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**SECOND COORDINATION MEETING FOR GOVERNMENTS
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BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

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**OPTIONS FOR ACHIEVING PRACTICAL SYNERGIES AND
COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING
INITIATIVES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL**

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision BS-I/5 on capacity-building, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted a Coordination Mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information with a view to promoting partnerships and maximizing synergies and complementarities between various initiatives undertaken to implement the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol. Paragraph 23 of the decision urged Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to establish or strengthen, as appropriate, corresponding national or regional-level coordination mechanisms in order to promote synergies between existing capacity-building initiatives.

2. Clearly, there is a need for greater coordination and collaboration between different capacity-building initiatives in order to foster synergies and complementarity in their implementation at all levels. Synergistic implementation of capacity-building initiatives, especially at the country level, would help to minimize overlap and duplication of effort as well as maximize the effectiveness and collective impact of the different initiatives. It would also foster leverage and efficient use of available resources and reduce transaction costs. Furthermore, it would also encourage partnerships, mutual learning and supportiveness between initiatives through sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learned.

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3. The present note reviews a number of processes and initiatives that are seeking to promote coordination and harmonization of development assistance programmes. It is intended to discuss possible concrete steps that might be taken to achieve practical synergies and complementarity in the development and implementation of biosafety capacity-building initiatives, particularly at the country level, drawing on the experiences and lessons learned from relevant processes.

II. CURRENT STATUS AND LIMITATIONS TO ACHIEVING SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES

4. Since the adoption of the Protocol in January 2000, a number of capacity-building projects and programmes have been initiated. Currently there are at least 77 ongoing long-term projects, of varying size and scope, registered in the Biosafety Clearing-House. Those projects address a wide range of issues and have varied geographic coverage. A few countries have multiple parallel projects funded or implemented by different organizations often with overlapping activities. For example, some have implemented training workshops on similar thematic issues and for the same target groups. The evaluation report of GEF's Support to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which was completed in October 2005 by the GEF Office of Monitoring & Evaluation, for example noted that many countries participating in GEF-funded national biosafety framework projects are also recipients of other bilateral or multilateral biosafety projects with the same or similar objectives, often working with the same in-country partner institutions.^{1/} For example, Uganda and Kenya are also participating in USAID's Program for Biosafety Systems; Namibia has participated in the Southern Africa Regional Biosafety program; India is a participant in USAID's South Asia Biosafety Program; and Bulgaria and Poland have both benefited from the Dutch government's Matra project on implementation of biosafety frameworks. Poland has also been supported through an EU twinning programme.

5. The evaluation report also noted that coordination and interlinkages between different biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the global and the country levels are quite weak. At the global level, there are ongoing efforts through the Coordination Mechanism to promote macro-level interaction, cooperation and sharing of information and experiences between the different biosafety capacity-building initiatives. For example the capacity-building databases in the Biosafety Clearing-House are facilitating the sharing of information about existing biosafety capacity-building projects, opportunities and resource materials. As well, the coordination meetings are providing a useful forum for relevant stakeholders to share information, experiences and lessons regarding their capacity-building efforts. However, those efforts are still at the initial stage.

6. At the country level, the GEF evaluation noted in some countries there is a lack of concerted cooperation or collaboration between similar biosafety projects. Some of reasons cited for the limited level of coordination and complementarity between donor-supported capacity-building in biosafety include: differences in policies and approaches, special country interests, and variations in focus among various donor agencies. Apart from the different policy approaches of the donors, coordination and the realization of synergies and complementarity between different initiatives in some countries are limited by a reluctance of the government officials to disclose other sources of support for fear that this would result in less overall financial support. In some cases the support for similar activities goes through different government agencies and in other cases it goes through non-government organizations and the government institutions are bypassed in the design and implementation of the projects.

^{1/} A copy of the first draft evaluation report can also be accessed from the GEF website at: http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C27/documents/C.27.ME.Inf.1.Rev.1BiosafetyEvaluation.pdf

7. Regrettably, the dispersed and uncoordinated nature of some of the capacity-building efforts has often resulted in unnecessary duplication of effort, ineffective and inefficient use of resources, incoherent approaches, wasteful competition and conflict between institutions. As well, fragmented initiatives with different priorities, approaches and reporting requirements have placed an unnecessary burden on the partner countries with limited capacities.

8. There is a need to strengthen the initial global-level coordination efforts and to foster effective country-level coordination. Ultimately, it is important to ensure that the coordination those efforts translate into actual synergies and complementarity between different initiatives at the strategic and operational levels.

III. EXAMPLES OF DONOR COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION INITIATIVES: ISSUES, EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

9. In recent years there has been a growing effort to enhance the effectiveness and impact of development assistance through promoting coordination and synergies among development initiatives and relevant multilateral processes. A number of initiatives have been launched at the global, regional and country levels. Examples include: (i) the Rome Declaration on Aid Harmonization and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness; (ii) Coordinated Initiatives for Trade-Related Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building; and (iii) the Coordination Initiatives of the United Nations system.

10. This section describes the above-mentioned processes and outlines the key emerging principles, procedures and practical measures that are relevant to promoting synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives, particularly at the country level.

A. *Coordination of Development Assistance: The Rome Declaration on Aid Harmonization and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*

11. Aid coordination and harmonization have become an increasingly significant focus area in development cooperation programmes. Following the International Conference on Financing for Development held in March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, a number of aid coordination and harmonization initiatives have been launched. Notable examples include: the Rome High-Level Forum on Harmonization (25 February 2003; Rome, Italy) and the Paris High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (28 February - 2 March 2005; Paris, France). As well, in May 2003, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC-OECD) established a Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices (WP-EFF) to assess and support efforts to improve the management, delivery and complementarity of development cooperation activities in order to ensure the highest development impact. ^{2/}

12. *The Rome High-Level Forum on Aid Harmonization (Rome-HLF)* discussed and adopted measures to improve the effectiveness of development aid through harmonization and alignment of priorities, practices and procedures of donors and partner countries. ^{3/} The outcome of the meeting, i.e. the “Rome Declaration on Harmonization and Alignment” set out an ambitious programme of activities to promote harmonization and alignment of development aid with partner countries’ priorities and systems. The declaration also aimed to optimize and rationalize donor activities to make them cost-effective and to assist partner countries to assume leadership in setting their own agenda.

^{2/} See details at: http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_3236398_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

^{3/} The forum brought together leaders of the major multilateral development banks and representatives of the IMF, other multilateral financial institutions, international and bilateral organizations, and donor as well as partner countries; see details at: <http://www.aidharmonisation.org/>

13. *The Paris High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Harmonization, Alignment, and Results)* reviewed the progress made since the Rome High-Level Forum and adopted “the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness” which included a list of actions, targets and indicators to accelerate progress towards improving the effectiveness of development aid through harmonization and alignment. ^{4/} Among other things, the declaration emphasized the need for stronger coordination and a more systematic approach to the sharing of experience, knowledge and lessons learned. ^{5/} It also noted that excessive fragmentation of assistance programmes impairs the effectiveness and impact of development aid.

14. Both the “Rome Declaration on Harmonization” and the “Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness” highlight important operational principles, procedures and specific actions that both donors and partner countries have committed to in order to foster coordinated and harmonized aid delivery at the country level. These are discussed below under three broad categories:

(a) *Country ownership and leadership of the coordination effort:* Both the Rome and Paris declarations emphasize the need for partner countries to exercise effective leadership over their development agenda and the need to coordinate development actions at the country-level. In this regard partner countries were encouraged to:

- (i) Develop clear national development strategies and translate them into prioritized results-oriented operational programmes through broad consultative processes;
- (ii) Take the lead in coordinating aid at the country and sectoral levels;
- (iii) Design and implement action plans and specific measures for aid coordination and harmonization at the country level;
- (iv) Foster policy dialogue with donors and encourage the participation of civil society and the private sector.

(b) *Alignment of donor assistance with the partner countries’ priorities, strategies, and systems:* In this regard, donors committed to:

- (i) Deliver aid in accordance with the partner countries’ needs and priorities specified in their national development strategies and to use the latter as the reference frameworks for programming and delivering assistance;
- (ii) Provide reliable multi-year indicative commitments and disburse aid in a timely and predictable manner according to agreed schedules;
- (iii) Deliver aid using the partner countries’ own aid management institutions, systems and procedures (e.g. for procurement and financial management, including procedures for disbursing and accounting for the funds provided). In cases where these do not meet broadly accepted good practices, adopt harmonized approaches;
- (iv) Avoid activities that undermine national systems such as bypassing national budget processes or creating parallel structures for day-to-day management and implementation of aid-financed projects and programmes.

^{4/} The Forum was co-sponsored by: AfDB, AsDB, EBRD, IADB, the OECD/DAC, the UN and the World Bank.

^{5/} A copy of the Paris Declaration can be accessed at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>

(c) *Harmonization of donor priorities, policies and operational procedures and approaches:* Donors, among other things, committed to:

- (i) Review and streamline their institutional and country policies, procedures, and practices, including streamlined frameworks of conditions (including those under which aid may be suspended or adjusted);
- (ii) Use common country-level arrangements or procedures for planning, funding (e.g. joint financial arrangements), disbursement, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- (iii) Reduce the number of separate and duplicative field missions and diagnostic reviews and promote joint training, sharing of lessons learnt and build a community of practice;
- (iv) Work through delegated cooperation ("silent partnership") whereby lead donors, based on their respective comparative advantage at the sector or country level, are mandated to execute specific programmes, activities or tasks on behalf of one or more other donors;
- (v) Rationalize their activities to make them as cost-effective as possible and adopt harmonized performance assessment frameworks for country systems.

15. In response to the Rome Declaration, and most recently the Paris Declaration, a number of countries have developed initiatives and tools to advance aid coordination and harmonization at the country level. For example, many countries have developed Action Plans for Aid Coordination and Harmonization (e.g. Rwanda), Memoranda of Understanding (e.g. Zambia), Voluntary Codes of Conduct (e.g. Bangladesh), Joint Financing Arrangements (e.g. Nicaragua) and Declarations (e.g. Cambodia).⁶ These tools aim to improve aid effectiveness by rationalizing aid delivery, reducing the administrative costs of managing multiple donor processes and making sure that aid is provided in ways that best support national development strategies and priorities.

16. Some operational experience has been gained and lessons learned from the above-mentioned aid coordination and harmonization initiatives. The operational principles, procedures and practical measures highlighted above could be very useful in promoting coordination and synergies between biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country level.

B. Coordinated initiatives for trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building

17. Within the trade sector a number of initiatives have been implemented to foster coordinated delivery of trade-related technical assistance and capacity building. Examples include: (i) the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-Developed Countries (IF); (ii) the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP) and; (iii) the Doha Development Agenda Trade Capacity Building Database (TCBDB).

18. *The Doha Development Agenda Trade Capacity Building Database (TCBDB)* was launched by the WTO and OECD Secretariats in November 2002 to assist in achieving higher degrees of coordination and coherence, minimizing duplication of effort, sharing information, and monitoring the implementation of commitments made in the Doha Ministerial Declaration.⁷ It provides information on the delivery of trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building projects and programmes.

⁶/ Examples of country-level aid harmonization initiatives can accessed at: <http://www.aidharmonisation.org/>

⁷/ See details about the DTCDB at: <http://tcbdb.wto.org/index.asp?>

19. *The Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme (JITAP)* is a partnership programme aimed at mobilizing technical and financial assistance to build and strengthen the capacities of selected African countries to integrate into and to benefit from the multilateral trading system.^{8/} It is designed to enhance synergies among the different partners as well as synergies among programme activities with a view to ensuring efficient use of resources through economies of scale. The programme is funded through a Common Trust Fund (CTF) supported by a number of donor countries.

20. *The Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least-Developed Countries (IF)* is a mechanism that was established in October 1997 to, among other things, facilitate integrated and coordinated delivery of trade-related technical assistance. It provides a framework through which the participating donors combine their efforts in enhancing the capacities of least developed countries to participate in and benefit from the multilateral trading system and to better respond to trading opportunities.^{9/}

21. The IF aims to strengthen and streamline trade-related assistance provided by participating donors with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness in its delivery, maximizing the use of available resources, ensuring that the technical assistance is demand-driven and responsive to the countries' individual needs and, ultimately, maximizing the benefits that eligible countries derive from such assistance.

22. The implementation of the Integrated Framework involves the following broad phases:

(a) *Preparatory activities:* These typically include: making request to participate in the IF process, establishing a National IF steering committee, identifying a "focal point" to coordinate the preparation of the country needs assessment, compiling on-going trade-related activities and, to the extent possible, identifying a lead donor (or IF Facilitator);

(b) *Diagnostic phase:* During this phase, each participating least-developed country prepares a Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS), which includes a needs assessment to determine the required technical and capacity-building assistance, among other things;

(c) *Follow-up/ implementation phase:* An Action Matrix, spelling out a set of policy recommendations and the priority capacity-building activities, is prepared and discussed at a national workshop. The Action Matrix serves as a basis for trade-related technical assistance delivery. Subsequently, the six core IF agencies develop an Integrated Response (IR) which indicates their future follow-up plans for addressing identified needs and priorities, taking into account the activities each agency is already implementing in the country. The helps to create synergies and complementarity of assistance provided;

(d) *IF Round Table:* The next step involves engaging other multilateral, regional and bilateral development partners beyond the six agencies. In this regard, the country organizes an "IF Round Table" in which the local stakeholders and the development partners (including the private sector and donors) review the needs assessment and the Action Matrix and prepare a concrete multi-year programme - a portfolio of projects - of technical assistance to meet those needs. The outcome of the IF Round Table is typically a multi-year programme comprising a portfolio of projects. That programme then forms the basis for subsequent technical assistance by all the partner donor agencies.

⁸ JITAP is a joint initiative of between WTO, UNCTAD and ITC. See details at: <http://www.jitap.org/info-e.htm>

⁹ The IF comprises six core participating agencies namely: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. To date, 28 countries and 17 bilateral and multilateral donors are participating in the IF. See details about IF at: <http://www.integratedframework.org/about.htm>

23. The financing of IF activities is provided through the IF Trust Fund (IFTF), which is managed by UNDP on behalf of the six agencies and other donors. The IFTF has two financing accounts, referred to as Windows I and II, operating simultaneously. Window I is for contributions which are used for diagnostic studies and mainstreaming work. Window II is for contributions earmarked for specific and clearly identifiable projects evolving from the Action Matrix and the multi-year programme. As of as of 31 May 2005, US\$ 30.1 million had been pledged, US\$ 16.0 million for Window I and \$14.1 million for Window II. ^{10/}

24. There has been some progress made in implementing the IF. For example, at least 13 countries have completed their Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies and 3 others are underway. Also 14 countries have held national IF workshops including DTIS Validation Workshops, 6 have developed DTIS Action Matrices and 6 have held Implementation meetings with the donors. As well, at least 33 projects in 13 countries have been approved for funding through Window II of the IF Trust as an immediate follow-up to implement the DTIS Action Matrices. ^{11/}

25. The IF, JITAP and TCBDB initiatives have so far produced some operational results. An evaluation of the IF published by the World Bank Operations Evaluation Department in 2004, for example, showed that the IF process has resulted in increased inter-agency cooperation, coordination, communication and information exchange among the six partner agencies and the countries. ^{12/} The IF process has also catalyzed donor support for trade related technical assistance in response to the countries' needs and priorities identified in the DTIS Action Matrices.

C. Aid Coordination Initiatives of the United Nations System

26. Since its early days, the United Nations system has invested considerable effort in promoting coordination and harmonization among the operational activities of its various departments, programmes and agencies. This is aimed at reducing fragmentation of effort and enhancing the quality, effectiveness and impact of its operations. As part of the reforms carried out since 1997, the United Nations agencies operating at the country level have been pursuing a unified approach towards promoting national development goals through different coordination mechanisms, e.g. the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and United Nations Resident Coordinator System (UNRCS).

27. The UNDG was established in 1997 by the UN Secretary General to improve the effectiveness of UN activities, particularly at the country level, through coordination and harmonization of efforts, joint programming and the use of common principles and practices (e.g. in project monitoring and reporting and financial management). ^{13/} The United Nations Resident Coordinator System, which is managed by UNDP, aims to strengthen coordination among United Nations Agencies at the country level in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of their operational activities at the country level. It facilitates the sharing of information, the joint planning for collaborative activities, the application of common approaches to cross-cutting issues, and the harmonization of programme cycles. ^{14/}

28. The UN is playing a significant role in enhancing coordination and harmonization of development assistance at the country level. For example, UNDP, as the manager of the United Nations Resident Coordinator System (UNRCS) and the chair of the UNDG, has facilitated several aid

^{10/} See details at: <http://www.integratedframework.org/trustfund.htm>

^{11/} UNCTAD Progress Report on the implementation the IF (2005), available at: http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdb52crp1_en.pdf

^{12/} The report is available at: http://www.worldbank.org/oed/gppp/case_studies/trade_finance/iftrta.html

^{13/} See details at: www.undg.org or <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/51/33725407.pdf>

^{14/} Details about the UNRCS can be accessed at: <http://www.undg.org/content.cfm?id=421>

coordination round tables and dialogue meetings in various countries. These meetings aim at, among other things, building consensus on development priorities and programme strategies, aligning donor assistance with the country priorities and mobilizing external resources. It has also helped to strengthen national capacities for aid coordination and management and to develop coordination tools and reporting mechanisms. ^{15/}

29. The United Nations is also working with other partners to assist countries to design and implement system-wide development planning instruments such as the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), Strategic Framework (SF), Country Strategy Notes (CSN), the Common Country Assessments (CCA). These instruments are intended to guide and facilitate coordination, coherence and harmonization of development assistance programmes and investments at the country level. ^{16/}

IV. EMERGING EXPERIENCES, BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED RELEVANT TO PROMOTING SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES

30. The implementation of the coordination and harmonization initiatives described above has generated substantial information and lessons learned which could be useful in promoting practical synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives. Implementation reviews of the Rome Declaration on Aid Harmonization and of the Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance, in particular, have highlighted important general principles and approaches to aid coordination as well as specific actions that could be taken to achieve effective coordination and harmonization.

31. This section discusses some of the key operational principles, implementation measures and lessons learned. It also lists resource tools (e.g. reference manuals and guidelines) produced through the above-mentioned initiatives to assist donors and partner countries in their coordination and harmonization efforts.

A. Core operational principles for effective coordination and harmonization

32. Experience from the initiatives described in the previous section and from other processes shows that efforts to promote coordination and harmonization need to be guided by certain principles. Some of the key principles include the following:

(a) *Country ownership and leadership:* In order to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the aid coordination and harmonization process, it is important for recipient countries to assume primary responsibility for, and ownership of, the process and for their programmes. They should be in the “driver’s seat”;

(b) *Political will and commitment:* Successful aid coordination requires commitment of all the partners involved. The partner countries must be fully committed to lead the process and to establish an enabling environment. The donors, on their part, need to agree to harmonize and align their policies and procedures and to abide by the decisions taken jointly;

^{15/} <http://www.undp.org/poverty/aid.htm>

^{16/} See: <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/owada.html#aide>

(c) *Alignment:* Aid coordination and harmonization activities should be tailored to the specific situation in each country as well as each sector or area of cooperation. This should be undertaken in such a way that maximizes the added-value for the partner countries;

(d) *Participatory approach:* An open, transparent and all-inclusive participatory process involving the Government, donors and other stakeholders is very important for developing a shared vision, common priorities and agreed rules for cooperation. This would lay a solid foundation for effective coordination;

(e) *Flexibility:* Institutional arrangements for aid coordination, in particular the implementation arrangements, should be as flexible as possible in order to respond to local needs and changing circumstances and to accommodate the preferences and comparative advantages of different donors;

(f) *Selective intervention:* It is important for donors to focus on issues or sectors which they are best suited to support, based on their comparative advantages. Where there are multiple donors with similar interests and equal comparative advantages, they should agree on a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities.

Box 1: Contributing factors to Effective Aid Coordination and Harmonization

Case-studies on aid coordination carried out in Cambodia identified the following as some of the key contributing factors to effective aid coordination and harmonization:

1. Achieving consensus among donors prior to consultation with the Government results in more coherent recommendations and reduced transaction costs to the Government.
2. An effective coordinator can make the process work more smoothly.
3. Developing agreement on the principles of the partnerships at an early stage facilitates later progress.
4. Strong commitment of high-level officials contributes to efficient decision making processes.
5. Establishing an effective collaborative framework and sufficiently consultative process is indispensable for the success of strategy development.
6. Personal ties can help complement formal coordination arrangements.
7. Multiple informal channels of information sharing can complement formal coordination mechanisms, under the right conditions.
8. Fostering a genuine partnership may require a considerable investment of time, effort, and resources.
9. Flexibility to accommodate a broad range of assistance modalities allows partnerships with a much greater number of donor agencies.
10. Effective forums for dialogue enhance partnership among the parties concerned.
11. Manageable numbers and clear definition of roles of partner donors helps reduce management costs.
12. A broad, comprehensive framework helps enhance coherence and complementarity among donor assistance programmes.
13. Institutional arrangements should be flexible to accommodate local needs.
14. Informal networks can supplement formal mechanisms of coordination among donors.

Source: Government of Cambodia, 2004. Practices and Lessons Learned in the Management of Development Cooperation: Case Studies in Cambodia (Chapter 4. Lessons from Aid Coordination): http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/practices_chapter4.htm

B. Essential Implementation Tools and Measures

33. According to the practical experience and lessons learned from various aid coordination initiatives, there are several key processes and measures (i.e. “best practices”) that have proved necessary to achieve effective aid coordination and harmonization. For example, it is important to:

(a) *Establish coordination focal points:* Partner countries need to identify a “focal point” within the relevant ministries to be responsible for bringing together the different coordination activities. This includes the preparation of the country needs assessment, keeping the country’s evolving needs in review and overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the assistance programmes;

(b) *Develop strategic frameworks:* It is important for partner countries to develop national strategic frameworks to guide all national efforts in addressing their needs and priorities, to serve as a reference document for all development partners and to provide a basis for harmonizing the different assistance programmes and facilitating coordinated allocation of both national and external resources. Such strategies should define the long-term vision, priorities, policy objectives and targets. Partner countries should ensure that externally-supported projects are planned and undertaken within the framework of those strategies. The elaboration of the strategic frameworks should be participatory and should provide a useful opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders at the country level; ^{17/}

(c) *Develop national harmonization frameworks:* Experience shows that in order to achieve effective aid coordination and management, it is necessary to have a clear and consistent plan that guides the coordination efforts and provides a basis for coordinating the work of all partners;

(d) *Delineate clear roles and responsibilities:* It is important to articulate a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the different players, the donors and the partner national agencies, based on their expertise and comparative advantages;

(e) *Establish linkages between different coordination arrangements:* It is advisable to establish stronger links between central and sectoral coordination arrangements. Central coordination arrangements should give the lead to local and sectoral coordination, *inter alia*, by identifying issues to be addressed at the local / sectoral level. Policy dialogue should be an intrinsic element of aid coordination at the local / sectoral level; ^{18/}

(f) *Alignment of donor assistance with national strategies:* It is important to ensure that capacity-building assistance is delivered in accordance with the partner country’s priorities and strategies. This may require donors to review and harmonize their assistance priorities, policies and operational procedures with the partner country’s strategies and plans;

(g) *Exchange of information:* Information sharing is a critical factor for effective aid coordination and management. The partners need to access pertinent information (e.g. ongoing and planned activities and aid commitments) in a systematic and transparent and systematic manner in order to reduce overlaps in assistance programmes, to synergize their activities and to act in a coordinated manner. They also need to exchange experiences, lessons learned and relevant publications. Information sharing should be institutionalized as part of the formal donor-government and donor-donor interactions through centralized databases, websites and correspondences;

^{17/} OECD, 2004. Survey on Harmonisation and Alignment: Measuring Aid Harmonisation and Alignment in 14 Partner Countries, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/37/33981948.pdf>

^{18/} DAC/OECD, 1992. Development Assistance Manual, DAC Principles for Effective Aid. Paris.

(h) *Establish information systems for aid management:* One of the major obstacles to effective aid coordination and harmonization is the difficulty faced by many Governments in collecting reliable information on past, present and planned donor assistance. It is necessary to develop a comprehensive donor assistance information system (e.g. a database) to facilitate the analysis of trends in the level of assistance and the areas of focus of assistance and to assist in the planning of future activities. This would also help to identify overlaps and gaps in funding of the different sectoral activities;

(i) *Encourage informal coordination and networking:* Informal networks often serve an important complementary role to the formal institutional arrangements. Strong personal networks among donor representatives and advisors often facilitate the coordination of activities and the exchange of critical information, opinions and insights that are rarely shared through formal communication channels;

(j) *Enhance complementarity among assistance programmes:* In order to achieve greater overall impact than what would ordinarily be achieved by individual programmes, donors should actively seek to ensure complementarity among their assistance programmes by combining their strengths. This could be achieved through different modalities, e.g. by co-financing or pooling of resources for joint programmes or by providing funding through trust fund arrangements (as in the case of the IF and JITAP);

(k) *Build capacity for donor coordination:* The coordination of development assistance from multiple donors often requires substantial administrative/managerial capability. Partner Governments need to have the capacity to effectively link all funded projects into the national frameworks and to ensure the best use of donor resources. Therefore, in order to achieve effective aid coordination, it is necessary to build the coordination capacity of partner countries.

C. *Resource tools for aid coordination and harmonization*

34. A number of resource tools (e.g. reference manuals, guidelines, databases and websites) have been developed under different coordination initiatives to assist partner countries, donors and other stakeholders in their coordination and harmonization efforts. Some of the available resources include the following:

(a) *The DAC-OECD reference document entitled: "DAC Guidelines and Reference Series: Harmonizing Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery (2003)":* This describes how aid can be delivered more effectively through simplifying and harmonizing donor procedures; ^{19/}

(b) *The IF Manual (2005):* This guide, prepared jointly by UNCTAD, UNDP and DFID, illustrates the IF process, including the IF modus operandi, based on the experience and lessons learned from different IF countries. ^{20/} It also outlines cooperative arrangements between the IF and other technical assistance programmes such as the JITAP.

(c) *The UNDP Guidebook for National level Synergy in Implementing the Rio Instruments (2001):* This synthesizes results from the Expert Meeting on Synergies, organized by UNDP and funded by the Governments of Israel, Japan, Norway, and Denmark. It contains recommendations on how to produce synergy among institutions. It outlines institutional, capacity-building, national planning and reporting requirements for achieving coordinated implementation of the Rio agreements. ^{21/}

^{19/} See: http://www.oecd.org/document/60/0,2340,en_2649_33721_15731196_1_1_1_1,00.html

^{20/} The IF manual can be accessed at: http://www.integratedframework.org/files/IF_Manual.pdf

^{21/} A copy of the guide can be accessed at: <http://www.undp.org/seed/guide/synergies/#toc>

(d) *The Aid Harmonization and Alignment website*: This website was developed by the World Bank to facilitate the exchange of information on the aid harmonization efforts conducted by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It provides access to useful practical information, including reports and papers, on global and country-level aid coordination and harmonization initiatives and activities. It contains “Harmonization & Alignment Tables” which present country-by-country summaries of Harmonization and Alignment initiatives, themes and institutions. The website also contains links to the Harmonization Action Plans & Programs of multilateral and bilateral donors. ^{22/}

(e) *Development Assistance Database (DAD, 2004)*: This a web-based Aid Management and Coordination tool was developed by Synergy International Systems Inc., a US-based company, to strengthen the effectiveness of international assistance in national reconstruction programmes. It enables users to capture data on international assistance commitments and funding disbursements and track and assess how assistance efforts are meeting development objectives. It helps in identification and coordination of projects requiring funding assistance, in accelerating the funding distribution process and in ensuring that donor assistance has maximum impact. ^{23/}

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

35. The need for, and benefits of, fostering synergies and complementarity between different biosafety capacity-building initiatives are widely acknowledged. The challenge, however, is realizing these on the ground. This note has outlined a number of useful guiding principles, procedures and practical measures that have emerged under different initiatives aimed at promoting coordination and harmonization of development assistance.

36. It is clear from the initiatives and processes reviewed above that achieving practical synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives would require effective coordination at different levels, including among donors and among national institutions. Coordination can be effected through different means, including: the holding of coordination meetings and round tables, the systematic sharing of information; the alignment of capacity-building assistance with the priorities and strategies of the beneficiary countries; and the harmonization of operational policies and procedures. All these require the commitment of all the partners involved.

37. There is a need to undertake case studies of concrete examples of collaborative efforts between biosafety capacity-building initiatives to document experiences, best practices and lessons learned in promoting synergies.

38. In light of the information contained in this note, participants may wish to:

(a) Identify specific measures that countries and organizations providing biosafety capacity building assistance could systematically take to achieve practical synergies and complementarity between different initiatives at the country level;

(b) Review and, if appropriate, adopt the draft guiding framework for promoting synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country level, on the basis of the draft, contained in the annex to this note;

^{22/} See: <http://www.aidharmonisation.org/>

^{23/} Details about the DAD are available at: <http://www.synisys.com/index.jsp?sid=1&id=95&pid=73>.

(c) Explore the possibility of developing a pilot country-level coordination initiative to apply (test) the proposed guiding framework for promoting synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country level;

(d) Encourage Governments and relevant organizations to undertake case-studies to document experiences, best practices and lessons learned in promoting synergies between biosafety capacity-building initiatives.

Annex I

**DRAFT GUIDING FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTING PRACTICAL SYNERGIES AND
COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES AT
THE COUNTRY-LEVEL**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision BS-I/5 on capacity-building, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted a Coordination Mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information with a view to promoting partnerships and maximizing synergies and complementarities between biosafety capacity-building initiatives.
2. Efforts are being made to promote coordination at the global level through the different elements of the Coordination Mechanism, including the capacity-building databases and the coordination meetings. Likewise, there is an urgent need to promote coordination and to realize concrete synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country-level.

II. OBJECTIVE

3. This guiding framework is intended to provide a list of options, including possible guiding principles and operational modalities (i.e. procedures, specific actions and institutional arrangements), that could be used to promote coordination and harmonization with a view to achieving practical synergies and complementarity between different capacity-building initiatives for promoting the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and supporting its effective implementation. The ultimate goal is to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of these initiatives.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition (hereafter referred to as “partner countries” as well as Governments and organizations providing capacity-building assistance for biosafety (hereafter referred to as “donors”) are invited to take into account the following operational principles to guide their efforts in promoting coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives at the country-level:
 - (a) Biosafety capacity-building assistance should be delivered in accordance with the needs and priorities of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition (i.e. partner countries);
 - (b) The partner countries should set the agenda for the national biosafety capacity-building initiatives and should own and lead the process for the coordination and harmonization of the different initiatives;
 - (c) Coordination activities should be tailored to the specific situation in each partner country;
 - (d) The partner countries should be fully committed to the coordination and harmonization process and should establish an enabling environment. The donors should consider building the capacity of partner countries in order to effectively manage the process;

(e) The Governments and organizations providing biosafety capacity-building assistance (i.e. donors) should deliver their assistance through the national biosafety coordination mechanism established by each country;

(f) Donors should streamline their assistance policies and procedures so that partner countries with limited capacities do not have to deal with multiple requirements, including monitoring and reporting requirements;

(g) Based on their expertise and comparative advantages, donors should focus on issues and areas in which they are best suited to support;

(h) The coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives should be undertaken through an open, transparent and all-inclusive participatory process, involving relevant partner Government agencies, donors and other relevant stakeholders;

(i) Institutional arrangements for coordination should be flexible in order to respond to local needs and changing circumstances and to accommodate the comparative advantages different donors.

IV. OPERATIONAL MODALITIES

A. *Procedures and approaches*

5. The process of coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives, particularly at the country-level, may involve the following basic steps, procedures and approaches:

(a) *Situational analysis and needs assessment*: The first logical step towards promoting effective coordination and harmonization would be to review the status of biosafety capacity-building efforts (including existing capacity-building initiatives and the level of implementation of the national biosafety frameworks) and to assess the country needs and priorities;

(b) *Development of national biosafety capacity-building strategies and plans*: In accordance with decision BS-II/3, paragraphs 19 and 20, partner countries should consider developing, on the basis of the needs assessments, national biosafety capacity-building strategies and action plans defining their overall vision, priorities, objectives and targets. The strategy and action plan could also stipulate the roles of different players, the desired approaches and the areas of focus. Such plans could be used as the reference documents for those interested in providing capacity-building assistance and could form the basis for coordinating and synchronizing the different capacity-building initiatives. They could also be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(c) *Organizing government-donor round tables*: Within the framework of the national biosafety capacity-building strategies and action plans, partner countries may consider organizing consultative meetings or round tables where the donors can express their interest regarding which elements of the strategy and action plan they would wish to support.^{24/} On the basis of the donor responses, a matrix showing which elements of the action plan would be supported by which donors could be developed. As well, a multi-year capacity-building programme, including specific project concepts, could be prepared. The matrix and the capacity-building programme could be available on the Biosafety Clearing-House. This exercise would help to identify overlaps and gaps and also facilitate the identification of opportunities for synergies and complementarity in the assistance programmes.

^{24/} Alternatively, partner countries could develop funding proposals for specific projects or activities and submit them to interested donors, including the Global Environment Facility.

(d) *Ongoing country-level dialogue*: In the course of implementing the capacity-building programme, it may be useful to organize periodic forums at the country level in order to facilitate dialogue between partner Governments and donors, to review progress with the coordination and harmonization efforts at both the strategic and operation levels, to share experiences and to discuss any new developments.

B. Specific coordination measures and actions

6. There is a wide range of specific measures and actions that could be systematically taken by both partner countries and donors to achieve practical synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives. These can be undertaken through formalized arrangements (e.g. institutionalized forums, committees or memoranda of understanding), semi-formal arrangements; or through informal or ad hoc arrangements.

7. *Formalized coordination activities and measures* could include the following: periodic donor-Government meetings (including round tables or consultative groups), regular donor coordination meetings in partner countries, institutionalized exchange of information through websites or databases, joint reviews and assessments, implementation of joint action plans; joint projects or activities (e.g. seminars and workshops, training events or studies), preparation of joint country and sectoral strategy papers; or pooling of resources (e.g. through co-financing of specific activities or through trust fund arrangements).

8. *Semi-formal coordination measures* could include: exchange of publications and training materials, exchange of work plans or schedules of events; cross-participation in each others' workshops and other activities; exchange of draft documents (including project appraisals, analyses, guidance materials, etc.) for review and comment; or participation in joint ad-hoc technical groups or taskforces (for example to develop joint guidance, methodologies and other tools).

9. *Informal or ad hoc coordination measures* could include: personal contacts and networking; exchange of opinions and insights; informal briefings; ad hoc consultations or participation in each other's planning and review meetings.

C. Institutional arrangements

10. In accordance with decision BS-I/5, paragraph 23, partner countries should consider establishing national biosafety coordination mechanisms to promote the coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building assistance and to promote synergies between existing capacity-building initiatives. The institutional structure for such a mechanism could include: a national focal point, a steering group and a donor-donor consultative mechanism at the partner country-level. ^{25/}

11. *National Biosafety Capacity-Building Focal Point*: The National Focal Point for the Cartagena Protocol could be designated as the National Biosafety Capacity-Building Focal Point. The responsibilities of the focal point in this regard could include the following tasks, among others:

(a) Serve as the contact point and intermediary between the donors and national institutions regarding biosafety capacity-building assistance programmes;

^{25/} The national biosafety coordination frameworks should take account of, and link with, the wider national donor coordination mechanism, including donor coordination fora, such as Round Tables or Consultative Groups.

- (b) Liaise and establish linkages with the overall national aid coordination mechanism, where it exists;
- (c) Organize and manage biosafety capacity-building consultative meetings or round tables for donors and relevant stakeholders;
- (d) Coordinate the assessment of biosafety capacity-building needs and priorities and the periodic review of the assessments;
- (e) Coordinate the preparation of the biosafety capacity-building strategy and action plan;
- (f) Analyze and track external assistance commitments and disbursements by donors for the biosafety capacity-building action plan to ensure effective resource allocation;
- (g) Monitor and report on the execution of the donor-funded biosafety projects and programmes;
- (h) Liaise and establish linkages with other relevant capacity-building initiatives at the national level;

12. *Steering Group:* The National Biosafety Committee, or an equivalent body, could be used to serve as the national steering group for the coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building assistance. Its roles in this regard would, *inter alia*, include the following:

- (a) Oversee the work of, and provide policy guidance to, the National Biosafety Capacity-Building Focal Point;
- (b) Ensure effective coordination and buy-in among relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders;
- (c) Monitor the overall progress of the biosafety capacity-building efforts and propose ways and means for improvement.

13. *Donor-donor consultative mechanism:* Donors providing biosafety capacity-building assistance to the same countries may wish to consider establish a consultative mechanism among themselves, including regular consultative meetings to, among other things: to exchange information, to harmonize their assistance policies and approaches, to synchronize their assistance initiatives and identify opportunities for joint activities; and to agree on joint operational requirements and guidelines to be discussed with partner Governments.

14. Donors may also wish to designate, at their home offices, contact persons for biosafety capacity-building assistance activities. Such a person would serve a single contact point for all information regarding the biosafety assistance programmes of the donor in different countries.

V. MONITORING AND REVIEW

15. These guidelines are designed to promote coordination and harmonization of biosafety capacity-building initiatives with a view to achieving practical synergies and complementarity between them and ultimately maximizing their efficiency, effectiveness and impact. In this regard, it is important for each partner country to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework (with a set of specific actions and indicators) to assess the progress towards achieving these objectives.

16. The partner countries should consider preparing periodic progress reports and sharing their operational experiences, best practices and lessons learned through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

17. This guiding framework shall be reviewed and updated, if necessary, every five years. An initial review shall be undertaken after two years of its adoption.
