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SECOND COORDINATION MEETING FOR
GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS
IMPLEMENTING OR FUNDING BIOSAFETY
CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES
Tromso, Norway 18-20 January 2006

**REPORT OF THE SECOND COORDINATION MEETING FOR
GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTING OR FUNDING
BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The second Coordination Meeting for Governments and Organizations Implementing or Funding Biosafety Capacity-Building Activities was held in Tromso, Norway from 18 to 20 January 2006.
2. The meeting was attended by 39 participants. The list of participants is contained in Annex II to this report.
3. The meeting was sponsored and hosted by the Government of Norway in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in accordance with decision BS-I/5 regarding the Coordination Mechanism for the Implementation of the Action Plan on Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP) at its first meeting.
4. The meeting was opened by Mr. Poul Engberg-Pedersen, Director General of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).
5. Participants elected Mr. Hartmut Meyer (Germany) to serve as Chairperson of the meeting and Ms. Stacey Wells-Moultrie (Bahamas) to serve as Rapporteur.
6. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda provided in document UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/2/1. The following key items were discussed at the meeting:

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- (a) Consideration of practical measures to achieve operational-level synergies and complementarities between capacity-building initiatives.
- (b) Consideration of practical experiences, best practices and lessons learned in capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Protocol.
- (c) Input into the comprehensive review of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol.

7. During the meeting, participants shared information about the ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building initiatives in which they are involved. It was agreed that the information shared at the meeting will be compiled and made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. Participants who had not already done so promised to submit to the Secretariat written updates about their initiatives within one week after the meeting.

8. The meeting also discussed and adopted an Interim Guiding Framework for Promoting Practical Synergies and Complementarity Between Biosafety Capacity-Building Initiatives at the Country Level, which is contained in Annex I of this report.

9. Under agenda item 5 (other matters), the meeting exchanged views on possible agenda items for the next coordination meeting, as well as the tentative venues and dates. It was agreed that the issue of 'regional and sub-regional approaches' will be one of the agenda items at the next meeting. The Steering Committee will make a final decision regarding the agenda, date and venue after the third meeting of the COP-MOP.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Review of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the first coordination meeting

10. Participants reviewed the progress made with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the first coordination meeting, including updates on: the capacity building initiatives undertaken, efforts made to address capacity needs and priorities of countries, the progress in developing national capacity-building strategies and the promotion of south-south cooperation. In this regard, the following recommendations were made:

- (a) The design of capacity-building projects should include a requirement to provide and update information in the project database in the Biosafety Clearing-House.
- (b) Where national capacity-building strategies have been developed, they should be taken into account when capacity-building projects and initiatives are being developed.
- (c) The national capacity-building strategies that have been developed should be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.
- (d) The design of any capacity-building project should include measures that would ensure the sustainability of activities beyond the project's life.
- (e) Governments and organizations should provide information on best practices in south-south cooperation based on their experiences.

B. Practical experiences, best practices and lessons learned in capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Protocol

11. The meeting heard case study presentations of the following ongoing and completed biosafety building projects, which focused on the practical experiences, best practices and lessons learned as well as the main challenges encountered and how they were addressed:

- (a) German-funded Project on Civil Society Participation in Algeria's Biosafety Process;
- (b) Norwegian Assistance to Zambia to build capacity for the implementation of the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- (c) Mexico-UNDP/GEF Capacity Building Project for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework;
- (d) Dutch MATRA Project on Implementation of Biosafety Frameworks in Pre-Accession Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (1999-2002);
- (e) USAID-funded Program for Biosafety Systems and;
- (f) UNEP-GEF Global Project on Development of National Biosafety Frameworks.

12. It was agreed that these presentations will be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

C. Input into the comprehensive review of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol

13. The meeting discussed the draft background paper prepared by the Executive Secretary on the progress in, and effectiveness of, the implementation of the Action Plan. The following views and comments were made regarding possible measures for addressing the constraints to the effective implementation of the Action Plan identified in the paper and were forwarded for consideration by the third meeting of the liaison group for capacity-building for biosafety:

- (a) *Insufficient funding:*
 - (i) Recipient countries should incorporate biosafety capacity building into their national development policies and strategies, which are often used by donors and organizations in developing their assistance policies and programmes.
 - (ii) Recipient countries should also include biosafety issues in their national budgets.
 - (iii) Donors should incorporate biosafety capacity building support into their development aid policies and strategies, and in the corresponding sectoral, bilateral and multilateral programmes.
- (b) *Lack of adequate human capacities:*
 - (i) Countries should utilize opportunities offered by biotechnology capacity building activities to the extent that they are relevant for biosafety.

- (ii) Building capacity for biosafety should go beyond creating awareness about technical and scientific issues, through seminars and short-term training activities. It should aim at creating core expertise through long-term training, including attachment of personnel to specialized institutions, located in the country or abroad.
 - (iii) In order to ensure sustainability of biosafety capacity-building efforts, a long-term perspective should be taken in the design and implementation of projects. As well, the implementation of training programmes should be spearheaded by local experts and national training institutions.
- (c) *Low priority given to biosafety:*
 - (i) National institutions dealing with biosafety should make use of all available opportunities to raise public and political awareness regarding biosafety issues.
 - (ii) Both donor and recipient governments should integrate biosafety into their broader sustainable development strategies and approaches, such as those related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- (d) *Lack of information:*
 - (i) Every country should make an effort to improve the level and quality of information provided in the capacity building databases in the Biosafety Clearing-House.
 - (ii) Countries participating in the UNEP-GEF project on "Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House" should be required to provide relevant information to the BCH before or upon completion of the project.
 - (iii) All biosafety capacity-building projects should include a requirement to provide information on the project activities, outcomes and lessons learned to the capacity-building databases in the Biosafety Clearing-House.
- (e) *Poor coordination and collaboration:*
 - (i) Each Government should establish a coordination mechanism for biosafety capacity building in accordance with decision BS-I/5, paragraph 23.
 - (ii) Best practices in coordination and collaboration should be documented and publicized, including through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

ANNEX I

INTERIM 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 (i.e. projects, programmes and other activities).

2. Efforts are being made to promote coordination at the global level through the Coordination Mechanism, especially the capacity-building databases and the coordination meetings. There is also 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 framework is intended to provide guiding principles and a list of options of operational modalities that could be applied to enhance coordination and harmonization between different capacity-building initiatives for promoting the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety, with a view to achieving practical synergies and complementarity between them. 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 “recipient countries”) as well as Governments and organizations providing capacity-building assistance for biosafety (hereafter referred to as “donors and organizations”) 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) Recipient 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.

(b) Coordination activities should be tailored to the specific situation in each recipient country. As well biosafety capacity-building assistance should be delivered in accordance with the needs and priorities of the recipient countries.

(c) Recipient countries should be fully committed to the coordination and harmonization process and should establish an enabling environment. Donors and organizations should consider building the capacity of recipient countries in order to effectively manage the process.

(d) Donors and organizations should deliver their assistance in consultation with the national biosafety capacity development coordination mechanism established by each country. This mechanism should include, inter alia, the national focal point for the Cartagena Protocol and the competent national

authority/authorities designated pursuant to article 19 of the Protocol, and, if appropriate, the national biosafety committee.

(e) Donors and organizations should, to extent possible, streamline their assistance procedures, including monitoring and reporting requirements, so that recipient countries with limited capacities do not have to deal with multiple requirements.

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

(g) Institutional arrangements for coordination should be flexible in order to respond to local needs and changing circumstances and to accommodate the comparative advantages of 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:* In order to achieve effective coordination and harmonization it may be necessary for recipient countries to review the status and effectiveness of their biosafety capacity-building efforts (including an overview of capacity building initiatives that have been or are being carried out, the level of implementation of the national biosafety frameworks and the lessons learned from thereof). It may also necessary for recipient countries to assess their needs and priorities. That information could be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

(b) *Development of national biosafety capacity-building strategies and plans:* In accordance with decision BS-II/3, paragraphs 19 and 20, recipient 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 different capacity-building initiatives. The national biosafety capacity-building strategies and action plans should be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House.

B. Specific coordination measures and actions

6. There is a wide range of specific measures and actions that could be systematically taken by both recipient countries and donors to achieve practical synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives. These could 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 meetings between recipient Governments and donors/organizations (including round tables or consultative groups), regular donor and organizations' coordination meetings held in recipient countries (including joint participation in their respective project steering committees), 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. *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 recipient Governments and donors/ organizations. This would serve to review progress with the coordination and harmonization efforts at both the strategic and operational levels, to share experiences and to discuss any new developments.

9. *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' activities, including seminars and workshops; exchange of draft documents (including project appraisals, analyses, guidance materials, etc.) for review and comment; or participation in joint ad-hoc technical groups or task forces (e.g. to develop joint guidance, methodologies and other tools).

10. *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

11. In accordance with decision BS-I/5, paragraph 23, recipient 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 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) Serve as the reference point regarding biosafety capacity-building assistance programmes;
- (b) Liaise and establish linkages with the overall national aid coordination mechanism, where it exists;
- (c) Ensure effective coordination and buy-in among relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders;
- (d) Organize and manage biosafety capacity-building consultative meetings or round tables for donors and relevant stakeholders;
- (e) Coordinate the assessment of biosafety capacity-building needs and priorities and the periodic review of the assessments;
- (f) Coordinate the preparation of the biosafety capacity-building strategy and action plan;
- (g) Analyze and track external assistance commitments and disbursements by donors for the biosafety capacity-building action plan to ensure effective resource allocation;
- (h) Monitor and report on the execution of the donor-funded biosafety projects and programmes;

(i) Liaise and establish linkages with other relevant capacity-building initiatives at the national level;

(j) Monitor the overall progress of biosafety capacity-building efforts and propose ways and means for improvement.

12. To facilitate communication with other stakeholders, the steering group may consider designating one of its members as a contact point and make his/her contact details available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. The designated contact may also be given the responsibility of notifying the BCH about all the capacity-building initiatives undertaken in a given country.

13. In addition to the national coordination mechanisms described above, donors and organizations providing biosafety capacity-building assistance to the same countries may wish to consider establishing a consultative mechanism among themselves. This could include regular consultative meetings to, among other things: exchange information; harmonize their assistance policies and approaches where possible; synchronize their assistance initiatives and identify opportunities for joint activities; and agree on joint operational requirements and guidelines to be discussed with recipient Governments.

14. Donors and organizations may also wish to designate, at their home offices, contact persons for biosafety capacity-building assistance activities and make this information available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. Such a person would serve as a 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 recipient 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 recipient 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.

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