



## Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.  
GENERAL

CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/1/Add.1  
26 April 2019

ENGLISH ONLY

AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP  
ON SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY  
Montreal, Canada, 4-7 June 2019

### ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

#### INTRODUCTION

1. In [decision 14/19](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity welcomed the outcomes of the previous meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology, held in Montreal, Canada, from 5 to 8 December 2017.
2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties decided to extend the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Synthetic Biology with renewed membership, taking into account, inter alia, the work on risk assessment under the Cartagena Protocol, to work in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to that decision. The Conference of the Parties also decided to extend the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology, taking into account the work on risk assessment under the Cartagena Protocol, to support the deliberations of the AHTEG.
3. In response to this decision and with a view to supporting the work of the AHTEG, the Secretariat:
  - (a) Issued a notification<sup>1</sup> inviting the submission of information as outlined in paragraph 16 of the decision;<sup>2</sup>
  - (b) Convened a series of moderated online discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology in March 2019;<sup>3</sup>
  - (c) Compiled and synthesized the outputs of the activities referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above to facilitate the deliberations of the AHTEG.
4. With financial support from the European Union, a meeting of the AHTEG on Synthetic Biology will be held from 4 to 7 June 2019 at the offices of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, Canada. Registration of participants will take place upon arrival at the meeting venue, starting at 8:30 am on the opening day.
5. The report of the AHTEG will be submitted for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its twenty-fourth meeting.

#### ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

6. A representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity will open the meeting of the AHTEG on Synthetic Biology at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 4 June 2019.

<sup>1</sup> [SCBD/CP/DC/MA/MW/87791](#).

<sup>2</sup> Submissions are available through the Biosafety-Clearing House at <https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/submissions/>

<sup>3</sup> The discussions under the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology are available at <https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/>

## **ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

### **2.1. Election of officers**

7. The AHTEG will be invited to elect a Chairperson or Chairpersons for the meeting.

### **2.2. Adoption of the agenda**

8. The AHTEG will be invited to consider and adopt its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda prepared by the Executive Secretary.

### **2.3. Organization of work**

9. The AHTEG will be invited to consider and adopt the proposed organization of its work as contained in annex I below. The work will be conducted in plenary, with the establishment of working groups, as appropriate. The meeting will be conducted in English.

10. The working documents and information documents prepared for the meeting are listed in annex II below.

11. In addition, the Secretariat will be pleased to host a reception for the members of the AHTEG. The reception will be held following the afternoon session of the meeting on 4 June 2019.

## **ITEM 3. CONSIDERATION OF TOPICS AS MANDATED BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

12. The AHTEG will consider the issues set out in its terms of reference as contained in the annex to decision 14/19, building on the work of the Online Forum carried out in March, as well as drawing upon relevant information submitted by Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and indigenous peoples and local communities as per paragraph 3 above.

13. To facilitate its deliberations, the AHTEG will have before it a note by the Executive Secretary providing a brief summary of the activities on synthetic biology as per decision 14/19 and key information to facilitate discussions on the various agenda items (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2). This will be complemented by three background documents: (a) synthesis of the submissions of information, (b) synthesis of the interventions from the online forum, and (c) list of references. AHTEG members are also encouraged to review the original submissions and online discussions,<sup>4</sup> and to consult the list of references prepared by the Secretariat.

### **3.1. New technological developments in synthetic biology**

14. In accordance with paragraph (b) of its terms of reference, the AHTEG will take stock of new technological developments in synthetic biology since the last meeting of the AHTEG, in 2017, including the consideration, among other things, of concrete applications of genome editing if they relate to synthetic biology, in order to support a broad and regular horizon scanning process.

15. In its deliberations, the AHTEG will be invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2.

### **3.2. Synthetic biology applications that are in early stages of research and development, vis-à-vis the three objectives of the Convention**

16. As per paragraph (e) of its terms of reference, the AHTEG will prepare a forward-looking report on synthetic biology applications that are in early stages of research and development, vis-à-vis the three objectives of the Convention, by compiling and analysing information, including but not limited to peer-reviewed published literature.

---

<sup>4</sup> See footnotes 2 and 3.

17. The AHTEG will be invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2, with a view to including in its report a list of synthetic biology applications that are in early stages of research and development, considering the three objectives of the Convention.

**3.3. Synthetic biology organisms that may fall outside the definition of living modified organisms as per the Cartagena Protocol**

18. In accordance with paragraph (d) of its terms of reference, the AHTEG is to consider whether any living organism developed thus far through new developments in synthetic biology fall outside the definition of living modified organisms as per the Cartagena Protocol.

19. To assist in this task, the AHTEG will be invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2.

**3.4. The state of knowledge on the potential environmental impacts of applications of synthetic biology, including those applications that involve organisms containing engineered gene drives**

20. As per paragraph (c) of its terms of reference, the AHTEG will undertake:

“A review of the current state of knowledge by analysing information, including but not limited to peer-reviewed published literature, on the potential positive and negative environmental impacts, taking into account human health, cultural and socioeconomic impacts, especially with regard to the value of biodiversity to indigenous peoples and local communities, of current and near-future applications of synthetic biology, including those applications that involve organisms containing engineered gene drives, taking into account the traits and species potentially subject to release and the dynamics of their dissemination, as well as the need to avoid duplication with the work on risk assessment under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.”

21. In doing so, the AHTEG will be invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2, the list of references collected by the Secretariat and the background document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/INF/4.

**3.5. Options for regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessing of developments**

22. In paragraph (f) of its terms of reference, the AHTEG is mandated to recommend options for carrying out the regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessing of developments referred to in paragraph 3 of decision 14/19.

23. To do this, the AHTEG will be invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2.

**3.6. Relationship between synthetic biology and the criteria set out in decision IX/29, paragraph 12**

24. In accordance with paragraph (a) of its terms of reference, the AHTEG will provide advice on the relationship between synthetic biology and the criteria set out in decision IX/24, paragraph 12, in order to contribute to the completion of the assessment requested in decision XII/24, paragraph 2, building on the preliminary analysis prepared by the Executive Secretary in document [CBD/SBSTTA/22/INF/17](#).

25. In its deliberations, the AHTEG may consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2.

**ITEM 4. OTHER MATTERS**

26. Under this item, participants may raise other matters relevant to the subject matter of the meeting.

**ITEM 5. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

27. The AHTEG will be invited to consider and adopt the report of the meeting.

**ITEM 6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

28. The meeting is expected to close at 5 p.m. on Friday, 7 June 2019.

*Annex I***PROVISIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORK****Tuesday, 4 June 2019**

Morning (9 a.m. - 12 noon)

Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)

Organizational matters (agenda item 2)

Consideration of topics as mandated by the Conference of the Parties: new technological developments in synthetic biology (agenda item 3.1)

Afternoon (1.30 -5 pm)

Synthetic biology applications that are in early stages of research and development, vis-à-vis the three objectives of the Convention (agenda item 3.2)

Synthetic biology organisms that fall outside the definition of living modified organisms as per the Cartagena Protocol (agenda item 3.3)

**Wednesday, 5 June 2019**

Morning (9 a.m. - noon)

The state of knowledge on the potential environmental impacts of applications of synthetic biology, including those applications that involve organisms containing engineered gene drives (agenda item 3.4)

Afternoon (1.:30 to - 5:00 pm)

Options for carrying out the regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessing of developments referred to in paragraph 3 of decision 14/19 (agenda item 3.5)

Advice on the relationship between synthetic biology and the criteria set out in decision IX/29, paragraph 12 (agenda item 3.6)

**Thursday, 6 June 2019**

Morning (9 a.m. - noon)

Pending issues

Afternoon (1.30 - 5 p.m.)

Pending issues

**Friday, 7 June 2019**

Morning (9 a.m. - noon)

Pending issues

Other matters (agenda item 4)

Afternoon (1.30 – 5 p.m.)

Adoption of the report (agenda item 5)

Closure of the meeting (agenda item 6)

*Annex II*

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT  
GROUP ON SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY**

**Working documents**

CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/1	Provisional agenda
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/2	Considerations on synthetic biology as per decision 14/19

**Background documents and other information**

CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/INF/1	Synthesis of submissions on synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/INF/2	Synthesis of discussions of the online forum on synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/INF/3	List of references on synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/INF/4	Information for deliberations on agenda item 3.4
<a href="https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/submissions/">https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/submissions/</a>	Submissions of information on synthetic biology
<a href="https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/">https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/</a>	Discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology
<a href="https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/">CBD/SBSTTA/22/INF/17</a>	Analysis against the criteria set out in paragraph 12 of decision IX/29
<a href="https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/">Conference of the Parties decision 14/19</a>	
<a href="https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/">UNEP/CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2015/1/3</a>	Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology on its meeting held in 2015
<a href="https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/">CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2017/1/3</a>	Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology on its meeting held in 2017

---