



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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### AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vienna, 10-13 December 2019

Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

### **SUPPLEMENTING THE GUIDANCE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTICLE 26 OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. In its decision [CP-9/14](#), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety took note of the “Guidance on the Assessment of Socio-Economic Considerations in the Context of Article 26 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety” as contained in [CBD/CP/MOP/9/10](#), annex, which has been issued as an information document for this meeting.
2. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety invited Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to use and submit preliminary experiences using the voluntary Guidance, as well as examples of methodologies and applications of socio-economic considerations in the light of the elements of the voluntary Guidance, preferably in the form of case studies.
3. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety established an online forum on socio-economic considerations and requested the Executive Secretary to organize moderated discussions of the online forum to comment on and add views to review the compilation of submissions.
4. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety extended the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Socio-economic Considerations to review the outcomes of the online forum in accordance with the terms of reference contained in the annex to decision CP-9/14, and requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to convene a face-to-face meeting of the Group.
5. The present document provides an overview of activities carried out pursuant to decision CP-9/14 in section I. Section II provides considerations for the AHTEG.

#### **I. INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN RESPONSE TO DECISION CP-9/14**

##### **A. Submissions and discussion of the online forum on socio-economic considerations**

6. Pursuant to decision CP-9/14, the Executive Secretary invited Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and indigenous peoples and local communities:<sup>1</sup>

(a) To submit: (i) preliminary experiences using the voluntary Guidance; and (ii) examples of methodologies and applications of socio-economic considerations, in the light of the elements of the voluntary Guidance, preferably in the form of case studies;

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\* CBD/CP/SEC/AHTEG/2019/1/1.

<sup>1</sup> See notification 2019-031, dated 6 March 2019.

(b) To nominate participants for the online discussions.

7. Submissions were received from 14 Parties, 1 other Government, and 1 organization.<sup>2</sup> The submissions were compiled by the Secretariat and can be accessed at: [http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal\\_art26/Submissions2019.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/Submissions2019.shtml).

8. A total of 61 participants from Parties, 3 participants from other Governments, and 11 participants from organizations were nominated and registered to participate in the online discussions.<sup>3</sup>

9. In consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, two rapporteurs, Mr. Ben Durham (South Africa) and Mr. Casper Linnestad (Norway), were selected and served as moderators of the online discussions.

10. The online discussions were held from 9 to 20 September 2019 and were divided into three forums, each dedicated to a specific topic, as follows:

(a) Forum 1: experiences in considering socio-economic aspects in decision-making on living modified organisms (9-4 September 2019);

(b) Forum 2: literature and reports cited in the submissions (14-20 September 2019);

(c) Forum 3: general discussion (14-20 September 2019).

11. The report on the online discussions, prepared in collaboration with the rapporteurs, is available as information document [CBD/CP/SEC/AHTEG/2019/1/INF/1](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/INF/1).

## **B. Meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group**

12. The Secretariat confirmed which experts were available to continue to serve on the AHTEG. To replace those who were no longer available, nominations were invited through notification 2019-068 of 7 August 2019.

13. In consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, taking into account the fields of expertise of nominated experts and with due regard to geographical representation and gender balance, new members were selected, and the composition of the AHTEG was announced through notification 2019-088, dated 15 October 2019.

## **II. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP**

14. In accordance with its terms of reference, the AHTEG is expected to “review the submissions in response to paragraph 2 of decision CP-9/14 and the outcomes of the moderated online discussions and use this information to supplement the voluntary Guidance, by indicating for which stage in the assessment process, as outlined in the voluntary Guidance, the information might be relevant.”

15. As set out above, 16 submissions were received in response to notification 2019-031. Several submissions contained case studies or descriptions of decisions on living modified organisms in which socio-economic aspects had been considered. These descriptions were provided in the submissions from, for example, China, France, Nigeria and Norway. Furthermore, in the submission from New Zealand, reference was made to a large number of decisions in which socio-economic considerations had been taken into account. From among these decisions, New Zealand identified a selection for further consideration by the online forum.<sup>4</sup> Forum 1 provided a dedicated space for a discussion on the examples in these submissions as well as on general aspects.<sup>5</sup>

16. A number of submissions contained references to literature or reports concerning applications of socio-economic considerations, some of which address methodological aspects. The submissions from the

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<sup>2</sup> Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, European Union, France, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Spain, Uruguay, New Zealand, South Africa, United States of America and Third World Network (TWN).

<sup>3</sup> The list of participants can be consulted at: [http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal\\_art26/participants.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/participants.shtml).

<sup>4</sup> The selected decisions by New Zealand, are available, together with the submissions, at: [http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal\\_art26/Submissions2019.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/Submissions2019.shtml)

<sup>5</sup> The discussions of forum 1 are summarized in [CBD/CP/SEC/AHTEG/2019/1/INF/1](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/INF/1), annex, section A.

European Union, Mexico, the United States of America and Third World Network contained such references.<sup>6</sup> Forum 2 hosted discussions about these materials.<sup>7</sup>

17. The submissions furthermore contained a variety of other pieces of information that may be of relevance to the work of the AHTEG. Forum 3 was dedicated to general comments on the submissions, and some of these issues were discussed therein.<sup>8</sup>

18. The AHTEG has been tasked with reviewing the submissions and the outcomes of the online discussions and to use this information to supplement the voluntary Guidance, by indicating the stage of the assessment process, as outlined in the voluntary Guidance, for which the information might be relevant.

19. The Guidance provides an introduction and objective, an operational definition, and principles for the assessment of socio-economic considerations, as well as a section on the overall assessment process. The assessment process outlined in the Guidance consists of three main stages, with stage B divided into three steps:

- (a) Stage A: preparation for assessment;
- (b) Stage B: Assessment and evaluation:
  - (i) Step 1: Scoping;
  - (ii) Step 2: Assessment;
  - (iii) Step 3: Evaluation of results and drawing conclusions;
- (c) Stage C: Review and monitoring.

20. For each stage, the Guidance outlines possible activities, and, for some, further possible elements are provided.

21. The Guidance was developed using a process-based approach, focusing on how an assessment might be performed, rather than focusing on parameters to be assessed. The AHTEG, at its meeting held from 9 to 13 October 2017, agreed that this approach had been a useful way forward.<sup>9</sup>

22. Following a general discussion, the AHTEG may wish to review the submissions and outcomes of the online discussions in the light of the three stages outlined in the Guidance and the activity descriptions provided for each of these stages and use this information to supplement the voluntary Guidance. For example, the AHTEG may wish to indicate that a particular submission provides information that might be relevant for the “assessment and evaluation stage”, in particular the “scoping step”, if the submission provides information on the geographical scope of the assessment.

23. Under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda, and in accordance with its terms of reference, the AHTEG is expected to prepare a report on its work and submit it for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol.

24. The outcomes of the intersessional process will be considered by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties at its tenth meeting.

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<sup>6</sup> The references were made available on the online forum on socio-economic considerations:  
[http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal\\_art26/Forum2019.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/Forum2019.shtml)

<sup>7</sup> The discussions of forum 2 are summarized in [CBD/CP/SEC/AHTEG/2019/1/INF/1](#), annex, section B.

<sup>8</sup> The discussions of forum 3 are summarized in [CBD/CP/SEC/AHTEG/2019/1/INF/1](#), annex, section C.

<sup>9</sup> See [CBD/CP/SEC/AHTEG/2017/3](#), para. 10.