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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

Eighth meeting

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

REPORT ON THE STATUS AND OPERATIONS OF THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS ON BIOSAFETY

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 14 of decision [EM-I/3](#), on the adoption of the Cartagena Protocol and interim arrangements, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established a roster of experts nominated by Governments 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. Subsequently, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted a number of decisions to operationalize the roster and facilitate its effective use. Among other things, the Parties adopted Guidelines for the Roster of Experts describing the administrative and operational modalities of the roster (decision BS-IV/4, annex). The guidelines, among other things, require the Secretariat to provide, at each regular meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, a report on the status and use of the roster, including information on the number of experts on the roster, a breakdown of its composition by region, gender and discipline; as well as the contacts initiated by Parties to use experts on the roster, directly or through the Secretariat and the results of those contacts, including a description of the assignments and the outcomes of the work undertaken.

3. In its decision BS-VI/4, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided to expand the mandate of the roster of experts to include supporting, as appropriate and upon request, the work of the Secretariat, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and other bodies under the Protocol, in relation to capacity-building for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations and the Executive Secretary were invited to consider selecting experts already on the roster to serve on ad hoc technical expert groups, informal advisory committees and other relevant bodies under

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the Protocol and using experts on the roster as resource persons and/or facilitators for training workshops, courses and other capacity-building activities (decision BS-V1/4, paras. 5 and 6).

4. The present note provides a report on the current status of the roster of experts (in section II) and a brief description of the recent use of the roster and measures proposed to further improve and maximize its use. The last section presents draft elements of a possible decision.

II. REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS

5. As of 30 September 2016, the roster contained a total of 187 experts nominated by 55 Parties and 3 non-Parties.¹ The regional breakdown of the roster's composition is as follows:

<i>Region</i>	<i>No. of Parties and Governments that have made nominations</i>	<i>No. of experts nominated</i>	<i>Percentage of the total No. of experts nominated</i>
Africa	11	43	25%
Asia and the Pacific	13	52	30%
Central and Eastern Europe	11	22	13%
Latin America and the Caribbean	12	38	22%
Western Europe and Others	11	32	10%
TOTAL	58	187	100%

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

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number of experts²</i>	<i>Percentage of total No. of experts</i>
Female	70	40%
Male	105	60%
TOTAL	175	100%

7. The composition of the roster by main area of expertise is as follows:

<i>Area of expertise</i>	<i>No. of experts*</i>	<i>Percentage of the total No. of experts in the roster*</i>
Biosafety policy and legal expertise	15	8.0%
➤ Biosafety law	12	6.4%
➤ Biosafety policy	8	4.3%
➤ Biotechnology policy	5	2.7%
➤ Compliance and enforcement	2	1.1%
➤ Handling of LMO applications (AIA procedure)	2	1.1%
➤ Import / Export control	1	0.5%
➤ Liability and redress	3	1.6%
➤ Multilateral agreements	4	2.1%
Capacity development expertise	6	3.2%
➤ Institutional capacity development	5	2.7%

¹ The three non-Parties that nominated experts are Australia (3), Canada (1) and the United States of America (10) for a total of 14 experts.

² The analysis by gender shows that there is a total of 175 experts (i.e. instead of 187) in the roster. This is due to data on gender being missing for 12 records which were created before "gender" became a mandatory field.

<i>Area of expertise</i>	<i>No. of experts*</i>	<i>Percentage of the total No. of experts in the roster*</i>
➤ Project design, monitoring and evaluation	7	3.7%
➤ Resource mobilization	1	0.5%
Information and knowledge management expertise	4	2.1%
➤ Biosafety Clearing-House	2	1.1%
➤ Biosafety database management	0	0.0%
➤ Biosafety website development	1	0.5%
➤ IT network development	0	0.0%
Public awareness, education and participation expertise	5	2.7%
➤ Access to information	2	1.1%
➤ Biosafety education	5	2.7%
➤ Media communication	0	0.0%
➤ Public awareness-raising	0	0.0%
➤ Public participation	0	0.0%
➤ Risk communication	2	1.1%
Scientific and technical expertise	37	19.8%
➤ Food and feed safety	17	9.1%
➤ Human health	4	2.1%
➤ LMO monitoring	9	4.8%
➤ LMO sampling and detection	10	5.3%
➤ Risk assessment	37	19.8%
➤ Risk management	17	9.1%
Socioeconomic and trade expertise	2	1.1%
➤ Bioethics	0	0.0%
➤ Coexistence	1	0.5%
➤ Intellectual property rights	3	1.6%
➤ Social and/or economic assessments	3	1.6%
➤ Trade rules and standards	1	0.5%

* *Note:* Some experts indicated multiple areas of expertise.

8. Since the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, when the last report on the roster was considered, the total number of experts nominated to the roster has increased from 129 to 187, representing an increase of 31%. Currently, the majority of experts on the roster are men (60%) and in terms of areas of expertise, most individuals on the roster are experts on risk assessment (37 experts, representing 19.8% of all experts on the roster), followed by risk management (17 experts or 9.1%), food and feed safety (17 experts or 9.1%), biosafety law (12 experts or 6.4%), LMO sampling and detection (10 experts or 5.3%), LMO monitoring (9 experts or 4.8%) and biosafety policy (8 experts or 4.3%).

III. USE OF THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS AND PROPOSALS TO ENHANCE ITS USE

9. During the current reporting period, the Secretariat did not receive any direct request from Parties or other Governments for assistance in identifying and facilitating access to experts on the roster. Furthermore, the Secretariat did not receive any information regarding contact made directly by Parties or other Governments with experts on the roster or reports regarding any assignments carried out by experts they had selected from the roster. During the reporting period, no contributions to the voluntary fund for the roster of experts were received.

10. Nevertheless, a number of experts on the roster were nominated to participate in the Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management³ and in online discussions on socioeconomic considerations,⁴ on public participation in the decision-making process regarding living modified organisms,⁵ and on sampling, detection and identification of living modified organisms.⁶

11. Taken together, the available information shows that, although there is increasing demand for experts in various areas of biosafety to be actively involved in the processes under the Cartagena Protocol, the roster of experts continued to be under-utilized by Parties and other Governments. The lack of funds to enable developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to provide financial compensation for using the experts selected from the roster, and difficulties in matching their needs to a particular expert and to funding opportunities seem to be the main reasons for the under-utilization of the roster.

12. The Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House at its tenth meeting, held on 11 and 12 April 2016 in Ispra, Italy, discussed, among other issues, ways to maximize the use of the roster of experts and recommended that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its eighth meeting:

(a) Urge developed country Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to make contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Roster of Experts and remind them that, without funds, the roster cannot operate;

(b) Extend participation in the roster of experts on biosafety registered in BCH online forums, ad hoc technical expert groups and networks (for example, on risk assessment, detection and identification, synthetic biology and socioeconomic considerations) and request the Executive Secretary to extend the search for biosafety experts accordingly and to clearly indicate in which category each expert participates.

13. Furthermore, the Informal Advisory Committee recommended to the Executive Secretary, among other things, to create a searchable list of experts registered in the BCH with the option to filter them by category, such as the group of experts (for example, Roster of Biosafety Experts, Online Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, and Online Forum on Synthetic Biology), region and area of expertise, and develop tools to facilitate the matching of funds to identified biosafety needs.

IV. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION

14. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, taking note of the report on the current status and operations of the roster of experts contained in the present document, may wish to take a decision along the following lines:

(a) Invite Parties and other Governments that have not yet done so to nominate experts to the roster and those that have done so to invite the experts nominated to the roster to update their records;

³ http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/forum_ra.shtml

⁴ http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art26/online_discussion_info

⁵ http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art23/pp_forum_discussion.shtml

⁶ http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_detection/discussions.shtml

(b) Urge developed country Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to make contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Roster of Experts in order to enable developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to pay for the services of the experts selected from the roster;

(c) Decide to expand the roster to include experts nominated by Parties and other Governments to participate in ad hoc technical expert groups and networks, including those on risk assessment, detection and identification, synthetic biology and socioeconomic considerations;

(d) Request the Executive Secretary to incorporate a functionality through the Biosafety Clearing-House that would allow users to search the roster of experts and sort the results by the category in which the experts were nominated, including expert groups or networks on risk assessment, detection and identification, synthetic biology and socioeconomic considerations, as well as the experts who have been actively participating in such groups or networks;

(e) Request the Executive Secretary to explore the possibility of linking the roster of experts on biosafety to tools being developed under other initiatives, such as the Bio-Bridge Initiative, in order to facilitate the matching of biosafety needs identified by Parties with available funding and technical assistance.
