

Synthetic biology

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decisions [14/19](#) of 29 November 2018, [15/31](#) of 19 December 2022 and [16/21](#) of 1 November 2024,

1. *Adopts* the voluntary thematic action plan to support capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology and knowledge-sharing in the context of synthetic biology for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity¹ and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,² as contained in annex I to the present decision as a non-duplicative and complementary tool to support Parties in accordance with their national priorities and circumstances;

2. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology;³

3. *Notes* the current and potential benefits of synthetic biology in relation to the targets of the Framework, as set out in annex II and III to the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, recognizing that examples are illustrative and not a result of an assessment;

4. *Further notes* the preliminary work on the potential positive and potential negative impacts of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology;⁴

5. *Reminds* Parties to take a precautionary and science-based approach with respect to the research, environmental release and use of synthetic biology applications in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

A. New technological developments in synthetic biology

6. *Decides* to establish an ad hoc technical expert group on synthetic biology, in accordance with the terms of reference contained in annex II to the present decision, to further address the areas of artificial intelligence and computational biology, and applications for conservation use in the context of the Convention and the Framework;

7. *Invites* Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth organizations, academia, research institutions and other relevant organizations to submit information on artificial intelligence and computational biology, and applications for conservation use to support the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group;

8. *Decides* to convene discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology to gather information related to artificial intelligence and computational biology, and applications for conservation use to support the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group;

10. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources:

(a) To synthesize the information on synthetic biology submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 above and the discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum referred to in paragraph 8 above to support the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology;

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

² Decision 15/4, annex.

³ See [CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2026/1/3](#).

⁴ See [CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2026/1/2](#), annex II.

(b) To convene at least one in-person meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology before a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice held before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(c) To support the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the work related to synthetic biology undertaken under the Convention, in accordance with decision [X/40](#) of 29 October 2010; and

(d) To support further the participation of women and youth organizations, academia and research institutions in the work related to synthetic biology undertaken under the Convention;

11. *Requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to consider at a meeting held before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology, with a view to submitting a draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties;

B. Synthesis and review of work relevant to synthetic biology conducted under the Convention and its Protocols

12. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources:

(a) To prepare a stocktake of the work and processes related to synthetic biology undertaken under the Convention and its Protocols since 2010, as described in Annex III of the present decision;

(b) To collect and synthesize information relevant to the stocktake using existing mechanisms, such as the invitation for submissions of information and discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology, as needed;

(c) To submit the stocktake to a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice held before the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties.

13. *Requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to consider the stocktake and prepare a draft recommendation on options to promote a streamlined approach for synthetic biology under the Convention for consideration at the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Annex I

Thematic action plan to support capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology and knowledge-sharing in the context of synthetic biology for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Annex II

Terms of reference for the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology

1. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology shall be convened in compliance with section H of the consolidated modus operandi of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice⁵ with membership expanded to four experts by region.

⁵ Decision [VIII/10](#), annex III.

2. The procedure for avoiding or managing conflicts of interest in expert groups set out in the annex to decision [14/33](#) of 29 November 2018, as amended in decision [16/26](#) of 1 November 2024, shall apply to the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.
3. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group is to:
 - (a) Review the potential positive and the potential negative impacts of artificial intelligence and computational biology and applications for conservation use on the objectives of the Convention and the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including biosafety, economic, social, ecological, cultural, traditional, religious and ethical considerations;
 - (b) Identify capacity-building and development needs related to artificial intelligence and computational biology, and applications for conservation use in the context of the Convention;
 - (c) Review the methodology for horizon scanning as presented in annex IV to document CBD/SBSTTA/26/4;
 - (d) Prepare a report on the outcomes of its work for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at a meeting held before the eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
4. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will take into consideration the particular needs and priorities of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, Parties with economies in transition and megadiverse countries.
5. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will build upon previous work conducted under the Convention on Biological Diversity⁶ and its Protocols, while ensuring a coordinated, complementary and non-duplicative approach.
6. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will work on the basis of the syntheses prepared by the Secretariat pursuant to subparagraph 10 (a) of the present decision and, as necessary, other relevant scientific and technical information.
7. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will, as appropriate, take into account the work of other international organizations in relation to the areas of artificial intelligence and computation biology, and applications for conservation use.

Annex III

Terms of reference for the stocktake of the work conducted under the programme of work on synthetic biology undertaken under the Convention and its Protocols since 2010

1. The stocktake prepared by the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, is to:
 - (a) Compile and review work and processes undertaken related to synthetic biology under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols;
 - (b) Identify gaps, overlaps, duplication and complementarities with existing processes under the Convention and its Protocols;

⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

(c) Review the scope and mandate of other relevant international organizations⁷ on synthetic biology in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(d) Present options for a streamlined approach for synthetic biology for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at a meeting held before the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

3. Additional information gathering should be limited in scope with the view of complementing the review of the scope and mandate of other relevant international organization.

⁷ Including, for example, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Biological Weapons Convention, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Union for Nature Conservation and the International Gene Synthesis Consortium.