



Convention on Biological Diversity

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INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE

Tenth meeting

Ispra, Italy, 11-12 April 2016

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

INTRODUCTION

1. The tenth 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 11 to 12 April 2016.

2. As listed in annex I to the present report, the meeting was attended by 19 participants from various countries and organizations.

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 (COP-MOP)) which mandates the Executive Secretary to seek guidance from the BCH-IAC with respect to technical issues associated with the ongoing development of the BCH.

4. The meeting was opened by a representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), Ms. Manoela Miranda. She emphasized the importance of the BCH and the work of the BCH-IAC to the overall development of the BCH to date. She further expressed her 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 and Ms. Delilah A. Cabb, from Belize, was elected as Rapporteur.

6. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/BS/BCH-IAC/10/1) as itemized below:

(a) Review of the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the ninth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(b) Latest developments in the Biosafety Clearing-House and ongoing projects;

(c) Status update regarding the United Nations Environment Programme – Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF) project “Sustainable Capacity-Building for Effective Participation in the BCH” (BCH III project);

(d) Status update regarding the analysis of national reports;

(e) Cooperation with international organizations regarding the provision of information on living modified organisms;

(f) Recommendations to the Secretariat;

(g) Recommendations to COP-MOP.

7. The following presentations were made:

(a) Ms. Manoela Miranda and Mr. Andrew Bowers, of SCBD, presented a review of the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the ninth meeting of the BCH-IAC and the latest developments in the BCH and ongoing projects;

(b) Mr. Philippe Leblond, of the SCBD, presented an overview of the ABS Clearing-House regarding the future migration of the BCH;

(c) Ms. Ileana Lopez, of UNEP, presented a status update regarding collaboration with the UNEP-GEF BCH III project;

(d) Mr. Stéphane Bilodeau and Mr. Andrew Bowers, of SCBD, presented a status update regarding the analysis of national reports and the survey to gather information corresponding to indicators in the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety covering the period 2011 to 2020;

(e) Ms. Masami Takeuchi, of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Mr. Bertrand Dagallier of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) presented on cooperation with international organizations regarding the online sharing of information on living modified organisms.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

8. After the two days of deliberations, the Committee agreed on the recommendations attached hereto as annex II for consideration by the Executive Secretary in the implementation of the programme of work for the BCH, and by COP-MOP at its eighth meeting.

9. The meeting also agreed that a draft report of the meeting will be circulated by e-mail to all members for their comments prior to its publication.

10. The meeting closed at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 April 2016, after the Chairperson had expressed his appreciation to all the participants for their inputs.

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*Annex II***CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE AT ITS TENTH 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 tenth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH-IAC).
2. Recommends that the Secretariat:
 - (a) Gather information on the type of user accessing the BCH and the frequency with which users revisit the site, for example, by targeting randomly selected users in order to customize pages (e.g. by offering different dimensions/depth of content to different users) and enable targeted outreach on specific thematic areas with the goal being to enlarge the user community of the BCH;
 - (b) Improve search engines so that the drop-down filters (for example modified traits and type of recipient organism) display only the options for which records are available;
 - (c) Monitor queries and keyword searches in the BCH in order to improve the display of information;
 - (d) Enable the search of decisions by outcome (i.e. “approved”, “approved with conditions”, “prohibited”, or “withdrawn”) as well as a further breakdown by type of decision (i.e. “food”, “feed”, and “processing”) and provide a brief summary of the search results (for example, count of countries and conditions);
 - (e) Provide geographic representation, such as maps, to the “List of Parties” page as well as search outputs, as appropriate, including the combination of different search filters, for example countries that have approved a particular living modified organism (LMO);
 - (f) Improve strategies to make the general public more aware of the BCH by, for example, preparing a short flyer to be sent electronically to new users (as well as hardcopy format dissemination) illustrating an overview of the main features of the BCH and further raising awareness about the BCH via social media, for example Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube;
 - (g) Prepare a package of awareness materials which can be easily accessed by BCH users not directly involved in biosafety (for example, customs officials, academic researchers, etc.) and, to respond to their needs, provide basic filtering tools to analyze data in the BCH;
 - (h) Create the following tick boxes, in the common format for submission of decisions and risk assessments generated by a regulatory process in order to facilitate the submission of such records to the databases of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

- Is this decision/risk assessment related to an LMO for commercial use?
 - If yes, is this submission related to food safety?
 - If yes, was it conducted in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA plants?
 - If yes, should this submission be forwarded to the FAO focal point for its possible inclusion in the GM Food Platform?
 - If yes, should this submission be forwarded to the OECD Secretariat for its possible inclusion in the BioTrack Product Database?
- (i) Collaborate with LMO developers to assign provisional unique identifiers (UIs), in accordance with OECD guidelines, to commercialized LMOs for which UIs have not yet been assigned, including, on a pilot basis, LM animals and microorganisms;
- (j) Consider ways of assigning provisional UIs to LMO events which are not approved for commercial use and that have been detected by countries and reported through the BCH in the context of Articles 17 or 25;
- (k) Improve the exchange of information on ongoing and future training activities, including the creation of a graphic and interactive calendar where capacity-building activities and their accompanying documentation can be registered, including lists of participants;
- (l) Create a searchable list of experts registered in the BCH with the option to filter them by categories such as the groups of experts (for example, Roster of Biosafety Experts, Online Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, Online Forum on Synthetic Biology, etc.), region, areas of expertise, etc., and develop tools to facilitate the matching of funds to identified biosafety needs;
- (m) Migrate the BCH to the new platform as soon as possible but before end of 2017 to enable testing by the BCH-IAC before its face-to-face meeting in 2018 and develop mock-ups before the end of 2016 for review by the BCH-IAC;
- (n) Update the BCH tutorials and other help materials once the migration to the new platform has taken place, including their translation into all of the official languages of the United Nations;
- (o) Collaborate with the European GMO Initiative for a Unified Database System (Euginius; <http://www.euginius.eu>), JRC, FAO, and OECD in order to harmonize the terms related to modified traits among the databases;
- (p) Add a search function for decisions and risk assessments by expiry date;
- (q) List the contact details of BCH-IAC participants in alphabetical order rather than categorized by countries or organizations.

3. Recommends that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP) at its eighth meeting:

(a) In the context of decision BS-IV/4:

- (i) Urge developed country Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to make contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Roster of Experts and remind them that, without funds, the roster cannot operate;
- (ii) Extend participation in the Roster of Experts to biosafety experts registered in BCH online forums, AHTEGs and networks (for example, risk assessment, detection and identification, synthetic biology and socio-economic considerations) and request the Executive Secretary to extend the search of biosafety experts accordingly and to clearly indicate in which category each expert participates;

(b) Urge Parties to provide funds to enable the translation of training materials and other resources into all of the official languages of the United Nations after the migration of the BCH to the new platform;

(c) Recall decision BS-VII/5 inviting the Global Environment Facility to promptly evaluate and approve the BCH III project;

(d) Invite the FAO and OECD governing bodies to strengthen the collaboration between their biosafety databases and the BCH, in particular to work towards ways to harmonize and share information between the databases, as appropriate.
