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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

Third meeting

Curitiba, Brazil, 13– 7 March 2006

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

STATUS OF CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Note by the Executive Secretary

Addendum

REPORT ON THE ROSTER OF BIOSAFETY EXPERTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 14 of its decision EM-I/3, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established a regionally balanced roster of experts nominated by Governments, in fields relevant to risk assessment and risk management related to the Protocol, to provide advice and other support, as appropriate and upon request, to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, to conduct risk assessment, make informed decisions, develop national human resources and promote institutional strengthening, associated with the transboundary movements of living modified organisms.

2. At its first meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol adopted, in its decision BS-I/4, Interim Guidelines for the Roster of Experts on Biosafety describing the administrative and operational modalities of the roster. The interim guidelines are contained in annex I of the decision. In paragraph 5 of the same decision, the Executive Secretary, as administrator of the roster, was requested to implement the functions specified in section B of the interim guidelines. The functions include, *inter alia*, advising Parties, from time to time, on the status and composition of the roster (including the coverage of the areas of expertise available in the roster and the regional and gender balance on the roster). At the same meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in its decision BS-I/12 on the medium-term programme of work,

* UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/3/1.

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agreed to include “Report on the status of capacity-building activities and the use of the roster of biosafety experts” as a standing item up to its fifth meeting.

3. In decision BS-I/4, Section II, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol also adopted Interim Guidelines for the Pilot Phase of the Voluntary Fund for the Roster of Experts on Biosafety, which was established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth meeting for the specific purpose of supporting developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and the small island developing States among them, and Parties with economies in transition to pay for the use of experts selected from the roster. The Executive Secretary was requested to administer the pilot phase of the Voluntary Fund in accordance with the Interim Guidelines. The Interim Guidelines require the Secretariat to report on the status, operation and use of the pilot phase of the voluntary fund for consideration at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

4. Furthermore at its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in decision BS-II/4, paragraph 4, requested the Executive Secretary to promote awareness about the roster of experts and publicize the available funding from the pilot phase of the Voluntary Fund for the Roster of Experts. In paragraph 5 of the same decision, the Executive Secretary was requested to include in the questionnaire for collecting information to facilitate the review of the Action Plan, questions to assess the possible reasons behind the limited use of the roster of biosafety experts to facilitate the review of the roster in accordance with decision BS-1/4, annex I, section K. Section K of the Interim Guidelines, provides that the operation of the Roster of Experts should be subject to independent periodic review and that the first independent review should be taken in two years, which would be in 2006.

5. In accordance with the decisions referenced above, the present note includes a report on the status and use of the roster of experts (section II), and a report on the status, operation and use of the pilot phase of the Voluntary Trust Fund (section III). Section IV describes the steps taken by the Executive Secretary to promote awareness about the roster and the pilot phase of the Voluntary Fund for the Roster of Experts and a report on the review of the roster is presented in section V. The last section presents recommendations and elements of a draft decision.

II. REPORT ON THE STATUS AND USE OF THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS ON BIOSAFETY

6. As of 25 January 2006, the roster contained 609 experts nominated by a total of 77 Parties and other Governments. The regional breakdown is as follows:

<i>Region</i>	<i>No. of Governments making nominations</i>	<i>No. of experts nominated</i>	<i>Percentage of total number of nominations</i>
Africa	20	175	29%
Asia and the Pacific	19	138	23%
Central and Eastern Europe	12	94	15%
Latin America and the Caribbean	13	74	12%
Western Europe and Others	13	128	21%
TOTAL	77	609	100%

7. The composition of the roster by gender is follows:

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Gender	Number of Experts	Percentage of total no. of experts
Female	138	22%
Male	388	64%
Not yet specified	83	14%

8. The breakdown by areas of expertise is as follows:

<i>Area of expertise</i>	<i>No. of experts*</i>	<i>Percentage of the total number of experts in the roster*</i>
Legislation and regulation	213	35%
Risk assessment and risk management	456	75%
Social and economic sciences	135	22%
Institutional development	213	35%
Teaching and training	185	30%
Public awareness and participation	150	25%
Data management and information-sharing	83	14%
Research and development	156	26%

* It should be noted that many experts have indicated multiple areas of expertise.

9. These statistics are updated regularly and can be accessed through the Biosafety Clearing-House. ^{1/} In accordance with the Interim Guidelines for the Roster of Experts on Biosafety, the Executive Secretary also reports these statistics once annually in the fourth quarterly report of the Secretariat, and publishes at the end of each calendar year a written version of the roster for distribution to each Party. At any time during the year, Parties may request an updated version. Alternatively, the printable version of the roster is updated daily and is available for download via the Biosafety Clearing-House.

10. One of the functions of the Executive Secretary, as administrator of the roster, is to assist Parties, on request, in identifying appropriate experts or verifying the availability of experts. As of 30 November 2005, Executive Secretary had not received any requests in this regard.

11. Another function of the Executive Secretary, as administrator of the roster, is to make available, through the Biosafety Clearing-House, any submissions by Parties of evaluation reports on the assignments (i.e. the advice or other support) carried out by the experts selected from the roster. As of 30 November 2005, the Executive Secretary had not received any reports in this regard.

III. REPORT ON THE STATUS, OPERATION AND USE OF THE PILOT PHASE OF THE VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS

12. In its decision VI/29, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established, on a pilot phase basis, a general trust fund for voluntary contributions from Parties and Governments for the specific purpose of assisting developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and the small island developing States among them, and Parties with economies in transition to pay for the use of experts selected from the roster of experts on biosafety.

13. At its first meeting, however, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, in its decision BS-I/4 on the programme budget for the Protocol, established a Special Voluntary Trust Fund (BEP Trust Fund, which was subsequently renamed "BH Trust Fund") for

^{1/} The roster of experts can be accessed: <http://bch.biodiv.org/roster/default.shtml>.

Additional Voluntary Contributions in Support of Approved Activities. It decided that the BEP Trust Fund shall include the activity previously supported by the General Trust Fund, which was established in paragraph 27 of decision VI/29 and that the General Trust Fund would be closed on 1 January 2005 and the funds contained therein transferred to the BEP trust fund.

14. Following its establishment in 2002, the Pilot Phase of the Voluntary Fund for the Roster of Experts had received one contribution of US\$ 62,240 from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2003. However, due to a lack of requests for assistance from the Fund by developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, this contribution was re-allocated, at the request of the donor, to other activities under the Protocol. Accordingly, there is currently no money available in the BH Trust Fund for the purpose of supporting developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to pay for the use of experts selected from the roster.

15. As of 30 November 2005, the Executive Secretary had received one request from a Party (Togo) for assistance from the Fund. However, it was not possible to support the request due to insufficient resources in the Fund. Consequently, the Executive Secretary sent a letter to National Focal Points of Potential Donor Countries soliciting for contributions to the Voluntary Fund. However as of 30 November 2005, no response had been received.

16. In accordance with the Interim Guidelines for the Pilot Phase of the Voluntary Fund for the Roster of Experts on Biosafety the Executive Secretary, as administrator of the pilot phase of the Fund, provided annual reports on the status, operation and use of the pilot phase of the Voluntary Fund for the roster in the fourth quarterly report of the Secretariat, and these are available through the Biosafety Clearing-House. As well, the Executive Secretary is required to make available, through the Biosafety Clearing-House, reports on assignments undertaken by experts selected from the roster and supported by the pilot phase of the Fund. However, as of 30 November 2005, the Executive Secretary had not received any such reports.

IV. PROMOTION OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE ROSTER

17. In its decision BS-II/4, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol noted with concern the limited use of the roster and of the Voluntary Fund and requested the Executive Secretary to promote awareness about the roster of experts and to publicize the available funding from the pilot phase of the Voluntary Fund for the Roster of Experts.

18. In response to the above-mentioned request, a fact sheet on the roster of experts was prepared in September 2005 (a copy is contained in annex I to this note). The fact sheet was posted on the Biosafety Clearing-House and on the Protocol website and has been sent to all Governments and relevant organizations. Copies are also being made available at relevant meetings supported or attended by the Secretariat, including meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and intersessional meetings.

V. REVIEW OF THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS ON BIOSAFETY

19. The Interim Guidelines for the Roster of Experts that were adopted in decision BS-I/4 provide, in section K, that the operation of the roster should be subject to independent periodic review and that the first independent review should be taken in two years. In its budget for the biennium 2005-2006 (decision BS-I/10), the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol allocated resources for the review of the roster of experts in the special voluntary trust fund for additional voluntary contributions in support of approved activities. However, no voluntary contributions were made for this purpose during the intersessional period. Accordingly, due to a lack of funds, it was not possible to commission an independent review of the roster of experts called for in decision BS-I/4, annex I, section

K. Consequently, the Executive Secretary utilized the following means to gather information to facilitate an internal review:

(a) The questionnaire for collecting information to facilitate the review of the capacity-building Action Plan included a section on the roster of experts, in accordance with paragraph 5 of decision BS-II/4. This questionnaire was sent out to all Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations on 16 September 2005. Forty-two (42) responses were received by the Secretariat as of 30 November 2005, including 33 Parties, 5 non-Parties and 4 organizations. ^{2/} A copy of the section of the questionnaire relating to the roster and a summary of the responses are included in annex II to this note;

(b) A short questionnaire was sent to all biosafety experts registered in the roster on 22 September 2005. At least 125 responses were received by the Secretariat as of 30 November 2005. A copy of the questionnaire, including a summary of the responses, is included in annex III to this note;

(c) Relevant information provided through the interim national reports under the Protocol were also used.

20. Section K of the interim guidelines for the roster of experts (decision BS-I/4, annex I) provides that the periodic reviews of the roster should look at, among other things, appropriate balances in the roster membership, its uses, successes, failures, quality control of roster assignments, the need for additional advisory services in administering the roster, and other possible recommendations for revisions to the mandate or these rules of procedure to respond to the findings.

21. A report on the geographic, thematic and gender balances in the roster membership is presented in section II above. However, as indicated in paragraphs 10 and 11 above, no reports have been received by the Secretariat regarding the selection or use of an expert from the roster to provide advice and other support to any developing country Party and Party with economy in transition. Therefore, it was not possible to fully review the uses of the roster, its successes, failures and quality control of roster assignments as required in section K of the interim guidelines. Instead, the current review focussed on determining whether there has been any indirect use of the roster and on establishing the possible reasons behind the limited use of the roster (i.e. why no requests have been made through the Secretariat for assistance in using experts from the roster).

A. Analysis of the use of the roster

22. In response to the questionnaire for the capacity-building Action Plan review, 13 Governments (34%) and three organizations reported that they had accessed and/or used the roster of experts. However, most of these indicated that they accessed it simply to find out the kind of expertise available through the Biosafety Clearing-House and to provide information on the nominated national experts. Five respondents (8%) reported that they had used the roster specifically to identify experts in risk assessment and risk management and regulatory systems. One respondent to the Action Plan review questionnaire, for example, stated that: "we have cooperated with some of the experts listed in Roster of Experts but through other projects and in an informal manner. We were very satisfied by their expertise."

23. A majority of the Governments (21 responses or 55%) reported that they had not yet accessed or used the roster. The main reason given by most Governments was that they did not have a need to use the

^{2/} The Parties that responded to the questionnaire were: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belize, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, European Community, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova (Republic of), Mozambique, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand and United Kingdom. The non-Parties were: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chad, Gabon, Guinea and United States. The organizations were: UN University Institute of Advanced Studies, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), Public Research and Regulation Organization and the Global Industry Coalition.

roster as yet (17 responses or 45%). A few reported that they wanted to use the roster but did not have Internet to access it through the Biosafety Clearing-House or a hard copy of it (4 responses or 11%).

24. In the survey of the experts themselves, 16 out of 125 experts (i.e. 13%) indicated that they had been contacted for advice informally or formally. However, some were not sure whether they had been contacted because their names were found in the roster of experts. Some of the specific responses with regard to this question are presented in box 1 below. The majority of experts (108 responses or 86%) reported that they had not been contacted.

Box 1: Use of the Roster: Sample Responses from the Experts' Survey

Expert from Argentina:

"I am not sure if the contact originated on my being in the roster but I guess it was. I was contacted by Ecuador (twice, for advice on the regulatory framework for LMOs), Chile (on the issue of co-existence of LMOs with organic production), Venezuela (three times, for courses given to prospective regulators in the UNU-BioLAc programme, once more within the frame of a capacity building as an UNEP-GEF activity) and Honduras (also under UNEP-GEF programme, consultancy on the Honduran Biotechnology Biosafety Law)."

Expert from Cameroon:

"I have been contacted three times for workshops organised for the National Biosafety Framework in Cameroon."

Expert from Iran:

"I have had many requests for advice in preparation of NBF projects and implementation of Protocol from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Croatia."

Expert from Japan:

"I was contacted once from an Asian country to help them establish regulatory systems to comply with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. However because of the time constraint, I could not respond to their request."

Expert from Lebanon:

"Although I have been on the ROE for almost five years, I have never been contacted by any institution, neither foreign nor national."

Expert from Netherlands:

"People approach me very frequently for advice, but never have I heard that they found me through the roster"

Expert from New Zealand:

"I have been involved in contributing to the UNEP-GEF Project on biosafety for developing national biosafety framework (NBF) of the participating countries. This role has included reviewing draft NBF as well as proposed regulatory framework of a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region as well as SID countries in the Caribbean."

Expert from Slovenia:

"I was contacted at least 4 times to assist on the final drafts of National Biosafety Framework documents for different countries. Due to other obligation I was able to assist only twice."

25. The responses to both the Action Plan review questionnaire and to the experts' questionnaire indicate that some countries have identified experts from the roster through Biosafety Clearing-House and contacted them directly without going through the Secretariat. This suggests that the roster is being used although at a modest rate and in a manner that it is difficult to track. Many countries (17 responses or 45%) indicated that they did not have a need to use the roster as yet. However, 23 countries (61%) indicated they foresee an increased need for expertise through the roster in the future. Only 10 countries (26%) said they did not expect to have a need for experts from the roster in the future.

B. Limitations to the use of the roster

26. Seven respondents to the Action Plan review questionnaire (18%) and 42 experts (34%) were of the view that there are no limitations to the use of the roster noting that it currently fulfils the needs of those who use it. However some respondents to both the Action Plan review questionnaire and to the experts' questionnaire highlighted a few possible reasons behind the modest use of the roster to date, and/or its limiting factors. The main limiting factors mentioned include the following:

(a) *Too early for countries to seek expertise from the roster:* Out of the 26 respondents Action Plan questionnaire that provided additional details for their responses, 11 (29%) presumed that it was too early for most developing countries to seek expertise from the roster because many of them are still developing their national biosafety framework. From the survey of the experts themselves, 35 (28%) also gave the same reason. However, many of the experts (73 responses or 58%) disagreed with this view. One expert argued that “that the fact that most developing country Parties are still developing their national biosafety frameworks is the very reason for them to seek advice at this critical phase.”

(b) *Limited information on the experts listed in the roster:* Another limiting factor to the use of the roster mentioned by at least 8 respondents to the action plan review questionnaire (21%) was that currently there is not enough information on the experts listed in the roster to enable potential users to determine their expertise. From the experts' survey, at least 39 experts (31%) expressed the same view. One expert stated that “the roster does not give clear information about the real expertise of the experts; the range of expertise listed is too general and may not provide sufficient targeted information for developing countries to make an appropriate choice.” Another suggested that “more details should be given about the experts' training, domain of competence, publications relevant to biosafety as well as relevant practical experience and list of occupations ... in order to make the selection easier for the countries”. One expert also noted that “... although the credentials of the experts were given by the nations, some may not be qualified enough to be “experts” in terms of academic and professional qualifications and experience.” In summary, one expert stated that: “there are too many experts in the roster, and too little information about them”.

(c) *Difficulties in using the roster to find the desired experts:* A few respondents speculated that some countries might be experiencing difficulties in using the roster to find the experts they need. One respondent observed that “the roster as it stands now is a heterogeneous list of experts. It is very difficult to find the best expert. Some kind of classification would be useful.” Another respondent noted that there are quite many experts in the roster, which makes it difficult for countries to know whom to choose for which issue. Some countries lack the local expertise to ask the right questions. A few respondents also noted that the procedures of requesting for, and engaging, an expert(s) from the roster seems to be very elaborate.

(d) *Lack of funds:* At least 6 countries that responded to the Action Plan review questionnaire (16%) indicated that they had wanted to seek expert advice through the roster but did not do so because of lack of funds. On the question regarding the fund established to enable developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to pay for the use of experts from the roster, most countries (21 responses or 55%) confirmed that they were aware of the existence of the fund. Only a few (9 responses or 24%) said they were not aware. Among the experts, 51 of those who responded (41%) knew that the fund existed. The majority (72 responses or 58%) did not know.

(e) *Lack of awareness of the roster:* Several experts who responded to the questionnaire noted that many potential users do not know about its existence or do not know how to access it. One expert observed that “in developing countries few people know about this important tool” and another noted that they “lack knowledge of who are on the roster and how the roster can be accessed”. Another expert also speculated that many developing countries do not know that the use of experts can be covered by a fund. Another expert commented that “... the capacity-building programs of the GEF apparently did not sufficiently promote the Roster, although they should have, in my view”.

(f) *Countries are using their local experts:* A few respondents to the Action Plan review questionnaire, mostly from countries with economies in transition (including Bulgaria and Lithuania), indicated that one of the reasons why they had not yet used the roster was because they employed local expertise from the national roster of experts on several cases.

(g) *Language barrier:* A few experts noted that the use of the roster could be limited by the fact that it is currently available in English only. In this regard, one respondent recommended that “for French countries it will be better to have a French version of the Roster of Experts on Biosafety”. In this regard, it should be noted that the Internet-accessible version of the Roster is searchable in the six official United Nations languages. It is also possible for experts to provide information regarding the expertise in any of the six official United Nations languages.

C. Recommendations for improving the roster of experts on biosafety

27. A number of respondents to both the Action Plan review questionnaire and to the experts' questionnaire provided specific suggestions and recommendations for improving the roster. Broadly, the recommendations relate to measures that would address the following issues: (a) enhancing the quality of the roster; (b) increasing awareness of the roster; (c) streamlining the structure and operational procedures of the roster; and (d) other general measures for improving the use of the roster.

1. Measures for enhancing the quality of the roster

28. A number of suggestions were made to enhance the level of expertise in the roster and to improve the level of detail and quality of the information about each expert nominated to the roster. These include the following:

(a) There is a need to establish proper criteria as to what constitutes appropriate expertise for the different areas relevant to biosafety, including a minimum set requirements that must be met, to guide countries in nominating experts to the roster. The roster criteria and requirements should be reviewed and updated periodically;

(b) It would be useful to establish an independent screening mechanism to review the current nominations to roster against the set criteria;

(c) Experts nominated to the roster should be required to provide sufficient details about their expertise, including: academic and professional qualifications, competencies, practical experience and publications relevant to biosafety. There should also be at least one summary page written about each expert describing, *inter alia*, their experiences in biosafety issues, their earlier experiences with developing countries and their past and present affiliations;

(d) The experts on the roster should be allowed and encouraged to update their data on line as regularly as possible in view of the fact that some experts do change jobs and undertake different assignments from time to time. It should be noted that currently, it is technically possible for experts to update their records in the Biosafety Clearing-House. However, the authorization to do so has to be granted by the National Focal Points, either by creating user accounts for the experts or authorizing the Secretariat to create accounts for them. Part of the problem also is the fact that many experts in the roster are not aware that it is possible for them to update their information online.^{3/} National Focal Points should inform the experts about this possibility and encourage them to update their information regularly;

^{3/} From the responses to the questionnaire that was sent to experts in the roster, a majority of them (78 responses or 62%) did not know that they can request access to the Biosafety Clearing-House in order to update their records.

(e) The Executive Secretary should remind the National Focal Points, at least once every two years, to ask their nominated experts whether they still want to be kept in the roster and also request them to provide feedback as to whether they provided assistance to any country during that time;

(f) A few respondents suggested that a quality control system is required to ensure that individuals in roster have demonstrated expertise to assist countries in their areas of need. They noted that such a system would help to ensure that countries using this roster do not have to bear the burden of sorting through the list to determine which experts truly have the required expertise. Such a system could include, for example, nomination forms that require a curriculum vitae of the nominee that provides detailed information on the nominee's relevant experience, as well as a listing of references who can vouch for an expert's applied experience in order to ensure that individuals nominated for the roster have a proved track record of experience in their area of speciality.

2. *Measures for increasing awareness of the roster*

29. Several respondents emphasized the urgent need to promote awareness of the roster. It was proposed that the roster of experts should be publicized as widely as possible to inform potential users about its existence and how it can be accessed and used. Some of the specific actions recommended in this regard include the following:

(a) The Secretariat should send out quarterly e-mail updates to all National Focal Points, relevant stakeholders and to the experts themselves about the status of the roster and how it is being used, including reports on completed expert assignments. This would help to improve confidence in the roster;

(b) The Secretariat should disseminate the fact sheet on the roster and make it available at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and other relevant meetings;

(c) The Secretariat should consider organizing side events during the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and other relevant meetings and invite experts who have been asked for help to make presentations of their specific assignments;

(d) The Secretariat should send out information to focal points in developing countries regarding available funding for the use of experts from the roster.

3. *Measures for streamlining and strengthening the roster*

30. A few respondents observed that the roster as it stands now is quite big and very heterogeneous, making it difficult to find the experts needed. In this regard, it was recommended that:

(a) The roster should also be rationalized so that only the best-qualified experts are retained;

(b) The roster should include clear specific information under each area of expertise to enable countries to make appropriate targeted searches and choices of the desired expertise;

(c) The process of submitting a Government request to Secretariat and the dispatch of an expert for assignment should be further simplified to allow rapid and efficient use of roster.

4. *Other general measures for improving the use of the roster*

31. The following general suggestions were made:

(a) The Secretariat should encourage those Parties who have difficulties in Protocol implementation to get advice from experts;

(b) Capacity-building initiatives, such as the GEF-funded projects, should inform countries about of the roster of experts, providing them access to the list of experts in the roster and encourage and facilitate them to make use of it to select expert of their choice.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

32. From the foregoing discussion it is clear that currently there is insufficient information and experience to fully evaluate the utility and effectiveness of the roster. However, the surveys have indicated that currently the roster is being used by countries to find experts they need to provide specific advice though at a modest rate. This is probably not very surprising given the fact that most developing countries and countries with economies in transition are only now embarking on the implementation of the Protocol, including the development and implementation of their national biosafety frameworks. As the survey results indicate many countries are likely to require experts from the roster in the coming years. Consequently, it is important to strengthen the roster and address the factors identified during the survey that have, and are likely to further, limit its effective use.

33. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol may wish to consider the measures proposed in section V for improving the operations, utility and effectiveness of the roster and adopt a decision along the following lines:

(a) Request the Liaison Group on Capacity-Building for Biosafety to develop, for consideration at the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, draft criteria and minimum requirements (including minimum qualifications and experience), for experts to be included in the roster, in order to assist countries in making their nominations to the roster and in re-assessing the nominations already made;

(b) Request also the Liaison Group on Capacity-Building for Biosafety to explore the possibility of establishing a quality control mechanism, and if feasible, the modalities of such mechanism, for consideration at the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, taking into account the suggestions made during the internal review of the roster;

(c) Invite Parties and Governments to submit to the Secretariat, no later six months prior to its fourth meeting, views and suggestions on the criteria and minimum requirements for experts to be nominated to the roster as well as views on a possible a quality control mechanism for the roster;

(d) Reiterate the call to Parties and Governments to oblige the experts they nominate to the roster to provide sufficient details regarding their expertise, including: academic and professional qualifications, specific competencies, practical experiences and publications relevant to biosafety;

(e) Encourage Parties and other Governments to strengthen their selection and screening process;

(f) Urge National Focal Points to create user accounts for the experts nominated to the roster or authorize the Secretariat to create accounts for all experts in the roster and to update the records on the basis of the information submitted by experts that unable to do it themselves online;

(g) Invite Parties, Governments and relevant organizations that identify and use experts from the roster directly through Biosafety Clearing-House without going through the Secretariat to provide to the Secretariat evaluation reports of the completed assignments by the experts, including the quality of the

advice and other support provided, in order to facilitate the overall assessment of the utility and effectiveness of the roster;

(h) Invite also capacity-building initiatives, such as the GEF-funded projects, to promote awareness of the roster, particularly in countries participating in those initiatives;

(i) Further invite donor countries and relevant organizations to make voluntary contributions to assist developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and the small island developing States among them, and Parties with economies in transition to pay for the use of experts selected from the roster.

Annex I

FACT SHEET

**Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
Roster of Experts on Biosafety**

What is the roster of experts for?

The roster of experts on biosafety is a resource established under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to **provide advice and support** to developing countries that are Parties to the Protocol, in areas associated with the transboundary movement of living modified organisms (LMOs). The roster gives users instant access to a wide range of expertise. Examples of assistance might include advice or support for:



- Conducting a **risk assessment**
- **Developing human resources** at a national level, such as providing on-the-

ground training of local personnel

- Making informed **decisions on import or release** of LMOs
- **Institutional strengthening**, for example assisting in infrastructure development

Who is on the roster?

After consultation with relevant stakeholders, **Governments nominate individuals** to the roster with the highest professional qualities and expertise relevant to biosafety. Governments are limited to maintaining a maximum of 50 experts in the roster at one time. Currently, the roster contains **more than 500 experts** on a wide range of subjects, familiar with many regions and fluent in a variety of languages.

Areas of expertise include:

- Risk assessment and risk management
- Legislation and regulation
- Social and economic sciences
- Institutional development
- Teaching and training
- Public awareness and participation
- Data management and information-sharing
- Research and development



How do I access the roster?

The roster is **publicly available and searchable** through the Biosafety Clearing-House on the Internet at <http://bch.biodiv.org/roster/default.shtml>, enabling you to quickly and effectively identify experts by searching names, nationalities or areas of expertise. Once you identify suitable expert(s), you can either contact the expert directly or ask the Secretariat to facilitate initial contact. For those with limited Internet connections, a hard copy of the roster can be downloaded or requested from the Secretariat.

Is funding assistance available to facilitate use of experts?

Using the roster to find an expert is free and open to all. Eligible Parties to the Protocol can also access resources from a **fund to pay for the use of an expert** selected from the roster, subject to the availability of funds. Each eligible Party can access up to US\$ 50,000 per year. Parties wishing to access the fund to pay for experts from the roster should review the eligibility criteria and procedures available online at <http://bch.biodiv.org/roster/use/voluntaryfund.shtml> or through the Secretariat.

Further information:



For more information and details, please visit the website or contact the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity by telephone (1-514-288-2220), fax (1-514-288-6588) or by email (secretariat@biodiv.org).

Annex II

**A SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE ACTION PLAN REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
RELATING TO THE ROSTER OF EXPERT**

Total number of respondents = 38 Governments and 4 organizations

20. Have you ever accessed or used the roster of experts for any purpose?	Yes	No
	13 (34%)	21 (55%)

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 4 (11%)

Organizations (4):

Yes: 3 No: 1

21. Has your country nominated experts to the roster?	Yes	No
	16 (42%)	16 (42%)

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 6 (16%)

Organizations (4):

Yes: 0 No: 2 Non-responses: 2

22. If you answered yes to question 20, how often and for what purpose?

Comments were received from 11 respondents (29%).

23. If you answered no to question 20, why have you not accessed or used the roster?	No.	%
a) I have no need to access or use the roster	17	45%
b) I would like to access or use the roster but I do not have internet access to the Biosafety Clearing-House or a hard copy of the roster	4	11%
c) Other: please specify	4	11%

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 17 (45%)

The other reasons mentioned are contained in an information document.

24. Are you aware that there is a fund available that will pay for the use of experts from the roster for developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition?	Yes	No
	21 (55%)	9 (24%)

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 8 (21%)

Organizations (4):

Yes: 3 No: 0 Non-responses: 1

25. Have you ever wanted to seek expert advice through the roster, but did not because of lack of funds?	Yes	No
	6 (16%)	24 (63%)

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 8 (21%)

Organizations (4):

Yes: 0 No: 2 Non-responses: 2

26. Please comment on limitations to your use of the roster (tick all that apply):	No.	%
a) No limitations – the roster fulfils our needs.	7	18%
b) It is too early to seek expertise because we are still developing our national biosafety framework.	11	29%
c) There is not enough information on the experts listed in the roster to enable us to understand their expertise.	8	21%
d) The roster does not contain the expertise that we need.	1	3%
e) Other comments:	5	13%

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 13 (34%)

The comments made in response to this question are contained in an information document.

27. Do you think that your Government may have increased need for expertise through the roster in the future?	Yes	No
	23 (61%)	10 (26%)

Number of Governments that did not respond to the question: 5 (13%)

Organizations (4):

Yes: 0 No: 2 Did not reply: 2

28. Please provide any suggestions you may have for improving the roster, or for increasing awareness and use of the roster?

Comments were received from ten (10) Governments and two (2) organizations. The specific comments are contained in an information document.

*Annex III***A SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO ALL EXPERTS REGISTERED IN THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS**

Total number of respondents = 125

1. Did you know that you are listed as an expert in the roster of experts on biosafety contained in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) at bch.biodiv.org?	Yes	No
	102 (82%)	21 (17%)

No. of experts that did not answer the question: 1 (1 %)

2. Did you know that you can request access to your record in the BCH, which would enable you to add information such as publications?	Yes	No
	45 (36%)	78 (63%)

No. of experts that did not answer the question: 1 (1 %)

3. Are you satisfied that the level of detail in the roster regarding your expertise would be enough for someone who does not know you to want to contact you for expert advice?	Have not accessed the record	Yes	No
	42 (34%)	41 (33%)	32 (26%)

No. of experts that did not answer the question: 2 (2%)

Only one expert provided a comment, i.e.: “This information is very outdated, please let me know how to fix it”.

4. Have you ever been contacted for advice informally or formally, by someone who found your name in the roster of experts?	Yes	No
	16 (13%)	108 (86%)

Comments were received from sixteen (21) experts and are contained in an information document.

5. Are you aware that there is a fund available that will pay for the use of experts from the roster for developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition?	Yes	No
	51 (41%)	72 (58%)

Comments were received from two (2) experts and are contained in an information document.

6. Please provide your views on the limitations to use of the roster:			
(a) The roster fulfils the needs of those who use it.	Agree	Disagree	Don't know

/...

	42 (34%)	11 (9%)	68 (55%)
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No. of experts that did not answer the question: 2 (2%)

(b) It is too early for developing country Parties to seek expertise because most are still developing their national biosafety frameworks.	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
	35 (28%)	73 (60%)	12 (10%)

No. of experts that did not answer the question: 2 (2%)

(c) There is not enough information on the experts listed in the roster to enable users to understand their expertise.	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
	39 (31%)	33 (27%)	49 (39%)

No. of experts that did not answer the question: 4 (3%)

(d) The roster does not contain the expertise that many developing countries need.	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
	10 (8%)	54 (43%)	55 (44%)

No. of experts that did not answer the question: 2 (2%)

(e) Other: please specify

Comments were received from thirty-one (31) experts and are contained in an information document.

7. Please provide any other comments including suggestions you may have for improving the roster, or for increasing awareness and use of the roster?
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Comments were received from sixty-five (65) experts and are contained in an information document.
