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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  
Cancun, Mexico, 4-17 December 2016  
Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*\*

#### **OPERATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) was established in article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as part of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms, and to assist Parties in implementing the Cartagena Protocol. The Central Portal of the BCH is accessible online at <http://bch.cbd.int>.
2. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its seventh meeting, in its decision BS-VII/2 requested the Executive Secretary to undertake a number of activities relevant to the improvement of the operations and activities of the BCH. The present note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary to assist the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in evaluating the progress made and identifying possible actions to further improve the BCH and the exchange of information on matters related to biosafety.
3. Section II of the present document provides an update report on the activities related to the BCH undertaken by the Secretariat in response to decisions by Parties, as well as ongoing activities for regular maintenance and improvement of the BCH. Section III provides an overview of the current status of implementation of the BCH and a summary of an analysis based on the indicators contained in the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol. Finally, section IV contains suggested elements for a draft decision on the operation and activities of the BCH. The annex attached hereto to this report contains a breakdown of records registered in the BCH at the time of writing this note.

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## **II. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INFORMATION SHARING AND THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE WHICH WERE UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARIAT**

4. In its decision BS-VII/2 on the operation and activities of the BCH, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To facilitate communication for the editing and updating of records submitted by Parties to the BCH;

(b) To continue developing the BCH, taking due account of the needs of its users and with special emphasis on activities relating to the harmonization of and capacity-building for monitoring of living modified organisms, for example through the Network of Laboratories for the Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms;

(c) To continue its collaboration with other biosafety databases and platforms, including those of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, other clearing-houses of the Convention and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development;

(d) To improve the BCH search interfaces in a way that allows the grouping of results by thematic areas;

(e) To complete the translation of all decisions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in all six official languages of the United Nations;

(f) To continue the development of online forums given their effectiveness in capacity-building in the implementation of the BCH.

5. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol invited the United Nations Environment Programme, in its implementation of the BCH III project to develop further guidance on the use of the BCH with special attention to customs and border control officials and promotion of public awareness, education and participation, and to promote, to the extent possible, regional synergies with Parties that have participated in the BCH II project;

6. Furthermore, in its deliberations on other agenda items at its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol made the following requests to the Executive Secretary that are relevant to the operations of the BCH:

(a) To collect, compile and analyse information on the implementation of the Protocol using the third national reports as a primary source, with a view to contributing to the third assessment and review of the Protocol in conjunction with the mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the period 2011-2020 (para. 2 of decision BS-VII/3 on the assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Protocol);

(b) To create sections in the BCH where information, tools, practical experience and guidance related to their existing mechanisms and requirements relating to the contained use of living modified organisms, including any specific requirement relating to the type and level of containment, could be submitted and easily retrieved as a basis for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, at its eighth meeting, of the gaps and needs identified by Parties, if any, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the Protocols on contained use of living modified organisms (para. 2 of decision BS-VII/4 on transit and contained use);

(c) To promote active participation of other conventions and related organizations in the BCH online discussion portal (para. 2(b) of decision BS-VII/6 on cooperation with other organizations, conventions and initiatives);

(d) To continue to collaborate with relevant international standard-setting bodies and to keep Parties abreast of any new developments in relevant international regulations and to make such information available in the BCH in such a way as to make it easily retrievable (para. 4 of decision VII/8 on handling, transport, packaging and identification);

(e) To (i) continue organizing online discussions through the Network of Laboratories focusing on the detection and identification of living modified organisms; (ii) compile and synthesize the information and case studies submitted by Parties of their existing mechanisms for emergency measures in case of unintentional transboundary movements of living modified organisms; and (iii) create, in the Biosafety Clearing-House, a system for the easy identification of notifications relating to unintentional transboundary movements of living modified organisms within the context of Article 17, and provide cross-references among the notifications and relevant detection methods, where applicable (decision VII/10 on unintentional transboundary movements and emergency measures);

(f) To improve the mechanism established for updating background documents linked to the Guidance on Risk assessment of Living Modified Organisms as detailed in the decision (decision VII/12 on risk assessment and risk management);

(g) To convene online discussion groups to facilitate the exchange of views, information and experiences on socio-economic considerations in the context of paragraph 1 of Article 26 of the Protocol, including concerning: international obligations that may be relevant to socio-economic considerations; socio-economic considerations and the value of biological diversity to indigenous and local communities; environment-related aspects of socio-economic considerations, as well as the relationship, if any, with risk assessment and human health-related issues (decision VII/13 on socio-economic considerations);

(h) To make the revised format for the third national reports available online through the BCH (decision VII/14 on monitoring and reporting).

7. In response to the request in paragraph 4(a) above, the Secretariat continued, on an annual basis, to contact Parties and inform them of the gaps that exist in their decision records (under Articles 10 and 11) registered in the BCH or required an accompanying risk assessment report (or summary) and assisted, when requested by Parties, to register the missing information. Parties were also notified about any missing Biosafety National Focal Points that are required to be nominated under Article 19 of the Cartagena Protocol and paragraph 7 of decision BS-I/3, and facilitated their registration in the BCH. In this exercise, Parties were also informed about LMO that were listed as commercialized in their countries by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) database,<sup>1</sup> but for which there were no decisions registered to the BCH by those Parties.

8. In the context of the requests in paragraphs 4(b) and 6(e)(i) above, the Secretariat expanded and continued to organize online discussions of the Network of Laboratories, through the BCH, focusing on the detection and identification of living modified organisms. A detailed account of the activities of the Network is available in document UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/9.

9. In response to the requests in paragraphs 4(c) and 6(c) above, the Secretariat has continued to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, host of the “GM Foods Platform”,<sup>2</sup> and with OECD, host of the “BioTrack Product Database”.<sup>3</sup> During the intersessional period, the three organizations jointly organized an online forum through the BCH (2015), as well as two webinars, on “Good practices for effective national communication mechanisms” (2015) and “Training on effective use of data on the databases” (2016), respectively.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the Secretariat improved the display, in the LMO decisions pages, of matching records from the Biotradestatus database<sup>5</sup> by implementing an automatic synchronization of new records registered in the Biotradestatus database.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.isaaa.org/gmaprovaldatabase>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/gm-foods-platform/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www2.oecd.org/biotech/>.

<sup>4</sup> The online forum and reports of the webinars are available at [https://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal\\_art20/fao-cbd-oecd/discussion](https://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art20/fao-cbd-oecd/discussion).

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.biotradestatus.com>.

10. Several improvements were made to the search interfaces of the BCH in the context of the request in paragraph 4(d) above. Namely, the improvements to the search interface now enable users to choose whether to filter records that are an “exact” match or “related” to the search option. Furthermore, changes were made to how information is entered in the relationship trees during the registration of a new record with a view to better matching records and search parameters. Further improvements to the search engine have already been developed and will be deployed after the migration of the BCH to the new platform (see below).

11. In the context of paragraph 4(e) above, the translation of all decisions from the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol has been completed and made available online.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the provision of up-to-date translations of all BCH pages in all six official languages of the United Nations continues to be done on an ongoing basis by the Secretariat.

12. In response to a request by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol as in paragraph 4(f) above and in an effort to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of processes carried out under the Cartagena Protocol, the Secretariat continued and expanded the development of online forums held through the BCH. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat organized and convened 41 online discussion groups that took place on seven different forums held through the BCH. In total, there were slightly over 1,000 active registrations from all geographic regions in the online forums held during the last intersessional period. A breakdown of the participation in the discussion groups is provided in table 1 below.

Table 1. **Details of the online forums and real-time conferences held in the intersessional period**

<i>Forums</i>	<i>Main Targets</i>	<i>No. of discussion groups</i>	<i>Parties</i>		<i>Non-Parties</i>		<i>Organizations</i>		<i>Total</i>	
			<i>Countries</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Countries/Institutions</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Network on Detection and Identification of LMOs	Open to LMO laboratory personnel	11	56	107	3	6	4	4	63	117
Open-ended Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management	Open to experts on the topics	7	53	213	4	19	26	34	83	266
AHTEG on Risk Assessment and Risk Management	AHTEG members	8	20	20	3	3	6	6	29	29
Forum on Socio-economic Considerations	Open	5	27	77	2	5	14	17	43	99
AHTEG on Socio-economic Considerations	AHTEG members	3	22	22	1	1	4	4	27	27

<sup>6</sup> At the time of writing this note, the translations of the decisions from the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol were only available through the CBD webpage (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=mop-07>) in Word and PDF formats.

Forums	Main Targets	No. of discussion groups	Parties		Non-Parties		Organizations		Total	
			Countries	Participants	Countries	Participants	Institutions	Participants	Countries/ Institutions	Participants
Open-ended Forum on Synthetic Biology	Open to experts on synthetic biology	7	53	149	1	9	48	80	102	238
FAO-CBD-OECD joint forum	Open	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	327
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>41</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1,103</b>

13. In the context of paragraph 5 above, collaboration with UNEP-GEF was renewed after the launch of the Project for Sustainable Capacity-Building for Effective Participation in the BCH (BCH III).<sup>7</sup> The first collaborative activity under the BCH III project is a workshop that will take place on 11 December 2016, during the concurrent meetings of the Convention and its Protocols in Cancun, Mexico, focusing on training BCH focal points and national authorized users. Furthermore, with generous contribution from the Government of Japan, the Secretariat has initiated the development of an e-learning tool based on the experience gained from the training workshops conducted by UNEP-GEF on the BCH. This e-learning tool will be further developed and improved taking into account the new developments of the BCH platform to enable BCH users of different categories to access a quick introduction to the Cartagena Protocol and on how “to find and retrieve information from the BCH”.

14. To facilitate the processes for the third assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol in conjunction with the mid-term evaluation of its Strategic Plan, during the intersessional period, the Secretariat has:

(a) In response to the request by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in paragraph 6(h) above, the Secretariat made available online, the revised format of the third national reports through the BCH to facilitate submission by Parties;

(b) In response to the request in paragraph 6(a) above, the Secretariat collected, compiled and analysed the information provided by Parties through their third national reports by further developing and improving the online Report Analyser tool at <http://bch.cbd.int/database/reports>. In addition, to facilitate the third assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol in conjunction with the mid-term evaluation of its Strategic Plan, a tool was developed through the BCH to analyse the information provided in the third national reports against the baseline information provided through the second national reports;

(c) Furthermore, the results of a dedicated survey to gather information corresponding to indicators in the Strategic Plan that could not be obtained from the second national reports or through other existing mechanisms, as requested in decision BS-VI/15, were integrated into to the Report Analyser tool of the BCH to augment baseline for the third assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol in conjunction with the mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

<sup>7</sup> The UNEP-GEF BCH III project contains the following five main components: (a) Global and subregional networking and knowledge sharing of information for effective Management of the BCH; (b) Production of BCH educational packages in all six languages of the United Nations, as appropriate, and provision of virtual education tools; (c) Strengthening and sustainability of the BCH Regional Advisor System (RA System) as a support to Parties for effective participation in the BCH; (d) Assisting government officials, decision makers and key stakeholders to enhance their understanding of and, where appropriate, appreciation of what should or must be registered in the BCH; and (e) Sustainability and awareness of the BCH and national databases in coordination with United Nations Agencies and other information sharing initiatives on Biosafety.

15. In response to the request in paragraph 6(b) above, the Secretariat created a page in the BCH where information, tools, practical experience and guidance related relating to the contained use of living modified organisms was compiled.<sup>8</sup>

16. In relation to the request in paragraph 6(d) above, the Secretariat is in the process of updating and revamping the Collaborative Portal for Customs Officials and the Portal on Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms, both available through the BCH,<sup>9</sup> in order to make information relevant to handling, transport, packaging and identification of LMOs more easily available to Parties.

17. In the context of the request in paragraphs 6(e)(ii) and (iii) above, to create, in the BCH, a system for the easy identification of notifications relating to unintentional transboundary movements of LMOs within the context of article 17, and provide cross-references between the notifications and relevant detection methods, where applicable, the Secretariat: (i) added filters to the Biosafety Clearing-House search tools to enable more targeted searches of “Country’s Decisions and other Communications” records, thereby facilitating the identification of notifications made in the context of article 17; (ii) added links within the notifications to relevant information on detection methods; and (iii) modified the language of the common format for the submission of such notifications to further align it with the text of the Protocol and to provide clarity to users regarding the type of information to be made available to the BCH.

18. In response to the request in paragraph 6(f) above, the workflow mechanism, through the BCH, for submitting and updating the list of background documents linked to specific sections of the “Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms and Monitoring in the Context of Risk Assessment” was improved, in accordance with decision BS-VII/12, by including a field to indicate author affiliation, and by adding a search interface that enables the filtering of documents linked to the Guidance in accordance with several parameters.

19. In response to the request in paragraph 6(g) above, the Secretariat organized a series of online discussion groups held between 30 March and 7 May 2015 to facilitate the exchange of views, information and experiences on socio-economic considerations in the context of article 26, paragraph 1, of the Cartagena Protocol. A detailed account of the online discussions on socio-economic considerations is available in document UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/13.

20. In addition to activities carried out in response to specific requests from the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the Secretariat continued to improve the BCH. In this regard, actions undertaken during the intersessional period include:

(a) Revising and updating the registries for LMOs, genetic elements and organisms. The LMO registry was expanded to include all LMOs newly registered in the OECD, FAO, EFSA and Biotradestatus databases. Since May 2014, the number of LMOs registered in the BCH increased by 41 per cent from 374 to 527 records. Likewise, the number of genetic elements registered in the BCH increased during the intersessional period by 22 per cent from 417 to 507 records. The number of recipient and donor organisms (i.e. non-modified organisms) registered in the BCH remained the same during the intersessional period, suggesting that the present list is rather comprehensive;

(b) Further efforts were undertaken during the intersessional period to fully integrate the BCH and the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing. The integration has resulted in the clearing-houses now sharing the same platform, including a unified Application Programming Interface (API) for interoperability with third parties, a unified indexing mechanism for the integration of data through the main search interface, and a unified account system for easier access by all registered users. The API will enable, among other things, full access to BCH data to all Parties, institutions and organizations wishing to display this information on their websites. The BCH

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<sup>8</sup> Available at [http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb\\_art6/contained\\_submissions.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art6/contained_submissions.shtml).

<sup>9</sup> Available at [http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb\\_art18/customs\\_portal](http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art18/customs_portal) and [http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal\\_detection/detection\\_main.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_detection/detection_main.shtml), respectively.

has already been operating some functionalities of the new platform, and the full migration to the new platform, including a new user interface, is expected to take place in 2017.

(c) In an effort to enhance integration among the different programme areas of the Convention, in response to decision XII/24 of the Convention of the Parties establishing an open-ended online forum on synthetic biology, tools were developed through the BCH to enable the online registration of experts in synthetic biology and a portal on synthetic biology was created<sup>10</sup> to host online discussions of the forum and serve as a platform for the exchange of information relevant to synthetic biology in the context of the Convention and Cartagena Protocol processes;

(d) The user accounts of the BCH and CBD site were integrated into a single accounts for all Secretariat services thereby eliminating the need for users to update different accounts to access the CBD webpages and databases;

(e) Due to increased global Internet connectivity, the provision of offline copies of the BCH in DVD format was discontinued. The offline copies of the BCH are now provided only upon request only.

19. Furthermore, during the intersessional period, the Secretariat convened the tenth meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH-IAC) in Ispra, Italy, on 11 and 12 April 2016.<sup>11</sup> As an outcome of its meeting, the BCH-IAC made recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its eighth meeting, as well as recommendations to the Executive Secretary, on actions to further improve the BCH as an information sharing portal to facilitate implementation of the Cartagena Protocol. The recommendations from the BCH-IAC to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol are reflected in section IV below as elements for a draft decision.

### **III. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BCH**

#### **A. Breakdown of records registered in the Biosafety Clearing-House**

21. The following is a breakdown summary of BCH records in comparison to the data in the last report on the operations and activities of the BCH which was presented to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol:<sup>12</sup>

(a) The total number of records registered in the BCH has increased by 33 per cent from 7,180 in May 2014 to 9,537 records in October 2016. Among these, the number of records registered by countries (i.e. “National Records”) has increased by 50 per cent from 4,052 to 6,096 records, while the total number of “Reference Records” increased by 10 per cent from 3,128 to 3,441 records (see annex, table 1);

(b) The total number of decisions/communications registered in the BCH has increased by 194 per cent from 1,265 in May 2014 to 3,717 records in October 2016, of which the number registered by Parties has increased by 231 per cent from 1,023 to 3,389. The total number of decisions under Articles 10 and 11 registered in the BCH has increased by 55 per cent from 1,191 records to 1,849 and those registered by Parties have increased by 69 per cent from 950 to 1,607 records (see annex, table 3);

(c) The total number of risk assessment summaries registered in the BCH has increased by 98 per cent from 902 records in May 2014 to 1,784 records in October 2016, and those registered by Parties have increased by 104 per cent from 831 to 1,698 (see annex, table 3);

(d) The percentage of decisions on Articles 10 and 11 that are supported by an accompanying risk assessment summary has increased from 76 per cent in May 2014 to 96 per cent in October 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://bch.cbd.int/synbio>.

<sup>11</sup> The summary of outcomes of the tenth meeting of the BCH-IAC is available as information document UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/8/INF/1.

<sup>12</sup> UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/3.

## B. Trends in the implementation of the BCH in relation to the relevant indicators of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol

22. As part of the third assessment and review of the Protocol in conjunction with the mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan, a detailed analysis of the indicators of the Strategic Plan was carried out and is available in document UNEP/CBD/COP-MOP/8/12/Add.1. The most relevant trends observed in relation to the use of the BCH, between the second reporting period and the third reporting period, are summarized below:<sup>13</sup>

(a) The number of submissions to the BCH from developing countries and countries with economies in transition increased by 50 per cent from 1,406 in the second reporting period to 2,103 in the third reporting period (indicator 2.2.1);

(b) The amount of traffic (annual average across the reporting periods) in the BCH by users from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, increased from 65,327 visits and 39,275 unique visitors in the second reporting cycle to 174,523 visits and 77,210 unique visitors in the third reporting cycle, representing increases of 167 per cent in the number of visits and 97 per cent in the number of unique visitors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition (indicator 2.6.2; table 1);

(c) The amount of traffic (annual average across the reporting periods) from users to the BCH (measured globally) increased from 136,450 visits and 83,159 unique visitors in the second reporting cycle to 239,153 visits and 117,210 unique visitors in the third reporting cycle, representing increases of 75 per cent in the number of visits and 40 per cent in the number of unique visitors (indicator 4.1.3; table 1). The increase in the number of visits and number of unique visitors was due exclusively to an increase in traffic from users to the BCH coming from developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

**Table 1. Comparison of the number of visits and unique visitors to the BCH between the second and third reporting cycles**

	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
Visits	136,450	239,153
Unique visitors	83,159	117,210
Visits (developing countries)*	65,327	174,523
Unique visitors (developing countries)*	39,275	77,210
% Visits (developing countries)*	47%	72%
% Unique visitors (developing countries)*	47%	66%

\* includes countries with economies in transition

(d) Number of references to the BCH (indicator 4.1.4), measured as the number of people who arrived at the BCH by clicking on links in social media websites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), increased from 1,458 during 2010-2012 (second reporting cycle) to 3,148 during 2013-2015 (third reporting cycle), representing an increase of 115 per cent;

(e) The average number of Parties who actively nominated participants to open-ended forums held under the BCH (2013-2015) increased from 29 (18% out of 163 Parties) in 2010-2012 to 42 (25% out of 170 Parties) in 2013-2015 (indicator 4.2.1). The total number of participants who participated in open-ended online forums held under the BCH went from 428 in 2010-2012 to 687 in 2013-2015, representing an increase in 60 per cent (indicator 4.2.2).

<sup>13</sup> Unless specifically indicated, the comparison was made between data obtained from the BCH in May 2012 for the second reporting cycle and in April 2016 for the third reporting cycle.



**Table 2. Comparison of the number of Parties and participants in online forums held under the BCH between the second and third reporting cycles**

	<i>No. of Parties</i>		<i>No. of participants</i>	
	<i>2010-2012</i>	<i>2013-2015</i>	<i>2010-2012</i>	<i>2013-2015</i>
Risk assessment	50	53	281	261
Detection and identification	18	41	34	91
Custom officers	15	N/A	21	N/A
Socioeconomic considerations	34	27	92	99
Synthetic biology	N/A	48	N/A	236
<b>Total number</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>687</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>172</b>

#### IV. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION

23. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, having considered the general operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House, the ongoing implementation of its programme of work and the progress report on the indicators of the Strategic Plan, and taking into account the recommendations of the Informal Advisory Committee at its tenth meeting, may wish to consider a decision along the following lines:

(a) Note with concern the decline in the number of records related to capacity-building activities that were registered in the Biosafety Clearing House and urge Parties, and invite other Governments and relevant organisations to register in the Biosafety Clearing-House their capacity-building activities, projects and opportunities;

(b) Urge Parties that have not yet completely done so to make all required information available to the Biosafety Clearing-house and keep the records up-to-date focusing in particular on information related to: (i) national biosafety frameworks, legislation, regulations and guidelines; (ii) summaries of risk assessments; (iii) final decisions regarding living modified organisms and living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed, or for processing; (d) national focal points and national points of contact; (e) information on bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements or arrangements into which they have entered and which have relevance for biosafety;

(c) Urge developed country Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, in the context of decision BS-IV/4, to make contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Roster of Experts and remind them that, without funds, the roster cannot operate;

(d) Urge Parties to provide funds to enable the translation of training materials and other resources into all of the official languages of the United Nations after the migration of the Biosafety Clearing-House to the new platform;

(e) Invite the governing bodies of the Food and Agriculture of the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to strengthen the collaboration between their biosafety databases and the Biosafety Clearing-House, in particular to work towards ways to harmonize and share information between the databases, as appropriate;

(f) Request the Executive Secretary:

(i) To continue collaborating with other biosafety databases and platforms, including those of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development;

(ii) To continue making improvements the central portal of the Biosafety Clearing-House, including following up on the recommendations by the Informal Advisory Committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House at its tenth meeting;

- (iii) To carry out the full migration of the Biosafety Clearing-House to its new platform with a view to enabling the Informal Advisory Committee on the Biosafety Clearing-House to test the new platform before its face-to-face meeting in 2018.

Annex I

**A. BREAKDOWN OF RECORDS SUBMITTED TO THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE  
(AS OF OCTOBER, 2016)**

Table 1. Number of records submitted to the Biosafety Clearing-House

Category of information	Number of BCH records <sup>14</sup>		Change (%)
	May 2014	October 2016	
<b>NATIONAL RECORDS</b>			
<b>NATIONAL CONTACTS</b>			
Protocol focal points	183	180	-2%
BCH focal points	190	190	0%
Article 17 focal points	92	110	20%
Competent National Authorities	369	371	1%
National biosafety websites and databases	129	132	2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>LAWS AND REGULATIONS</b>			
National laws	795	889	12%
Bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements	16	22	38%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>DECISIONS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS</b>			
Decisions under AIA (introduction into the environment)	593	979	65%
Decisions under Article 11.1 (LMO-FFPs)	856	1,136	33%
Other decisions and declarations	162	131	-19%
<b>Total records for country's decisions and other communications</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>1,937</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>RISK ASSESSMENTS REPORTS</b>			
Risk Assessment reports from regulatory processes	961	1,756	83%
Risk Assessment reports from independent or non-regulatory processes	0	28	n/a
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>1,784</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>ROSTER OF EXPERTS ON BIOSAFETY</b>			
Number of members	157	185	18%
Number of reports on expert assignments	2	2	0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL (NATIONAL RECORDS)</b>	<b>4,052</b>	<b>6,096</b>	<b>50%</b>

<sup>14</sup> The difference between the sum of the records listed in each category and the total number of records is due to the possibility that one record contains information for more than one category (for example, a focal point may have more than one role); in such a case, the same record is listed two or three times in the breakdown.

<b>REFERENCE RECORDS</b>			
<b>REGISTRIES</b>			
LMO registry	374	527	41%
Genetic elements registry	417	507	22%
Organism registry	195	195	0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>1,229</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Capacity-building activities, projects and opportunities	389	354	-9%
Capacity needs and priorities	31	33	6%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>-8%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONS</b>			
Biosafety-related organizations	238	292	23%
LMO detection laboratories	55	59	9%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>BIOSAFETY INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRE (BIRC)</b>			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,430</b>	<b>1,474</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL (REFERENCE RECORDS)</b>	<b>3,128</b>	<b>3,441</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF RECORDS IN THE BCH</b>	<b>7,180</b>	<b>9,537</b>	<b>33%</b>

\* Data not available.

Table 2. Number of records of a “country’s decisions and other communications” submitted to the BCH and details on decisions submitted under Articles 10-11 and “risk assessments”

Country	Total number of decisions / communications	Decisions under Articles 10 and 11				Risk assessments submitted
		Art. 10 only	Art. 11 only	Art. 10 and 11	Total	
<b>PARTIES</b>						
Austria	7	0	0	0	0	1
Barbados	1	0	0	0	0	0
Belarus	6	1	0	0	1	5
Belgium	12	4	1	0	5	6
Brazil	94	5	0	38	43	45
Bulgaria	2	0	0	0	0	0
Burkina Faso	4	0	0	0	0	2
China	23	0	20	2	22	0
Colombia	311	45	103	3	151	149
Costa Rica	58	24	0	0	24	21
Cyprus	1	0	0	0	0	0
Czechia	25	0	0	0	0	25
Denmark	4	0	0	0	0	3
Dominican Republic	1	0	0	0	0	0
El Salvador	1	0	0	0	0	1
European Union	157	4	72	2	78	75
Finland	6	0	0	0	0	5
Germany	107	52	1	0	53	54
Ghana	1	0	0	0	0	1
Honduras	12	3	2	1	6	6
India	10	5	0	0	5	5
Indonesia	2	10	0	0	10	1
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Italy	2	0	0	0	0	1
Japan	201	7	34	57	98	101
Kenya	2	0	0	0	0	1
Malaysia	56	6	22	0	28	28
Mexico	995	311	152	0	463	529
Netherlands	25	0	6	0	6	18
New Zealand	154	0	85	0	85	65
Nicaragua	15	0	0	0	0	15
Niger	1	0	0	0	0	1
Nigeria	5	3	0	0	3	2
Norway	5	1	1	0	2	1
Philippines	153	0	68	0	68	80
Republic of Korea	304	0	150	0	150	153
Republic of Moldova	4	0	3	0	3	1
Romania	3	2	0	0	2	1
Saint Lucia	1	0	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	4	2	0	0	2	2
South Africa	39	11	4	0	15	14
Spain	377	186	1	0	187	190

Country	Total number of decisions / communications	Decisions under Articles 10 and 11				Risk assessments submitted
		Art. 10 only	Art. 11 only	Art. 10 and 11	Total	
Sudan	6	0	0	2	2	3
Sweden	12	0	0	0	0	3
Switzerland	8	0	8	0	8	0
Syrian Arab Republic	1	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey	84	0	40	2	42	42
Uruguay	36	6	0	12	18	18
Viet Nam	50	9	18	0	27	23
<b>Subtotal (Parties)</b>	<b>3,389</b>	<b>697 (21%)</b>	<b>791 (23%)</b>	<b>119 (4%)</b>	<b>1,607 (47%)</b>	<b>1,698 (50%)</b>

Table 2 (continued). Number of records of a “country’s decisions and other communications” submitted to the BCH and details on decisions submitted under Articles 10-11 and “risk assessments”

Country	Total number of decisions / communications	Decisions under Articles 10 and 11				Risk assessments submitted
		Art. 10 only	Art. 11 only	Art. 10 and 11	Total	
<b>OTHER GOVERNMENTS</b>						
Argentina	40	9	9	6	24	16
Australia	42	6	25	4	35	7
Canada	127	1	15	48	64	63
United States of America	119	0	30	89	119	0
<b>Sub-total (other Governments)</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>16 (5%)</b>	<b>79 (24%)</b>	<b>147 (45%)</b>	<b>242 (74%)</b>	<b>86 (26%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,717</b>	<b>713 (19%)</b>	<b>870 (23%)</b>	<b>266 (7%)</b>	<b>1,849 (50%)</b>	<b>1,784 (48%)</b>

Table 3. Comparison of data between the number of a “country’s decisions and other communications” and “risk assessments” submitted to the Biosafety Clearing-House in May 2014<sup>15</sup> and October 2016

	Total number of decisions / communications submitted to the BCH		Decisions under Articles 10 and 11								Risk assessments submitted	
			Decisions under Art. 10 only		Decisions under Art. 11 only		Decisions under both Art. 10 and 11		All decisions under Art. 10 and 11 (total)			
	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016
<b>Parties</b>	1,023	3,389	317	697	520	791	113	119	950	1,607	831	1,698
<b>Other Governments</b>	242	328	30	16	77	79	134	147	241	242	71	86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>3,717</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>1,849</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>1,784</b>

<sup>15</sup> See UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/3, annex, table 3.