



## **Convention on Biological Diversity**

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MEETING OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE TO THE CLEARING-HOUSE  
MECHANISM OF THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
Montreal, Canada, 30-31 October 2015

### **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In its decision X/15, the Conference of the Parties adopted the mission, goals and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism for the period 2011-2020. In its decision XI/2, paragraph 11, it welcomed the work programme for the clearing-house mechanism in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/31) and agreed to keep this work programme under review.

2. The previous meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM-IAC) was held on 5 October 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, to review the progress made on the clearing-house mechanism. The report of that meeting (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2014/2/2) includes recommendations to the Executive Secretary.

3. In preparation for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Executive Secretary prepared a progress report on technical and scientific cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/11) as well as an information note providing additional information on progress made (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/INF/2). After considering these documents, the Conference of the Parties adopted section 3 of decision XII/2 B, containing a number of requests on the clearing-house mechanism. The present note summarizes the progress on these requests since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

4. The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

(a) Section II summarizes the progress made on the clearing-house mechanism since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Section III provides information on some additional activities related to the clearing-house mechanism;

(c) Annex I contains the list of Parties which have submitted information in response to notification 2015-068, entitled "Clearing-House Mechanism Award".

## II. PROGRESS ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM

5. This section summarizes the progress towards the requests made by the Conference of the Parties in section 3 of decision XII/2 B. Under each item, a distinction is made between the progress made since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the next steps to be undertaken.

### A. Submission of information

#### *Request*

6. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 14, Parties and other users have been invited to submit information through the central clearing-house mechanism and to provide user feedback whenever possible.

#### *Progress*

7. This request is related to paragraph 18(a) of decision XII/2 B, in which the Executive Secretary was requested to establish a fully functional online reporting tool. The latest version of this tool has been available for testing at <http://dev-chm.cbd.int> since August 2015. A number of interested Parties as well as members of the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism have been granted access to this system. Feedback received has been collected and will be used to finalize the online reporting tool.

8. In addition to the above online reporting tool, the Secretariat has implemented an online tool for the financial reporting framework adopted in decision XII/3, paragraph 24. This tool has been made available online at <https://chm.cbd.int/submit/resourcemobilization> and allows Parties to provide baseline information and report on their contribution to reach the global financial targets under Aichi Biodiversity Target 20.

#### *Next actions*

9. Whenever a new online submission service is made available on the central clearing-house mechanism, Parties and other users will be invited to use it to submit information and provide feedback.

10. The online submission services will also continue to be demonstrated and promoted whenever possible during capacity-building workshops and side-events.

### B. Establishment of national clearing-house mechanisms

#### *Request*

11. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 15, Parties were strongly encouraged to accelerate the establishment and development of their national clearing-house mechanisms where they had not done so.

#### *Progress*

12. Since the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties, some Parties have been working on the establishment or further development of their national clearing-house mechanisms. Slightly more than 20 requests for assistance have been received so far, mostly through the NBSAP forum. In terms of outcomes, four Parties (Kenya, Nigeria, Seychelles and Sudan) established their national clearing-house mechanisms in 2015. As of 19 October 2015, the total number of Parties having established their national clearing-house mechanisms is 98. Coincidentally, the last regional capacity-building workshop on the

clearing-house mechanism was held from 5 to 9 May 2014 in Buea, Cameroon, and three of the four above-mentioned Parties were represented at this workshop.

#### *Next actions*

13. It is expected that the ongoing support to national clearing-house mechanisms as well as the clearing-house mechanism award process mentioned in the two sections below will contribute to the further establishment of national clearing-house mechanisms by Parties that have not yet done so.

### **C. Award for national clearing-house mechanisms**

#### *Request*

14. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 15, the Executive Secretary was requested to propose, in collaboration with the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism, a process to grant, at the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties, subject to the availability of resources, an award to the Parties that have made the most significant progress in the establishment or further development of their national clearing-house mechanisms.

#### *Progress*

15. Further to this request, the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism established the “CHM Award Working Group” in order to drive this process and define its modalities. In collaboration with this working group, the Executive Secretary issued notification 2015-068 on 17 June 2015 to (a) inform Parties of the modalities of the CHM Award at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, (b) give an overview of what is expected from a national CHM, and (c) kindly request them to answer a questionnaire on their national CHM. As of 19 October 2015, 25 Parties have responded to this notification, as indicated in annex I.

#### *Next actions*

16. The next steps of this process include the review of the questionnaires and national clearing-house mechanism websites in order to determine the best candidates for the award. These next steps will be discussed by the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism during its consideration of agenda item 8.1.

### **D. Support to national clearing-house mechanisms**

#### *Request*

17. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 16, Parties and partners were invited to provide support to developing country Parties for the establishment or strengthening of their national clearing-house mechanisms. In paragraph 17 of the same decision, Parties and donors were also invited to continue to provide financial support for this purpose, including for content preparation and translation to facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge.

#### *Progress*

18. Thanks to the Japan Biodiversity Fund, the CBD Secretariat has received funding for supporting the development of national clearing-house mechanisms during the period 2015-2016. Such support includes two capacity-building workshops and a component to develop a tool to assist Parties in the establishment of their national clearing-house mechanisms. This tool is a basic generic national clearing-

house mechanism that can be made available online to interested Parties for them to easily share key information related to their NBSAPs and its implementation.

19. Preparatory work has begun for the planning of the first workshop in the Pacific region in the context of a cooperation agreement with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). Work on the development of the tool started in July 2015 and the progress made so far can be visualized on the demonstration website available at <http://demo.chm-cbd.net>.

20. In February 2015, Belgium invited the member countries of its partnership for the clearing-house mechanism to respond to a call for project proposals for the reinforcement of national clearing-house mechanisms. The CBD Secretariat participated in the review of 15 project proposals submitted by developing countries in response to this call. More details on this cooperation initiative are available at [http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm\\_coop/chm-partnering/call\\_reinforcement/call-reinforcement-chm-web-sites-2015](http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm_coop/chm-partnering/call_reinforcement/call-reinforcement-chm-web-sites-2015).

21. Collaboration also took place with the NBSAP Forum initiative in order to prepare a thematic section about the clearing-house mechanism on this forum and to initiate a discussion thread. Such collaboration has allowed the CBD Secretariat to be more aware of the needs of Parties and the challenges they face in the process of establishing their national clearing-house mechanisms.

#### *Next actions*

22. The demonstration version of the tool will be reviewed by Committee members in order to collect feedback for pursuing its development and making it available to interested Parties. In addition, the forthcoming capacity-building workshops on the clearing-house mechanism will include training sessions on this tool.

23. The next capacity-building workshop on the clearing-house mechanism has been planned to take place during the first quarter of the 2016 pending official confirmation of the host country. The other capacity-building workshop will be convened in another region before the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

### **E. Online reporting tool**

#### *Request*

24. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 18, the Executive Secretary was requested, subject to the availability of resources, to continue developing the information services of the central clearing-house mechanism, taking into account user feedback as well as recommendations from the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism. More specifically, in paragraph 18 (a), the Executive Secretary was requested to establish a fully functional online reporting tool enabling Parties to submit, on a voluntary basis, information on their progress towards national targets and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, directly involving Parties in the development and testing of this tool.

#### *Progress*

25. Progress has been made on the development of the online reporting tool. Among other things, its user interface was redesigned to improve usability and consistency with other online systems recently developed by the CBD Secretariat. The latest version of this tool was recently made available for testing at <https://dev-chm.cbd.int>, as indicated in paragraph 7 above. Guidance on this online reporting tool has also been made available online at <https://www.cbd.int/chm/doc/chm-latest-guide-online-reporting.pdf>.

Feedback from Parties and members of the Committee has been received and compiled by the CBD Secretariat.

#### *Next actions*

26. The feedback received will be reviewed and taken into account to improve the tool. This tool will then be officially launched to enable Parties to submit, on a voluntary basis, information on their progress towards national targets and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

27. Once information on progress is reported by Parties through this tool, such information will be made automatically available on web pages specifically designed to visualize progress towards each Aichi Biodiversity Target.

### **F. Interoperability with national clearing-house mechanisms**

#### *Request*

28. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 18 (b), the Executive Secretary was requested to develop the interoperability with national clearing-house mechanisms, among which is the existing portal toolkit used by many national and regional clearing-house mechanisms.

#### *Progress*

29. The CBD Secretariat has been developing an application programming interface (API) to enable interoperability with national clearing-house mechanisms. Table 1 below provides the endpoints recently made available to retrieve information by types. This API also provides access to individual records by their unique identifier.

**Table 1. CHM API endpoints**

<i>Information type</i>	<i>CHM API endpoint</i>
Treaties	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/treaties">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/treaties</a>
Countries and Parties	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/countries">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/countries</a>
National focal point types	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-focal-point-types">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-focal-point-types</a>
National focal points	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-focal-points">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-focal-points</a>
National reports	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-reports">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-reports</a>
NBSAPs	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-strategies">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-strategies</a>
National targets	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-targets">https://api.cbd.int/api/v2015/national-targets</a>

30. Work has started to provide web developers with online documentation of this API. Progress on this documentation can be viewed at <https://api.cbd.int/developers/2.15>.

#### *Next actions*

31. As it is being further developed, this API will be tested and adjusted to ensure that it provides the information and features needed to enable the exchange of relevant information between the central and national clearing-house mechanisms. Documentation will be updated and expanded accordingly.

32. The development of simple demonstration examples is envisaged to facilitate implementation by national clearing-house mechanisms. Parties will then be encouraged to link their national clearing-house mechanisms to the central clearing-house mechanism through this API to enable the exchange of relevant information without duplication.

### G. Interoperability with InforMEA

#### *Request*

33. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 18 (c), the Executive Secretary was requested to maintain interoperability with InforMEA to allow relevant information on the Convention on Biological Diversity to be globally searchable on the InforMEA website ([www.informea.org](http://www.informea.org)). This request is in line with the internal cooperation agreement signed in March 2014 between the CBD Secretariat and the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/DELCO) on the next phase of InforMEA in the context of the MEA Information and Knowledge Initiative (MEA-IKM).<sup>1</sup>

#### *Progress*

34. The CBD Secretariat has been implementing the InforMEA application programming interface (API) based on the specifications available at [www.informea.org/about/api](http://www.informea.org/about/api). Table 2 below lists the endpoints currently available to allow the InforMEA website to retrieve information on the Convention and its Protocols.

**Table 2. InforMEA API endpoints**

<i>Information Types</i>	<i>InforMEA API Endpoints</i>
Meetings	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/Meetings">https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/Meetings</a>
Decisions	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/Decisions">https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/Decisions</a>
Countries and Parties	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/CountryProfiles">https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/CountryProfiles</a>
National focal points	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/Contacts">https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/Contacts</a>
National reports	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/CountryReports">https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/CountryReports</a>
NBSAPs	<a href="https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/NationalPlans">https://api.cbd.int/informea.svc/NationalPlans</a>

#### *Next actions*

35. Some technical issues need to be resolved in order to fully implement the InforMEA API according to its specifications. In addition, the recent initiative of the steering committee meeting of MEA-IKM recommended some additional interoperability features, such as a schema allowing the exchange of MEA documents. Once the corresponding specifications are available, each MEA Secretariat will be invited to implement these new features.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/agreements/sgmt-unesp-delco-informea-2014-03-13-ica-web-en.pdf>

## H. Maintenance of a high-quality website in all United Nations languages

### *Request*

36. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 18 (d), the Executive Secretary was requested to maintain a high-quality website for the Convention in all six United Nations languages, and particularly in Chinese due to the fact that this language version is not well established.

### *Progress*

37. The content of the CBD website has been updated on an ongoing basis since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Web pages and sections that were substantively updated include:

- (a) The home page ([www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int));
- (b) The online version of the latest decisions ([www.cbd.int/decisions](http://www.cbd.int/decisions)) for the Convention and its Protocols;
- (c) The Nagoya Protocol web portal ([www.cbd.int/abs](http://www.cbd.int/abs));
- (d) The web pages on the International Day for Biodiversity for 2015 ([www.cbd.int/idb](http://www.cbd.int/idb));
- (e) Improvements to the visual appearance of the new information services of the clearing-house mechanism previously mentioned and of the new search engine (<http://chm.cbd.int/database>);
- (f) A unified user account component allowing users to create and maintain their user account (<http://accounts.cbd.int>).

38. In addition, during the first quarter of 2015, the CBD Secretariat undertook a survey of other MEA secretariats and United Nations partners to learn about their experiences in content management systems with a view to remaining aware of potential options for maintaining a high-quality CBD website in all United Nations languages.

39. As for web translation, terms of reference were prepared and advertised to establish a roster of translators for the CBD website and to hire them on a competitive basis, made possible by financial support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund. The applications received cover all six United Nations languages. The recruitment process is still ongoing due to some delays caused by the rollout of the new Umoja system within the United Nations.

### *Next actions*

40. The CBD website will continue to be maintained and translated on an ongoing basis, together with its related web portals and clearing-houses. To a large extent, the web strategy described in the next section will determine the evolution of the CBD website in terms of infrastructure, user interface, content and translation.

## I. Web strategy

### *Request*

41. In decision XII/2 B, paragraph 19, the Executive Secretary was requested to develop a web strategy to ensure that all information common or relevant to the clearing-house mechanism, the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House and the Biosafety Clearing-House, as well as other platforms developed under the Convention and any future similar developments, can be accessed centrally to avoid duplication of efforts, and to provide this strategy to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, for its

consideration at its first meeting, in preparation for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

#### *Progress*

42. Further to this request, the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism established the “Web Strategy Working Group” to provide advice on the preparation of this web strategy. In collaboration with this working group, the Executive Secretary prepared a preliminary draft of the web strategy (UNEP/CBD/CHM/IAC/2015/1/INF/2) in order to allow committee members to provide views and feedback on it.

#### *Next actions*

43. The preliminary draft of the web strategy is expected to evolve on the basis of the feedback received and further consultations. It will then be finalized for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation at its first meeting. In the meantime, implementation will proceed for some elements of this web strategy, particularly those that have been identified as priorities, because they address urgent issues or represent fundamental building blocks of the web infrastructure.

### **IV. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

44. Since the last Conference of the Parties, the CBD Secretariat was represented at, and contributed to the outcomes of, the following partner meetings related to the clearing-house mechanism:

(a) The MEA Information and Knowledge Management working group meeting on thesaurus, held on 1 and 2 December 2014 in Bonn, Germany, and organized by UNEP/DELIC;

(b) The BISE-CHM expert meeting on sharing national information in support of the assessment of progress to 2020 biodiversity targets, held on 4 December 2014 in Copenhagen and organized by the European Environmental Agency (EEA);

(c) The Technical meeting on interoperability between the CBD reporting tool and the Target Cross-linking Tool, held on 5 December 2014 in Copenhagen and organized by the European Environmental Agency (EEA);

(d) The Expert meeting on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of MEA implementation: interoperability between reporting systems for biodiversity data, held on 15 and 16 December 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland, and co-organized by UNEP-WCMC and CITES;

(e) A number of working group meetings (listed at <http://www.informea.org/about>) under the MEA-IKM initiative to discuss common issues related to the InforMEA web portal, terminology, e-learning, reporting, and interoperability;

(f) The Sixth MEA Information and Knowledge Management Steering Committee Meeting, held from 15 to 17 September 2015 in Montreux, Switzerland, and organized by UNEP/DELIC.



*Annex I***LIST OF PARTIES HAVING RESPONDED TO NOTIFICATION 2015-068**

The table below contains the list of Parties that have responded to notification 2015-068 on the Clearing-House Mechanism Award issued on 17 June 2015.

#	Code	Party	Received on	National CHM Website
1	af	Afghanistan	2015-08-03	<a href="http://www.nepa.gov.af">http://www.nepa.gov.af</a>
2	au	Australia	2015-07-31	<a href="http://www.environment.gov.au">http://www.environment.gov.au</a>
3	ba	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2015-07-29	<a href="http://www.bih-chm-cbd.ba">http://www.bih-chm-cbd.ba</a>
4	be	Belgium	2015-07-31	<a href="http://www.biodiv.be">http://www.biodiv.be</a>
5	bi	Burundi	2015-07-30	<a href="http://bi.chm-cbd.net">http://bi.chm-cbd.net</a>
6	ca	Canada	2015-07-29	<a href="http://www.biodivcanada.ca">http://www.biodivcanada.ca</a>
7	cn	China	2015-07-31	<a href="http://biodiv.gov.cn">http://biodiv.gov.cn</a>
8	gt	Guatemala	2015-08-03	<a href="http://www.chmguatemala.gob.gt">http://www.chmguatemala.gob.gt</a>
9	jp	Japan	2015-07-31	<a href="http://www.biodic.go.jp/chm">http://www.biodic.go.jp/chm</a>
10	ke	Kenya	2015-10-16	<a href="http://meas.nema.go.ke/cbdchm">http://meas.nema.go.ke/cbdchm</a>
11	kh	Cambodia	2015-07-31	<a href="http://www.chm.gdancp-moe.org">http://www.chm.gdancp-moe.org</a>
12	ma	Morocco	2015-07-09	<a href="http://ma.chm-cbd.net">http://ma.chm-cbd.net</a>
13	mg	Madagascar	2015-07-31	<a href="http://mg.chm-cbd.net">http://mg.chm-cbd.net</a>
14	mk	FYR Macedonia	2015-07-31	(Not yet established)
15	mu	Mauritius	2015-08-07	(Not yet established)
16	mx	Mexico	2015-08-19	<a href="http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx">http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx</a>
17	my	Malaysia	2015-07-31	<a href="http://www.chm.frim.gov.my">http://www.chm.frim.gov.my</a>
18	mz	Mozambique	2015-07-31	<a href="http://41.76.149.154:8000/chm">http://41.76.149.154:8000/chm</a>
19	ng	Nigeria	2015-08-18	<a href="http://www.chm-cbd.com.ng">http://www.chm-cbd.com.ng</a>
20	nl	Netherlands	2015-07-22	<a href="http://nl.chm-cbd.net">http://nl.chm-cbd.net</a>
21	sc	Seychelles	2015-08-15	<a href="http://seychellesbiodiversitychm.sc">http://seychellesbiodiversitychm.sc</a>
22	sd	Sudan	2015-07-29	<a href="http://sd.chm-cbd.net">http://sd.chm-cbd.net</a>
23	tg	Togo	2015-08-12 2015-08-31	<a href="http://www.biodiv.be/togo">http://www.biodiv.be/togo</a>
24	ug	Uganda	2015-07-30	<a href="http://chm.nemaug.org">http://chm.nemaug.org</a>
25	uy	Uruguay	2015-07-31	(Not yet established)