



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/5/4

1 October 2009

ENGLISH ONLY

FIFTH COORDINATION MEETING FOR GOVERNMENTS
AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTING OR FUNDING
BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

San José, 9-11 March 2009

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

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The fifth Coordination Meeting for Governments and Organizations Implementing or Funding Biosafety Capacity-Building Activities was held from 9 to 11 March 2009 in San José, Costa Rica. It was hosted by the Government of Costa Rica, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, with support from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). It was held at the IICA headquarters. The Government of Norway and the Government of Germany through the GTZ/African Union Commission biosafety project provided financial support for participants from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to attend the meeting.

2. The meeting was attended by 47 participants from 22 Governments and 15 organizations. The countries were: Belize, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, European Community, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa and United States of America. The organizations were: African Union Commission, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, Desarrollo Medio Ambiental Sustentable, Ecoropa, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad en Costa Rica (INBio), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), RAEIN-Africa, United Nations Environment Programme-Global Environment Facility (UNEP/GEF), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and University of Vechta. The full list of participants is contained in annex II to this report.

3. The objectives of the meeting were to:

(a) To share information and experiences from different biosafety capacity-building initiatives;

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(b) To identify emerging biosafety capacity-building issues, needs and gaps and ways to address them;

(c) To discuss possible measures to facilitate the strengthening of national capacities in:
(i) environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of living modified organisms (LMOs); and
(ii) integration of biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes.

II. MEETING PROCEEDINGS

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. The meeting was opened by Hon. Carlos Villalobos, Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica. In his remarks, Hon. Villalobos welcomed the participants to Costa Rica, noting that it was an honour for Costa Rica to host the meeting. He thanked IICA for providing the conference facilities and for its support in co-organizing the meeting. Hon. Villalobos noted that the meeting would be discussing issues that were critical to ensuring the safe use of modern biotechnology. In particular, he highlighted the need to integrate biosafety into national development plans and programmes. He noted that, if used in a safe manner, biotechnology had a great potential to contribute to improving human well-being and promoting sustainable development. He noted that Costa Rica being a very biodiverse country with high agricultural potential, the Government was very committed to ensuring adequate protection for its biological diversity and human health from potential adverse effects of modern biotechnology. Hon. Villalobos wished participants fruitful deliberations, which he hoped would result in concrete actions for advancing capacity-building in the field of biosafety.

5. Opening remarks were also made by Dr. Chelston Brathwaite, Executive Director of IICA and Mr. Charles Gbedemah on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

6. In his opening remarks, Dr. Brathwaite welcomed all the participants to the IICA headquarters and wished them successful deliberations. He noted that global agriculture would have to feed an increasing population, which was expected to reach 8 billion people by 2020 with approximately 6 billion in developing countries. Under those conditions, traditional agriculture might not guarantee the needed food supply without expanding the production frontier or degrading the natural resources. He observed that biotechnology offers a powerful tool that could help to alleviate poverty and ensure food security. Nevertheless, this new technology has generated concerns over its possible adverse environmental and health effects. Those concerns had inspired most countries to develop regulatory mechanisms for environmental risk assessment and food safety. Dr. Brathwaite reported that IICA, aware of the importance of the subject, has been developing activities in biotechnology and biosafety since 2005 in order to build capacities for the safe use of biotechnology and promotion of sustainable agriculture in the Latin America and Caribbean region. In the same vein, IICA endorsed the creation of platforms to exchange information and experiences within the framework of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Dr. Brathwaite noted that it was fundamental that countries in the region, as producers and net food exporters, organized themselves as to face the difficulties and technical challenges, including through development and implementation of national biosafety frameworks. He therefore noted that IICA was pleased to host the coordination meeting and encouraged regional and global activities that would strengthen capacities to face those challenges.

7. In his statement on behalf of the Executive Secretary, Mr. Gbedemah thanked the Government of Costa Rica for hosting the meeting and IICA for providing excellent meeting facilities and for providing

organizational support for the meeting. He also thanked the Government of Norway and the Government of Germany through the GTZ/African Union Commission biosafety project for providing financial support, which had enabled the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Mr. Gbedemah underscored the important role played to date by the coordination meetings in facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experiences among stakeholders involved in capacity-building for biosafety and in the development of innovative ideas and guidance for enhancing capacity-building efforts on specific issues, such as documentation and identification (Article 18) and regional cooperation. He noted that the present meeting would focus on capacity-building in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs and on the issue of the integration of biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes. In conclusion, he recognized the contributions made by Ms. Leda Avila of IICA; Ms Gabriela Zúñiga, Mr. Alex May and Mr. Alejandro Hernández Soto of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; and Erie Tamale of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in organizing the meeting. He also thanked members of the Steering Committee for their guidance and support throughout the preparations of the meeting.

ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

8. After the opening session, the participants elected Mr. Hartmut Meyer (Germany) to serve as Chairperson of the meeting and Ms. Francisca Acevedo Gasman (Mexico) to serve as Rapporteur.

9. The meeting then adopted the following agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/5/1), which was developed by the Secretariat in consultation with the Steering Committee:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Election of officers;
 - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;
 - 2.3. Organization of work.
3. Standing agenda items:
 - 3.1 Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of previous coordination meetings and relevant decisions of the Parties to the Protocol;
 - 3.2 Update on ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building projects/initiatives: latest developments and emerging opportunities for collaboration;
 - 3.3 Consideration of the capacity-building needs and priorities of countries.
4. Issues for in-depth consideration:
 - 4.1. Capacity-building in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of living modified organisms: current status, priority needs and strategic measures to improve national capacities;
 - 4.2. Capacity-building for and experiences gained in integrating biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national programmes for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
5. Operational modalities and programme of work of future coordination meetings.

6. Other matters.
7. Conclusions and recommendations.
8. Closure of the meeting.

10. It also adopted its organization of work for the meeting, as contained in annex I to this report. Participants agreed to start the substantive discussions with agenda item 3.2 (Update on ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building projects/initiatives) and then take up agenda item 3.1 (Progress report on implementation of the recommendations of previous coordination meetings and relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol). Subsequently, it was also agreed to consider agenda 3.3 (Consideration of the capacity-building needs and priorities of countries) while discussing the programme of work of future coordination meetings, under agenda item 5.

ITEM 3. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

3.1. Report on implementation of the recommendations of the previous coordination meetings and the COP-MOP decisions

11. Under this agenda item, the Chair of the meeting, Hartmut Meyer, gave an overview of how recommendations of the previous coordination meetings were taken up in the decisions of the Parties to the Protocol. He reported that Parties to the Protocol had adopted most of the previous recommendations. These included those on the capacity-building Action Plan, the roster of biosafety experts, identification and documentation of LMOs (Article 18 of the Protocol) and general measures to advance capacity-building for the effective implementation of the Protocol.

12. Mr. Meyer noted that in its decision BS-IV/16, paragraph 3, the Parties to the Protocol in particular took note of the recommendations of the fourth coordination meeting concerning capacity-building in socio-economic considerations and gave the next coordination meeting a mandate to further consider possibilities for cooperation in identifying needs for capacity-building among Parties for research and information exchange on socio-economic impacts of LMOs and to submit its recommendations for consideration by the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

13. Following the Chair's introduction, the following two issues were discussed in detail:

(a) Implementation of the mandate given to the coordination meeting by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in paragraph 3 of decision BS-IV/16, regarding socio-economic considerations; and

(b) Options for further developing and promoting the utilization of the two draft guidelines that were developed at the second and third coordination meetings, i.e. "Interim Guiding Framework for Promoting Synergies and Complementarities Between Biosafety Capacity-Building Initiatives at the Country Level" and the "Draft Guidance on Promoting Regional and Subregional Initiatives and Approaches to Capacity-Building in Biosafety".

(a) Capacity-building in addressing socio-economic considerations

14. With regard to the issue of socio-economic considerations, participants noted that the mandate given to the coordination meeting by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties

to the Protocol is limited to considering possibilities for cooperation in identifying needs for capacity-building among Parties in: (i) research on socio-economic impacts of LMOs and; (ii) information exchange on socio-economic impacts. However, it was observed that many countries still lack a clear understanding of what socio-economic considerations are and as such they are not able to identify their specific capacity-building needs with regard to how to assess and take them into account in decision-making regarding LMOs. It was reported that a number of countries mention socio-economic considerations broadly in their national biosafety frameworks but only a few of specify what they are.

15. A few initiatives have been taken by different Governments and organizations to address this issue. For example, it was reported that the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit, with financial support from the Department for International Development (DfID) of the United Kingdom and in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, initiated a study in 2007 to examine national experiences with the integration of socio-economic considerations in biosafety decision-making processes. Under this initiative, an annotated bibliography of peer-reviewed and “grey” literature related to socio-economic considerations in biosafety has been assembled and will be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH). A draft questionnaire has also been developed by a panel of experts to document national-level experiences, needs and examples. The results of the questionnaire will be used to develop a toolkit module on socio-economic considerations in the context of Article 26 of the Protocol. Other initiatives include: a research study which was carried out by the World Resources Institute,¹ ongoing studies by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and studies by ASARECA’s Eastern and Central Africa Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis (ECAPAPA) and the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS).

16. The participants agreed that this issue would be one of the substantive agenda items for the next coordination meeting. The meeting will, *inter alia*, identify mechanisms through which Parties could cooperate in identifying their capacity-building needs with regard to conducting research and exchanging information on socio-economic impacts of LMOs, in accordance with the mandate given by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. Participants mentioned the following as some of the possible mechanisms that could be considered: regional and subregional level brainstorming/consultative workshops, use of existing regional and subregional networks and initiatives, regional surveys for example using questionnaires, and others. The next meeting will also review the experiences from different countries and identify specific examples of socio-economic issues that have been considered by countries, and how they have been assessed and taken into account in decision-making on LMOs.

17. In the preparation for the next coordination meeting, it was suggested that the results from the UNEP-SCBD survey should be taken into account, including the bibliographic review and the questionnaire. In this regard, the Secretariat was requested to work with the UNEP-GEF Biosafety team to send out the questionnaire and compile the results for consideration at the next coordination meeting. The Secretariat was also requested to compile information on capacity-building needs and priorities with respect to socio-economic considerations, submitted by Parties and other Government through the BCH and other processes such as the UNDP/GEF-supported National Capacity Self-Assessments.

¹ Fransen, L., La Viña, A., Dayrit, F., Gatlabayan, L., Santosa, D.A., & Adiwibowo, S. (2005). Integrating socio-economic considerations into biosafety decisions: The role of public participation. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute: http://pdf.wri.org/fransen_lavina_biosafetywhitepaper.pdf

(b) Options for dealing with outputs of previous coordination meetings

18. Under this agenda item, the participants also discussed options for further developing and utilising the “Interim Guiding Framework for Promoting Synergies and Complementarities Between Biosafety Capacity-Building Initiatives at the Country Level”, which was developed at the second coordination meeting, and the “Draft Guidance on Promoting Regional and Subregional Initiatives and Approaches to Capacity-Building in Biosafety”, which was developed at the third coordination meeting.

19. It was agreed that the draft guidance documents needed revision and streamlining before they could either be submitted to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol for formal adoption or published and disseminated publications of the Secretariat. In this regard, a small taskforce was established to review the draft guidelines and propose revised versions for consideration by the meeting. The taskforce consisted of: Michael DeShield of Belize, Desmond Mahon of Canada, Lucy Naydenova and Jeroen Rijniens of the Netherlands, Chris Viljoen of South Africa and Christine von Weizsäcker of ECOROPA.

20. The meeting discussed and approved the revised versions of the two guidelines, as contained in annexes II and III to this report. The Secretariat was requested to finalize them for adoption at the sixth coordination meeting after which they would be forwarded for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

3.2. Update on ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building activities

21. Under this agenda item, 37 participants made short presentations on their ongoing capacity-building initiatives, focusing on the latest developments since the previous coordination meeting. Participants who were unable to make their presentations were invited to submit written briefs thereafter to the Secretariat. The Secretariat reported that all the submissions would be compiled into an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/5/INF/1) which will be posted on web page for the fifth coordination meeting (<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BSCMCB-05>).

ITEM 4. ISSUES FOR IN-DEPTH CONSIDERATION

4.1. Capacity-building in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of living modified organisms

22. Under this agenda item, participants reviewed the report of the online conference on “capacity-building in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs” which was held from 3 to 28 November 2008 (which was made available as document UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/5/2). They also reviewed the conclusions and recommendations from the regional workshops on capacity-building and exchange of experiences on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs which were organized by the Secretariat in 2007 and 2008 (which were compiled and circulated as information document UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/5/INF/2).

23. It was observed that the report of the online conference and also the reports of the regional workshops contained useful information which could provide valuable input into other processes. For example, the information is relevant for the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, which was established by the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the meeting of academic institutions and organizations involved in biosafety education and training, the process for the development of the strategic plan of the Protocol.

24. The participants highlighted the problem of “brain drain” and a high turnover of the few available experts in the national regulatory institutions. In this regard, they emphasized the need to engage and collaborate with relevant academic institutions in order to develop a critical mass of expertise in risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs. It was also noted that building national capacities in risk assessment requires training of persons with different specialised disciplines, such as ecology, entomology, microbiology and others.

25. After the initial round of discussions, the meeting agreed to identify a set of action points that could be undertaken, in the short-term and long-term and at different levels (national, regional, subregional and global levels), in order to assist countries to build and strengthen their capacities in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs. Subsequently, two working groups were established, which discussed and developed matrices on:

- (a) Capacity-building for environmental risk assessment;
- (b) Capacity-building for post-release monitoring of LMOs.

26. The two matrices from the working groups which were then adopted at the plenary session are contained in annex III to the present report. The Secretariat was requested to finalize the matrices and make them available at the next coordination meeting.

27. The participants also noted the linkage between the work of the coordination meetings on risk assessment and that of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Risk Assessment. It was agreed that when the AHTEG has finished its work, the capacity-building action points in the matrices may need to be further revised by the coordination meeting.

4.2. Capacity-building for and experiences gained in integrating biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes

28. Under this item, participants were invited to review the report of the online conference on capacity-building for integration of biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes which was held from 19 January to 13 February 2009 and made available to the meeting as document UNEP/CBD/BS/CM-CB/5/3. Before the discussions, the meeting heard four short case-study presentations by Mr. Carlos Woolford of Guatemala, Ms. Marnie Portillo of Honduras, Ms. Helle Biseth of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and Ms. Alexandra Mueller of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

29. Mr. Woolford described the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process in Guatemala and the effort made to integrate environmental issues. It was reported that one of the thirteen objectives of Guatemala’s current Poverty Reduction Strategy, is creating and strengthening sustainable environmental policies to rescue, protect, conserve, develop and exploit natural resources in a controlled manner. The strategy emphasizes the need for balanced and sustainable management of environmental resources, in particular water and forests, and prevention of natural disasters. However biosafety is not specifically mentioned in the strategy.

30. Ms. Portillo described the situation in Honduras with regards to the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the consideration of environmental issues in the national development process. It was noted that Honduras's PRSP highlights the need to reduce the ecological risks and environmental vulnerability of the country through improved processes of environmental and risk management and the development of economic and financial tools that foster sustainable natural-resource management and environmental protection. However, environment, and

biodiversity and biosafety for that matter, currently receives a relatively small portion of the support provided for the implementation of the PRSP.

31. Ms. Biseth gave an overview of the Norwegian development cooperation policy, strategies and approaches and the efforts being made to integrate environmental considerations. She reported that Norway, like other donors, provides development assistance to partner countries in different forms including: (i) sector-wide support or "basket funding" where donors pool and channel their funds into a given sector as a group; (ii) sub-sector support where it earmarks its assistance to a specific part of the sector (e.g. within the environment sector, support for protected area management); (iii) project support; and (iv) funding of specific individual activities, such as conferences or workshops. She noted that in recent years, donors have made effort to coordinate their assistance to different sectors or to national budgets and many have embraced what is known as the "budget support" approach where they act as a group to support the national budget of a recipient. Under this arrangement, the recipient countries have to develop national strategic plans, such as PRSPs, based on their own priorities, which form the basis for the national budget and donor support. In this regard, Ms. Biseth emphasized the need for the line ministries or departments responsible for biosafety to make sure that biosafety considerations are integrated into such high-level strategy documents if it is to be adequately considered among the national priorities to receive budgetary allocations and donor funding support in the medium or long term. She also highlighted the need to integrate biosafety into relevant sectoral policies and plans including agriculture, science and technology and environment.

32. In her presentation, Ms. Muller reported that Germany had bilateral agreements with different partner countries for support to sector-wide programmes and projects which are developed with the country and other donor organizations. The issues and activities to be implemented were identified through bilateral negotiations and had to be based on national development strategies and plans. Therefore, it was necessary to integrate environment as a whole, and biosafety specifically, into these strategies because they formed the basis of the bilateral negotiations. Donors also needed to mainstream the question of biosafety and biodiversity conservation in their development cooperation policies and strategies. Ms. Muller observed that in general integration of environment in PRSPs had been very difficult, partly due to poor communication and marketing. For example, she noted that biodiversity was often presented simply as protection of species and not effectively in terms of the ecosystem goods and services that underpinned people's livelihoods and contributed to poverty reduction. Sometimes biosafety and biodiversity issues and initiatives under the Convention on Biological Diversity were divorced from each other. She recommended that biosafety issues should be effectively integrated in the national biodiversity strategies and action plans and in the communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities under the Convention.

33. After the short presentations, participants discussed the challenges to, and possible strategies for promoting, the integration of biosafety into national development plans and development cooperation policies and strategies. It was clarified that the focus of the discussions was not on integration of biosafety into PRSPs *per se* but also other high-level development plans, policies and processes, including National Development Plans, National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSDs). It was pointed out, for example, that some countries, such as Malaysia, Thailand, Mexico and others did not need to prepare PRSPs but had other types of development plans or policies into which biosafety needed to be integrated.

34. One of the main limiting factors identified is a lack of clear understanding of the concept of biosafety by policy makers, officials responsible for national development planning and the public lack of appreciation of its importance as a key strategy for sustainable development. It was agreed that there is a need to raise awareness of biosafety at the highest level in order to generate broad support for its

mainstreaming into the development process. For example, it is important to sensitize policymakers and the public about the potential threat to the environment, the economy and people's livelihoods if biosafety issues are not effectively addressed. This would also require effective communication of the science and the economics of biosafety, backed with concrete data, so that policymakers, planners and other key stakeholders can be convinced about the need to integrate it into the national development agenda.

35. Participants also emphasized the need to integrate biosafety issues into sectors and economic activities that were linked to the transfer, handling and use of LMOs, including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health, food safety, food aid, science and technology and others. It is also important to articulate the linkages between biosafety and other issues such as food security, climate change and energy (e.g., biofuels) and others linked to the use of LMOs, which are currently considered high priorities in many national development planning processes.

36. The participants noted the urgent need to build the capacity of officials responsible for biosafety at the national and sectoral levels to be able to integrate biosafety into national development plans and programmes. They identified the following as some of the measures that could contribute to building or strengthening national capacities:

- (a) Seminars to sensitize policymakers, planners and other relevant officials by providing relevant information on the issue of biosafety and its relevance to sustainable development;
- (b) Training workshops to develop the skills of relevant officials in mainstreaming biosafety considerations into development plans and processes;
- (c) Development of guidance on how to integrate biosafety considerations into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, programmes and projects.

37. Furthermore, the participants identified different strategic opportunities/entry points that could be used to integrate biosafety into national development processes. These include stakeholders meetings for the preparation of national development plans, national budget consultations, reviews of country assistance strategies and sectoral policy frameworks, sector-wide technical consultations, strategic environmental assessments and project-level environmental impact assessments. They also noted that National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) developed in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity are crucial instruments to facilitating the mainstreaming of biosafety.

ITEM 5. OPERATIONAL MODALITIES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK OF FUTURE COORDINATION MEETINGS

A. Review of the operational procedures and guidelines for the coordination meetings and election of a new Steering Committee

38. Under this agenda item, the participants reviewed and amended the operational procedures and guidelines for the coordination meetings which were adopted at the first coordination meeting. It was agreed to delete "Consideration of the priority needs of countries and specific requests for capacity-building support" as one of the standing items on the agenda of all the coordination meetings. Paragraph 10 of the guidelines was also amended to specify that the following categories of stakeholders would be members of the Steering Committee: United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and donors.

39. The following were elected to serve on the next steering committee:

1. Dr. Hartmut Meyer (Germany) – Western Europe and others group
2. Prof. Chris Viljoen (South Africa) – African region – for one more year
3. Dr. Pisey Oum (Cambodia) – Asia Pacific region
4. Dr. Francisca Acevedo Gasman (Mexico) – Latin America and the Caribbean region
5. Dr. Aleksej Tarasjev (Serbia) – Central and Eastern Europe region;
6. TBA – Donors
7. Dr. Fee-Chon Low (UNEP/GEF) – UN agencies
8. Mr. Decio Ripandelli (ICGEB) – Intergovernmental organizations.

40. The following persons were elected to serve as alternate members for the respective regions in the event that the substantive members is not be able to attend the steering committee meetings due to various reasons:

1. Mr. Kangayatkarasu Nagulendran (Malaysia) – Asia Pacific region
2. Mr. Alejandro Hernandez (Costa Rica) – Latin America and the Caribbean region
3. Mrs. Milena Roudná (Czech Republic) – Central and Eastern Europe region;
4. Mr. Bather Kone (African Union) – Intergovernmental organizations.

B. Programme of work for future coordination meetings

41. Under this agenda sub-item, participants exchanged views on priority issues requiring urgent capacity-building support and guidance, which would be discussed by the upcoming coordination meetings in the medium term. In this regard, the following priority issues were identified:

- (a) Public awareness and participation in decision-making;
- (b) Enforcement of regulatory frameworks;
- (c) Capacity-building in the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House;
- (d) Handling of liability and redress issues at the national level;
- (e) Risk assessment of genetically modified animals.

42. It was agreed that the upcoming coordination meetings would take up the issues in the above order of priority. The Steering Committee was mandated to decide when the different issues would be scheduled for consideration.

C. Date and venue of the next coordination meeting

43. The participant from Cambodia expressed his country's interest in hosting the next coordination meeting. He will make further consultations with the relevant national authorities and inform the Secretariat in due course of the final decision. The participants welcomed the expression of interest and tentatively agreed to host the meeting in the first quarter of 2010. The representative of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity offered to explore possibility of supporting some participants from the Asian

region to attend the meeting. The participant from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission also expressed her organization's interest to host the next meeting in the event that Cambodia is unable to do so or the seventh coordination meeting.

ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

44. Under agenda item 6 (Other matters), one participant proposed that future meetings should again provide opportunities for in-depth case-studies. Another participant suggested that during the next meeting, invited participants should be requested to prepare a short presentation on how they are integrating biosafety in their development plans and programme. Furthermore, one participant proposed that when addressing the issue of public awareness and participation, a representative of the Aarhus Convention should be invited to share the experiences under that Convention.

ITEM 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

45. The meeting discussed a number of issues and possible measures that could be taken to assist developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to develop and strengthen their capacities in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs and in integration of biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes. It also discussed the way forward in developing possible options for cooperation in identifying the capacity-building needs of Parties for research and information exchange on socio-economic impacts of LMOs.

46. With regard to capacity-building in handling socio-economic considerations, it was agreed that:

(a) The next coordination meeting should, among other things, identify mechanisms through which Parties could cooperate in identifying their capacity-building needs for research and exchange of information on socio-economic impacts of LMOs, in accordance with the mandate given by the Conference of the Parties serving as the Parties to the Protocol, in paragraph 3 of decision BS-IV/16;

(b) The next coordination meeting should also review the experiences from different countries and identify specific examples of socio-economic issues that have been considered, and how they have been assessed and taken into account in decision-making concerning LMOs;

(c) The work of the coordination meeting on this issue should build upon, and avoid duplication of, the work under the UNEP-GEF initiative. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity should collaborate with the UNEP-GEF Biosafety team to send out the questionnaire and compile the results for consideration at the next coordination meeting;

(d) The Secretariat should compile information on capacity-building needs and priorities with respect to socio-economic considerations, submitted by Governments through the BCH and other processes such as the UNDP/GEF-supported National Capacity Self-Assessments.

47. With regard to capacity-building in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs, it was agreed that:

(a) The Secretariat should further develop the matrices of action points for advancing capacity-building in risk assessment and post-release monitoring of LMOs, contained in annex IV, and submit them for further consideration at the next coordination meeting. The meeting will consider the possibility of submitting the finalized matrices to the fifth meeting of the Parties for adoption;

(b) The work of the coordination meeting on this issue should take into account, and complement, the work of the AHTEG on risk assessment and risk management. When the AHTEG has finished its work, the capacity-building action points in the matrices should be reviewed and further developed, if necessary.

48. Concerning the issue of capacity-building for integrating biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes, the meeting agreed that:

(a) Further work needs to be done to develop concrete measures to assist Parties to integrate biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes. In the meantime, countries should identify and share experiences and case-studies of how biosafety and/or other environmental considerations have been integrated into national development plans and programmes;

(b) The ministries and departments responsible for biosafety, in particular the National Focal Points for the Protocol, should champion efforts to integrate biosafety into relevant sectors and national development plans. In order to achieve that, they should be conversant with the national processes and procedures leading to the development and/or revision of national development plans, including PRSPs;

(c) Training activities should be organized for national biosafety focal points and other officials dealing with biosafety to acquire skills and know-how in mainstreaming strategies, tools and methodologies. The training activities could include regional workshops and guidance materials or toolkits;

(d) Seminars should be organized to promote awareness among high-level policymakers, planners, donors and other relevant stakeholders of biosafety and its importance to sustainable development in order for them to appreciate the need to integrate it into national development plans and development assistance programmes;

(e) Relevant national authorities should ensure that efforts to integrate biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes should be closely linked and aligned with other environmental mainstreaming efforts, in particular the integration of biodiversity into development plans and processes. In this regard, it is important to ensure that biosafety issues are adequately addressed in national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

(f) In order to facilitate the integration of the biosafety into national development processes, effort should be made to show the linkages between biosafety and other key topical issues such as food security, climate change, biofuels and others that are associated with the use of LMOs.

ITEM 8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

49. On the last day, participants reviewed and adopted the draft report of the meeting covering the proceedings of the previous two days. The Secretariat was requested to incorporate proceedings of the last day and send the final draft to all participants for comments. The present report has been finalized on that basis.

50. The meeting was closed on Wednesday, 11 March 2009 at 6.10 p.m.

Annex I

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

9 March 2009 9 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.	<i>Agenda item:</i> 1. Opening of the meeting.
9.30 a.m. – 10 a.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> 2. Organizational matters: 2.1. Election of officers; 2.2. Adoption of the agenda; 2.3. Organization of work.
10 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	Coffee/Tea Break
10.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> 3. Standing agenda items: 3.1. Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of previous coordination meetings and relevant decisions of the Parties to the Protocol; 3.2. Update on ongoing and planned biosafety capacity-building projects/initiatives: latest developments and emerging opportunities for collaboration; 3.3. Consideration of the capacity-building needs and priorities of countries.
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	Lunch Break
2 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.	Agenda item 3 (<i>continued</i>)
3.30 p.m. – 4 p.m.	Coffee/Tea Break
4 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> 4. Issues for in-depth consideration: 4.1. Capacity-building in environmental risk assessment and post-release monitoring of living modified organisms: current status, priority needs and strategic measures to improve national capacities.
10 March 2009 9 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> 4.2. Capacity-building for and experiences gained in integrating Biosafety into national development plans, strategies and programmes, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national programmes for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
10.30 a.m. – 11 a.m.	Coffee/Tea Break
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> Group discussions on item 4.1
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	Lunch Break

2 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.	Agenda item 4 (<i>continued</i>) Group discussions on item 4.2.
3.30 p.m. – 4 p.m.	Coffee/Tea Break
4 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.	Agenda item 4 (<i>continued</i>) Group presentations.
11 March 2009 9 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> Group discussions.
10.30 a.m. – 11 a.m.	Coffee/Tea Break
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> Consideration of group discussion reports.
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.	Lunch Break
2 p.m. – 5 p.m.	<i>Agenda items:</i> 5. Operational modalities and programme of work of future coordination meetings. 6. Other matters. 7. Conclusions and recommendations. 8. Closure of the meeting.

Annex II

**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 (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. This guiding framework has been developed to facilitate this process.

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”) should consider taking 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) Adopt a demand-driven approach;
- (b) Take into account the needs and circumstances of the country;
- (c) Have political endorsement;
- (d) Promote synergies between different capacity-building initiatives;
- (e) Identify or establish a national coordination mechanism for biosafety capacity development including, *inter alia*, the national focal point for the Cartagena Protocol and the competent national authority/authorities and, if appropriate, the national biosafety committee;
- (f) Donors and organizations should deliver their assistance in consultation with the national biosafety capacity development coordination mechanisms, where they have been established;

(g) Donors and organizations should, to the 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;

(h) Encourage inclusive, transparent and participatory stakeholder involvement;

(i) 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. ELEMENTS THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTING PRACTICAL SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN BIOSAFETY CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES AT THE COUNTRY-LEVEL

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) Building the capacity of recipient countries in order to effectively manage the process;

(b) *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 be necessary for recipient countries to assess their needs and priorities. That information could be made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House;

(c) *Development of national biosafety capacity-building strategies and plans*: In accordance with paragraphs 19 and 20 of decision BS-II/3, 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. Specific measures and actions that could be undertaken to achieve practical synergies and complementarity between biosafety capacity-building initiatives could include, *inter alia*, the following:

(a) *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);

(b) *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);

(c) *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;

(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 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.

C. *Institutional arrangements*

7. 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. The activities that such a body could undertake 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) Liaise and establish linkages with other relevant capacity-building initiatives at the national level;
- (d) Ensure effective coordination among relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders;
- (e) Organize and manage biosafety capacity-building consultative meetings or round tables for donors and relevant stakeholders;
- (f) Coordinate the assessment of biosafety capacity-building needs and priorities and the periodic review of the assessments;
- (g) Coordinate the preparation of the biosafety capacity-building strategy and action plan;
- (h) Analyze and track external assistance commitments and disbursements by donors for the biosafety capacity-building action plan to ensure effective resource allocation;
- (i) Monitor and report on the execution of the donor-funded biosafety projects and programmes;
- (j) Monitor the overall progress of biosafety capacity-building efforts and propose ways and means for improvement.

8. To facilitate communication with stakeholders, the coordination mechanism may consider designating 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.

9. 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 Government.

10. 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.

Annex III

**DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR PROMOTING REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL INITIATIVES
AND APPROACHES TO CAPACITY-BUILDING IN BIOSAFETY**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Article 22 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety requires Parties to “cooperate in the development and/or strengthening of human resources and institutional capacities in biosafety (...) including through existing global, regional, subregional and national institutions and organizations and, as appropriate, through facilitating private sector involvement.” It states that such cooperation includes scientific and technical training in the proper and safe management of biotechnology and the use of risk assessment and risk management for biosafety, and in the enhancement of technological and institutional capacities in biosafety.

2. Many developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition require significant investments in human resources development, institutional building and technological capacities in the area of biosafety. Addressing those needs would require effective collaboration and coordination between Governments and other stakeholders, including both the private and public sectors, at different levels.

3. The purpose of this guidance is to assist Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to catalyze and/or strengthen regional and subregional approaches and initiatives for building capacities in biosafety, and biotechnology to the extent that it is required for biosafety, for the purpose of the effective implementation of the Protocol.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4. Regional and subregional approaches and initiatives to capacity-building in biosafety should be based on the following principles:

(a) Focus on issues or needs that can best be addressed through regional and subregional cooperation;

(b) Establish a process for identifying biosafety issues that could be addressed through regional and subregional cooperation;

(c) Identify institutional mechanisms for promoting regional and subregional cooperation on capacity building in biosafety;

(d) Establish operational strategies and measures for promoting regional and subregional cooperation on capacity building in biosafety on a case by case basis;

General relevant principles

(e) Adopt a demand-driven approach;

(f) Take into account the needs and circumstances of the different participating countries;

- (g) Encourage inclusive and transparent participatory stakeholder involvement;
- (h) Strengthen existing bodies and structures;
- (i) Promote synergies with relevant initiatives;
- (j) Have political endorsement in all participating countries; and
- (k) Involve the National Biosafety Focal Point and the National Competent Authority/ies.

III. ELEMENTS THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED, *INTER ALIA*, FOR AS GUIDANCE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTING REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL COOPERATION ON CAPACITY-BUILDING IN BIOSAFETY

5. Focus on issues or needs that can best be addressed through regional and subregional cooperation. Such issues or needs could include the following:

(a) Development and sharing of scientific and technical expertise in areas such as LMO detection, development of norms and standards, etc.;

(b) Development of common approaches to, and formats for, risk assessment and risk management, including:

- (i) Cooperation in the implementation of Article 17 of the Protocol on unintentional transboundary movement of LMOs likely to have significant adverse effects on biodiversity and human health, including determination of appropriate responses and initiation of necessary actions, including emergency measures;
- (ii) Cooperation in environmental LMO monitoring and evaluation.

(c) Sharing information, experiences and best practices on different issues, including the development and implementation of legislation, LMO decisions, etc;

(d) Development of regional and subregional websites and databases;

(e) Development of criteria for undertaking research on, and addressing, socio-economic considerations;

(f) Development of regional and subregional biosafety research initiatives, including the collection and sharing of (agro)-ecological baseline data and risk assessments;

(g) Development of common approaches to public awareness and education;

(h) Development of common curricula in biosafety for governmental institutions, academic institutions and other stakeholders; and

(i) Cooperation in academic and in-service training in biosafety, including the development and sharing of training materials, transfer of credits, and exchange of staff and students.

6. Establish a process for identifying biosafety issues that could be addressed through regional and subregional cooperation. This could include the following:

- (a) Be relevant to the majority of countries in the region or subregion;
- (b) Respond to, and cut across, individual country needs;
- (c) Be relevant to assisting countries in meeting their obligations under the Protocol; and

7. Identify institutional mechanisms for promoting regional and subregional cooperation on capacity-building in biosafety. Institutional mechanisms could include, *inter alia*, the following:

(a) Selection of a body or bodies to facilitate regional and subregional cooperation on capacity-building in biosafety.

The following criteria, *inter alia*, should be considered:

- (i) Have a mandate for subregional/regional cooperation and such a mandate should include activities and elements relevant to biosafety;
 - (ii) Have previous experience and a good track record in implementing subregional/regional activities;
 - (iii) Preferably have previous direct or indirect involvement in promoting and catalyzing activities relevant to the implementation of the Protocol or related activities;
 - (iv) Be able to respond to varying needs and levels of capacity in the operational area;
 - (v) Have adequate human, financial, physical infrastructure and technical resources to deploy for biosafety activities so as to ensure sustainability;
 - (vi) Have considerable influence among the participating countries; and
 - (vii) Be able to build and maintain networks with relevant institutions outside of the operational area;
 - (viii) The above criteria should be applied in a flexible manner, taking into account the needs and circumstances of different participating countries, subregions and regions.
- (b) Development of institutional arrangements that could facilitate regional and subregional cooperation in biosafety. These may include, *inter alia*, the following:
- (i) Administrative and decision-making structures;
 - (ii) Coordination mechanisms, including, among others, steering committees;
 - (iii) Working and subject matter groups (including rosters of experts);
 - (iv) Regional and subregional centre(s) of excellence;

- (v) Effective, transparent formal and informal communication systems;
 - (vi) Networks linking national centres or institutions.
- (c) Establishment of regular regional and subregional conferences of ministers responsible for biosafety and/or regional and subregional technical working groups on biosafety, where they do not exist. The functions of such meetings should, *inter alia*, include:
- (i) Identifying and articulating regional and subregional biosafety issues;
 - (ii) Developing long-term regional and subregional policies and strategies;
 - (iii) Developing and prioritizing regional and subregional action plans;
 - (iv) Enhancing regional and subregional cooperation and initiatives in biosafety and biotechnology, as appropriate;
 - (v) Resolving issues likely to hinder the achievement of regional and subregional visions and goals;
 - (vi) Mobilizing resources and promoting partnerships.

8. Establish operational strategies and measures for promoting regional and subregional cooperation on capacity building in biosafety on a case by case basis.

- (a) Operational strategies and measures for promoting regional and subregional cooperation on biosafety vary between regions and on a case-by-case basis, depending on the issue(s) being addressed. They may also vary depending on the phases in development and implementation of national biosafety systems of the participating countries. Strategies and measures that could be pursued include, *inter alia*, the following:
- (i) Collaboration through regional and subregional initiatives (including projects and programmes);
 - (ii) Enhancement of coordination and cooperation among relevant national government agencies in the formulation and implementation of policies and regional and subregional initiatives;
 - (iii) Strengthening of mechanisms for fostering coordination and collaboration among different regional and subregional partners;
 - (iv) Establishment of regional and subregional regulatory frameworks and procedures;
 - (v) Training on technical issues;
 - (vi) Developing and testing best practices;
 - (vii) Public education and awareness-raising;
 - (viii) Sharing of information and knowledge and learning from each others' experiences, strengths and weaknesses;

- (ix) Exchanges of experts, for example through short-term attachments, internships or fellowships.
- (b) Other mechanisms that may be employed to enhance regional and subregional cooperation in biosafety include, *inter alia*, the following:
 - (i) Use of existing regional and subregional bodies, including: United Nations regional economic commissions, regional and subregional economic integration organizations, as well as research and development organizations or centres of excellence to help in fostering the exchange of information and expertise and undertaking regional and subregional activities in biosafety;
 - (ii) Creation or strengthening of regional and subregional centres of excellence, which could be mobilized to support countries in the implementation of the Protocol;
 - (iii) Establishment of regional and subregional Working Groups or coordinating committees on biosafety;
 - (iv) Creation of support networks at the regional and subregional levels to facilitate collaboration, sharing of knowledge and experience and ongoing interaction between experts in the regions;
 - (v) Establishment of regional and subregional rosters of biosafety experts to mobilize and effectively use existing expertise within participating countries;
 - (vi) Exchanges of experts in order to enhance professional cohesion among countries and organizations in a region, for example through cross-border exchanges of experts;
 - (vii) Establishment of regional and subregional biosafety information centres, databases or regional and subregional nodes of the Biosafety Clearing-House;
 - (viii) Publication of regional and subregional newsletters or appropriate information exchange tools and mechanisms to facilitate dissemination of regional news;
 - (ix) Organization of regional and subregional seminars and workshops that would provide useful forums for networking and sharing of experiences;
 - (x) Organization of regional and subregional courses, fellowships and study tours to enhance the skills of biosafety policy-makers and practitioners in a region;
 - (xi) Exchanges of experiences and best practices in developing regional and subregional training and public awareness programmes;
 - (xii) Development of exchange programmes with regional and subregional centres and institutions in other regions;
 - (xiii) Mobilization of funding for regional and subregional activities, including training, exchanges of scientists, conducting assessments and exchanges of information including, where feasible, the establishment of regional and subregional funds for technical cooperation in biosafety;

- (xiv) Identifying and sharing information on funding opportunities for regional and subregional initiatives;
- (xv) Conducting joint risk assessments and post-release field monitoring of LMOs and policy analyses to demonstrate the applicability of regional and subregional approaches to biosafety regulations and practices;
- (xvi) Development of regional and subregional policy frameworks, guidelines or operational procedures on common biosafety issues relevant to the effective implementation of the Protocol.

(c) For effective regional and subregional cooperation efforts, it is important to put in place mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of information on capacity-building initiatives in any given region. Partly because its focus is limited to the Biosafety Protocol, the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) may not be sufficient to address the unique circumstances of different regions/subregions. Accordingly, countries should consider developing regional and subregional biosafety websites and databases.

(d) Establishment and sustainability of regional and subregional mechanisms should not rely solely on external funding. They should, as much as possible, be funded from sustainable local funding sources.

Annex IV

ACTION POINTS FOR ADVANCING CAPACITY-BUILDING IN RISK ASSESSMENT AND POST-RELEASE MONITORING OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

A. Action Points for Capacity-building for Environmental Risk Assessment

Action Points	Capacity Building for Risk Assessment					
	Immediate Tasks			Ensuring Sustainability		
	National	(Sub)Regional	Global	National	(Sub)Regional	Global
Category A: Scientific capabilities						
Development of core scientific capabilities for evaluation, risk management and inspection	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facilitation of access to data and information on risk assessments of new LMO releases	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hands-on training for scientists (applicants), regulators, field trial managers and inspectors	X			X		
Development of long term educational programmes (e.g. PhD and Masters programmes)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Development of procedures and criteria for LMO risk assessment and standards for LMO detection and quantification	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promotion of synergies between research institutions in carrying out risk assessments		X	X		X	X
Establishment of subregional networks of experts on risk assessment and risk management		X			X	

Linking of biosafety capacity-building efforts to capacity development in other sectors, including agriculture, health and science and technology	x			x		
Establishment and/or strengthening of partnerships between academia, private sector and government institutions	x			x		
Facilitation of access to the Internet services, databases and information in local languages	x			x		
Facilitation of access to baseline data on the specific local receiving environments	x			x		
Establishment of e-forums to discuss topical issues and challenges	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sharing of knowledge of specific fragile and rich biodiversity ecosystems and susceptible to natural disasters	x	x		x		
Category B: Institutional arrangements or procedures						
Development of infrastructure for testing, evaluation and risk assessment of LMOs	x			x		
Public awareness creation and public participation processes (including sharing of best practices and experiences)	x			x		
Development of guidelines	x			x		
Promotion of synergies between research institutions in carrying out risk assessments		x	x		x	x
Improvement of the common format for risk assessment summaries submitted to the BCH			x			x
Establishment of subregional networks of experts on risk assessment and risk management		x			x	
Linking biosafety capacity-building efforts to capacity development in other sectors, including agriculture, health and science and technology	x			x		
Establishment and strengthening of partnerships between academia and government institutions	x			x		
Harmonization of risk assessment standards		x			x	
Building public confidence in the regulatory systems by ensuring transparency and accountability	x			x		

Organizing training workshops for policy makers, regulators, risk-management officials, journalists and members of national biosafety committees to enable them gain an understanding of the basic principles, steps and requirements of risk assessment	x			x		
Designing different training packages for specific targeted audiences						
Category C: Information management						
Ensuring adequate internet access ²	x					
Facilitating access to scientific databases ³	x					
Analysis of risk assessments results (for a common GMO)						x
Training to foster comprehension of the risk assessment common formats and procedures for registering information in the BCH, with particular focus on registering risk assessment summaries	x	x	x			
Collection, management, publication and facilitation of access to baseline information on receiving environment in particular centres of origin and centres of genetic diversity ⁴	x	x	x	x	x	x
Compilation and publication biological documents (e.g. botanic files) on BCH ⁵				x	x	x
Collect and make searchable through BCH the guidance tools and materials for risk assessment and risk management			x			
Exchange of relevant risk assessment information through workshops, national databases and forums	x	x				
Facilitate identification and utilisation of local expertise through national BCH websites	x					
Ongoing training in the use of the BCH to access information on risk assessment and risk management	x	x		x	x	

² This is crucial for accessing and downloading information from BCH in a timely manner e.g. 512 kpbs and up (each access point).

³ Examples of existing scientific databases include: Springer, Elsevier, etc. The Secretariat should liaise with major publishers and find a way to make publications available to risk assessors in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

⁴ Such information would include: the taxonomy, ecology and distribution of wild relatives.

⁵ The Secretariat should liaise with relevant organizations such as OECD , GBIF, FAO and AIC to obtain such information.

Category D: Determining national objectives						
Establishment of country baselines for biosafety resources	x					
Undertaking of comprehensive capacity building needs assessments and defining specific national priorities	x					
Development of action plans on capacity building for risk assessment and risk management, containing prioritized activities and sustainability matrices	x					
Establishment and strengthening of partnership between academia and government institutions	x					
There is a need to strengthen capacity building at national level. In doing so, it is important to approach their needs and priorities through specific seminars and workshops to prepare a National Action Plan to reach adequate capacity levels for risk assessment.						

B. Action points for capacity-building for post-release monitoring of LMOs

Action Points	Capacity Building for Post-Release Monitoring					
	Immediate Tasks			Ensuring Sustainability		
	National	(Sub)Regional	Global	National	(Sub)Regional	Global
Category A: Scientific capabilities						
Training of local experts	x			x		
Training of trainers	x			x		
Use of existing regional human resources (e.g. through staff exchange)	x			x		
Establishment and use of national rosters of experts	x	x		x	x	
Organization of workshops for non experts (policy makers, farmers etc)				x		
Identification and dissemination of existing training/resource materials and guidance documents on post-release monitoring of LMOs, and their translation into local languages	x	x		x	x	
Encouraging universities and other training institutions to include post-release monitoring of LMOs into their biosafety and biotechnology programmes	x	x		x	x	
Promotion of research exchanges and scholarship/fellowship programmes	x			x		

Category B: Institutional arrangements or procedures						
Development of harmonized frameworks for post-release monitoring		x			x	
Mobilization of financial resources and technical support for capacity-building in post-release monitoring	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maximizing the use of existing infrastructure to support post-release monitoring of LMOs	x					
Category C: Information management						
Gathering and exchange of data and information relevant to post-release monitoring of LMOs	x	x		x	x	
Development and update of guidance materials, such as manuals, on post-release monitoring	x					
Submission and regular update of post-release monitoring data to the database established in Biosafety Clearing-House	x			x		
Category D: Determining national objectives						
Undertaking capacity-building needs assessments and defining national priorities with respect to post-release monitoring of LMOs	x					
Development of capacity-building action plans for post-release monitoring of LMOs	x					
Establishment and strengthening of partnership between academia and government institutions on research for post-release monitoring of LMOs	x					

Annex V

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