



Convention on Biological Diversity

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INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE

Ninth meeting
Ispra, Italy, 2-4 April 2014

SUMMARY OUTCOMES OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The ninth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH-IAC) was held at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Ispra, Italy, from 2 to 4 April 2014.
2. The meeting was attended by experts selected from Belarus, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, the European Union, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, India, Kenya, and the Philippines. Representatives from the following organizations also took part in the meeting as observers: Global Industry Coalition, EcoNexus, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Universidad Católica del Uruguay. Experts invited from Belize, Fiji, and Jamaica were unable to attend.
3. The meeting was convened in accordance with section E of the Modalities of Operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House (annex to decision BS-I/3 of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol) which mandates the Executive Secretary to seek guidance from the BCH-IAC with respect to technical issues associated with the ongoing development of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH).
4. The meeting was opened by a representative of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mr. Giovanni Ferraiolo. He emphasized the importance of the BCH and the work of the BCH-IAC to the overall development of the BCH to date. He further expressed his appreciation to the BCH-IAC for its work.
5. Mr. Joachim Kreysa from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission was elected as Chairperson of the meeting.
6. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/BS/BCH-IAC/9/1) as itemized below:
 - (a) Latest developments in the Biosafety Clearing-House and ongoing projects;

(b) Review of the conclusions and recommendations of the eighth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH-IAC);

(c) Status update regarding collaboration with the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Clearing-House Capacity-Building Project;

(d) Recommendations to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

7. The following presentations were made:

- Mr. Giovanni Ferraiolo, Programme Officer in charge of the BCH at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), presented the following: (a) an overview of the main improvements introduced to the BCH since the IAC last met online in April 2013; (b) the ongoing use of the BCH by means of a Google analytics report; (c) the integration of data from the BiotradeStatus database into the BCH; and d) a review of the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the eighth meeting of the BCH-IAC.

- Mr. Philippe Leblond, Computer Information Systems Officer, SCBD, presented an overview on the ongoing integration of the BCH into the broader clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CHM).

- Mr Andrew Bowers, Programme Assistant, SCBD, gave an overview on the status of the completeness of records in the BCH.

- Mr. Ernesto Ocampo, consultant to the BCH, of the Universidad Católica del Uruguay, gave a presentation on the BCH e-learning training modules which are under development;

- Ms. Ileana Catalina Lopez, Project Manager of the UNEP-GEF 'Project for Continued Enhancement of Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House' at UNEP-DELC, gave a presentation on the final assessment of the project results as well as on the status of the UNEP submission of a new project to GEF for the provision of capacity-building to all remaining eligible countries;

- Mr. Peter Kearns, of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), provided an update on the status of the OECD BioTrack Product Database and on the ongoing discussion on the extension of the OECD Guidance for the designation of Unique Identifiers to transgenic organisms other than plants.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

8. After the three days of deliberations, the Informal Advisory Committee agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations, attached hereto as annex I, for consideration in the implementation of the programme of work for the Biosafety Clearing-House. Annex II to this report contains the list of participants in the meeting.

9. The meeting also agreed that the Secretariat would present a draft report of the meeting by e-mail to all members for their comments prior to its final publication.

10. The meeting closed at 12.45 p.m. on Friday, 4 April 2014, after the Chairperson had expressed his appreciation to all the participants for their inputs.

*Annex I***CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE AT ITS NINTH MEETING***The Informal Advisory Committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House*

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission for hosting the ninth meeting of the informal advisory committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH-IAC);

2. *Commends* the Secretariat for improving the overall performance of the BCH;

3. *Recommends* that the Secretariat:

(a) Take action on the remaining recommendations from previous meetings of the BCH-IAC;

(b) Produce a report, derived from BCH data and Google Analytics, on an annual basis, and enables the BCH to record the following items:

(i) The number and categories of users who sign in to the BCH when they visit the website;

(ii) The number of users who have signed into the BCH with their registered email address and password at least once over a given period;

(iii) The categories of information that are visited by BCH users;

(c) Request information on user categories, frequency of user visits, feedback from users on quality and accessibility in order to better identify the current BCH large user community in accordance with decision BS-VI/2 on the collection of feedback from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations;

(d) Facilitate the submission of new records by allowing for record duplication and over-writing;

(e) Improve the overall accessibility of retrieving information on the BCH, in particular by:

(i) Improving both the top horizontal bar and left-hand menu;

(ii) Using an auto-complete function on all drop-down lists;

(iii) Implement a simplified search interface which facilitates advanced searches, taking into consideration new users;

(f) Improve the layout of the LMO decision page, in particular by:

(i) Clearly distinguishing between different data sets, such as those between Biotradestatus and the BCH (e.g. by enhancing visual distinction, using different icon sets for the two databases and introducing links and a short text that informs the user on the difference between data sets);

- (ii) Introducing the option of sorting/filtering decisions by specific target categories;
- (g) Introduce the search-ability and display of different results of decision (e.g. approval without conditions, approval with conditions, prohibition);
- (h) Add to the country profile pages a list of decisions formatted in a similar way to those found on the LMO decision pages;
- (i) Improve cooperation with key institutions maintaining LMO databases (and in particular with the FAO) in order to reduce the need for countries to duplicate the registration of records;
- (j) Confirm to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP), the BCH-IAC recommendation to have two meetings during the inter-sessional period between the COP-MOPs; one in the online format in the first year followed by one face-to-face in the following year;
- (k) Make available from the BCH short and easy to understand introductory presentations about the BCH that can be used by BCH-NFPs for further dissemination to national stakeholders and targeted audiences;
- (l) Further promote the BCH use and engages National Focal Points in the sharing of material on public participation/awareness and promoting stakeholder participation to public fora;
- (m) Urge OECD to deliberate, at its earliest convenience, on unique identifiers of living modified animals and micro-organisms; in the cases of LMOs submissions not yet included in the OECD guidelines, the BCH-IAC invites the Secretariat to adopt interim solutions;
- (n) Promote complementarity between the BCH network of laboratories and the existing collaborating JRC networks for detection of LMOs.

The BCH-IAC confirms that the BCH has developed into a solid information base on LMOs and now needs to focus its attention on:

- Quality and completeness of information;
- Interoperability with other databases (e.g. FAO, JRC, OECD, Biotradestatus); and
- Reaching wider audience (e.g. by providing small, “sound bites” of information which are useful and interesting to non-experts) supported by a user-friendly interface.

The Informal Advisory Committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House expresses its full support for the BCH III Project being undertaken by the UNEP-GEF as well as the BCH e-learning initiative undertaken by the Secretariat.

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