



Convention on Biological Diversity

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English only

Multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment First meeting Montreal, Canada, 11–14 July 2023

Annotated provisional agenda

1. In its decision [15/31](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established a process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology. The process consists of the following steps: (a) information gathering; (b) compilation, organization and synthesis of information; (c) assessment; and (d) reporting on outcomes. The Conference of the Parties also agreed to start its work for one intersessional period.
2. In the annex to the same decision, the Conference of the Parties established a multidisciplinary ad hoc technical expert group on synthetic biology to support the process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment, and adopted terms of reference for the group. The Conference of the Parties also decided that the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology would support the work of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.
3. In order to support the work of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, the Secretariat:
 - (a) Issued a notification¹ inviting the submission of information relevant to trends in new technological developments in synthetic biology, pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision 15/31;²
 - (b) Convened a moderated meeting of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology from 20 to 31 March 2023;³
 - (c) Compiled and synthesized the outputs of the activities referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above to facilitate the deliberations of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.
4. With financial support from the European Union, the first meeting of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will be held at the offices of the Secretariat of the Convention on

¹ [SCBD/CPU/DC/WM/MAQ/MW/90775](#).

² The submissions are available at <https://bch.cbd.int/en/submissions-to-notifications?schema=submission¤tPage=1¬ification=2023-006>.

³ The discussions held under the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology are available at https://www.cbd.int/synbio/current_activities/open-ended_online_forum/.

Biological Diversity, in Montreal, Canada, from 11 to 14 July 2023. The registration of participants will take place upon arrival at the meeting venue, from 8.30 a.m. on the opening day.

5. The meeting will be held in English only.
6. To assist participants with preparing for the meeting, a briefing webinar will be held on 27 June 2023, from 7 to 9 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time, to present the documents submitted for consideration and the proposed organization of work. All participants will be pre-registered for the webinar.
7. The report of the meeting will be submitted to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for consideration at its twenty-sixth meeting.

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

8. A representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity will open the meeting at 9 a.m. on 11 July 2023.

Item 2

Organizational matters

(a) Election of officers

9. Participants will be invited to elect a chair or co-chairs for the meeting.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

10. Participants will be invited to adopt the provisional agenda for the meeting (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/1).

(c) Organization of work

11. Participants will be invited to adopt the proposed organization of work (see annex I). The work will be conducted in plenary session. Working groups will be established as necessary to facilitate participatory approaches.
12. The list of documents for the meeting is contained in annex II.
13. The Secretariat will host a reception on 11 July 2023, after the afternoon session.

Item 3

Implementation of the mandate

14. Participants will be invited to consider the topics set out in the terms of reference, building on the discussions held in the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology in March 2023 and drawing upon relevant information submitted in response to the notification mentioned in paragraph 3 (a).
15. In accordance with paragraph 1 (a) of the terms of reference, participants will be invited to make use of existing tools and approaches to enable a participatory process to review and assess the information to be gathered through the process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment.

16. To facilitate discussions, participants will have before them a note by the Secretariat providing points to consider for carrying out the process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology, pursuant to decision 15/31 (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/2). This will be complemented by a synthesis of submissions on synthetic biology (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/INF/1) and the summary of discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/INF/2). Participants are also encouraged to review the original submissions and online discussions^{2,3} and to refer to the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology on its meeting held in 2019 (CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/3) and issue No. 100, on synthetic biology, of the technical series published by the Secretariat.⁴

(a) Process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology

17. After introducing the sub-item, an expert consultant will give a presentation on the potential methodologies, options and pertinent considerations for conducting broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment. Examples of other horizon scanning and foresight exercises will be highlighted.

18. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/2.

(b) Steps for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment

19. To facilitate the completion of the four steps of the process, as defined by the Conference of Parties in the annex to decision 15/31, participants will be invited to provide inputs on how each step should be performed and how the trends should be analysed.

20. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/2.

(c) Trends in synthetic biology and clarification of the scope of the broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment process

21. In accordance with paragraph 1 (a) of the terms of reference, participants will be invited to consider technological developments in synthetic biology and their potential positive and negative impacts vis-à-vis the objectives of the Convention, taking into account the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology on its meeting held in 2019 in order to support a broad and regular horizon scanning process.

22. In accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of the term of reference, participants will also be invited to consider the identification and prioritization of the trends and issues regarding developments of synthetic biology that need to be considered vis-à-vis the three objectives of the Convention.

23. Following an introduction of the sub-item, participants will hear a presentation on the trends identified by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology at its meeting held in June 2019 and on new trends identified in the submissions of information received by the Secretariat and during the meeting of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology in March 2023.

24. Participants will be invited to consider the trends in synthetic biology on which to base the process of broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment, and to define its scope.

⁴ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Synthetic Biology*, CBD Technical Series No. 100 (Montreal, 2022).

25. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/2.

Item 4
Other matters

26. Under this item, participants will have an opportunity to raise any other matters of relevance.

Item 5
Adoption of the report

27. Participants will be invited to 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, 14 July 2023.

Annex I

Provisional organization of work

<i>Date and time</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
Tuesday, 27 June 2023	
7– 9 a.m. (online)	Briefing webinar
Tuesday, 11 July 2023	
9 a.m.–12 noon	Item 1. Opening of the meeting Item 2. Organizational matters Item 3. Implementation of the mandate Item 3 (a). Process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 3 (b). Steps for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment
Wednesday, 12 July 2023	
9 a.m.–12 noon	Item 3 (c). Trends in synthetic biology and clarification of the scope of the broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment process
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 3 (<i>continued</i>)
Thursday, 13 July 2023	
9 a.m.–12 noon	Item 3 (<i>continued</i>)
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 3 (<i>continued</i>)
Friday, 14 July 2023	
9 a.m.–12 noon	Item 3 (<i>continued</i>) Item 4. Other matters
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 5. Adoption of the report Item 6. Closure of the meeting

Annex II

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
Working documents	
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/1	Provisional agenda
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/1/Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/2	Considerations on synthetic biology pursuant to decision 15/31
Information documents	
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/INF/1	Synthesis of submissions on synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/INF/2	Summary of discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology
Reference material	
Decision 15/31 of the Conference of the Parties	Synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2019/1/3	Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology on its meeting held in 2019
n/a	<i>CBD Technical Series No.100: Synthetic Biology</i>
n/a	Submissions of information on synthetic biology
n/a	Discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology
