



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/2
5 September 2014

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Twelfth meeting
Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 6-17 October 2014
Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PROGRESS ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

Note by the Executive Secretary

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Conference of the Parties, in decision X/15, adopted the mission, goals and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism for the period 2011-2020, and in paragraph 11 of decision XI/2, welcomed the work programme for the clearing-house mechanism in support of implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/31) and agreed to keep this work programme under review.
2. At its fifth meeting, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention adopted WGRI recommendation 5/11 C after consideration of a progress report on the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/WGRI/5/3/Add.2).
3. Furthermore, the informal advisory committee to the clearing-house mechanism (CHM-IAC) met on 13-14 June 2014 in Montreal, Canada, to review the progress made on the clearing-house mechanism. The report of this meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2014/1/2), which includes recommendations to the Executive Secretary, is available online at www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CHMIAC-2014-01.
4. The purpose of this note is to complement the Progress report on technical and scientific cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/11). The note is structured as follows:
 - (a) Section B summarizes the progress made on the clearing-house mechanism since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
 - (b) Annex I contains the recommendations arising from the above-mentioned meeting of the informal advisory committee to the clearing-house mechanism (CHM-IAC);
 - (c) Annex II is a proposal for an online system to track the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism, further to CHM-IAC recommendation B.1 in annex I;

* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

(d) Annex III is a proposal for the selection of the best national clearing-house mechanisms, further to CHM-IAC recommendation B.3 in annex I.

B. PROGRESS ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

5. This section summarizes the implementation activities of the clearing-house mechanism in which the Executive Secretary is involved. Under each goal or objective, a distinction is made between the progress made since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next steps to be undertaken.

Goal 1: *The central clearing-house mechanism provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.*

1.1. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has the capacity to sustain an effective central clearing-house mechanism.

Progress

6. Since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the following actions have been undertaken at the Secretariat with a view to strengthening the capacity to strengthen the central clearing-house mechanism:

(a) In December 2012, all the Secretariat's expertise in information technology was pooled into a single unified team responsible for the technical implementation of the three clearing-houses hosted by the Secretariat, with a high priority on the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABS-CH) due to the ratification process of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization;

(b) The vacant Documentation Officer post was filled in June 2013 to increase the Secretariat's capacity to manage documentation and terminology. This capacity was further increased in April 2014 with the arrival of an Information Clerk to assist the Documentation Officer;

(c) A cross-divisional Knowledge Management Task Force was constituted in early 2014 to plan knowledge management across the Secretariat;

(d) There has been an ongoing use of computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools to optimize the budget available for website translation. The CHM Programme Assistant, in her capacity of website translation coordinator, attended training sessions offered by the software provider;

(e) Pursuant to paragraph 25 of decision XI/31, a functional review of the Secretariat started in February 2014 which identified knowledge management as a critical function of the Secretariat.

Next actions

7. Based on the recommendation of the functional review, the current arrangements for knowledge management and information technology are to be reviewed after the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.¹

1.2. A high-quality CBD website is available in all United Nations languages.

Progress

8. The content of the CBD website has been updated on an ongoing basis since the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. There have been more than 3,300 web posting requests during the period

¹ See UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/26 Finding 8, section 5.3.5 (end), and section 7.1.

from 20 October 2012 to 31 August 2014. Web pages and sections that were substantively updated include:

- (a) The home page (www.cbd.int);
- (b) The web pages on national biodiversity strategies and action plans (www.cbd.int/nbsap), and related information;
- (c) The web pages on the preparation of the fifth national report (www.cbd.int/nr5);
- (d) The Nagoya Protocol web portal (www.cbd.int/abs);
- (e) The web portal on the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (www.cbd.int/2011-2020);
- (f) The web pages on the International Day for Biodiversity for 2013 and 2014 (www.cbd.int/idb);
- (g) The online version of the latest decisions (www.cbd.int/decisions) and recommendations (www.cbd.int/recommendations);
- (h) The list of Biodiversity Champions and their pledges (www.cbd.int/champions/list);
- (i) Several thematic web portals, such as the web portal on Biodiversity for Development (www.cbd.int/development), the Global Platform on Business and Biodiversity (www.cbd.int/business), and the web portal on protected areas (www.cbd.int/protected).

9. The generous financial support of the Governments of Japan and Canada enabled significant progress in translating the website content. More than a million words were translated in the most cost-effective manner through the use of computer assisted translation (CAT) software as described in table 1 below. However, translation into Chinese has remained an issue due to the fact that a suitable Chinese translator has been difficult to find. In terms of prioritization, content related to key areas such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (www.cbd.int/sp) and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (www.cbd.int/sp/targets) is translated first, followed by content of recently updated web pages and sections, such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Table 1. CBD website translation through automated tools since COP 11 (as of 31 August 2014)

Target language	Translated words
Arabic	237,938
French	224,152
Russian	272,030
Spanish	291,012
Total:	1,025,132

Next actions

10. The CBD website will be maintained on an ongoing basis and updated to reflect the outcomes of the recent subsidiary meetings. A web portal for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be kept up-to-date and further developed. Progress is also expected on several ongoing web-related initiatives, including:

- (a) Web pages on Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- (b) Web pages on biodiversity and the post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs);

- (c) The web portal on the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity;
- (d) The web portal on biodiversity and human well-being;
- (e) The web portal on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI);
- (f) The web portal on biological and cultural diversity jointly developed with the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO).

11. Web translation will also proceed, subject to available resources. The use of automated tools will focus on recent content updates as well as on the latest decisions and recommendations.

1.3. Effective information exchange services are fully operational.

Progress

12. After the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the following priorities were established for the development of information exchange services to be provided by the central clearing-house mechanism:

- (a) The pilot phase of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABS-CH);
- (b) An online reporting system on progress towards national targets and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- (c) An online reporting system on resource mobilization for biodiversity;
- (d) An online library for biodiversity-related resources;
- (e) The repository and information sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs);

13. The website of the pilot phase of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABS-CH) has been expanded and is available at <http://absch.cbd.int>. It was developed in accordance with the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (ICNP) and guidance from the Informal Advisory Committee to the Pilot Phase of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House.

14. The demonstration version of the other above-mentioned information exchange services of the central clearing-house mechanism (on reporting, library and EBSAs) is available at <http://chm.cbd.int>. They share a common back-end infrastructure consisting of the following components:

- (a) A faceted search engine to find information (<http://chm.cbd.int/database>);
- (b) An online submission system allowing users to insert new records and update them whenever needed (<http://chm.cbd.int/management>). Access to this component is restricted to authorized users and requires a user account;
- (c) A user account component allowing users to create and maintain their user account (<http://accounts.cbd.int>);
- (d) An application programming interface (API) enabling interoperability and allowing open access to public records through the REST communication protocol.²

15. Table 2 contains a list of record types currently available for submission. These records are grouped according to their validation workflow:

- (a) National records submitted by national authorized users and validated by Parties;

² REST stands for REpresentational State Transfer (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representational_state_transfer).

(b) Reference records submitted by any registered users and subject to review and validation by the Secretariat;

(c) Secretariat's records managed exclusively by the Secretariat's staff.

Table 2. Record types available for submission at <http://chm.cbd.int> (as of 31 July 2014)

National records	Reference records	Secretariat records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) - National reports - National targets - National indicators - Assessments of progress - Implementation activities - Financial resource mobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library resources - Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) - Strategic Plan indicators - Case studies

16. National records have been designed to gather information on the implementation of the Convention at the national level in order to facilitate reporting against national targets. This was demonstrated during the side event entitled "Online reporting of progress in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020" which was held on 14 October 2013 on the margins of the seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. This system was also presented during various subsequent events, including the latest capacity-building workshop on the clearing-house mechanism (Buea, Cameroon, May 2014), the latest meeting of the informal advisory committee to the clearing-house mechanism and a side event held at the margins of the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (Montreal, Canada, June 2014).

17. Regarding resource mobilization, the note by the Executive Secretary on methodological and implementation guidance for the indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Convention's strategy for resource mobilization (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/14/Add.1) was the reference used to define the form enabling Parties to submit the corresponding information online. The evolution of this online form will be guided by the forthcoming decision that will be made by the Parties based on WGRI recommendation 5/10.

18. The purpose of the online library is to allow the submission of biodiversity-related resources by any registered user. Submitted resources can be classified by Aichi Biodiversity Targets, subjects under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other relevant properties, which makes them searchable through the new faceted search engine.³ One of the duties of the Documentation Officer is to validate these new records before making them public.

19. Pursuant to decision XI/17, the repository and information sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) has been established. Existing EBSA records are available at <http://chm.cbd.int/database/?schema=marineEbsa>. These record details include geolocation coordinates and corresponding map boundaries. This repository is managed by the Secretariat, but Parties will have the opportunity to use the online submission system to propose new areas.

20. In addition, the scope of the LifeWeb initiative has been broadened in order to seek financial support for projects consistent with all area-based Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As a result, the information

³ A faceted search, also called faceted navigation or faceted browsing, is a technique for accessing information organized according to a faceted classification system, allowing users to explore a collection of information by applying multiple filters (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faceted_search).

exchange services offered through LifeWeb (<http://lifeweb.cbd.int>) have been expanded to allow Parties to post their financial needs not only for projects related to protected areas and Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, but also for Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Next actions

21. The Secretariat will continue to develop the new information services available for demonstration purposes at <http://chm.cbd.int> while also responding to other information technology requests arising from its programmes and operations. Due to the high number of pending requests, a prioritization exercise was carried out in early 2014. As a result, the development of the information services of the central clearing-house mechanism will continue based on the following priorities:

- (a) Improvements to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABS-CH);
- (b) Improvements to the repository and information sharing mechanism for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs);
- (c) Improvements to the visual appearance of the new CHM information services;
- (d) Maintenance of the existing interoperability services with the InforMEA website;
- (e) Preparation of a working example of interoperability using the new application programming interface (API) in order to allow national CHM websites to display national information hosted by the central CHM;
- (f) Development of a module allowing the existing CBD website to display content submitted through the new CHM information services;
- (g) Development of an online system to track the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism.

1.4. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity facilitates the development of a network of experts and practitioners among Parties and partners.

Progress

22. In order to promote networking between CBD and CHM national focal points, an effort was made to hold capacity-building workshops on the clearing-house mechanism in parallel with other workshops in related areas. This was the case for the three workshops convened in 2013-2014 as indicated in the section below on Goal 2.

23. UNDP has collaborated with the Secretariat to establish the NBSAP Forum website (<http://nbsapforum.net>), whose purpose is to connect, through communities of interest, experts and practitioners involved in the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity and action plans. This initiative was promoted during the regional workshop for Latin America on the clearing-house mechanism held on 6-10 May 2013 in Villa de Leyva, Colombia.⁴

Next actions

24. The Secretariat will continue to promote networking, including through the NBSAP forum initiative. Given that the Secretariat has several databases of experts and other relevant contacts, a series of actions can be envisaged to centralize this information into a single master expert database and/or establish interconnections with existing expert networks such as LinkedIn.

⁴ See UNEP/CBD/COP12/12, paragraph 26.

1.5. Guidance is available for Parties and partners to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.

Progress

25. Guidance on information exchange was provided to Parties in each capacity-building workshop on the clearing-house mechanisms, as well as in response to specific requests. So far, the main focus has been on guidance to exchange information through national clearing-house mechanism websites. Guidance on how to exchange information with the central clearing-house mechanism through the application programming interface is planned, as explained below.

Next actions

26. Paragraph 14 (a) of decision XI/2 requested the Executive Secretary to establish a standard information-exchange mechanism for the clearing-house mechanism to interconnect the central and national clearing-house mechanisms. Therefore, CHM national focal points need guidance on how to make these interconnections, such as:

(a) Some simple examples illustrating how relevant records can be displayed on a national CHM website. (e.g. national focal points, NBSAPs, national reports);

(b) Documentation for CHM national focal points which describes how to use the features of the information exchange mechanism, such as how to display relevant records on a national CHM website.

27. As it was estimated that many days of information technology expertise would be necessary to produce the full documentation of the new application programming interface (API), the current priority is to deliver a working example that can be demonstrated to CHM national focal points as soon as possible. The preparation of the documentation will follow at a later stage.

Goal 2: National clearing-house mechanisms provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

Progress

28. Establishing, strengthening, and ensuring the sustainability of a national clearing-house mechanism is under the responsibility of each Party. Therefore, the main role of the Secretariat in this area is to assist Parties in their efforts to do so. Since the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties, capacity-building has been provided through the following workshops to support Parties in the development of their national clearing-house mechanisms:

(a) The Regional African Workshop of the Belgian Partnership for the Clearing-House Mechanism was held from 11 to 14 March 2013 in Marrakech, Morocco, thanks to the support of the Governments of Morocco, Belgium and Japan. The workshop was attended by 18 participants, including CHM representatives of eight African countries and one regional institution (COMIFAC). The workshop focused on the Belgian partnership programme for 2014-2019 with developing countries on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Further details are available at http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm_coop/chm-partnering/workshops/atelier-marrakech-2013/;

(b) The Regional Workshop for Latin America on the Clearing-House Mechanism was held from 6 to 10 May 2013 in Villa de Leyva, Colombia, thanks to the support of the Governments of Colombia and Japan. This workshop was attended by representatives of 18 Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. The main goal of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of these countries to develop effective and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms. The workshop was held in parallel with the Regional Workshop for Latin America on Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Joint sessions were organized to strengthen the relationship between NBSAPs and the CHM. Further details are available at [http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=chm-rw-2013-la](http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=chm-rw-2013-la;);

(c) The Regional Workshop for the Caribbean Countries on the Clearing-House Mechanism was held from 16 to 20 September 2013 in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, thanks to the support of the Governments of Saint Lucia and Japan. This workshop was attended by 17 participants representing 11 countries in the Caribbean region. The main goal of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of these countries to develop effective and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms. The workshop was held in parallel with the Regional Workshop for the Caribbean Countries on the Preparation of the Fifth National Report. Joint sessions were organized for topics of interest to both workshops. Further details are available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=chm-rw-2013-car>;

(d) The regional Workshop for African Countries on the Clearing-House Mechanism was held from 5 to 9 May 2014 in Buea, Cameroon, thanks to the support of the Governments of Cameroon, Belgium and Japan. This workshop was attended by 22 participants representing 22 African countries. The main goal of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of these countries to develop effective and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms. The workshop was held in parallel with the Coordination Meeting of the Belgian Partnership for the Clearing-House Mechanism. Joint sessions were organized for topics of interest to both workshops. Further details are available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=chm-ws-2014-01>.

Next actions

29. Keeping track of the progress made by Parties in the implementation of their national clearing-house mechanisms is not something that can be realistically envisaged if it is done manually. To be able to keep track of such progress in an efficient manner, the informal advisory committee to the clearing-house mechanism has recommended that the Executive Secretary establish an online system enabling a CHM national focal point to easily report progress as it happens. For instance, the system could have a feature to report progress by e-mail. Moreover, the system can be designed in a generic way in order to benefit all programmes under the Convention on Biological Diversity. A proposal for such an information service is available in annex II below.

Goal 3: Partners significantly expand the clearing-house mechanism network and services.

Progress

30. Providing an exhaustive list of partner initiatives that have contributed to the clearing-house mechanism network and services would be beyond the scope of this report. Therefore, this section highlights significant contributions from key Parties and partners since the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

31. The European Union (EU):

(a) Has further developed its Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) which is a single entry point for data and information on biodiversity supporting the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in Europe, and serves as the clearing-house mechanism for the EU (<http://biodiversity.europa.eu>);

(b) Has organized yearly meetings of the European network of CHM national focal points held at the European Environment Agency (EEA) in Copenhagen, in November 2012 and 2013 (<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/chm-network/meetings>);

(c) Has continued to maintain the European CHM Toolkit which creates an out-of-the-box CHM portal with content management and administration features; This toolkit was developed by the European Environment Agency with EU funding and it is maintained in collaboration with user countries (<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/chm-network/the-european-chm-toolkit>);

(d) Has developed an Aichi Biodiversity Target collating tool which can be used by Parties to facilitate their reporting duties to European institutions, the Secretariat and other biodiversity-related conventions;

(e) Has funded a project to support the MEA Information and Knowledge Management initiative mentioned in the next paragraph;

32. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

(a) Has continued to bring together multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems for the benefit of Parties through its MEA Information and Knowledge Management (MEA-IKM) initiative;

(b) Has enhanced its InforMEA website (www.informea.org), which harvests key information (treaty articles, Parties, decisions, news, events, national focal points, national reports and plans) from MEA secretariats in order to make it searchable around a set of agreed terms;

(c) Has established internal cooperation agreements with various MEAs to further share relevant information and knowledge. Table 3 below summarizes the activities foreseen under the agreement signed between UNEP and the Secretariat in March 2014 (www.cbd.int/doc/agreements/agmt-unesp-delc-informea-2014-03-13-ica-web-en.pdf);

(d) Has launched its UNEP Live (www.unep.org/uneplive) knowledge platform to collect, process and share environmental science and research in order to fill gaps between data providers and consumers (www.unep.org/NewsCentre/default.aspx?ArticleID=10690&DocumentID=2758).

Table 3. Activities foreseen under the internal cooperation agreement with UNEP on InforMEA

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Results/Impact</i>
1	Continued and sustained availability of CBD information on the InforMEA website through the maintenance of the InforMEA API implemented at the CBD Secretariat.	CBD information is fully integrated within the InforMEA website.
2	Further implementation of the InforMEA API to provide support for NBSAPs and national reports.	NBSAPs and national reports can be searched along with national plans and reports of other MEAs on the InforMEA website.
3	Terms relevant to the CBD have been integrated within an InforMEA vocabulary in close collaboration with the InforMEA information specialist and the InforMEA team.	CBD terminology has been integrated with the thesaurus of the InforMEA project.
4	A list of key training and learning documents has been provided and is ready for integration with the e-learning facility of InforMEA.	CBD components are reflected in the overall e-learning facility of InforMEA.

33. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has collaborated with the Secretariat to establish its NBSAP forum website (<http://nbsapforum.net>), which is a networking and collaboration platform for experts and practitioners involved in the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity and action plans.

34. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB):

(a) Has further developed its Biodiversity Information Sharing Service serving as the regional clearing-house mechanism for ASEAN member States (<http://chm.aseanbiodiversity.org>);

(b) Has provided support to ASEAN member states in their efforts to establish their national clearing-house mechanisms.

35. The *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)* has added a biodiversity component to its Médiaterre social network (<http://www.mediaterre.org/biodiversite>) and collaborated with the Secretariat in order to increase the visibility of French content disseminated through the clearing-house mechanism network. Notification 2013-100 (Ref. No. SCBD/TSI/RS/ODM/82882) was issued to inform French-speaking Parties about the existence of the biodiversity component of Médiaterre and to encourage them to use this new service.

Next actions

36. Ongoing collaboration with existing partners will continue, including for the implementation of activities under the cooperation agreement with UNEP on InforMEA.

Annex I

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

This annex contains the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM-IAC) which took place on 13-14 June 2014 in Montreal, Canada. These recommendations are addressed to the Executive Secretary. **Recommendations in bold** should be considered **with a higher priority**, and recommendations which would require a decision by the Conference of the Parties are grouped in Section D (“Possible elements for drafting future decisions”). The full report of this CHM-IAC meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2014/1/2) is available online at www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=CHMIAC-2014-01.

A. CENTRAL CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

Strategic Advice

- A.1. **Involve the CHM-IAC in planning the development of CHM information services with a view to ensuring that they meet Parties’ needs and expectations.**
- A.2. Provide timelines for the deployment in production of the new CHM information services.
- A.3. Prepare a web strategy for the development and maintenance of the central CHM in consultation with the CHM-IAC with a view to increasing consistency between the three clearing-houses as well as with other platforms developed under the Convention.

Interoperability

- A.4. **Make publicly available a first version of the application programming interface (API) of the central CHM** in order to allow interested CHM national focal points and partners to start working on the interconnection with the central CHM (decision XI/2, paragraph 14 (a)).
- A.5. **Finalize the implementation of the interoperability with InforMEA to allow national reports and NBSAPs** to be globally searchable on the InforMEA website (decision XI/2, paragraph 14 (b)).

Online information services

- A.6. **Finalize the development of the new CHM services**, preferably in consultation with the CHM-IAC.

Technical advice

- A.7. Continue to make the source code of newly-developed tools available on open-source repositories (e.g. GitHub) and provide the necessary documentation to allow Parties and partners to reuse this code as needed.
- A.8. Adapt the common formats and metadata based on the advice to be provided by the CHM-IAC working group that will review them.
- A.9. Adopt and use open standards for exchanging information on biodiversity whenever possible.

B. NATIONAL CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISMS

Information services

- B.1. **Establish an online system to keep track of the implementation of national CHM**, as described in annex II below.
- B.2. **Collaborate with the European Environment Agency on the further development of the European CHM Portal Toolkit (PTK)** used by many national CHMs, particularly to make it interoperable with the central CHM.

Promotion of national CHMs

- B.3. **Establish an award for the best national CHMs at COP 12** based on the proposal in annex III below and, if Parties agree, announce a competition for COP 13.
- B.4. Prepare a promotional package to help Parties raise awareness on their national CHMs.
- B.5. Develop a sensitization workshop on the CHM and its role in NBSAP implementation for target groups of CHM users, using standardized templates and tools that can be customized for different national CHMs.
- B.6. Recommend the selection of a simple meaningful name for a national CHM, and discourage the prominent use of the CHM acronym. In French, “Centre d’échange d’informations sur la biodiversité” is recommended.

Support to NBSAP implementation

- B.7. Encourage the creation of national help desks to respond to requests on biodiversity and implementation of the CBD at the country level.
- B.8. Carry out an assessment of the contribution of the national CHM to the NBSAP revision or national report preparation processes in order to identify gaps and barriers.

Capacity-building

- B.9. Take steps to increase the number of national CHMs, including through the establishment of a help desk facility at the CBD Secretariat to support the development of national CHMs.
- B.10. Prepare a training module to assist Parties in building their national CHMs.

C. CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM NETWORK

Technical and scientific cooperation

- C.1. Support the establishment of a matchmaking facility in order to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.
- C.2. Given that the CHM is more than a technical platform, explore opportunities to facilitate technical and scientific cooperation through human networking, such as match-making and identification of capacity-building needs during CBD workshops.

Promotion of partners’ tools and services

- C.3. Inform Parties of the existence of relevant tools and services (e.g. NBSAP Forum, Target Cross-Linking Tool, etc.) and promote their use.

Collaboration

- C.4. Further collaborate with the MEA-IKM initiative in order to increase access to and sharing of biodiversity-related information and knowledge held by MEAs, including through further work on interoperability, common vocabularies, and thesaurus.
- C.5. Further collaborate with relevant initiatives, including the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) and the NBSAP Forum, in order to make relevant data hosted by them accessible through the central and national CHMs.
- C.6. Collaborate with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) through the task force on knowledge and data and the task force on capacity-building, including on the IPBES discussions on the establishment of a matchmaking facility.
- C.7. Explore ways to collaborate with existing projects and networks (e.g. UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), the Valuing Nature Network (VNN), Invasive Species Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System (EDDMapS)) in order to generate specific data and information on thematic areas relevant to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (e.g. ecosystem service mapping, valuation).

D. POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR DRAFTING FUTURE DECISIONS

- D.1. Invite Parties to assist other Parties in the development of national CHMs by building upon successful experiences and good practices.
- D.2. Encourage global partners to play a more active role in engaging with the CHM network.
- D.3. Encourage Parties and other donors to further support capacity-building activities such as workshops.
- D.4. Invite Parties, partners and other donors to provide resources to establish and maintain effective national CHMs.
- D.5. Encourage parties to develop funding proposals aiming at mobilizing resources for further developing their national CHMs.
- D.6. Encourage pilot projects, including pilot projects between global partners and national CHMs.

Annex II

**ONLINE SYSTEM TO TRACK THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Keeping track of the progress made by Parties in the implementation of their national clearing-house mechanisms is not something that can be realistically envisaged if it is done manually. To be able to keep track of such progress in an efficient manner, it is recommended to establish a user-friendly online system that a CHM national focal point can use to easily report progress as it happens. Moreover, the system can be designed in a generic way in order to benefit all programmes under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This annex is a concept note describing the features of such an information service.

B. SYSTEM OVERVIEW

2. The main features of this information service should allow CHM national focal points to easily:
- (a) Describe the current status of their national CHM;
 - (b) Describe the main activities or projects related to their national CHM;
 - (c) Provide quick updates whenever some progress is made on any of these activities.
3. The core system relies on the three information types (see table 4) whose proposed formats are described in Section D below. These formats are expected to be developed and fine-tuned as needed.

Table 4. Information types

<i>Type</i>	<i>Created by</i>	<i>Description</i>
National CHM Status	CHM national focal point	Description of the current status of a national CHM in a country. When editing this record, the user has the option to update the list of activities related to the national CHM.
Activity	CHM national focal point, CBD Secretariat, Partner	Brief general description of an activity or project related to the CHM. Among other things, this activity can be tagged with one of more elements of the CHM work programme. When editing this record, the user has the option to update the progress made on this activity.
Progress Update	CHM national focal point, CBD Secretariat, Partner	Record describing some progress at a given time. The format of this record is similar to a blog post.

4. While the *National CHM Status* information type is specific to the CHM programme, *Activities* and *Progress Updates* are generic types that apply to any programme under the Convention. This is because an *Activity* can be tagged by elements coming from any decision or work programme. The selection of tags should be presented hierarchically (from decisions and programmes to specific elements).

C. OPERATIONS

5. When a CHM national focal point signs in, one of his/her records is an online form to describe the status of his/her national CHM. This record is automatically created for each country and cannot be deleted. It can be updated by the CHM national focal point and any other authorized user. The latest published version of the *National CHM Status* record is public and is replaced whenever the CHM national focal point publishes a new version.

6. When updating the *National CHM Status* record, the CHM national focal point is invited to add one or more *Activity* records related to this national CHM. This opens a separate form allowing the CHM national focal point (or any authorized user) to describe this new *Activity*. This description is initialized once for each major activity or project, but without including any progress update against this activity. Instead, the description focuses on general stable information, particularly on metadata tags that connect this activity to a national target, programme element, or any other relevant reference. One of the properties is the status of the activity which can be ongoing, planned, completed or cancelled. While the emphasis is on present and future activities, the CHM national focal point is free to create records on completed activities to gradually enhance the institutional memory about the national CHM.

7. When updating an *Activity* record, the CHM national focal point is invited to add one or more *Progress Update* records. These updates should be easy to enter, like a simple blog post or tweet. At this level, there is no need to repeat metadata elements that have already been entered at the *Activity* level.

8. A mailing mechanism could also be envisaged to allow the national focal point to provide progress updates by sending e-mail messages, as indicated in table 5. Such a feature would typically be turned on or off by a configuration switch in the user's profile (e.g. allow progress updates by e-mail? [Yes/No]). A validation process would be in place to protect against potential fake messages, as follows: when a *Progress Update* e-mail is received by the system, an acknowledgement is sent back with a link to either validate the new *Progress Update* record or discard it.

Table 5. Progress update information sent through e-mail

<i>E-mail message</i>	<i>Progress Update record</i>	<i>Description</i>
Date	Date	The e-mail date is used as the date of the <i>Progress Update</i> record
From	User	The <i>From</i> e-mail should match the e-mail of an existing user who has the privilege to create <i>Progress Update</i> records.
To	update@cbd.int	General e-mail address to provide updates on progress.
Subject	Activity #: Title	The number (#) should match an existing <i>Activity ID</i> to which the identified user can add <i>Progress Update</i> records. The second part of the <i>Subject</i> is used as the <i>Title</i> of the <i>Progress Update</i> record.
Body	Description	The <i>Body</i> of the message is used as the <i>Description</i> of the <i>Progress Update</i> record.
Attachments	Attachments	The attachments (documents and images) are added to the <i>Progress Update</i> record.

D. INFORMATION FORMATS

Table 6. Format of a National CHM Status record

<i>Information item</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Overview		
Title	<Text>	Pre-filled as the national CHM of the current country
Country	<Country>	Automatic based on user status
Website address	<URL>	Pre-filled with National CHM URL
Thumbnail	<Image>	Home page snapshot
Organization	<Organization>	Reference to the government entity managing the national CHM
Description	<Text>	Brief description of the national CHM
Technical information		
Webmaster	<Expert>	Reference to the webmaster's expert record with name and e-mail (pre-filled with the CHM national focal point)
CMS	<Text>	Content management system used by the national CHM
Database system	<Text>	Database system used by the national CHM
Search engine	<Text>	Search engine used by the national CHM
Other technical details	<Text>	Additional technical details
Development		
Strategic vision	<Text>	Description of the strategic vision of the national CHM
Capacity & expertise	<Text>	Description of the capacity and expertise available for developing the national CHM
Challenges & needs	<Text>	Description of the challenges and needs for further developing the national CHM
Related information		
Activities	<Activity(ies)>	Ordered list of activities with buttons to manage them (add, edit, move up/down, delete)
Links	<URL(s)>	Links to related information
Attachments	<File(s)>	Attached documents, images or videos

Table 7. Format of an Activity record

<i>Information item</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Overview		
Title	<Text>	Title of the activity or project
Thumbnail	<Image>	Thumbnail image to visually represent the activity
Start date	<Date>	Starting date of the activity (does not need to be an exact date)
End date	<Date>	Ending date of the activity (does not need to be an exact date)
Status	<Status>	Typical statuses are: planned, ongoing, completed, or cancelled.

Information item	Type	Comments
Location	<Location>	Information for geolocation if applicable
Description	<Text>	Brief description of the activity
Responsible expert	<Expert>	Reference to the main expert in charge of this activity (pre-filled with the CHM national focal point)
Responsible organization	<Organization>	Reference to the organization in charge of this activity (pre-filled with the organization in charge of the national CHM)
National references <i>(Section for national users)</i>		
National targets	<Target(s)>	Selection of one or more national targets (if applicable)
NBSAP reference	<Text>	Reference to NBSAP (if applicable)
CBD references <i>(Section for all users)</i>		
Aichi Biodiversity Targets	<Target(s)>	Selection of one or more Aichi Biodiversity Targets
CBD subjects	<Subject(s)>	CBD subject or thematic area (pre-filled with CHM)
Decisions	<Decision(s)>	To select one or more COP decisions.
Elements	<Element(s)>	To select decision or programme elements (e.g. CHM programme elements in UNEP/CBD/COP/11/31)
Allow CBD review	<Checkbox>	Checkbox to grant permission to the Secretariat (when applicable) "Allow the CBD Secretariat to review and possibly enhance the above CBD references"
Related information		
Progress updates	<Progress Update(s)>	Ordered list of progress updates with buttons to manage them (add, edit, move up/down, delete)
Links	<URL(s)>	Links to related information
Attachments	<File(s)>	Attached documents, images or videos

Table 8. Format of a Progress Update record

Information item	Type	Comments
Overview		
Title	<Text>	Brief title of the progress update
Date	<Date>	Date of the progress update
Description	<Text>	Description of the progress update
Related information		
Links	<URL(s)>	Links to related information
Attachments	<File(s)>	Attached documents, images or videos

Annex III

**PROPOSAL FOR THE SELECTION OF THE BEST NATIONAL
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISMS**

1. This annex proposes a process and some criteria for selecting the top five national clearing-house mechanisms to receive an award.

A. PROCESS

2. The following process is suggested:

- (a) A notification will be issued to Parties to inform them of this initiative, and to provide guidance on how to maximize their chance to be one of the winners;
- (b) All existing national CHMs will be assessed; there is no need to enroll;
- (c) A jury will be established, and may include CHM-IAC members, CBD Secretariat staff and others;
- (d) Each jury member will allot points to his/her selected national CHMs (5 points for the first, and 1 point for the fifth);
- (e) A jury member cannot assign points to his/her own country. The results of jury votes will be adjusted to ensure that the process remains fair for countries represented in the jury;
- (f) In case of a tie, the jury will have a specific round of votes to resolve it;
- (g) The announcement of the winners will be made during a meeting of the Conference of the Parties or at another major CBD event.

B. CRITERIA

3. The criteria in table 9 below are proposed to assess each national clearing-house mechanism.

Table 9. Proposed criteria to assess national clearing-house mechanisms

<i>Category</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Visibility and usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ranking after a Google search of “Biodiversity [Country]” in the language of the site- Web statistics (page views)- Availability in several languages (if non-English website)- Activities undertaken to promote awareness of the national CHM (meetings, brochures, etc.)- Use of the national CHM by thematic groups and other stakeholders
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Home page- Design and attractiveness of the site- Menu and navigation- Overall user-friendliness- Appearance on mobile devices- Appearance of printed pages

<i>Category</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity in the country - National strategy and action plan (NBSAP) - Implementation activities and progress towards Aichi Targets - Scientific and technical information - National legislation - National information on biosafety and access and benefit-sharing (ABS) - Information on national initiatives related to cooperation, collaboration, and networking - Case studies, assessments, reports, etc. - News and events - Links to other national websites - Other resources
Online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search engine - Online databases (species, protected areas, document, experts, ...) or links to these databases - Submission services - Collaboration tools (forums, blogs) - Other modern services (e.g. maps)
Content management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of a content management system - Number of updates in the current year and the previous year - Frequency of updates - Number of active contributors - Use of terminology / metadata - System(s) in place to gather and analyze statistics (based on reports provided) - Content translation (if site available in several languages)
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy and roadmap for further development - Coordination committee - National collaboration - History and evolution (document, presentation, or case-study) - Level of adherence to guidance for developing national CHMs (http://www.cbd.int/chm/guidance)
