para. 13 below).

B. Cooperation through information-sharing

6. The Secretariat continued to work with various organizations through the sharing of information and collaboration on a number of databases, primarily within the context of the Biosafety Clearing-House. Databases included the GM Foods Platform of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the BioTrack Product Database of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Union Reference Laboratory for Genetically Modified Food and Feed, the CropLife International Detection Methods Database and the European GMO Initiative for a Unified Database System (Euginius). Details of these collaboration activities are provided in document [CBD/CP/MOP/12/8](#) on the operation and activities of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

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

C. Cooperation on technical and scientific issues

8. The Secretariat continued to collaborate with relevant organizations in its efforts to facilitate capacity-building and technical cooperation among Parties within the context of risk assessment, synthetic biology and the detection and identification of living modified organisms.

9. Regarding risk assessments of living modified organisms, the Secretariat organized two workshops. First, the Secretariat organized a training course for Caribbean States on risk assessments of living modified organisms, which was held in St John's from 2 to 6 December 2024.³ The Secretariat worked with representatives of the Finnish Environment Institute, the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety of Germany and the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda to deliver the training material during the course. Second, the Secretariat organized an international training course on risk assessments of living modified organisms, which was held in Brasília from 2 to 6 June 2025.⁴ The Secretariat worked with representatives of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety of Germany, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil, the South African National Biodiversity Institute and UNEP to provide the technical training during the course.

10. Through a combination of presentations and case studies, both workshops provided complementary theoretical and practical training on risk assessment. The role of the Biosafety Clearing-House when conducting risk assessments was also emphasized, and key technical resources, including the *Additional Voluntary Guidance Materials to Support Case-by-Case Risk Assessments of Living Modified Organisms Containing Engineered Gene Drives* (Biosafety Technical Series 07), to support continued learning within the field were also shared.

11. Regarding synthetic biology,⁵ the Secretariat co-organized with the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation of Germany the first capacity-building workshop on synthetic biology,⁶ which was held

³ See [CBD/CP/RA/OM/2024/1/2](#).

⁴ See [CBD/CP/RA/OM/2025/1/2](#).

⁵ Noting the need for a coordinated, complementary and non-duplicative approach on issues related to synthetic biology under the Convention and its Protocols, as emphasized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision [14/19](#), para. 7.

⁶ See [CBD/SYNBIO/WS/2025/1/2](#).

on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, from 3 to 7 November 2025. During the workshop, representatives of the Atomic Energy Authority of Egypt, the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety of Germany, the Ministry of Climate and Environment of Norway, the Third World Network and the Kaunas University of Technology gave presentations on the technical elements of the agenda. The workshop provided an overview of the work conducted under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol and offered an opportunity to discuss capacity-building needs and additional considerations related to recent developments in synthetic biology.

12. In addition to providing technical capacity-building, the Secretariat also cooperates with the International Union for Conservation of Nature on work related to synthetic biology. Both organizations have been present as observers in the respective processes. For example, an expert from the International Union attended the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology, which was held in Montreal, Canada, from 19 to 22 May 2026.⁷ The joint cooperation is expected to continue.

13. Regarding the detection and identification of living modified organisms, the Secretariat organized a workshop on the detection and identification of living modified organisms and the role of customs officials in implementing the Cartagena Protocol, which was held in Ljubljana from 22 to 26 September 2025.⁸ The Secretariat worked with representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy of Slovenia, the National Institute of Biology of Slovenia, the World Customs Organization, the Green Customs Initiative and the Port of Koper to provide the technical training during the workshop. For example, a representative of the World Customs Organization participated online to provide information on the CLiKC! e-learning platform⁹ for customs officers, on which an e-learning course on Article 18 of the Protocol is available. The workshop enabled participants to learn modern techniques used in the detection and identification of living modified organisms and understand the role of customs officials in implementing the Protocol, and provided an opportunity to promote synergies among competent national authorities, laboratory technicians and customs officials.

14. The Secretariat continues to maintain the Network of Laboratories for the Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms,¹⁰ which, as at 1 August 2026, comprised 90 participants from various organizations, and periodically organizes online discussions. The most recent discussions were held from 24 November to 5 December 2025. More information on these discussions can be found in document [CBD/CP/MOP/12/INF/4](#). Furthermore, the Secretariat follows the discussions and activities of the community of practice of the DETECTIVE project¹¹ to keep abreast of the most recent developments related to the detection and identification of living modified organisms.

15. The Secretariat participated in the FAO Global Agrifood Biotechnologies Conference, which was held in Rome from 16 to 18 June 2025 under the theme “Biotechnologies for a sustainable future: driving agrifood systems transformation”. At the Conference, participants discussed the most recent advancements in the field, identified opportunities and risks associated with biotechnologies and examined how biotechnologies could drive agrifood system transformation, ensure equitable access and deliver meaningful results at all levels. The Conference also provided an opportunity to highlight international platforms, including the FAO GM Foods Platform, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the OECD BioTrack Product Database, as critical tools for promoting active data-sharing and transparency. These collaborative efforts support science-based and informed decision-making and help countries to navigate regulatory challenges more effectively.

⁷ See notification No. [2026-018](#) and [CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2026/1/3](#).

⁸ See [CBD/CP/DI/WS/2025/1/2](#).

⁹ Available at <https://clike.wcoomd.org/>.

¹⁰ Available at <https://bch.cbd.int/en/portals/detection/network-of-labs>.

¹¹ See <https://detective-ngt.eu>.

16. The Secretariat also participated in the conference entitled “Modern molecular methods in biotechnology: perspectives for research and applications”, which was hosted by the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety of Germany and held in Berlin on 24 and 25 February 2026. The conference, which convened experts from regulatory authorities, reference laboratories and research institutions, provided an opportunity to exchange information on recent developments in biotechnology and in the detection and identification of living modified organisms.

D. Outreach activities

17. In support of regional preparations for the meetings of the subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat participated in virtual sessions convened by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and by the International Academy for Nature Conservation on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, to provide briefings on topics relevant to biosafety.

18. The Secretariat also provided direct, online capacity-building support to Parties upon request. For instance, the Secretariat organized an online introductory session on the Biosafety Clearing-House for stakeholders in Pakistan in April 2025. The Secretariat also participated online in a session on biosafety for stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago in February 2026 to support the preparation of the country’s fifth national report. In addition, the Secretariat participated in an online educational and awareness-raising session on the Cartagena Protocol for stakeholders in Guyana in April 2026. Parties are reminded that they may contact the Secretariat to request direct capacity-building support.

19. The Secretariat also delivers presentations to stakeholder organizations upon request and seeks to broaden technical and scientific engagement on areas of work related to biosafety. In that regard, the Secretariat gave an online presentation for the African Society for Synthetic Biology to brief delegates on recent developments in synthetic biology and in risk assessments of living modified organisms.

E. Donor-funded cooperation projects

20. The Secretariat, with the financial support of the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, initiated a collaboration with FAO to support Parties in strengthening their biosafety legislation. Financing was also provided by UNEP, through the Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law. Through this global project, the FAO Development Law Service has provided technical legal assistance to help four Parties in the development and amendment of legal instruments. In addition, capacity-building activities have been conducted for Parties in the African, Latin American and Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions. Furthermore, a publication developed jointly by FAO, UNEP and the Secretariat provides a practical framework to support Parties in analysing their national legal frameworks and identifying regulatory gaps. The publication is expected to be released in 2026. The project is expected to end in the first half of 2027.

21. In June 2026, the Secretariat was awarded approximately 1.3 million United States dollars from the Kunming Biodiversity Fund to implement the project entitled “Enhancing biosafety capacity for sustainable use”. The Secretariat will collaborate with the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology and engage other experts as needed to implement the project. The focus of the project will be on risk assessments of living modified organisms and creating change at the individual, national and international levels. More information on the project can be found in notification No. [2026-059](#). Activities will continue through December 2028.

F. Cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme

22. The Secretariat participated in the final evaluation of the UNEP-Global Environment Facility project on building capacity for effective participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (phase III). Overall, the third phase of the project was deemed to have yielded satisfactory results, consolidating and scaling up achievements from earlier phases, while remaining highly relevant to the environmental governance mandates of both the Cartagena Protocol and UNEP.

23. At the invitation of UNEP, under the Global Environment Facility project to support preparations for the fifth national report on the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, the Secretariat co-organized regional workshops for African States and Latin American and Caribbean States, which were held in October and November 2025, and for Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States and Central and West Asian States, which were held in January 2026. The purpose of the workshops was to provide technical support to Parties in drafting their national reports, increase stakeholder engagement, provide hands-on training on submitting the reports through the Biosafety Clearing-House and promote knowledge exchange through peer-to-peer learning.

24. The Secretariat also collaborated with UNEP and the Global Environment Facility to provide in-country technical support to Parties requesting additional assistance with the finalization and publication of their fifth national reports. Detailed training on the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House was provided to stakeholders in Maldives in June 2026 and Seychelles in July 2026.

25. The Secretariat also collaborated with UNEP on the international training course on risk assessments of living modified organisms held in Brasília from 2 to 6 June 2025 (for more information on the training course, see para. 9 above). A representative of UNEP gave a presentation on the integration of biosafety targets into revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans, with a view to supporting alignment with the Cartagena Protocol. Furthermore, as a result of the cooperation with UNEP, and with funding from the European Union through the African, Caribbean and Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements 3 programme,¹² additional experts from the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions were able to participate.

G. Cooperation with the secretariats of the Aarhus Convention and Escazú Agreement on access to information and public participation

26. With regard to public awareness and outreach, the Secretariat continued to collaborate with the Secretariat of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and the Secretariat of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).

27. Accordingly, the secretariats of the Escazú Agreement and the Aarhus Convention convened a side event on the margins of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement. The event, entitled “Support for the implementation of the Escazú Agreement, the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: access to information, public participation and access to justice”, was held on 24 April 2026. During the event, the Parties to these treaties and a broad range of stakeholders, including representatives of the private sector and non-governmental organizations, highlighted critical needs and recent developments under the Escazú Agreement, the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol. The event also marked the beginning of an ongoing collaboration among the secretariats of the three instruments to promote synergies and support their continued implementation in the areas of access to information, public participation and access to justice.

28. Regarding the Aarhus Convention specifically, the amendment on genetically modified organisms¹³ of the Aarhus Convention officially entered into force on 20 April 2025. Its entry into force and translation into national measures were celebrated by the Secretariat and will further facilitate the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol. Furthermore, on 18 November 2025, Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol participated in a joint side event on the margins of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention to discuss the theme

¹² The African, Caribbean and Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements 3 programme is a joint partnership between the European Union, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, UNEP and FAO. The aim of the programme is to build capacity and support African, Caribbean and Pacific countries in fulfilling their obligations as parties to multilateral environmental agreements.

¹³ Adopted at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (decision II/1, annex).

“Promoting transparency and participatory approaches to biosafety-related decision-making” and to celebrate the entry into force of the amendment on genetically modified organisms.

29. The collaboration between the three secretariats is expected to continue, with the next global round table on living modified organisms and genetically modified organisms provisionally scheduled for 1 to 3 December 2027 in Geneva, Switzerland.

H. Collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

30. The Secretariat continued to collaborate with the OECD Working Party on the Harmonization of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology on technical issues related to the environmental risk and safety assessment of modern biotechnology and with the OECD secretariat on the BioTrack Product Database. In addition, the Secretariat participated in joint activities with the Working Party for the Safety of Novel Foods and Feeds and started collaborating with the Working Party on Biotechnology, Nanotechnology and Converging Technologies in the context of policy discussions on synthetic biology.

31. The Secretariat also participated in the thirty-ninth and fortieth meetings of the Working Party on the Harmonization of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology. The Secretariat was thus able to contribute to discussions on topics of relevance to the Cartagena Protocol, including by participating in the process related to the development of unique identifiers for living modified animals and microorganisms, which is currently under consideration by the Working Party. The collaboration also resulted in the organization of an online webinar to discuss the extension of the OECD unique identifier system (historically used for transgenic plants) to transgenic animals on 5 December 2025.

III. Conclusions

32. Cooperation with international organizations, bodies established under other conventions, and initiatives, including relevant entities at the national and regional levels and indigenous peoples and local communities, continues to be a key element in the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and the work of the Secretariat. The continued participation of the Secretariat in cooperation activities will depend on the availability of resources.

33. While a specific decision on cooperation may not be necessary at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, Parties may wish to address cooperation under specific agenda items, as appropriate, and to ensure that continued financial support is provided to enable the Secretariat to carry out cooperation activities. The lack of resources for collaborative work with other organizations, conventions and initiatives relevant to biosafety should be considered, with a view to identifying remedial actions, such as including a budget for activities related to the Green Customs Initiative and the Aarhus Convention, among others, so that the Secretariat can effectively engage with other organizations, conventions and initiatives and enhance its collaborative efforts.

34. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, at its twelfth meeting, is invited to take note of the present report.
