

Sustainable Capacity Building for the Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH III Project)

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Convention on
Biological Diversity

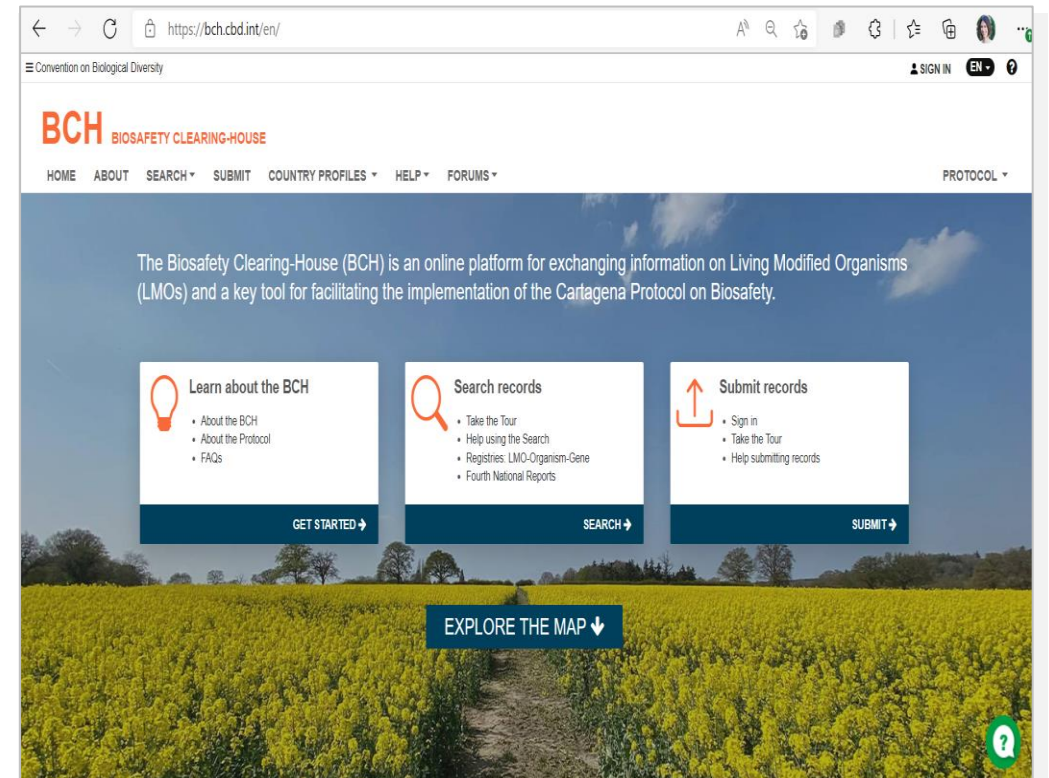
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. *Introduction*
2. *BCH III Project Overview*
3. *Activities and Achieved Results*
4. *Capacity Building Needs*
5. *Recommendations*

1. INTRODUCTION

THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE

- BCH is one of the key pillars of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and is the primary mechanism for information sharing.
- It provides a searchable database of a broad range of information about LMOs and how they are regulated, produced, used, and grown within the jurisdiction of Parties and non-Parties.



1. INTRODUCTION

THE BCH GLOBAL PROJECTS

- Despite the BCH availability, Parties have encountered many challenges in fulfilling their information-sharing obligations and requested capacity building and funding support.
- Guided by COP/MOP requests, several GEF-funded Biosafety projects were designed to assist Parties in having a functional Biosafety regimes with operational BCH systems through the phases of the BCH projects.



1. INTRODUCTION

THE BCH I PROJECT (2007-2009)

- Designed and executed as an “add-on project” to the National Biosafety Framework (NBF) Development Project.
- Its primary focus was providing technical training and infrastructure to enable countries to achieve compliance with Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol.
- 109 Parties out of 136 eligible parties participated in the project

“ Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) of the Cartagena Protocol ”



1. INTRODUCTION

THE BCH II PROJECT (2010-2012)

- The project focused on mobilizing central resources through batches of training materials and electronic forums made available publicly and assistance on site by qualified Regional Advisors.
- It aimed to ensure that the technical expertise acquired is sustained and shared with stakeholders, directly impacting the import, release, and use of living-modified organisms (LMOs) at the national and regional levels.
- 50 parties participated in the project

“ Continued enhancement of building capacity for effective participation in the BCH ”

(COP/MOP-4 Decision BS-IV/5)



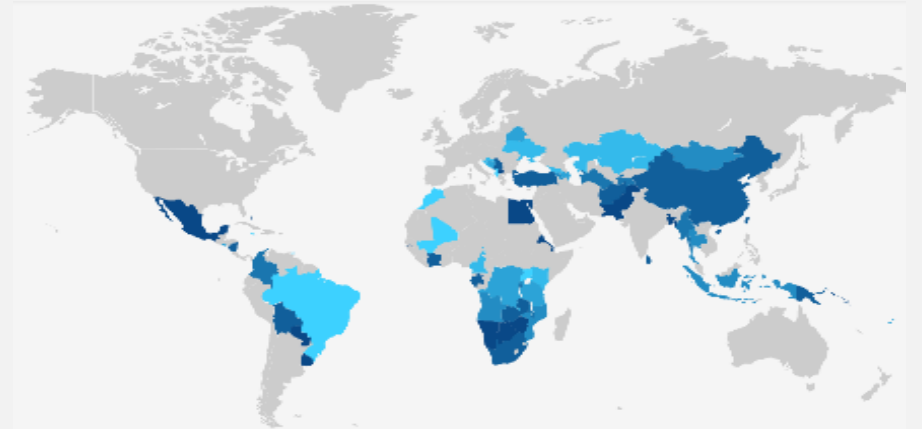
2. THE BCH III PROJECT (2016-2023)

GOAL

- The BCH-III project aims to consolidate previous BCH projects' achievements and build the BCH system's sustainability at national, regional, and global levels.
- Extend the BCH-II project to the last 76 eligible parties which did not take part in BCH II or were not part of the Biosafety Demonstration projects.

“ Project for Sustainable Capacity Building for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing House ”

(COP/MOP-5, Decision BS-V/5)

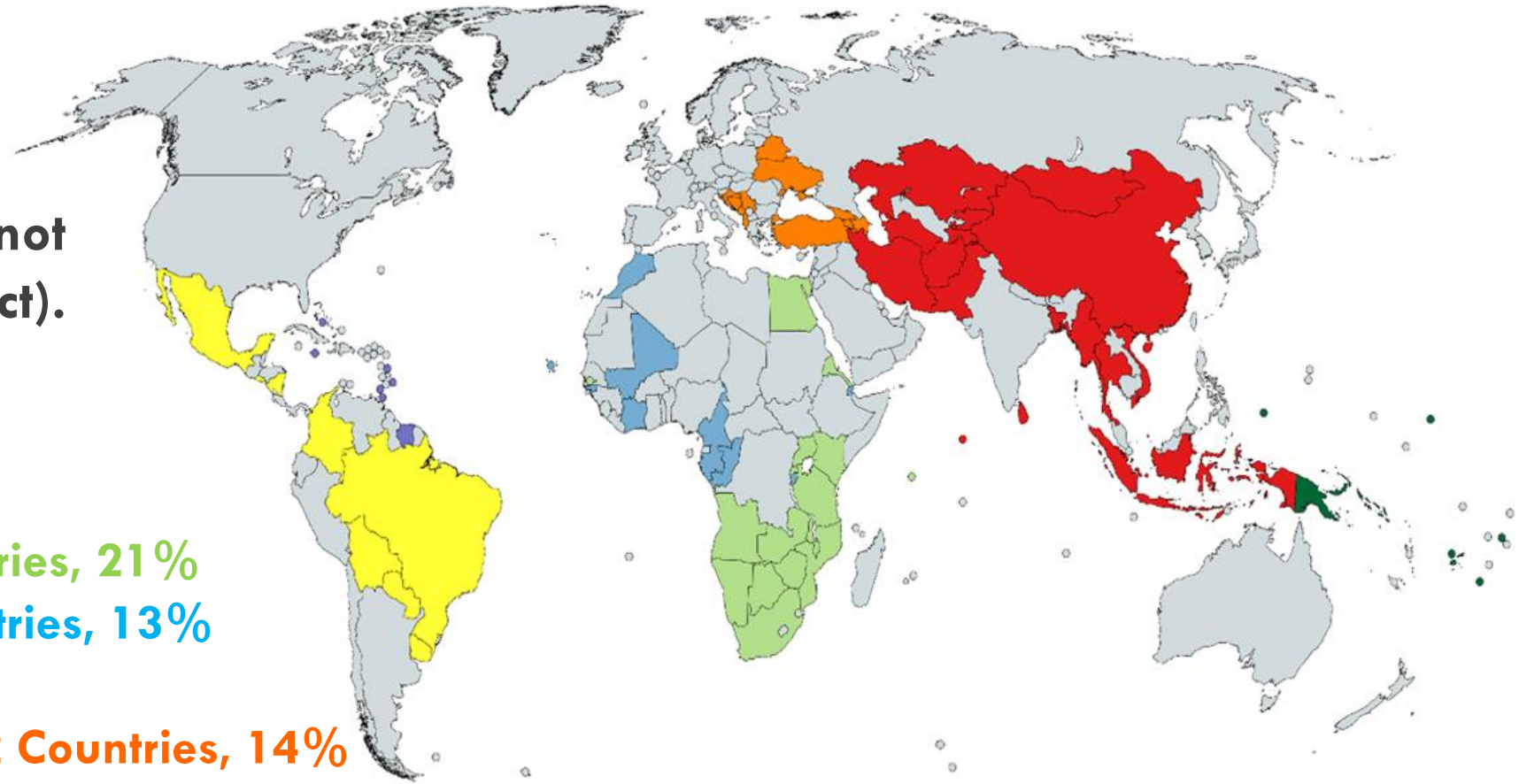


2. THE BCH III PROJECT (2016-2023)

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

The Remaining 76 Parties (not covered by the BCH II Project).

- Africa (Anglophone): 16 countries, 21%**
- Africa (Francophone): 10 countries, 13%**
- Asia: 14 countries, 17%**
- Central and Eastern Europe: 12 Countries, 14%**
- Pacific: 9 countries, 11.5%**
- Latin America: 8 countries, 10.5%**
- Caribbean: 7 countries, 9%**



2. THE BCH III PROJECT (2016-2023)

OBJECTIVES

- To pursue its goal, **two main objectives** were identified:

1. Effective participation in the BCH

Participating Parties to effectively use the BCH Central Portal and set up Portals interoperative with it, including sub-regional or regional portals.

2. Stakeholders' inclusiveness

Key stakeholders will be identified and involved in decision-making and interpretation.



2. THE BCH III PROJECT (2016-2023)

COMPONENTS

01

National BCH
Institutional Capacity
Development including
Effective and Inclusive
Participation,
Production and Sharing
of Information

02

National
Sustainability of
Biosafety
Clearing House
Mechanisms
through the
Establishment of
Effective
National
Procedures

03

Regional
Networking,
Experience and
Knowledge
Sharing

04

Global
Sustainability of
BCH and other
Multilateral
Environmental
Agreements'
sharing
Mechanisms
through the
Regional Advisors
System

Revised logical framework following the 2019 midterm review

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES INTENDED OBJECTIVES

- **Improve national competence in using the BCH for submitting data and finding information to support decision-making;**
- **Identify and establish national procedures and operational linkages to gather information to be put on BCH in line with National Biosafety Frameworks and BCH sustainability and training plan; and**
- **Identify Potential centers of excellence that could support the BCH training and capacity-building activities after the end of the BCH III project.**



Kenya and Gabon's 2nd
workshops (2018, 2022)

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES



3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

COUNTRIES THAT SIGNED THE SSFA PER REGION

1. **Anglophone Africa (15):** Angola, Botswana, Eritrea, Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe,
2. **Francophone Africa (9):** Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Mali,
3. **Caribbean (5):** Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Suriname,
4. **Pacific (1):** Solomon Islands;
5. **Central and Eastern Europe (5):** Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan,
6. **Asia (7):** Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye,
7. **Latin American Region (2):** Nicaragua, Uruguay.

So far, a total of 44 Parties

- **Egypt and Trinidad and Tobago** recently expressed interest in joining the Project.

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN NUMBERS

- A total of 121 national workshops were conducted
 - 44 countries (100%) have completed the 1st National Workshop
 - 42 countries (95%) have completed the 2nd National Workshop, and
 - 35 countries (80%) have completed the 3rd National Workshop.
- 2,338 participants attended National workshops, of which 47% were women,
- 65% of participants were from public institutions,
- Average Participants' knowledge increased by 34% points (relative) after the workshop (from 54% to 88 %),

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES INTENDED OBJECTIVES

- Develop Regional BCH Strategies to help each country to enhance the availability and exchange of relevant information at the BCH according to their current level of BCH implementation, promoting increased compliance with national and international requirements;
- Build an operational intraregional network of cooperation among the participating countries to fulfill Art. 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and related Meeting of Parties decisions on the BCH; and
- Share experiences, good practices, and lessons learned in promoting Public Awareness, Education, and Participation
- **Regional Activities include all the eligible 76 project countries and are not limited to those that signed agreements with UNEP**

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

CONDUCTED REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

- As of date, seven regional workshops have been held, namely:
 1. Anglophone and Francophone Africa (held simultaneously, Cairo, Egypt, May 2017, 26 participants from **26 countries**);
 2. Caribbean (Port of Spain, Trinidad, and Tobago, Oct. 2017, 8 participants from **7 countries**);
 3. Pacific (Nadi, Fiji, Jun. 2017, 8 participants from **8 countries**);
 4. Central and Eastern Europe (Belgrade, Serbia, Nov. 2017, 11 participants **from 10 countries**);
 5. Asia (Daejeon, South Korea, Nov. 2017, 17 participants from **17 countries**) and
 6. Latin American Region (Montevideo, Uruguay, 10-13 Apr. 2018, 10 participants **from 8 countries**).



3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

GLOBAL ACTIVITIES

- As of date, three face to face global pre-COP-MOP trainings workshops were held, namely:

1. **Cancun, Mexico** Workshop, Dec. 2016, 32 participants;
2. **Sharm Elsheikh, Egypt** Workshop, Nov. 2018, 33 participants;
3. **Montreal, Canada, Dec.** 2022, 57 participants.

COP13-COPMOP8-COPMOP2
CANCUN, MEXICO 2016



MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY FOR WELL-BEING
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

**UN BIODIVERSITY
CONFERENCE**

Investing in biodiversity for people and planet



COP 14 - CP/MOP9 - NP/MOP3
Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 2018



3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

WEBINARS

- These are online conferences conducted in 5 UN languages to provide training on specific topics relevant to the BCH, the Cartagena Protocol.
- They are advertised in various fora, including the BCH website and participants from all over attend and actively participate in the discussions.
- So far, 17 well-attended webinars have been conducted, recorded, and made available online by the project.



3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

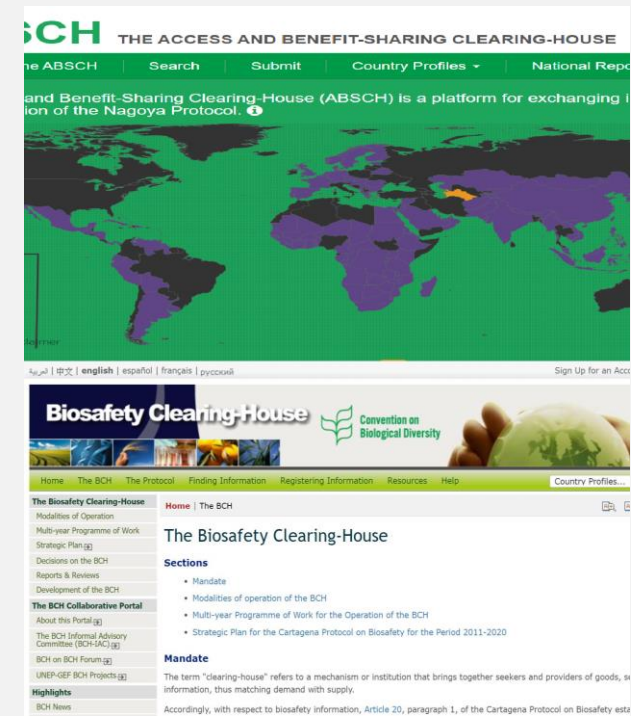
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND PARTNERS

3 Internal Cooperation Agreements (ICAs) were signed between UNEP and the Secretariat

- **The 1st ICA** (USD 54,000) to hire a Web Development Consultant to support the SCBD IT team with the migration of the BCH to its new platform.
- **The 2nd ICA** (USD 120,000) to conduct a detailed review of the BCH and reduce barriers that make it more difficult for users to use these services by streamlining processes,
- **The 3rd ICA** (USD 148,000) to support NFPs/NAUs Trainings workshop, Side Event during COP-MOP10, and hiring a web designer to improve the new BCH platform.



Convention on
Biological Diversity

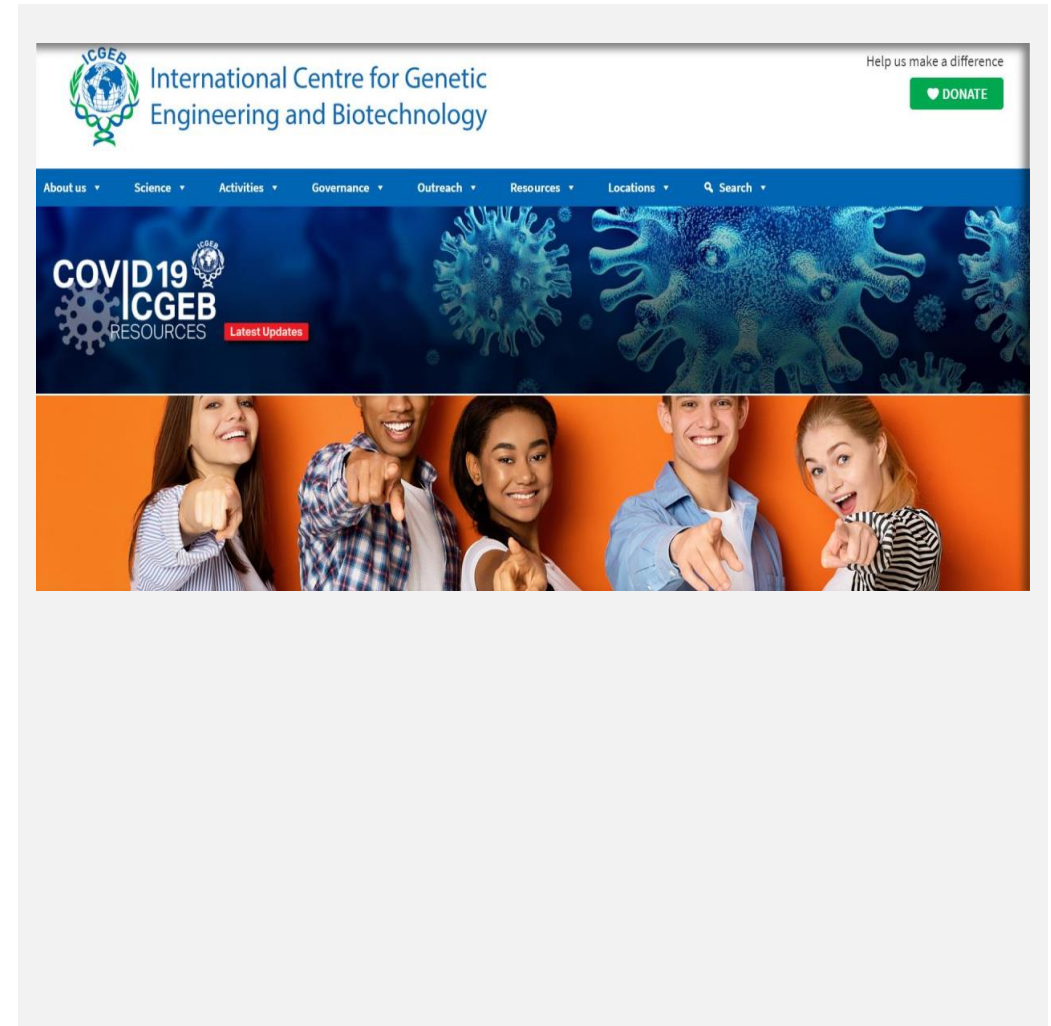


3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND PARTNERS

ICGEB and UNEP (BCH III Project) signed a Small-Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) to cooperate in:

- Developing strategic Communication and Outreach material to provide project countries and stakeholders with clear messages and communication tools on Biosafety, the BCH, and its importance in national Biosafety decision-making.
- Developing a Communication Strategy in line with the project's Mid-Term Review and with the BCH III Needs Assessment Survey conducted in July and August 2020.



3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

INFORMATION PUBLISHED BY BCH III PROJECT COUNTRIES

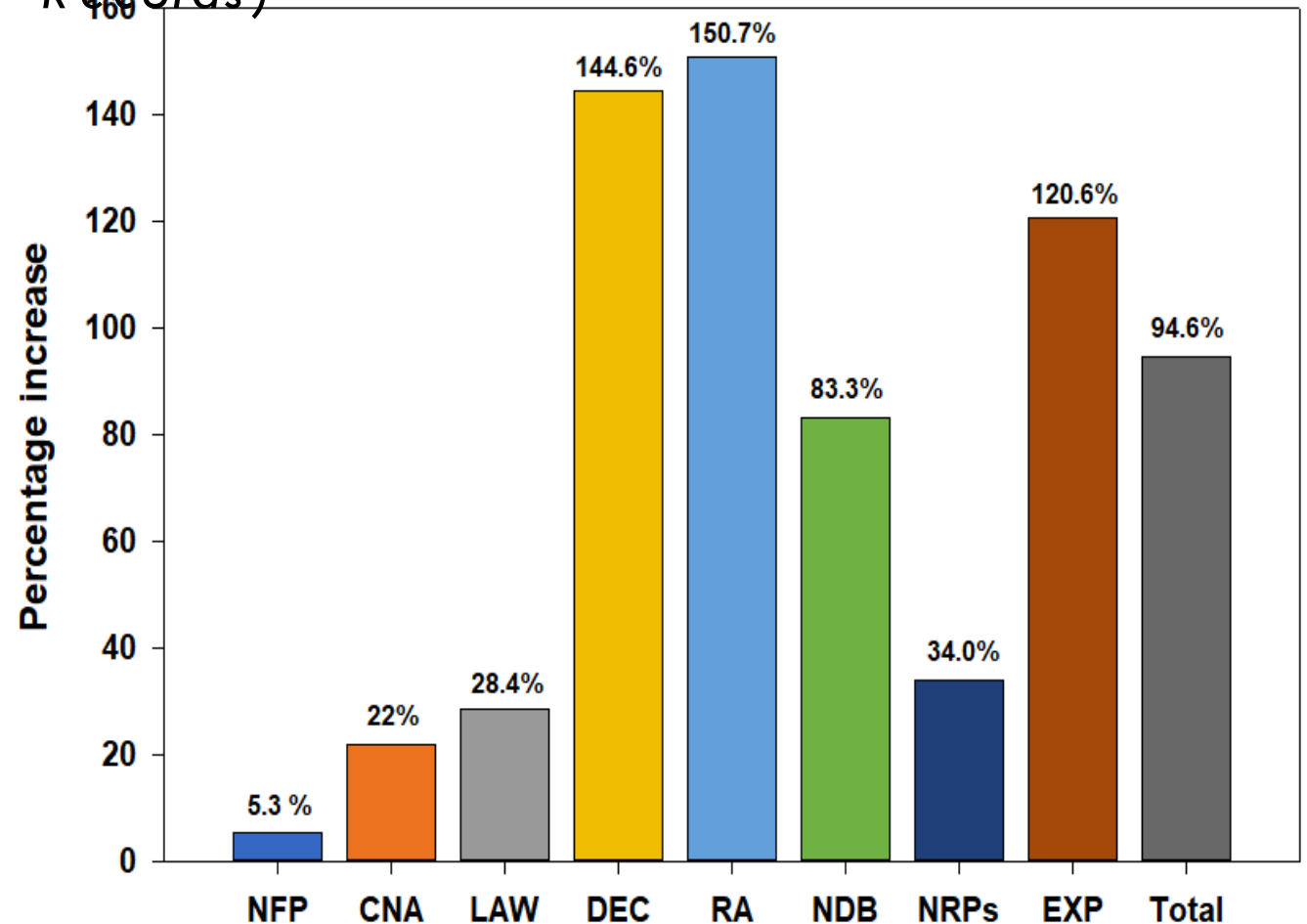
Type of Record	NFP		CNA		LAW		DEC		RA		NDB		NRPs		EXP	
	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now
Region	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now	Before	Now
Africa	46	52	33	46	52	94	25	136	14	139	5	13	58	71	27	43
Asia	26	32	30	42	102	139	24	113	1	81	8	15	29	37	10	41
Pacific	11	12	4	8	8	8	1	0	0	0	1	2	9	17	5	0
Europe	19	17	29	27	105	96	43	8	46	9	5	6	22	30	7	12
Caribbean	13	12	8	7	8	12	0	1	0	0	2	5	13	17	0	5
Latin America	17	14	28	31	59	80	394	933	408	947	3	3	13	21	19	49
Total	132	139	132	161	334	429	487	1191	469	1176	24	44	144	193	68	150

Now as of May 5th, 2023

Increase in publishing mandatory information

The total percentage increase in publishing national records was **94.6%**, between October 2016 and May 2023, which is very high compared to the **project target of 5% increase**

Total increase in Publication between **October 2016** and **May 2023** (Global and per type of National Records)



3. WAY FORWARD

REMAINING ACTIVITIES



4. CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

SURVEY

- In July 2020, an online survey was conducted to gather feedback from national Biosafety stakeholders to:

1. Identify countries' immediate BCH and Biosafety capacity-building needs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. Take stock of Biosafety and BCH implementation progress, and
3. Determine measures that can enhance general knowledge, awareness, participation, and sustainability of the BCH and Biosafety over the longer term.



BCH III Project Survey (Survey Monkey)



4. CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

SURVEY MAIN FINDINGS, EXPECTATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Respondents from countries who completed all national project activities indicated that the project resulted in a better understanding and awareness of the BCH and its more efficient management.
- Respondents across all countries acknowledged the importance of continued capacity building: The project's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Regional Advisors' (RA) expertise have been critical resources.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

SURVEY MAIN FINDINGS, EXPECTATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

3. Expertise and sustainability of Regional Advisors need to be developed by institutionalizing the RA system within UNEP beyond the project.
4. Replicability and sustainability should be ensured by scaling the BCH III RA system to other projects supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

THE REGIONAL ADVISORS NETWORK

- The Advisors are the legacy of the first Global BCH Project, which identified experts with solid Professional Backgrounds in genetics, biological and environmental sciences, international law, and information technology and trained them to become regional resource persons on biosafety.
- These experts are highly culturally sensitive as a multi-lingual, multi-cultural corps of trainers and consultants. They are welcomed by the countries and can advise and work with a wide range of stakeholders from different backgrounds, often in the local language.
- They understand the intricacies of inter-governmental coordination and public consultation processes.

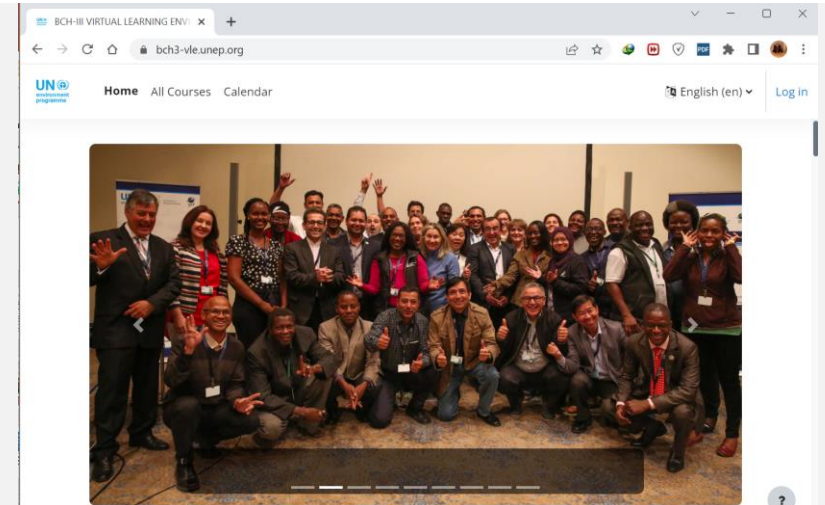


3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

THE PROJECT VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Is a tool to make all the BCH learning materials accessible to different target audiences.
- It includes pre-developed training materials such as manuals, interactive training software, case studies, and curricula for different stakeholders.
- Training materials are organized as virtual courses over which customized national and regional training solutions can be built.
- It is hosted on UNEP servers, regularly updated and maintained, and will be accessible after the project completion.

<https://bch3-vle.unep.org/>



127

Countries using the virtual learning Environment

22727

Active users accessing our amazing resources

94

Courses made for you that you can trust!

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

THE REGIONAL ADVISORS NETWORK

As a part of the BCH III Project, they

- Identify and assess countries' needs for national capacity building, analyze strengths and weaknesses of the Cartagena Protocol implementation at the national level, and recommend intervention in line with international best practices,
- Take lead responsibility for design and operation in capacity building programs and assist national staff in fully understanding national obligations to the Cartagena Protocol,
- Develop and fine-tune through adaption to specific capacity-building requirements, training materials, user manuals, virtual courses, and e-forums in all UN languages,
- Design, conduct, and carry out national and regional training workshops, and
- Assist in evaluating National strategies to ensure continuity and sustainability of fulfillment of obligations related to the Cartagena Protocol with particular emphasis on article 20.



3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

THE REGIONAL ADVISORS NETWORK

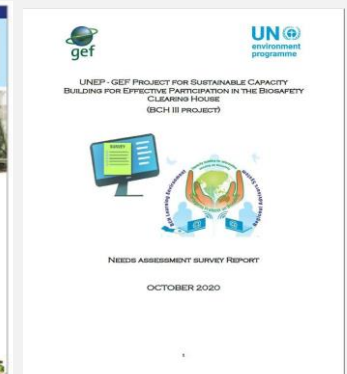
- The Network continues to be part of UNEP's dedicated core of biosafety support to countries delivering capacity-building interventions. UNEP continues to update the skill sets and knowledge of the support network.
 - Training of Trainers (ToT 1), 4-8 May 2015, Canada, at the CBD Secretariat.
 - ToT 2, 3-17 June 2022, in Dubai, UAE.
- Under the BCH III Project, the training of Regional Advisors extended beyond the CBD and its Protocols to cover other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) as well.

“ The Regional Advisors Network as a model mechanism can be used effectively and efficiently in providing expert assistance to countries in fulfilling their obligations under MEAs ”

3. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

TRAINING MATERIALS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Global BCH Outlook: Compiled report (2018)
- Needs Assessment Survey Report (2020)
- Brochure on Regional Advisors Network
- BCH III project in Brief Brochure
- 32 Case studies on using the BCH to search for information and submission of data were updated to be aligned with the new version of the BCH
- 3 Case studies were produced.
- 22 training videos covering various relevant topics were produced.

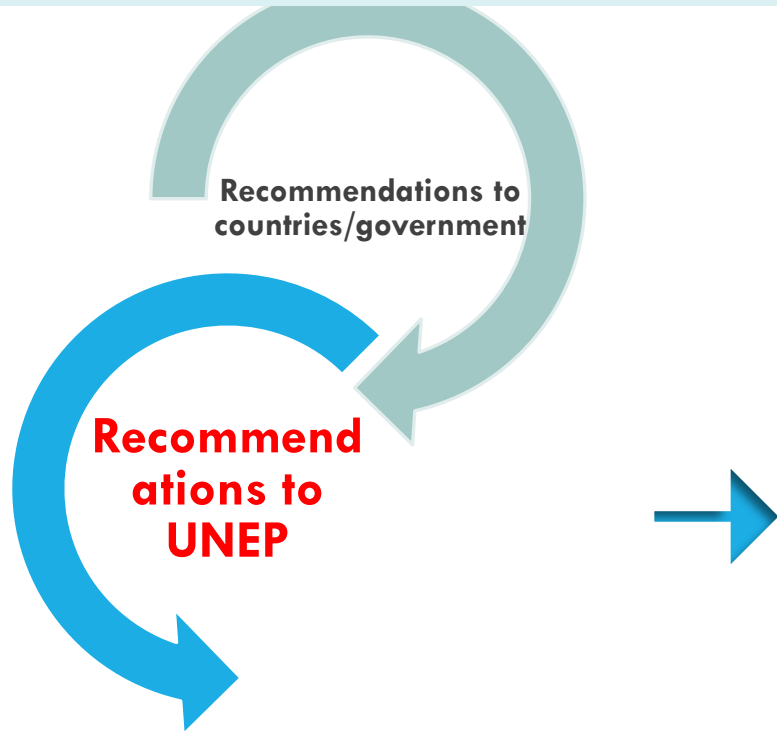


5. RECOMMENDATIONS



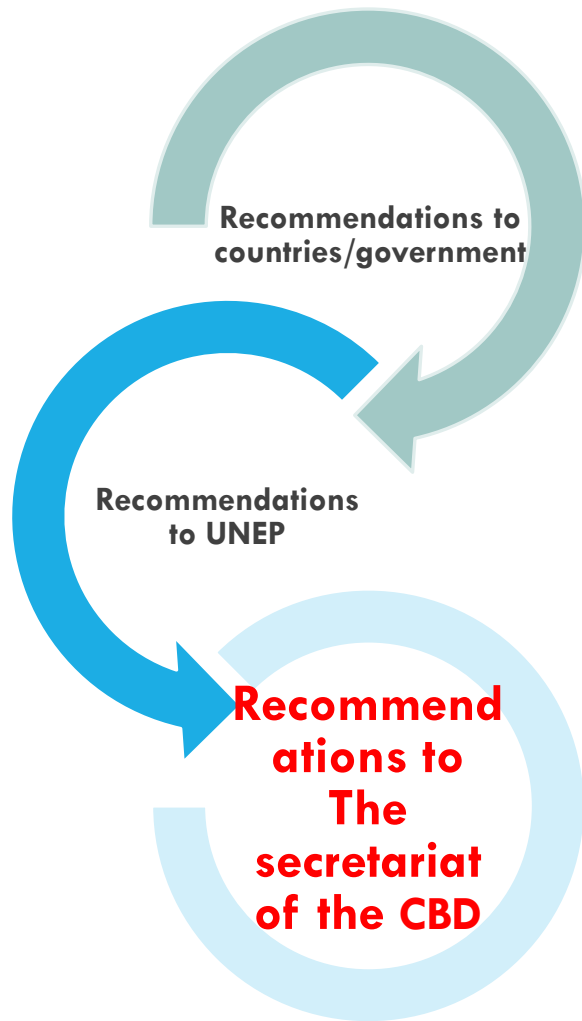
1. Countries are encouraged, Whenever possible, to define clear responsibilities for their Competent National Authorities (CNA), its staff, and their Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Point.
2. Eligible countries that have not yet implemented the project should engage with BCH III project management,
3. Countries that have advanced in implementing the BCH III project are encouraged to take the lead in BCH advocacy at the regional level and during COP-MOPs, raise awareness, support synergies between projects, and promote regional networks and policy harmonization,
4. Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Points are encouraged to:
 - a) allocate more time to their actual task of monitoring their national records on the Biosafety Clearing-House,
 - b) select 'key stakeholders' to boost the establishment of a clearly defined network of biosafety stakeholders, (not clear)
 - c) develop communication programmes on e-learning tools for their national Biosafety Clearing House staff, National Authorized Users (NAUs), and relevant stakeholders.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Strengthen the RAs system through capacity-building activities.
2. Call upon UNEP to institutionalize and scale the RA system in a way to ensure its sustainability and extend its use to provide capacity-building support to other MEAs.
3. Unlock the potential of RAs to prepare technical documents, draft project proposals, and assist countries in preparing reports on implementation, as appropriate.
4. Launch global projects to continue supporting capacity building on the use of the harmonized CBD clearing house mechanisms and international obligations under the CBD and its protocols.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Cooperate with the RAs in developing capacity-building materials on the BCH and the ABSCH.
2. Cooperate with RAs in the translation of technical documents and webpages.
3. Secretariat should assist the project in requesting eligible Parties which endorsed the project to sign the SSFA urgently to use the funds allocated to them



THANK YOU!

- FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE E-MAIL:
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