



Convention on Biological Diversity

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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

Seventh meeting

Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 29 September - 3 October 2014

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE “COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK ON EXISTING CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCES IN USING THE BCH”

1. In its decision BS-VI/2 the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP) requested the Executive Secretary to “Collect, through Biosafety Clearing-House national focal points and online tools made available in the Biosafety Clearing-House, feedback from Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations on existing capacity and experiences in using the Biosafety Clearing-House and the submission and retrieval of data, and to take this experience into account for future improvements to the Biosafety Clearing-House.”
2. In response to this request, the Secretariat prepared a short survey which was made available through the Biosafety Clearing-House in all six official languages of the United Nations, at <https://bch.cbd.int/managementcentre/register/feedbacksurvey2014.shtml>. On 6 May 2014, the Executive Secretary issued a notification¹ advising National Focal Points and relevant organizations of the survey and the closing date of 7 June 2014 for its completion. In the end, 162 participants took part in the survey. The results of the survey are attached hereto as the annex to this report.

¹ Accessible at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2014/ntf-2014-070-bch-en.pdf>

Annex

RESULTS OF THE “COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK ON EXISTING CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCES IN USING THE BCH”

Total number of participants: 162

1. In which role are you registered as a BCH user?

- National Focal Point 65 (40%)
- National Authorized User 30 (19%)
- Competent National Authority 12 (07%)
- General user 51 (31%)
- I do not know 04 (02%)

2. How often, on average, do you or your staff visit the BCH?

- More than once a week 41 (25%)
- Once a week 38 (23%)
- Once a month 53 (33%)
- Once a year 06 (04%)
- Rarely 23 (14%)
- Never 01 (<01%)

Average of the results: more than once a month

3. How often, on average, do you or your staff register information on the BCH?

- More than once a week 04 (02%)
- Once a week 02 (01%)
- Once a month 32 (20%)
- Once a year 30 (19%)
- Rarely 60 (37%)
- Never 34 (21%)

Average of the results: more than once a year

4. Do you or your staff receive information from the BCH through other channels?

- No 33 (20%)
- Email 116 (72%)
- RSS 01 (<01%)
- YouTube 01 (<01%)
- Facebook 03 (02%)
- Twitter 00 (00%)
- Other (please specify) 07 (04%)

Participants reported receiving information through other channels such as e-mail from the national focal points, the BCH Current Awareness Service, online forum announcements and the off-line DVD version of the BCH.

5. **On a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very simple), how would you rate the following:**

- **Ease of retrieving information from the BCH:**

On average: 3.8 out of 5 (76%)

<input type="radio"/>	1	07 (04%)
<input type="radio"/>	2	17 (10%)
<input type="radio"/>	3	23 (14%)
<input type="radio"/>	4	70 (43%)
<input type="radio"/>	5	45 (28%)

- **Ease of registering information on the BCH:**

On average: 3 out of 5 (60%)

<input type="radio"/>	1	15 (09%)
<input type="radio"/>	2	12 (07%)
<input type="radio"/>	3	53 (33%)
<input type="radio"/>	4	56 (35%)
<input type="radio"/>	5	26 (16%)

6. **On a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), how would you rate the following:**

- **Quality of the information available through the BCH:**

On average: 4 out of 5 (80%)

<input type="radio"/>	1	03 (02%)
<input type="radio"/>	2	03 (02%)
<input type="radio"/>	3	34 (21%)
<input type="radio"/>	4	70 (43%)
<input type="radio"/>	5	52 (32%)

7. **With regard to the retrieval of information, are there any BCH categories of information which you or your staff would like to see changes to the way they are made available?**

- No 133 (82%)
- Yes (please specify): 29 (18%)

Participants indicated that there was a need for increasing information which is usually not mandatory requirements of the Protocol such as information on the contained use of LMOs. Search boxes for easier navigation could also be made more accessible.

Participants also indicated that it would be helpful to have an increased use of colours to quickly categorize the meaning of information visually (i.e. in decisions) as well as the use of “heat-map” graphics.

One participant indicated the need to simplify access to online conferences by registered participants. There was a suggestion to introduce a tool/section regarding the division of biosafety by region in order to update information regarding the names of focal points, their e-mails, etc. A need to improve the retrieval of information for approved LMOs categorized by year, jurisdiction and other information was also indicated.

Further, there was also a recommendation that the country profile search pages be improved by producing a better summary of approved LMOs in each country for the use of customs authorities.

Finally, participants indicated that a more user-friendly search and indexing functions should be improved, regardless of the category of information, by introducing a fit-to-screen tabulated information without the need to scroll up and down.

8. **With regard to the retrieval of information, are there any additional BCH related categories of information which you or your staff would like to see added to the BCH?**

- No 133 (82%)
- Yes (please specify): 29 (18%)

It was suggested that the Secretariat, through the BCH, should provide maps regarding the new information such as countries which are growing LMOs and which took decisions prohibiting certain use(s) of LMOs.

There were also recommendations for the provision of a) more information from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other non-governmental bodies; b) more “flash-news” on the BCH regarding LMOs; and c) more links to other databases with repositories of information on LMOs.

Participants also recommended that the Secretariat, in general, and the BCH, specifically, be more actively engaged in Public Awareness, Education and Participation (PAEP) and target groups for training in the BCH. Further, participants also recommended that country profiles be regularly updated with current and ongoing biosafety programmes.

A participant recommended the creation of a category that covered decisions on LMOs not approved by Competent National Authorities specifying the reasons for prohibition.

9. **Are there any BCH common formats for the submission of information which you or your staff would like to suggest changes to?**

- No 144 (89%)
- Yes (please specify): 18 (11%)

A participant noted that it would be convenient if users were able to provide identical information on field trials simultaneously to both the BCH and EU registers in order to avoid the duplication of work. Other participant noted the need for technical links between biosafety databases and the BCH and use of common formats with the aim to simplify information submission. It was noted that this recommendation could minimize the challenges of registering biosafety experts which several participants found cumbersome.

10. **Are there any additional common formats for the submission of information which you or your staff would like to see added to the BCH?**

- No 148 (91%)
- Yes (please specify): 14 (9%)

A participant suggested a common format for reporting cases related to liability and redress under the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Another participant recommended the implementation of the option to partially copy the information to submit from a previously submitted record.

11. **Have you or your staff attended any capacity-building workshops on using the BCH?**

- No 67 (41%)
- Yes (please specify): 95 (59%)

Several participants reported attending a wide range of capacity-building initiatives, including, but not limited to: (1) Regional Global Advisors training all over the world; (2) National workshops all

over the world; (3) Participation in BCH Training Workshops conducted under the UNEP-GEF BCH Project(s) with the support of the CBD prior to the meetings of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOPs); (4) Use of online training material made available through the BCH; (5) Webinars conducted through the BCH; (6) Training organized by BCH-NFPs; (7) Training organized by Ministries of the Environment; and (8) BCH training of trainers.

12. **Are there any aspects, regarding the submission/retrieval of BCH information, that you or your staff would like to receive some training in?**

- No 81 (50%)
- Yes (please specify): 81 (50%)

One participant recommended the further training of BCH national focal points in validating information registered by National Authorized Users. Another recommended the increased use of statistics to facilitate the analysis of biosafety data. Most participants, however, focused on capacity-building issues, including, but not limited to: (1) making more training material directly available through the BCH; (2) generating/creating more training in data entry/management and finding information; (3) producing more short video training on the use of the BCH; (4) providing more training material on the use and management of Ajax and Hermes for n-BCH purposes; (5) increasing the use of online forums and real-time conferences for training purposes; (6) making more training available to non-regular users of the BCH; and (7) increasing training for customs officers and agricultural quarantine authorities responsible at border posts.

13. **(Optional) Here you may provide further details on your experience with the use of the BCH:**

66 responses (41% of the participants)

Participants expressed a lot of satisfaction regarding the quality and quantity of biosafety information being made available through the BCH. Many participants noted that the high level of quality and quantity of biosafety information being made available through the BCH must be maintained. The Secretariat was encouraged to continue its efforts to make the BCH the most accurate and complete repository of biosafety information in the world, in particular with regard to information on capacity-building initiatives.

The following comments and recommendations were also noted: (1) there is some lack of clarity for focal points when they try to provide information on the transboundary movement of LMOs for contained use only; (2) the LMO registry has become overly complex and needs to be simplified; (3) the BCH tutorials need to be more easily accessible; (4) there needs to be more regular use of the BCH as a platform for collaboration among regional advisors; (5) for non-native English speakers, some information in the BCH could be made more comprehensible; and (6) provide more offline material to countries with limited internet connection.

14. **(Optional) Contact details:**

121 responses from 77 countries (75% of the participants, from 46% of the Parties to the Protocol)

- Africa: 43 respondents (36%) from 26 countries (49% of the region)
 - Asia-Pacific: 31 respondents (26%) from 19 countries (34% of the region)
 - CEE: 11 respondents (9%) from 7 countries (30% of the region)
 - GRULAC: 30 respondents (25%) from 19 countries (58% of the region)
 - WEOG: 6 respondents (5%) from 6 countries (20% of the group).
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