



Convention on Biological Diversity

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INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR JOINT MODALITIES OF OPERATION FOR THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM OF THE CONVENTION, THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE AND THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Under Article 14 of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, an Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House was established as part of the clearing-house mechanism under Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its first meeting adopted the modalities of operation of the ABS Clearing-House (see [decision NP-1/2](#)).

3. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to further refine the modalities of operation, taking into account the advice given by the Informal Advisory Committee to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, and feedback received on the implementation and operation of the ABS-Clearing-House, in particular that of Parties, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its third meeting (see [decision NP-2/2](#), para. 8(a)).

4. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol also requested the Executive Secretary to develop, as part of the exercise for refining the modalities, joint modalities of operation for the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the ABS Clearing-House, taking into consideration the web strategy, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at their ninth meeting and the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at their third meeting, with a view to enhancing coherence in the implementation and operation of the common elements of the central clearing-house mechanism, while preserving the specific functionalities of the mechanisms under the Protocols and the Convention (see [decision NP-2/2](#), para. 8(b)).

5. Furthermore, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, in [decision CP-VIII/2](#), paragraph 8(h), requested the Executive Secretary to develop joint modalities of operation between the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention, the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety at their ninth meeting and the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at their third meeting with a view to enhancing coherence in the implementation and operation of the common elements of all components of the central clearing-house mechanism of the Convention.

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6. Pursuant to the decisions referred to above, the purpose of the present document is to propose elements for joint modalities with a view to enhancing coherence in implementation and operation among the clearing-houses established under the Convention and its Protocols and administered by the Secretariat of the Convention, namely, the central clearing-house mechanism, the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House. Formalizing these joint modalities of operation will provide coherent operational guidance for the central clearing-house mechanism and complement the modalities of operation adopted for the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House.

7. The possible elements included in annex I take into account: (a) the experience gained in the implementation of the modalities of operation for the Biosafety Clearing-House and the ABS Clearing-House; (b) progress made in the development and implementation of the central clearing-house mechanism, the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House; (c) the common elements of each of the information-exchange mechanisms; and (d) the website strategy (see [decision XIII/22](#)).

8. The Informal Advisory Committee will be invited to consider the possible elements for joint modalities of operation for the clearing-house mechanism, the ABS Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House. The Executive Secretary will take into account the advice of the Informal Advisory Committee on this issue in the preparation of documents for consideration by the informal advisory committees on the clearing-house mechanism and Biosafety Clearing-House.

*Annex I***POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR JOINT MODALITIES OF OPERATION FOR THE CENTRAL CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM, THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE AND THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE****A. Development and administration by the Secretariat**

1. The Secretariat shall continue to implement and administer the central clearing-house mechanism, the Biosafety Clearing-House, and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (hereafter “clearing-houses”) in accordance with the relevant mandates and decisions under the Convention and its Protocols and on the basis of the guiding principles and core specifications described in this section.
2. The clearing-houses shall be developed and implemented in a manner consistent with the following characteristics:
 - (a) Guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, open access, and open to all Governments;
 - (b) Developed on the basis of clear and identified demand, experience gained, and available resources;
 - (c) Ensuring that the user experience is predictable and coherent across the clearing-houses;
 - (d) Ensuring that the visual design and functionality is intuitive, user-friendly and consistent across the clearing-houses;
 - (e) Ensuring, to the extent possible, that common approaches are taken in the development and administration of the clearing-houses, while preserving the specific functionalities unique to each clearing-house;
 - (f) Ensuring, to the extent possible, the timely provision of on-demand technical assistance for using the clearing-houses.
3. The clearing-houses shall meet the following core specifications:
 - (a) Access and navigation through a publicly available web portal operational in the six official languages of the United Nations;
 - (b) A secure central database acting as the repository of available information;
 - (c) A secure submission mechanism allowing users to publish information in a structured manner through common formats, metadata and controlled vocabulary, while distinguishing between mandatory and optional information;
 - (d) A publicly-available search mechanism allowing the search and retrieval of the content through metadata and controlled vocabularies across all clearing-houses;
 - (e) Unique identifiers to search and retrieve information, where applicable;
 - (f) A secure update mechanism allowing users with the appropriate role to amend or update information;
 - (g) A design that clearly identifies the owner of the information published;
 - (h) An interoperability mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information with other databases and systems, as appropriate;
 - (i) An offline mechanism to register information, as well as to facilitate offline access to available information, upon request and in particular for users with limited Internet access;

B. Role of users with respect to the sharing of information

4. When sharing information through any of the clearing-houses, users shall:

(a) Follow the procedures for publication established for each clearing-house or type of information;

(b) Take responsibility to ensure that the information made available is accurate, complete, relevant and up-to-date;

(c) Not include confidential data, since all information published in the clearing-houses is publicly available;

(d) Not infringe on any intellectual property rights associated with the information published;

(e) Provide metadata which describes the primary data (such as the elements describing the content of a legislative measure chosen from a controlled vocabulary) in an official language of the United Nations, while recognizing that the primary data (for example, a legislative measure), may be submitted in the original language;

(f) Endeavour to provide a courtesy translation into one of the official languages of the United Nations of the primary data submitted.
