



Convention on Biological Diversity

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REPORT ON THE SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISMS FOR THE MEMBER STATES OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL, RIYADH, 14-18 APRIL 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decisions [X/15](#), [XI/2](#), [XII/2 B](#), [XIII/23](#), the Conference of the Parties encouraged Parties to continue to take the necessary steps to establish, strengthen, and ensure the sustainability of national clearing-house mechanisms (CHMs) to provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).
2. Most recently, in decision 14/25, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties and other Governments that do not have national clearing house mechanisms and those wishing to redesign existing ones to use the Bioland tool developed by the Executive Secretary. It also invited governments and relevant organizations, as appropriate, to continue providing the necessary financial, technical and human resources to support the further development of national clearing-house mechanisms, or migration of existing national clearing-house mechanism websites to the Bioland tool. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary was requested to continue to support the efforts of Parties to establish, sustain, and further develop their national clearing-house mechanisms, including through ongoing development and promotion of the Bioland tool and facilitating and organizing training, in collaboration with Parties and relevant organizations, to assist Parties in developing or strengthen their national clearing-house mechanisms.
3. Pursuant to the above decisions and at the request of the Government of Saudi Arabia (the [Saudi Wildlife Authority](#)), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity organized the Subregional Workshop on National Clearing-House Mechanisms for the Member States of the [Gulf Cooperation Council](#). The workshop was held in Riyadh from 14 to 18 April 2019. The workshop was held in English with the interpretation into Arabic as needed.
4. The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of participating countries to establish and sustain effective national clearing-house mechanisms in support of their NBSAPs.
5. The workshop was attended by representatives of four countries: Bahrain, France, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Additional information is provided in the list of participants (annex I) and the feedback synthesis (annex II). The workshop was conducted by Mr. Alexandre Rafalovitch on behalf of the Secretariat and by Mr. Han de Koeijer, Chair of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-house Mechanism, as a resource person.
6. The workshop documentation, including presentations and other information is available online at <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/CHMWS-2019-01>.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOP

Item 1. Opening of the workshop

7. The workshop was opened by Mr. Hany Tatwany, Vice-President of the Saudi Wildlife Authority and the CBD National Focal Point for Saudi Arabia. He welcomed the participants and trainers of the workshop and wished them a successful event.

8. Mr. Faisal Shuraim of the Saudi Wildlife Authority and the CHM Focal Point also made an opening statement and summarized the workshop logistics.

9. On behalf of the Secretariat, Mr. Rafalovitch also made an opening statement. He thanked the Government of Saudi Arabia for their generous financial support, which had enabled the workshop to be convened and to bring together countries interested in receiving practical hands-on training in the Bioland tool.

Item 2. Objectives and programme of the workshop

10. The session started with an introductory presentation by Mr. Rafalovitch on the objectives and programme of the workshop.¹ The overall objective was to strengthen the capacity of participating countries to establish and sustain effective national clearing-house mechanisms in support of the NBSAPs.

11. The learning objectives of the Secretariat of the Convention were also presented. Those objectives were to learn about the situation in the region, such as the experiences and challenges of participating countries, and to gain a better understanding of their needs for further development of their national clearing-house mechanism. Another objective of the Secretariat was to collect feedback on the Bioland tool.

12. In terms of increased capacity after the workshop, each participating country should be able to adopt a sound approach to further developing its national clearing-house mechanism on the basis of a strategic vision and a realistic road map for its implementation. They would also know what kind of support could be expected from the Secretariat to achieve that goal.

13. After the statements, participants were invited to introduce themselves through a tour de table.

Item 3. The role of the clearing-house mechanism and national clearing-house mechanisms

14. Under this agenda item, two presentations were made. The first presentation, by Mr. Rafalovitch, described the proposed work programme for the clearing-house mechanism in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 ([UNEP/CBD/COP/11/31](https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/12e5/da3e/359f7d914c80a2a1e42c3f42/chm-ws-2019-01-item-03-chm-natchm-roles-en.pdf)) and the three goals contributing to that vision.² Special attention was devoted to CHM goal 2, which stated that national clearing-house mechanisms should provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of the NBSAPs (see decision X/15, annex). Details were provided on the activities that should be carried out in order to meet the objectives under that goal. The presentation was followed by a brief discussion to answer any questions.

15. The second presentation, by Mr. de Koeijer, shared lessons learned from implementation of other national CHMs covering the selection of the best tools the establishment of best practices.³ Both technical and non-technical issues were covered.

Item 4. Overview of the Bioland tool

16. Under this item, Mr. Rafalovitch presented the Bioland tool.⁴ He explained the high-level reasons for the Bioland tool offering, the details and limitations of the offer, the up-to-date tool development status and the details on training instances available to the workshop participants.

17. A quick demonstration of a website using the Bioland tool was then given.

¹ See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/d9a1/db9a/99b2fead91a64bcea19f6be2/chm-ws-2019-01-item-02-workshop-objectives-en.pdf>

² See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/12e5/da3e/359f7d914c80a2a1e42c3f42/chm-ws-2019-01-item-03-chm-natchm-roles-en.pdf>

³ See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/40a4/029f/f38bdba806e7fdd6c7a6787c/chm-ws-2019-01-item-03-natchm-setup-en.pdf>

⁴ See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/967d/038c/c7c1bec92870825396217c46/chm-ws-2019-01-item-04-bioland-en.pdf>

Item 5. Hands-on Bioland training

18. Mr. de Koeijer led a highly interactive session in which participants used their country-specific Bioland-based training instances. The participants learned overall Bioland capabilities and workflows as well as populated with the provided content for the following content types:

- (a) Related website (link);
- (b) Event;
- (c) News;
- (d) Project.

19. The participants explored new features of Bioland, including the contributor submission and approval workflow.

20. The participants also explored and provided detailed feedback on the Arabic-language interface and content issues of the Bioland tool.

Item 6. Population of country-specific information

21. Participants continued populating their training websites with the material they discovered as being most relevant to their countries. The material sources included:

- (a) NBSAP documents;
- (b) Organizational websites;
- (c) Google searches.

22. The participants were supported in both one-on-one fashion and as a group by the trainers and by the interpreter to ensure rapid progress.

23. The resulting additional information was then presented on-screen for discussion, additional questions, and feedback on the Bioland tool itself. The overall immediate reaction was positive, and participants indicated that they might provide further feedback as they became more familiar with the new tools.

Item 7. Exploration of partner resources

24. In this session, a Compendium of Guidance on Key Global Databases⁵ by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre was introduced to the participants as a useful summary of partner databases already containing information from or about their countries.

25. The participants were asked to review the databases and select the three that they deemed most relevant to their country's needs.

26. They were then asked to review those resources in depth, specifically focusing on the amount of information available about their country and on the level of support for the Arabic language.

27. At the end of the session, participants discussed their choices and their discoveries.

Item 8. Road map for a national clearing-house mechanism website

28. In this session, additional Bioland functionality was demonstrated, including approaches to building feedback forms and complex surveys.

29. The participants were then asked to complete the end-of-workshop survey that had been built using the Bioland tool.

⁵ See <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources-and-data/biodiversitysynergies>

30. The summary of the feedback is available in the annex II.

Item 9. Pending matters

31. Under this item, participants were invited to raise any pending matter for further discussion or ask questions on any matter that would require clarification. A number of questions about specific Bioland features, Arabic support, and best approaches to integrate with partner systems were raised and discussed.

Item 10. Synthesis and report of the workshop

32. Mr. Rafalovitch briefly recapped what had been done during the workshop. He indicated that participants should not hesitate to contact him for further guidance after the workshop. He encouraged participants to remain in contact with each other for further collaboration or exchange of experience.

Item 11. Closure of the workshop

33. The workshop was closed by Mr. Tatwany. He thanked all the participants for the hard work and looked forward to the benefits of the increased capacity in the region. He also thanked Mr. Han de Koeijer, Chair of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-house Mechanism and the Secretariat for the guidance provided. Mr. Rafalovitch also made a closing statement on behalf of the CBD Secretariat, thanking Government of Saudi Arabia and all the participants for making the workshop a success.

34. The workshop closed at 2.50 p.m. on Wednesday, 17 April 2019.

Non-training activities

35. On the evening of 16 April 2019, the participants visited the [National Museum of Saudi Arabia](#), in the King Abdul Aziz Historical Centre.

36. On 18 April 2019, the participants visited the King Khalid Wildlife Research Centre.

37. Informal one-on-one and small-group consultations were held on the margins of the field trips.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

| | Participant and contact | Organization and address |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <i>Bahrain</i> | | |
| 1. | Mr. Ali Abbas Senior Environmental Specialist Tel.: +973 33191777 Email: aabbas@sce.gov.bh | Supreme Council for the Environment Manama, Bahrain |
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| <i>France</i> | | |
| 3. | Mr. Denis Duclos CHM National Focal Point Directeur des relations européennes et internationales Tel.: +33 140798046 Email: denis.duclos@mnhn.fr | Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle Paris, France |
| <i>Oman</i> | | |
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| <i>Saudi Arabia</i> | | |
| 6. | Mr. Hany Ebrahim Mohamed Moustafa GIS and RS Analyst Tel.: +966 509083034 Email: hanyelnagar@mewa.gov.sa | Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA) Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 7. | Mr. Faisal Shuraim CHM National Focal Point Tel.: +966 535933282 Email: f.shuraim@swa.gov.sa | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |

| | Participant and contact | Organization and address |
|-----|--|--|
| 8. | Mr. Abdulkarim-Saleh-Alanazi Environmental Protection Specialist Tel.: +966 533822294 Email: a.alenezi@swa.gov.sa | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 9. | Mr. Fahad Adel Alqthami Environmental Protection Specialist Tel.: +966 566828694 Email: f.alqthami@swa.gov.sa | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 10. | Mr. Ali Alahmari Trainer Tel.: +966 561464446 Email: al555i2009@hotmail.com | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 11. | Mr. Wael Ibrahim Hasan Conservation Training Planner Tel.: +966 532188131 Email: waelhasan1@hotmail.com | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 12. | Mr. Naif Dakhilallah Environment Systems Supervisor Tel.: +966 540680192 Email: norfi@pme.gov.sa | General Authority of Meteorology and Environment Protection Jeddah, Saudi Arabia |
| 13. | Mr. Abdullah Saeed Alalyani Agricultural Engineer Tel.: +966 532416633 Email: abdollah7@hotmail.com | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 14. | Ms. Albandari Y. Alwetaid Trainer Tel.: + 966 505833208 Email: albandari.u@swc.gov.sa | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 15. | Mr. Ali Abdullah Alseqaihi Computer Engineer Tel.: +966 593559955 Email: a.alsoquihi@swa.gov.sa | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 16. | Mr. Khaled Almalki Trainer Tel.: +966 590111107 Email: kh_almalki@outlook.sa | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 17. | Ms. Suliman Nora Trainer Tel.: +966 542909922 Email: nssh@hotmail.com | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| 18. | Mr. Abdullah Fadil Geographical Researcher Tel.: +966 556777773 Email: a_fadeil@hotmail.com | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |

| | Participant and contact | Organization and address |
|--|--|---|
| 19. | Ms. Athar O. Khalawee Environmental Trainer Tel.: +966 59 028 792 Email: khlaw1ao@gmail.com | Saudi Wildlife Authority Riyadh, Saudi Arabia |
| <i>Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity</i> | | |
| 20. | Mr. Alexandre Rafalovitch Website Officer, Clearing-House Mechanism Tel.: +1 514 287 7048 Email: alexandre.rafalovitch@cbd.int | Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity Montreal, Canada |
| <i>Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism</i> | | |
| 21. | Mr. Han de Koeijer CHM national focal point Department of Invertebrates Tel.: +32 26274267 Email: hdekoeijer@naturalsciences.be ; cbd-chm@naturalsciences.be | Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences Brussels, Belgium |

Annex II

FEEDBACK SURVEY SYNTHESIS

| <i>A. General</i> | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. During the workshop, were you able to acquire knowledge related to: | (a) Roles of a CHM and national CHM | | Yes: 13 | No: 2 | | | | |
| | (b) Bioland tool benefits for a national CHM website | | Yes: 14 | No: 1 | | | | |
| | (c) Road map for a national CHM website | | Yes: 13 | No: 2 | | | | |
| 2. To what extent were your expectations regarding the workshop met? | The workshop exceeded my expectations 7 | The workshop met my expectations 7 | The workshop partly met my expectations - | The workshop did not meet my expectations - | | | | |
| 3. How relevant was the subject matter of the course to your job activities? | Very relevant 6 | Somewhat relevant 8 | | Not relevant - | | | | |
| <u>Please evaluate the following:</u> | | | Excellent | Very good | Good | Fair | Poor | Not Applicable |
| <i>B. Content and facilitation of workshop</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 4. The workshop objectives were clear | | | 12 | 3 | - | - | - | - |
| 5. Quality of training material | | | 5 | 6 | - | 1 | - | 3 |
| 6. Organization of sessions | | | 9 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - |
| 7. Balance and relevance of topics | | | 10 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 8. Overall assessment of trainers/facilitators | | | 11 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| <i>C. Usefulness of each session/topic</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Opening of the workshop | | | 11 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 10. Objectives and programme of the workshop | | | 10 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - |
| 11. The role of a clearing-house mechanism and national clearing house mechanisms | | | 9 | 5 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 12. Overview of the Bioland tool | | | 6 | 8 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 13. Hands-on Bioland training | | | 10 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 14. Population of country-specific information | | | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| 15. Exploration of partner resources | | | 7 | 7 | - | - | - | - |
| 16. Road map for a national CHM website | | | 9 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - |
| 17. Pending matters; synthesis and report of the workshop | | | 6 | 5 | 3 | - | - | 1 |
| <i>D. Overall assessment</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Clarity of conclusions after each session | | | 9 | 5 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 19. Overall assessment of the workshop | | | 10 | 5 | - | - | - | - |

| <i>E. Logistics</i> | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20. Time for distributing the invitations, agenda, relevant materials | 9 | 2 | 4 | - | - | - |
| 21. Sufficient time for discussion and participation in sessions | 9 | 4 | 2 | - | - | - |
| 22. Delivery time of travel arrangements and expenses | 6 | 5 | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| 23. Duration of the workshop | 9 | 5 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 24. Quality of workshop venue and facilities | 9 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - |
| 25. Quality of translation services (where applicable) | 5 | - | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 26. Planning and overall organization of the workshop | 11 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - |
| <p>27. What was the most useful element of the workshop?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elements are useful. • Bioland. • Everything. • I have used WordPress before, so, from the technical view, the workshop was a refresher. However, from the theoretical point of view, it was very useful. It enriched my knowledge about the CBD and the Bioland tool and how it made it easy to relate it to my country. • Knowledge of data entry. • National CHM, Bioland tool. • The exercises were good and useful in delivering the information. • The hands-on Bioland. • Using Bioland to add data. • Using the Bioland tools. <p>28. What was the least useful element of the workshop?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing. • Road map. • Some of the exercises took a long time, which should take less time. • The theoretical part was long. <p>Comments or suggestions to improve the content and facilitation of the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I suggest using photo metadata automatically to verify information. • Make a materials and guidelines document for the Bioland tool. • Make a user manual for the Bioland tool. • Some technical part. • Some of the elements, like “Government”, should be taken out. Also, I had some difficulties using the “Geo-location tool”; it was a little bit hard to handle and find locations. • The presentation needs more clarity of fonts and format. • The screen is not clear. • User manual for Bioland tool. | | | | | | |