



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.: General
19 January 2024

English only

Multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment Second meeting Montreal, Canada, 29 January–2 February 2024

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 same decision, the Conference of the Parties established a multidisciplinary ad hoc technical expert group on synthetic biology to support the aforementioned process, in accordance with terms of reference contained in the annex to the decision. The Conference of the Parties also decided that the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology would support the work of the group.
3. With financial support from the European Union, the first meeting of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology to Support the Process for Broad and Regular Horizon Scanning, Monitoring and Assessment was held at the offices of the Secretariat of the Convention, in Montreal, Canada, from 11 to 14 July 2023. At that meeting, the Group developed a process for the 2023–2024 intersessional period consisting of multidisciplinary expert-driven submissions by members of the Group and a literature review conducted by the Secretariat.
4. The multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group held a virtual meeting from 10 to 12 October 2023, at which the experts identified a prioritized list of 17 trends and issues in synthetic biology, of which 5 were further identified for more detailed information gathering to inform the assessment.
5. In order to support the work of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, the Secretariat:
 - (a) Issued a notification¹ to invite the submission of information on synthetic biology related to 12 of the trends and issues in synthetic biology identified through the multidisciplinary expert-driven process;²

¹ [Notification No. 2023-111](#).

² The submissions are available at bch.cbd.int/en/submissions-to-notifications?currentPage=1&schema=submission¬ification=2023-111.

(b) Issued a notification³ to reconvene the online discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology;

(c) Convened a second round of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology, from 6 to 22 November 2023;⁴

(d) 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.

6. The second meeting of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will be held at the offices of the Secretariat from 29 January to 2 February 2024. The registration of participants will take place upon arrival at the meeting venue, from 8.30 a.m. on the opening day.

7. The meeting will be held in English only.

8. 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

9. A representative of the Secretariat will open the meeting at 9 a.m. on 29 January 2024.

Item 2

Organizational matters

(a) Adoption of the agenda

10. Participants will be invited to adopt the provisional agenda for the meeting.⁵

(b) Organization of work

11. Participants will be invited to adopt the proposed organization of work (see annex I). Work will be conducted in plenary session, but drafting groups will be established as necessary to facilitate a participatory approach and the conduct of the assessment.

12. The list of documents for the meeting is contained in annex II.

Item 3

Implementation of the mandate

13. Participants will be invited to continue their consideration of the topics set out in the terms of reference of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, building on the discussions held at their previous meetings and drawing upon relevant information submitted in response to notifications Nos. 2023-111 and 2023-115 and the online discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology.

14. In accordance with subparagraphs 1 (c) and (d) of the terms of reference, participants will be invited to conduct the assessment and prepare a report on its outcomes.

15. To facilitate discussions, participants will have before them a note by the Secretariat providing an overview of the process carried out for steps (a) and (b) of the process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology, pursuant to decision 15/31.⁶ The note will be complemented the prioritized list of trends and issues in synthetic biology and a summary of discussions on capacity-building, technology

³ [Notification No. 2023-115](#).

⁴ The corresponding discussions are available at www.cbd.int/synbio/current_activities/open-ended_online_forum/November_2023/.

⁵ CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/1.

⁶ CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/2.

transfer and knowledge-sharing needs for synthetic biology.⁷ Participants are also encouraged to refer to the report of the first meeting.⁸

(a) Assessment of trends in synthetic biology

16. After hearing an introduction to the sub-item, participants will conduct a multidisciplinary assessment of the information compiled. They will employ tools and approaches enabling a participatory assessment process, working in plenary session and, as appropriate, in small groups.

17. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/2.

(b) Reporting on the assessment outcomes

18. Following the completion of the assessment, and after hearing an introduction to the sub-item, the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will prepare a report on the outcomes of its assessment, for submission to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for consideration at its twenty-sixth meeting.

19. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/2.

(c) Review of the effectiveness of the horizon scanning process

20. To facilitate the compilation of recommendations for the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, participants will be invited to carry out a review of the process adopted in decision 15/31 and to consider the key elements that would need to be taken into account for refining it.

21. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/2.

(d) Identification of capacity-building, technology transfer and knowledge-sharing needs

22. In accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of the terms of reference of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, participants will be invited to identify capacity-building, technology transfer and knowledge-sharing needs on the basis of priorities determined by Parties on issues related to synthetic biology and in the light of the outcomes of the horizon scanning process.

23. To support the work of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, the Secretariat invited input on relevant information related to needs for capacity-building, technology transfer and knowledge-sharing, including potential solutions, during the discussions of the Online Forum on Synthetic Biology.

24. After an introduction to the sub-item, participants will hear a presentation from the Secretariat on the Long-term Strategic Framework for Capacity-building and Development to support nationally determined priorities for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

25. To facilitate discussions, participants are invited to consider the relevant parts of document CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/2.

⁷ CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/INF/1 and CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/INF/2, respectively.

⁸ CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/3.

(e) Recommendations for the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on specific issues that may require further consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol or the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol

26. In accordance with paragraph 1 (e) of the terms of reference of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, participants will be invited to draft recommendations for the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on specific issues that may require further consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol or the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol.

Item 4

Other matters

27. Under agenda item 4, participants will have an opportunity to raise any other matters of relevance.

Item 5

Adoption of the report

28. Participants will be invited to adopt the report of the meeting.

Item 6

Closure of the meeting

29. The meeting is expected to be closed at 5 p.m. on 2 February 2024.

Annex I

Provisional organization of work

<i>Date and time</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
Monday, 29 January 2024	
9 a.m.–noon	Item 1. Opening of the meeting Item 2. Organizational matters Item 3. Implementation of the mandate Item 3 (a). Assessment of trends in synthetic biology
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 3 (a) (<i>continued</i>)
Tuesday, 30 January 2024	
9 a.m.–noon	Item 3 (a) (<i>continued</i>)
1.30–7 p.m.	Item 3 (b). Reporting on the assessment outcomes
Wednesday, 31 January 2024	
9 a.m.–noon	Item 3 (c). Review of the effectiveness of the horizon scanning process
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 3 (c) (<i>continued</i>)
Thursday, 1 February 2024	
9 a.m.–noon	Item 3 (d). Identification of capacity-building, technology transfer and knowledge-sharing needs
1.30–5 p.m.	Item 3 (e). Recommendations for the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on specific issues that may require further consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol or the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol
Friday, 2 February 2024	
9 a.m.–noon	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 or URL</i>	<i>Title</i>
Working documents	
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/1	Provisional agenda
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/1/Add.1/Rev.1	Annotated provisional agenda
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/2	Considerations on synthetic biology pursuant to decision 15/31
Information documents	
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/INF/1	Prioritized list of trends and issues in synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2024/1/INF/2	Summary of discussions on capacity-building, technology transfer and knowledge-sharing needs for synthetic biology
Reference material	
Decision 15/8 of the Conference of the Parties	Capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation
Decision 15/31 of the Conference of the Parties	Synthetic biology
CBD/SYNBIO/AHTEG/2023/1/3	Report of the multidisciplinary Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology on its first meeting
bch.cbd.int/en/submissions-to-notifications?schema=submission&currentPage=1&notification=2023-006	Submissions of information on synthetic biology
www.cbd.int/synbio/current_activities/open-ended_online_forum/	Discussions of the Open-ended Online Forum on Synthetic Biology