



Update since the eleventh meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House

*Informal Advisory Group on the Biosafety Clearing House,
twelfth meeting,
15-16 May 2023*



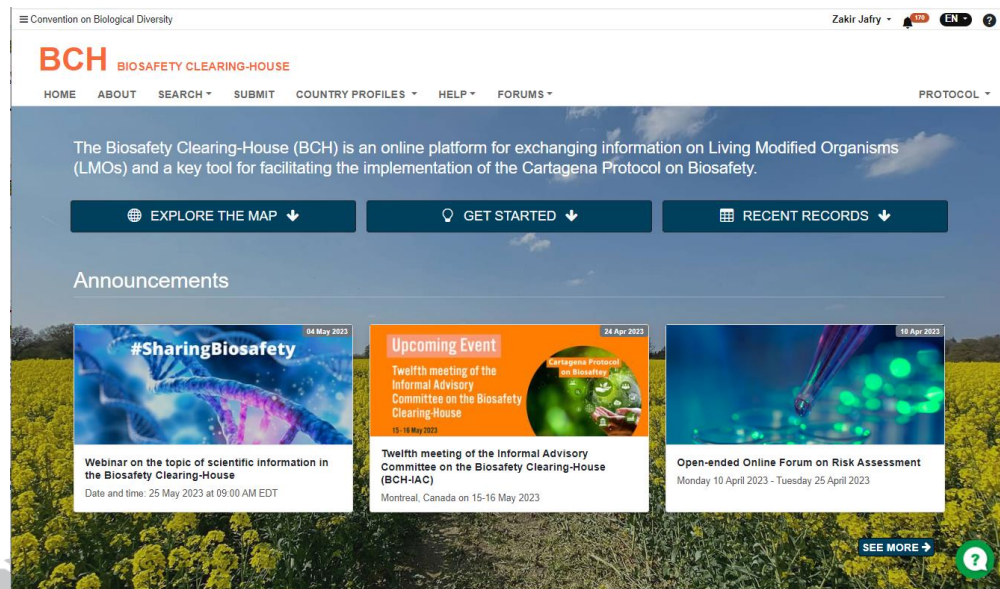
Convention on
Biological Diversity





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Update on the chronogram

- At its eighth meeting (2016), in decision CP-VIII/2, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP) **requested the Executive Secretary** to undertake a number of tasks on the BCH, including carrying out the full migration of the BCH to its new platform and **to send to the BCH focal points a chronogram detailing the migration and follow-up processes.**
- **At the eleventh meeting of the BCH IAC, an update was provided on work completed against the chronogram, and a roadmap was provided towards migration.**





Status of progress made against the chronogram

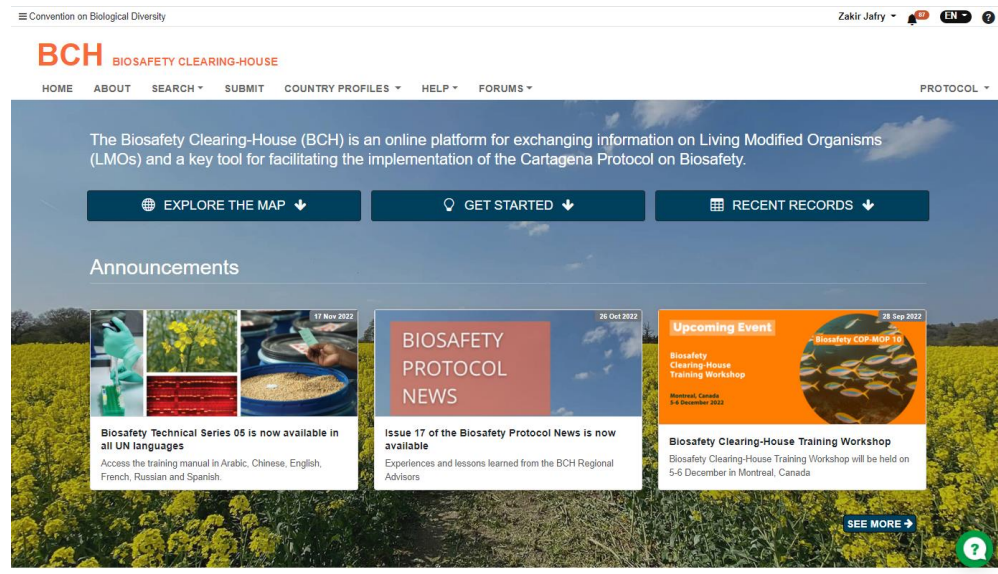
	Activity	Current Status (April 2023)
→ 1	Development of common formats	Completed
→ 2	Development of the search interface and display of search results	Completed
→ 3	Development of the BCH Training site	Completed
→ 4	Migration of the fourth national reports	Completed
→ 5	Testing phase	Completed
→ 6	Initial set of statistical tools (Sort, Group, Table, Send, Print, and Export)	Completed Note: All initial statistical tools were completed for launch, excluding "Send". The Send tool was later developed in 2022 and renamed to Share.
→ 7	Migration of existing plug-ins and other existing BCH applications	Partially completed by launch; fully completed August 2022
→ 8	Development of new record functionalities	Completed
→ 9	Migration of online forums	Ongoing Note: The first forum hosted on the new platform took place from 10-25 April 2023





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Continue the migration process to its completion and the launch of the new BCH platform even if the function for hosting online forums is not yet available and parts of the platform other than the common formats are available only in English*
- Migration to the new platform was completed in November 2021.





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

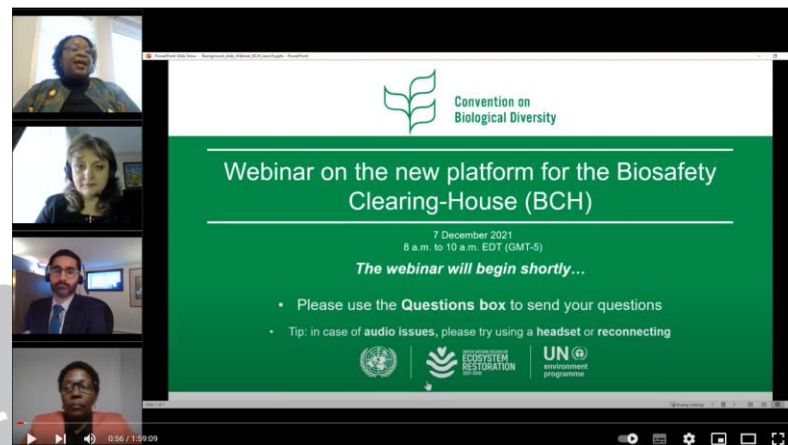
- *Review its staffing needs to ensure the proper functioning of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) from both a substantive and information technology perspective.*
- **2 full-time officers:**
 - Programme Management Officer for the Biosafety Clearing-House (permanent position approved at COP15); and
 - the Programme Management Assistant.
- **Other staffing resources:**
 - Associate Information Technology (IT) Officer
 - Web Development Consultant (temporary position);
 - Individual Contractor (temporary position);
 - Associate Programme Management Officer (scientific officer in charge of validating scientific records like LMOs, genetic elements and organisms).





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Provide an update to Parties, other Governments and relevant stakeholders on progress towards the migration of the BCH.*
 - Regular updates provided on the BCH on BCH Forum
 - Through various Notifications
 - 2021-24 (Apr 05 2021): Update on the progress of the migration of the Biosafety Clearing-House to its new platform
 - 2021-42 (Jun 09 2021): Training Videos on the new Biosafety Clearing-House Platform
 - 2021-75 (Nov 03 2021): Launch of the new platform of the Biosafety Clearing-House
- Launch Webinar hosted on 7 December 2021





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Include in the common format on “Country’s decision or other communication, notification or declaration” an optional field to provide information on the place where an unintentional transboundary movement occurred.*
 - A text entry field has been added to the DEC common format.
 - As of April 2023, no records have been published in the BCH that provide additional information in this new field.



Illegal transboundary movement or unintentional transboundary movement

For an unintentional transboundary movement, please provide the following

Information on the place where the occurrence and/or release occurred

EN

Available relevant information on the estimated quantities and relevant characteristics and/or traits of the living modified organism

EN

Information on the circumstances of the release

EN





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Include a function that enables the export of draft records so that they can be shared with others to collect input as well as a function for exporting the record of discussions from online forums.*
 - The export and sharing of draft records has been implemented within the submission form for a record.
 - Once a user Saves a draft record, they can then do the following:
 - Generate a PDF export that they can share to collect input.
 - Generate a direct link to the record for any user to view.
 - Send the record **only** to specific clearing-house users by email.

Country's Decision or any other Communication (DEC)

TAKE TOUR

◀ Introduction Submission form Review Publish ▶

Offline format: [ar](#) | [en](#) | [es](#) | [fr](#) | [ru](#) | [zh](#)

Save Draft

Share

PDF

✕



- While users cannot export a record of discussions from an online forum, the forum pages remain active for forum participants to view at any time.



Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Develop further the explanatory videos and similar online tools to demonstrate various features on different sections of the new BCH (e.g. visual tooltip for sorting arrows in the “matrix” views of the “search” interface).*
 - Virtual walkthrough onboarding tours on key pages of the BCH.
 - Collection of help articles available through the *Knowledge Base* and *Contextual Help*
 - Suite of help videos produced in partnership with UNEP-GEF BCH III Project

CBD / BCH / Knowledge base

BCH Knowledge Base

Search the Knowledge Base...

The **BCH Knowledge Base** is an online tool designed to help users become familiar with the Clearing-House, learn how to submit records, search for information and complete other important tasks.

FAQs

- What are the various categories of records in the BCH?





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Consider further development of online help materials and training modules on the new BCH platform, taking into consideration the needs of Parties for capacity-building arising from the new BCH platform*
 - Series of webinars on various clearing-house tasks:
 - Launch of the new platform webinar (7 December 2021)
 - New and improved clearing-house features (29 January 2023)
 - Publishing information on the clearing-house (23 February 2023)





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Make national website tools available to allow interoperability with the new BCH platform and take into account national migration requirements and inform countries of the plans and timeline for the phase-out of Hermes;*
 - The connection to websites using Hermes is functional; details regarding the phase-out have not yet been concluded and will be discussed in a later session.
 - New “embed” feature developed to replace Ajax plug-in national website tool





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Migrate the function for hosting online forums to the new BCH.*
- *Archive the previous online forums as static HTML.*
 - First forum hosted on the new platform of the BCH occurred 10-25 April 2023
 - Previous online forums currently available on legacy





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Carry out the translation of the common formats and make them available in the six official languages of the United Nations by the time the new BCH is launched;*
 - Completed in November 2021.
 - Other translations of the website are on-going.





Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Develop temporary unique identifiers for living modified animals falling under the scope of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in consultation with developers when information about such living modified organisms is submitted to the BCH and taking into account existing procedures when available*
- *Continue discussions with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with the aim of assessing the possibility for OECD to develop permanent unique identifiers for living modified animals in the near future*
 - OECD in discussions toward the development of permanent unique identifiers for living modified animals.
 - Temporary unique identifiers have not been developed.



Recommendations: 11th meeting of the BCH IAC

- *Continue collaborating and exploring possibilities for facilitating information-sharing between BCH, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and OECD databases and other relevant databases in the longer term.*
 - Information-sharing process has been achieved for Decisions and national Risk Assessment records in the BCH.

Information sharing with other databases

Is this decision related to an LMO for commercial use?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Should this decision be forwarded to the OECD Secretariat for possible inclusion in the [BioTrack Product Database](#)?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Is this decision related to food safety?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Was it conducted in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius *Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants*?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Should this information be forwarded to the Secretariat of the [FAO GM Foods Platform](#)?

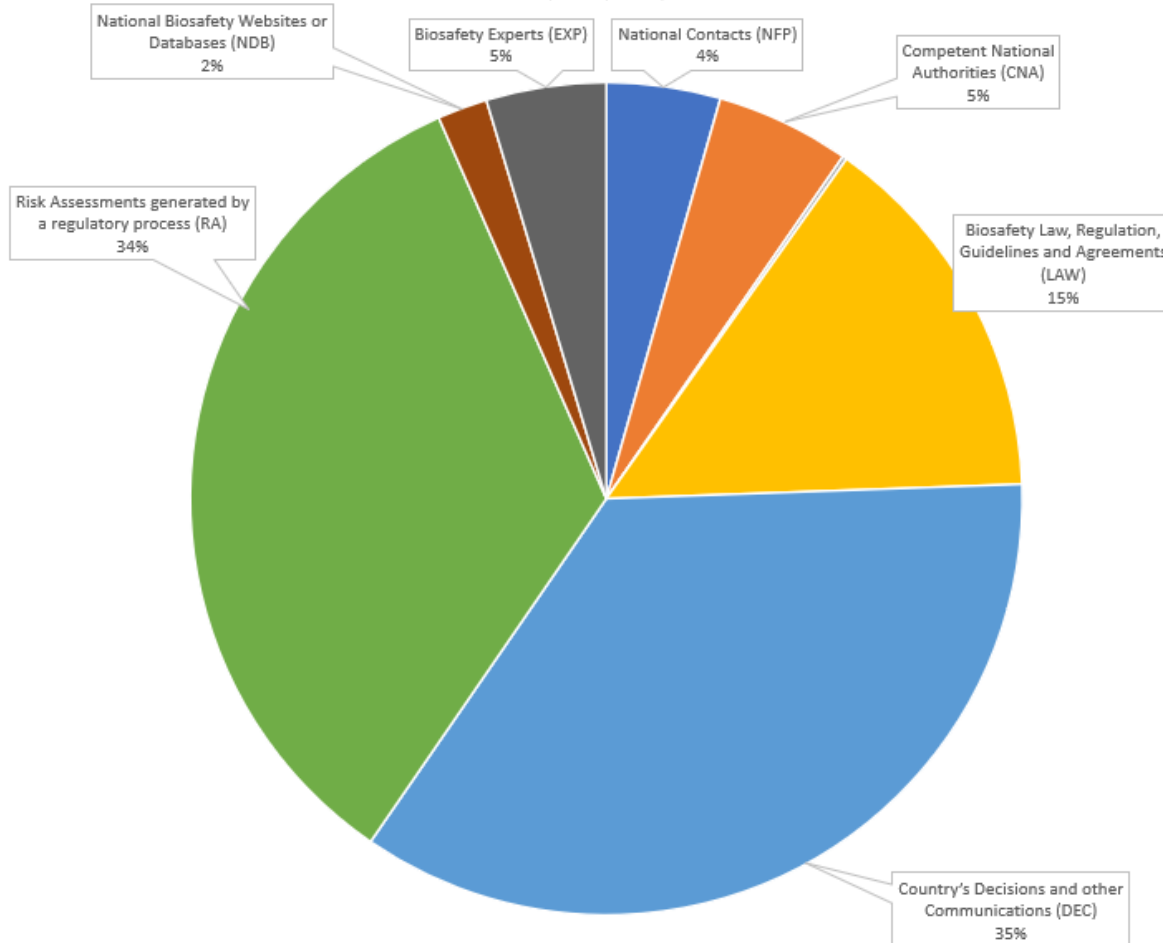
☒ Yes ☐ No



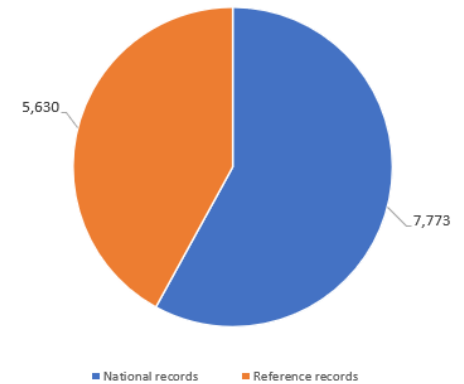
Status of records published in the BCH

National Records Published in the Biosafety Clearing-House

(as of 1 April 2023)



Records Published in the Biosafety Clearing-House
(as of 1 April 2023)



**excluding Contact records and National Reports*





Status of records published in the BCH

Record type	Total records as of 1 December 2020	Total records as of 1 April 2023
National records		
National contacts (CPB and BCH focal points, emergency measures contacts under Article 17)	N/A ¹	344
Competent national authorities (CNA)	360	405
Supplementary Protocol competent authority (SPCA)	<i>N/A (new format as of 29 November 2021)</i>	13
Biosafety laws, regulations, <u>guidelines</u> and agreements (LAW)	1026	1138
Countries' decisions and other communications (DEC)	2426	2732
Risk assessments generated by a regulatory process (RA)	2282	2628
National biosafety websites or databases (NDB)	136	151
Biosafety experts (EXP)	348	362
National records total:	6 578	7 773

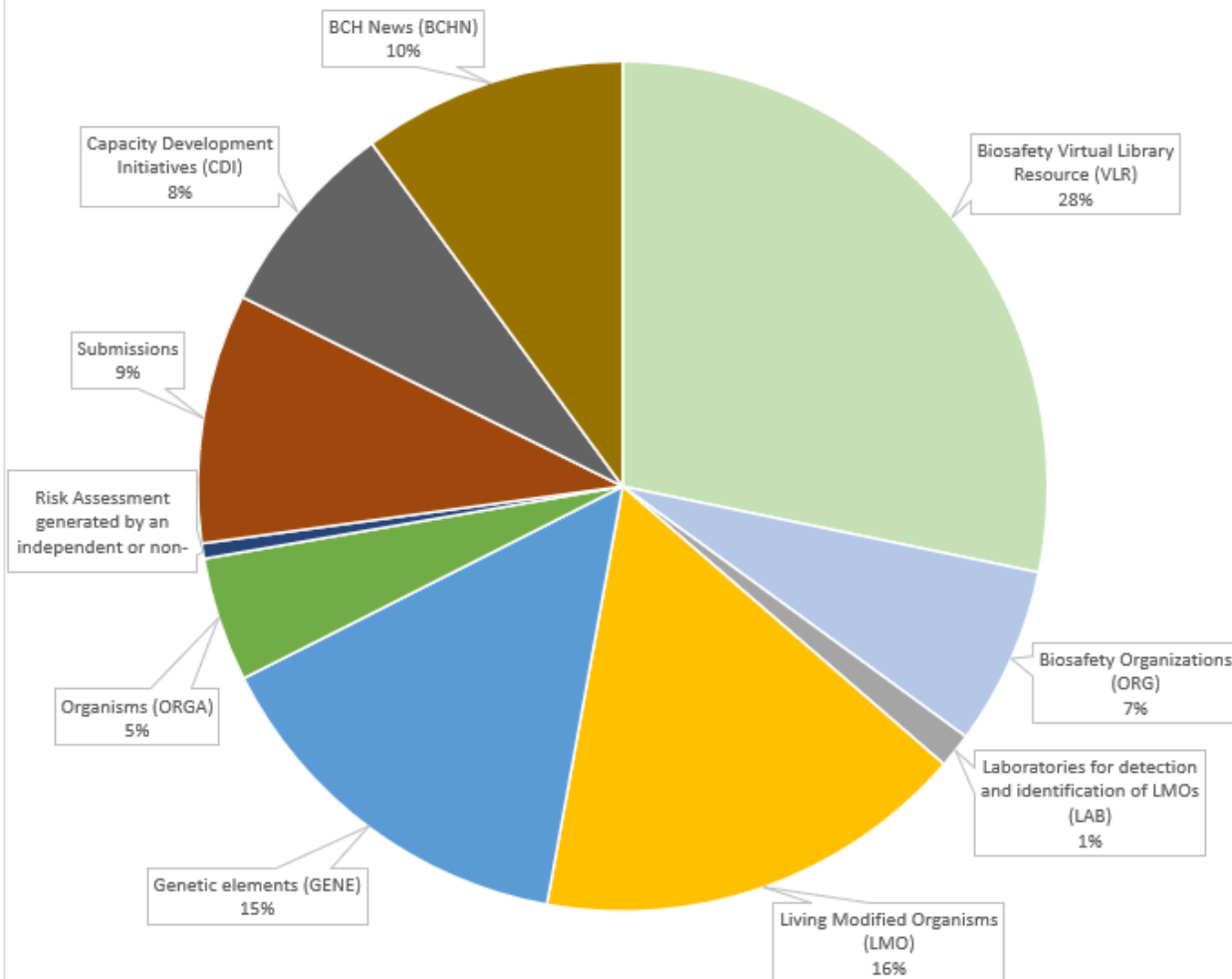




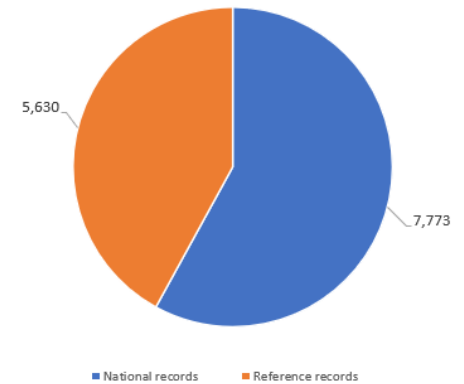
Status of records published in the BCH

Reference Records Published in the Biosafety Clearing-House

(as of 1 April 2023)



Records Published in the Biosafety Clearing-House
(as of 1 April 2023)



**excluding Contact records and National Reports*





Status of records published in the BCH

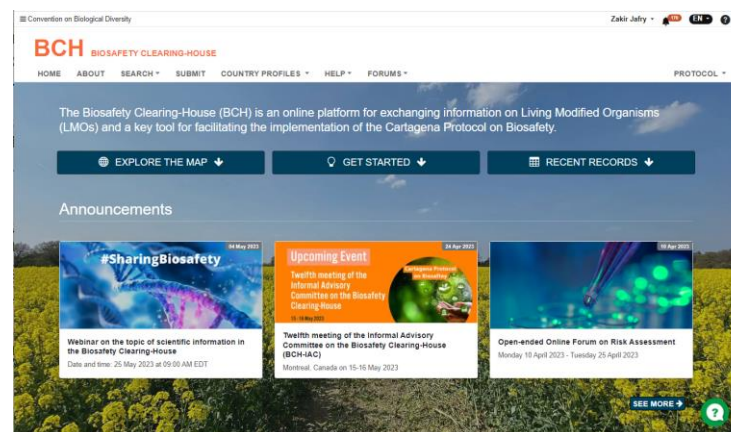
Record type	Total records as of 1 December 2020	Total records as of 1 April 2023
Reference records		
Biosafety virtual library resource (VLR)	1534 ²	1571
Biosafety organizations (ORG)	258	379
Laboratories for detection and identification of LMOs (LAB)	27	75
Living modified organisms (LMO)	782	942
Genetic elements (GENE)	599	852
Organisms (ORGA)	243	269
Risk assessment generated by an independent or non-regulatory process (IRA)	31	32
Capacity development initiatives (CDI)	420 ³	423
BCH news (BCHN)	539	558
Reference records total:	4 433	5 101
Contacts	2351	2462
Total of all records:	13 362	15 336





Traffic on the new platform

- **Traffic on the new platform:** reaffirming the success of our recent launch
- **Compare traffic several metrics between:**
 - **1 year before launch** (29 November 2020 – 28 November 2021)
 - **1 year after launch** (29 November 2021 – 28 November 2022)

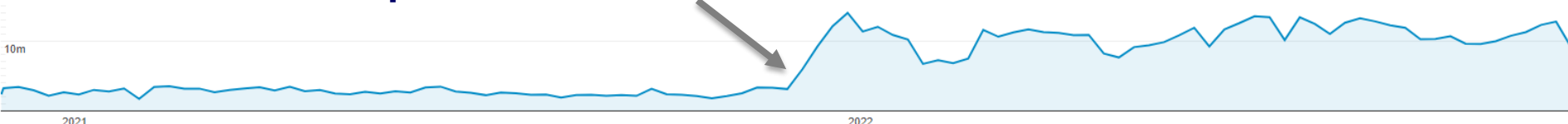


● Avg. Session Duration

20m

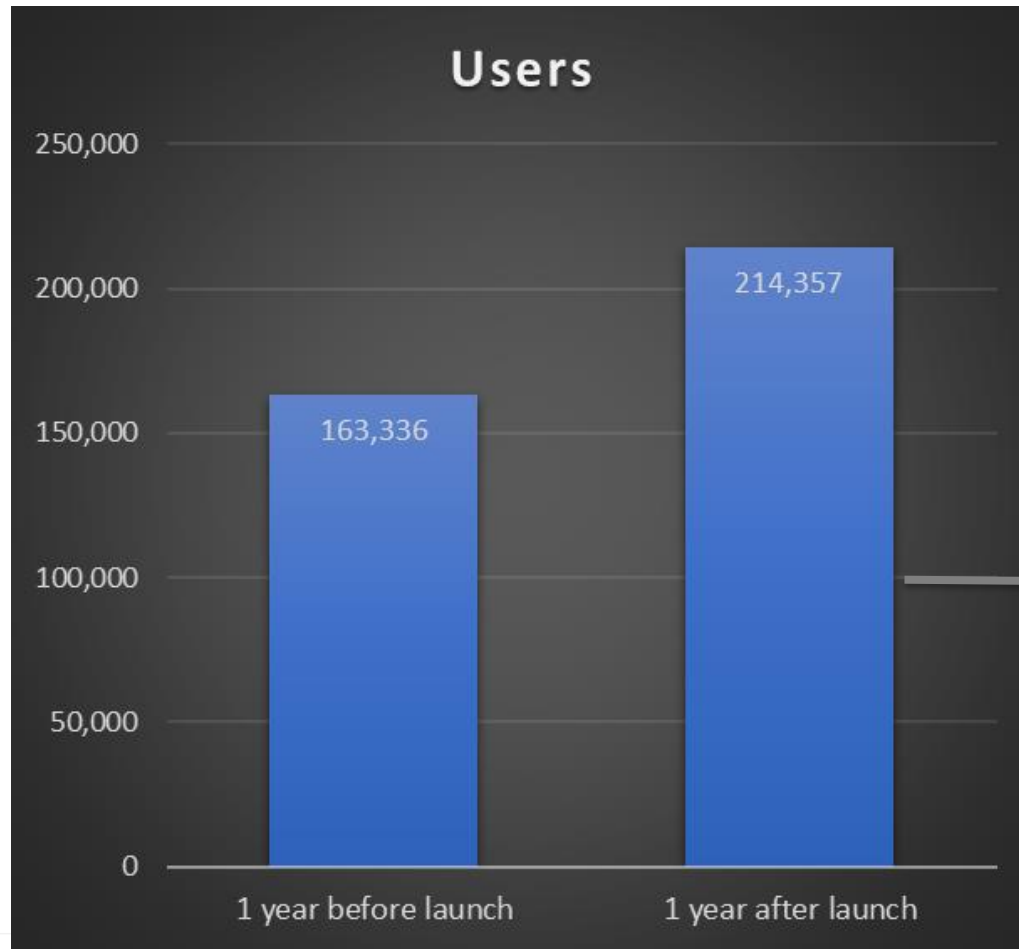
10m

New platform launch

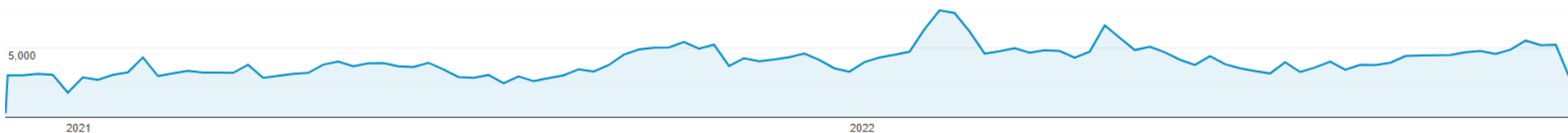




Traffic on the new platform: Users

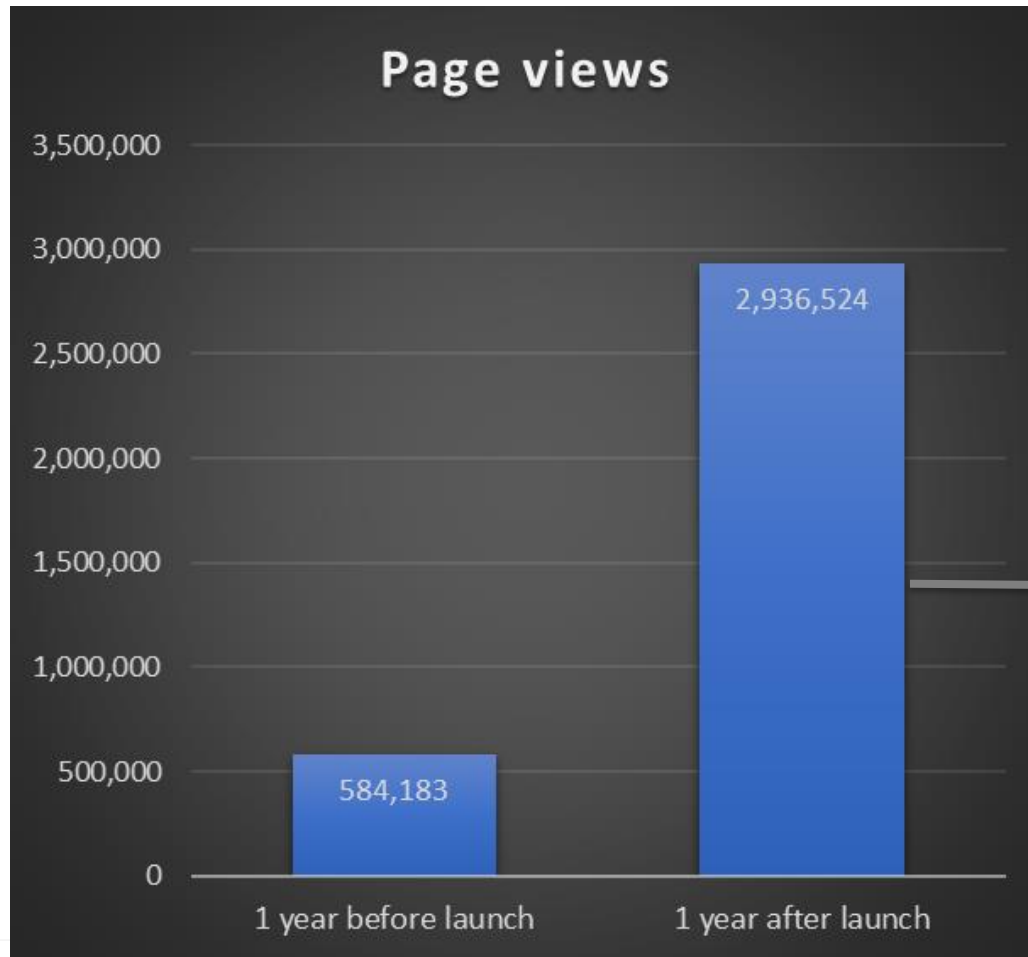


● Users
10,000



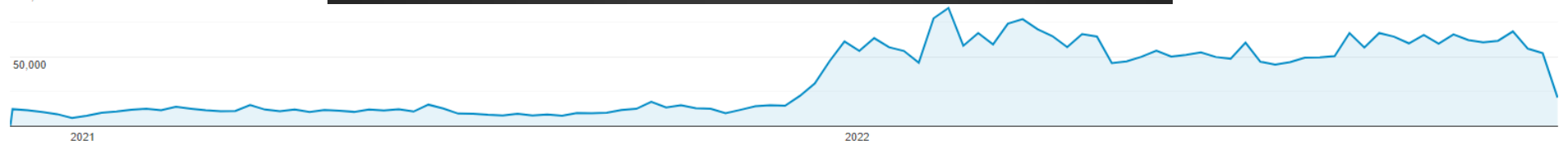


Traffic on the new platform: Page views



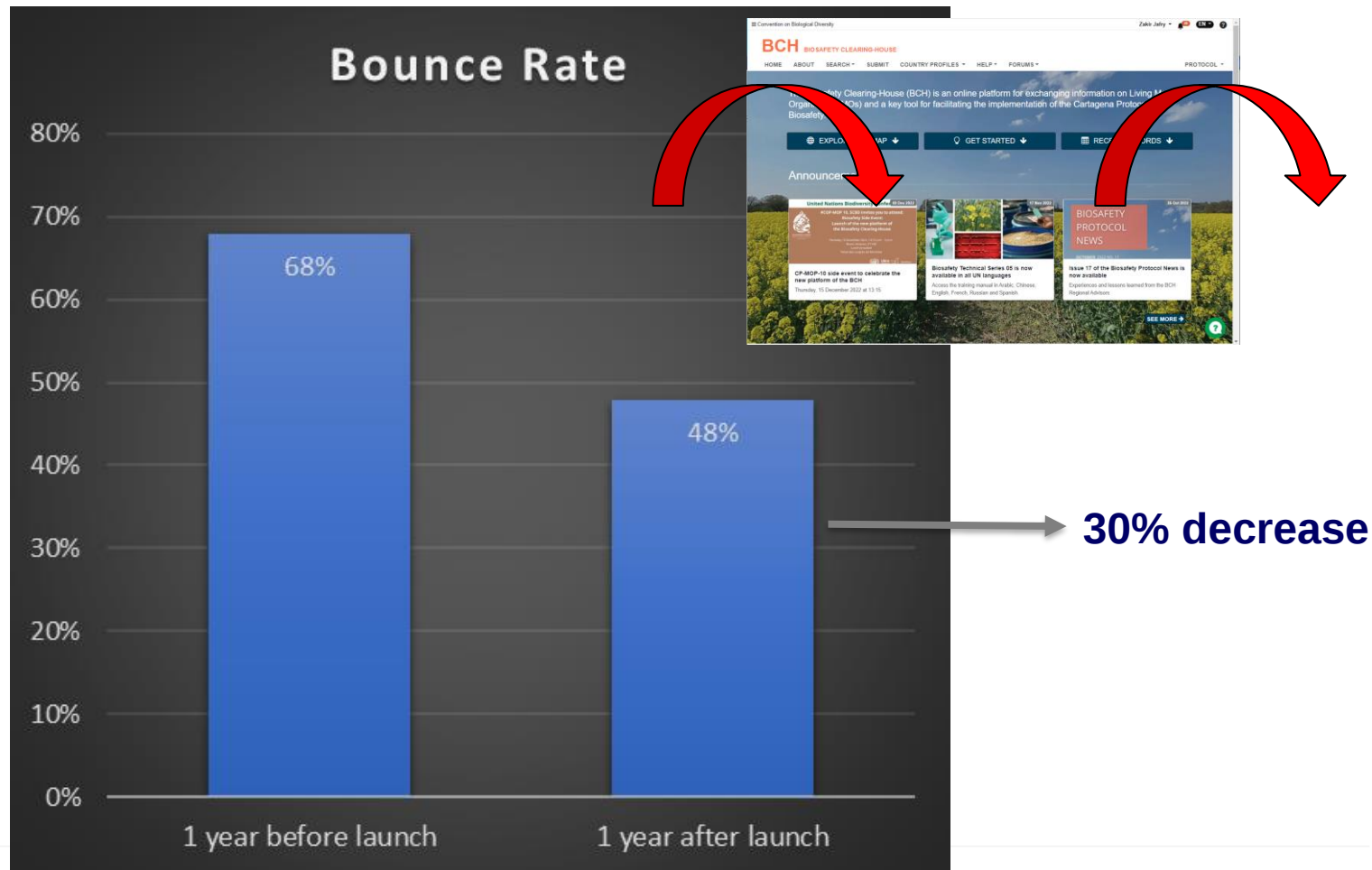
403% increase

● Page Views
100,000

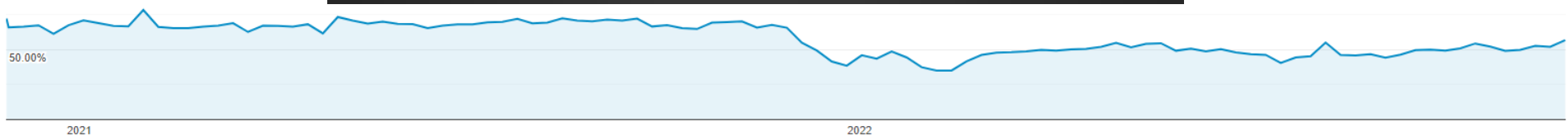




Traffic on the new platform: Bounce rate



● Bounce Rate
100.00%





Conclusions

- **Recommendations from the 11th meeting of the Committee largely addressed.**
 - Additional details on many recommendations will be presented throughout the day
- **Significant increase in published content in the BCH since the previous meeting of the Committee**
- **BCH traffic in the year following launch indicates success of the new platform**

