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Item 4.5 of the provisional agenda*

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND THE CLEARING-HOUSE
MECHANISM**

Progress report and recommendations for further development

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the informal advisory committee of the clearing-house mechanism, to report on progress in the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism, and to make recommendations for further development of this mechanism in accordance with the updated strategic plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity to be adopted at this meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
2. The document is structured as follows:
 - (a) Section I is this introduction;
 - (b) Section II provides a brief background on the clearing-house mechanism;
 - (c) Section III is a summary of the key findings detailed in the rest of this document;
 - (d) Section IV consists of the progress report;
 - (e) Section V is an overall analysis in the context of the updated Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity with recommendations for further development.

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3. The draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties is available in document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/1/Add.2. Additional details related to the progress report are available in the following information documents, with contributions from several partners:

(a) “Report on the activities of the programme of work 2006-2010” prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/5) with contributions from European CHM, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), and the Global Invasive Species Information Network (GISIN);

(b) “Report on the Belgian Clearing-House Mechanism partnership activities 2008-2010” submitted by Belgium (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/6);

(c) “CHM establishment and development update in the ASEAN Region” submitted by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/7).

II. BACKGROUND

4. The clearing-house mechanism has been created pursuant to Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation. In line with Article 17, it also serves as the information exchange platform of the Convention which has evolved into a global network of websites consisting of national clearing-house mechanisms, partners' websites, and the central node hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

5. In decision VIII/11, the Conference of the Parties adopted the strategic plan of the clearing-house mechanism and its programme of work for the period 2005-2010, and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a report on progress made for consideration at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

6. The mission of the clearing-house mechanism, as defined in its strategic plan, is to contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity through the promotion and facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation. This mission is further articulated around three major strategic goals:

(a) Promoting and facilitating scientific and technical cooperation;

(b) Promoting and facilitating the exchange of information;

(c) Establishing a fully operational network of Parties and partners.

7. Furthermore, in decision IX/30, the Conference of the Parties highlighted priority activities for Parties, relevant partners, and the Executive Secretary, taking into account that full implementation of the strategic plan has been constrained by the limited capacity and resources available at national and global levels, including the Secretariat.

III. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

8. For 193 Parties, there are, as of August 2010, 162 national focal points for the clearing-house mechanism and 89 national websites. The situation in 2006 was 152 national focal points and 78 national websites for 188 Parties (see table 1 on page 4). Most of the increase was in Africa through a long-standing partnership initiative. Qualitatively, one third of the existing national CHM websites would need further improvements.

9. Establishing strong and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms, in line with paragraph 2 of decision IX/30, is a challenging and lengthy undertaking, particularly to reach and sustain the level of capacity required to be effective in the long run. Cooperation and partnerships can make a difference in building capacity, particularly in developing countries.

10. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has carried out the following work related to the clearing-house mechanism:

(a) High-priority was given to activities related to the International Year of Biodiversity, particularly its dedicated website and online collaboration tools;

(b) The gradual establishment of the knowledge base and the submission system is being undertaken in a phased approach with the building blocks to be completed by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting;

(c) An advanced system has been implemented to facilitate website and database translation in all United Nations languages in a cost-effective way;

(d) The capacity of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to develop information systems is being strengthened, and significant improvements to the clearing-house mechanism are expected during the next intersessional period;

(e) Several initiatives have been undertaken with key partners (UNEP, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), and the Global Invasive Species Information Network (GISIN)) with the overall objective of facilitating access to relevant information and knowledge through new information-exchange services.

11. The main challenges remain capacity and sustainability. An important lesson learned is that a firm high-level commitment is a prerequisite to address them. Getting this commitment typically means convincing decision-makers that the clearing-house mechanism can be a cost-effective investment to facilitate the implementation the Convention.

12. Such a facilitation mechanism is precisely what the draft updated strategic plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity envisions by proposing a biodiversity knowledge network to share the wide range of information, expertise and experience needed to implement the Convention. In order to build this network, a number of major activities should be undertaken at various levels to fully engage Parties and partners, to mobilize communities of practice, to capture relevant knowledge and map it to identified needs, and to enhance the information exchange infrastructure of the clearing-house mechanism.

IV. PROGRESS REPORT

A. Introduction

13. Given the guidance contained in decision IX/30, the focus of this report is on the most recent and relevant priority activities adopted at the Ninth Conference of the Parties. A report on older activities of the programme of work is available as additional reference in document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/5. Further details on activities undertaken by major partners are available in the “Report on the Belgian Clearing-House Mechanism partnership activities 2008-2010” (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/6) and in the “CHM establishment and development update in the ASEAN Region” (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/7).

14. A combination of sources was used to prepare the report below. They include data available in the CHM central database, content published on national CHM websites, answers to questionnaires sent to CHM National Focal Points, through notification 2010-044, information in the quarterly reports of the Secretariat of the Convention, comments from CHM-IAC members, and user feedback.

B. Network status

15. Table 1 below compares the status of the network of national clearing-house mechanisms between 2006 and 2010. Overall, there has been an increase of 10 clearing-house mechanism national focal points and 11 national CHM websites. Most of this increase has occurred in Africa, followed by Asia, while the situation in the rest of the world has remained fairly stable.

16. These results can be explained by several factors: Africa has been benefiting from the Belgian regional partnership programme which has gradually expanded from 19 in 2006 to 25 countries in 2010. Second, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity has been actively promoting biodiversity information exchange and the clearing-house mechanism. Third, other regions had already achieved a certain level of CHM presence in 2006, but did not benefit from any regional programme to further expand the clearing-house mechanism. This information indicates that sustained regional capacity-building support initiatives can make a difference in the expansion of the network of national clearing-house mechanisms. More details on regional partnerships are available in subsection E below.

Table 1: Comparative status of the network of national clearing-house mechanisms (2006 vs. 2010)

Year	Countries ¹		Parties		NFP		Websites	
			2006	2010	2006	2010	2006	2010
Africa	53		52	53	44	48	18	25
Asia and the Pacific	56		53	56	39	44	10	12
Central and Eastern Europe ²	22	23	22	23	16	17	13	13
Latin America and the Caribbean	33		33	33	28	28	16	17
Western Europe and Others ³	31		28	28	25	25	21	22
Totals	195	196	188	193	152	162	78	89

Notes:

1. The European Union has been counted as in the Western Europe and Others group.
2. Serbia and Montenegro split into two separate countries around mid-2006.
3. The NFP and websites include those of a non-Party (USA).

17. Table 1 above does not reflect the quality (content, features, user-friendliness, attractiveness, etc.) of existing national clearing-house mechanisms, nor the efforts made to maintain and enhance them. These aspects are difficult to quantify in an objective manner, but a tour of existing national clearing-house mechanism websites reveals that they are roughly equally split between three categories: excellent/very good, good/average, and poor (most of the time in terms of content and attractiveness). This means that at least one third of the national CHM websites would need further improvements.

C. National clearing-house mechanisms

18. Table 2 below reports on progress made on the requests made to Parties in paragraph 2 of decision IX/30. It is a synthesis of information made available by Parties in reply to notification 2010-044 sent in March 2010 to all CHM National Focal Points. Given that only 20 questionnaires were returned (despite reminders), the information presented below may not be representative of the whole network of national clearing-house mechanisms.¹

¹ This also suggests that a better way of tracking progress against decision elements would be quite useful.

Table 2: Progress on decision IX/30, paragraph 2

2.	Encourages Parties, whenever appropriate, to take the following steps with a view to establishing strong and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms:
2(a)	<p>If not yet done, designate, as soon as possible, a national focal point for the clearing-house mechanism, as requested by paragraph 7 of decision II/3, with the appropriate expertise to coordinate and implement the national clearing-house mechanism;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Most Parties have designated a CHM NFP, as indicated in table 1. There was an increase from 152 to 162 CHM NFPs. Around 30 Parties have yet to designate their CHM NFP. 40% of the respondents (8) mentioned a process to strengthen the capacity of the NFP or its team.</p>
2(b)	<p>Prepare a national implementation strategy for the clearing-house mechanism, where appropriate, preferably as a component of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, based on identified needs;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Half of the respondents (10) indicate that they have a national implementation strategy for their clearing-house mechanism. Morocco has been the first Party to formally submit its CHM national implementation strategy (www.cbd.int/doc/world/ma/ma-nbsap-oth-fr.pdf). This strategy was shared during the subregional African CHM workshop held in Côte d'Ivoire, in February 2010, and other Parties may follow this example.</p>
2(c)	<p>Develop their national clearing-house mechanisms as a key means for the implementation and review of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Responses indicate that national CHM websites are mainly used as a dissemination tool. National biodiversity strategies and action plans are available on these websites, but the NBSAP implementation and review process is not carried out through the national CHM. In addition, it should be noted that there is at least one sophisticated online systems for national biodiversity planning and reporting (e.g. www.ukbap.org.uk).</p>
2(d)	<p>Whenever possible, develop links between the national clearing-house mechanism and existing networks, and develop information exchange mechanisms with relevant national databases, making use, whenever applicable and appropriate, of well-established open standards;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> National CHM have links to national information and networks. News feeds are common features. Online databases and GIS system are becoming increasingly available. Nevertheless, the CHM network has not yet established a standard information exchange system.</p>
2(e)	<p>Establish a national structure, as appropriate, to coordinate the development of the clearing-house mechanism, such as an inter-institutional steering committee with participation of relevant biodiversity-related organizations and stakeholders;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Almost half of the respondents (9) report the existence of an inter-institutional structure. The remaining half is typically dependent on a single national entity.</p>

2.	Encourages Parties, whenever appropriate, to take the following steps with a view to establishing strong and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms:
2(f)	<p>Mobilize and allocate resources for strengthening the institutional capacity to implement the national clearing-house mechanism and for sustaining its operations;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> Respondents are roughly equally split between three situations: (1) A sustainable arrangement is in place at least for basic operations of the national CHM. (2) The country has benefitted from a support programme to establish or strengthen the capacity of the national CHM (e.g. a GEF NBSAP project with a CHM component). (3) There are insufficient resources to operate the national CHM.</p>
2(g)	<p>Define roles and responsibilities for collecting, reviewing and disseminating information, managing website content, and for outreach activities;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> 40% of the respondents (8) indicate that they have well-defined roles and responsibilities. Most of the others indicate a willingness to define or formalize these roles.</p>
2(h)	<p>Identify relevant biodiversity-related information sources at the national level and promote them through the national clearing-house mechanism, and if not yet done, first provide basic information on national contacts and on biodiversity in the country;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> 90% of the respondents (18) indicate that these tasks are being done on a routine basis.</p>
2(i)	<p>Encourage the use of the national clearing-house mechanism as a tool to dialog with the civil society, major groups and stakeholders;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> 25% of the respondents (5) mentioned efforts to raise awareness about the national CHM during outreach activities, including those related to the International Year of Biodiversity. Another 25% expressed their lack of capacity to establish and maintain a dialog with a wide audience, even when online collaboration tools such as discussion forums are available. These forums are typically used in a narrower context by working groups collaborating on common tasks. 20% (4) indicated that dialog with the civil society is done through partner organizations such as NGOs.</p>
2(j)	<p>Whenever applicable and feasible, make the national clearing-house mechanism website available also in national or local languages, and disseminate relevant materials at the national level, including to indigenous and local communities in appropriate formats and languages;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> 35% of the respondents (7) have ongoing activities to make their national CHM websites available in more than one language. Overall, countries with more than one official national language are the most active, followed by those whose language is not an official language of the United Nations. One country reported translation of a major section of its national website in a traditional language because of its particular relevance to an indigenous community.</p>

19. Establishing strong and sustainable national clearing-house mechanisms is a challenging and lengthy undertaking. Based on their priorities and capacity, Parties have been making progress as per the steps described in paragraph 2 of decision IX/30. Some Parties have been able to benefit from external support, either through funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) or regional partnerships. Such support has been very important in building their capacity. Overall, the main challenge is to sustain the level of capacity required by national clearing-house mechanisms to be effective in the long term.

D. Central clearing-house mechanism

20. Table 3 below reports on progress made on the requests to the Executive Secretary in paragraph 6 of decision IX/30.

Table 3: Progress on decision IX/30, paragraph 6

6.	Requests the Executive Secretary to:
6(a)	<p>Gradually build a knowledge base, to facilitate access to relevant references, such as guidelines, strategies, reports and other information;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> Thanks to voluntary contributions from Spain, development of the CHM knowledge base has begun with the implementation of its core IT infrastructure (Phase 1), based on the existing Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) architecture. Detailed functional specifications were prepared and work is ongoing. Tasks include customizing existing BCH components for the CHM, developing the search engine, and designing the on-line user interface. Completion of this first phase is expected by COP-10. Phase 2 will start after COP-10. It is expected to include additional information types to respond to specific programme needs, as well as a global contact database to facilitate networking. User feedback and COP-10 decisions will also determine the evolution of the knowledge base.</p>
6(b)	<p>Provide collaboration tools to enable Parties to maintain contact, share ideas and brainstorm on how to implement the Convention; keeping in mind that such collaboration is most effective when appropriate incentives such as well-defined discussion topics and clear objectives are available to encourage participation;</p> <p><u>Progress:</u> Collaboration tools have been made available in specific contexts. Online discussion forums were held for various programme areas (marine & coastal, traditional knowledge, strategic plan, etc.). During the first half of 2010, the Aichi-Nagoya International E-Conference on the Post-2010 Target (ANIEC 2010) was held as a broad consultation process on the Convention. Collaboration was also made available through popular social networking services such as Facebook and Twitter.</p>

6.	<i>Requests the Executive Secretary to:</i>
6(c)	<p>In consultation with the informal advisory committee (CHM-IAC), provide a detailed analysis about the scope and complexity of a potential online submission system for sharing knowledge and experiences, and, if feasible and appropriate, develop a prototype for review and comments by interested Parties;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Specifications for a potential online submission system were shared with the CHM-IAC. These specifications were subsequently reviewed and a prototype is under development. The objective is to have an initial system by COP-10 that enables submissions of certain types of information to the knowledge base. Its operations will be similar to the management center of the Biosafety Clearing-House.</p>
6(d)	<p>Establish, whenever applicable and feasible, common formats and vocabularies for the clearing-house mechanism information systems with a view to enhance clarity, user-friendliness, efficiency, interoperability, and data comparability;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> A set of common formats and vocabularies were included in the functional specifications of phase 1 of the knowledge base. In parallel, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has been involved in UNEP's information and knowledge management initiative for MEAs to establish common formats and vocabularies for information exchange. The European clearing-house mechanism has also been working on a multilingual glossary. Various views were expressed in these parallel processes, resulting in several proposals. From a clearing-house mechanism perspective, it would be useful to pursue these efforts. At this stage, the assistance of terminologists would facilitate the process of converging towards a single proposal.</p>
6(e)	<p>Strengthen the Secretariat's capacity in areas related to the clearing-house mechanism, such as information technology, website, knowledge management and other modern information services, focusing on the priority areas identified in this paragraph;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Efforts have been made to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat of the Convention whenever feasible. These include (a) an internal agreement between the clearing-house mechanism and the Biosafety Clearing-House to develop synergies in information and communication technology (ICT), (b) a staff member in charge of reviewing Web content, and (c) the initiation of two recruitment processes: one for a website information systems officer (before COP-10), and one for a documentation and knowledge officer (after COP-10). These two posts are expected to have a significant impact on the Secretariat's capacity to strengthen the central clearing-house mechanism, and they will address issues related to reliance on consultants and interns.</p>

6.	<i>Requests the Executive Secretary to:</i>
6(f)	<p>Improve the Convention's website, its accessibility, and make this website available in all United Nations languages;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Website maintenance and improvements have been ongoing. A new website template has been prepared with modern user interface features to facilitate access to key information. The technical infrastructure was also improved to enable translation in all United Nations languages with advanced software translation tools. The objective is to have the main pages of the website of the Convention available in all United Nations languages for COP-10.</p>
6(g)	<p>Provide guidance and support to Parties to assist in the establishment of their national clearing-house mechanism, including through organizations which are present and active at the national or regional levels, and based on the special capacity-building needs of developing countries;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Guidance and support was provided to Parties through participation in regional workshops organized by partner institutions, particularly the Belgian CHM partnership and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity. In addition, the central CHM email is always available for requesting direct guidance and support. A network portal and a common CHM domain name (chm-cbd.net) have been established to promote networking. 33 national CHM have their website under this common domain.</p>
6(h)	Further collaborate with key partner organizations, <i>inter alia</i> :
6(h)(i)	<p>Other Rio conventions to develop synergies for national implementation and support to the clearing-house mechanism;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has remained available to develop synergies with Rio conventions. Specifications were prepared to automate the exchange of selected information types between the three conventions. However, this initiative was given a lower priority compared to more important activities of each Convention. The potential still exists. This process would be facilitated if joint user needs were identified and if each secretariat had a stronger mandate from its respective Conference of the Parties to move forward in specific areas.</p>
6(h)(ii)	<p>The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) for the management of biodiversity data;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> GBIF has developed tools that extract biodiversity data from the GBIF repository. Discussions are ongoing to further investigate how this technology can be adapted to CHM websites. The CHM Programme Officer has been invited to two recent GBIF meetings to explore further collaboration. In addition a joint CBD/GBIF communiqué is under preparation to highlight the specific role that the National Biodiversity Information Facilities can play in addressing country obligations.</p>

6.	<i>Requests the Executive Secretary to:</i>
6(h)(iii)	<p>The United Nations Environment Programme and its related institutions for biodiversity issues and knowledge management;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> UNEP has established a knowledge and information management initiative for multilateral environment agreements (MEA IKM). The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is represented in the Technical Working Group and in the Steering Committee. An initial “proof-of-concept” phase was completed in June 2010. Its objective was to demonstrate the technical feasibility of searching through decisions of the Conference of the Parties from various MEAs. This was possible after agreement on a common information format and an interoperability mechanism. A second phase is planned with the objective of further implementing such interoperability and offering additional MEA-wide services. In parallel, the Secretariat of the Convention has been actively participating in the periodic UNEP Internet Audioconferences with MEAs and regional offices to share information on ongoing initiatives.</p>
6(h)(iv)	<p>Regional and subregional organizations that have the expertise and mandate to support the clearing-house mechanism;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Regional collaboration took place with the European CHM (EU-CHM), the Belgian CHM partnership (BE-CHM) and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB). These partners have organized regional CHM workshops to build capacity and share experiences on CHM implementation.</p>
6(h)(v)	<p>Organizations active in the field of technology transfer, the 2010 indicators, and communication, education and public awareness;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Collaboration took place with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an online database of success stories on biodiversity and local livelihoods. Collaboration on technology transfer was also considered with specialized organizations, but a firm partnership could not be established. CBD Activities on 2010 indicators took place though a separate programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and specific assistance from the CHM was not requested. The clearing-house mechanism played an important role in communication, education and public awareness in the context of the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), with the establishment of a dedicated website and IYB-specific online services, as described below.</p>
6(i)	<p>Take into account the strategy for the preparation of the International Year of Biodiversity adopted under decision IX/33 when further developing the services offered by the clearing-house mechanism leading up to the year 2010;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Thanks to funding from Japan, a dedicated website was prepared for the International Year of Biodiversity. This site features modern online services such as online maps of IYB celebrations, a Facebook page, and a YouTube video channel.</p>

6.	<i>Requests the Executive Secretary to:</i>
6(j)	<p>Consider the role of the clearing-house mechanism in analyses prepared for revisions to the Strategic Plan of the Convention beyond 2010;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Views were exchanged among NFPs and programme officers about the role of the CHM as a support mechanism to the implementation of the Convention. This is reflected in the draft decision of this document, as per recommendation 3/5 of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention.</p>
6(k)	<p>Facilitate cooperation between the informal advisory committee on the clearing-house mechanism (CHM-IAC) and the informal advisory committee on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA-IAC) in order to further develop the clearing-house mechanism as a tool for communication, education and public awareness activities.</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> As no voluntary funding could be mobilized for the CHM-IAC, it was not possible to organize joint meetings of the CEPA-IAC and CHM-IAC. Nevertheless, the views from each committee were shared by the programme officers in charge of CEPA and CHM. This arrangement was effective particularly in the context of the International Year of Biodiversity.</p>

21. The intersessional period between the ninth and the tenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties has been extremely dense in terms of activities for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and capacity was often stretched. Nonetheless, significant time has been devoted to finding ways to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat in areas related to the clearing-house mechanism, as requested by item 6(e) of decision IX/30. The impacts of this process will be evident through significant improvements to the clearing-house mechanism during the next intersessional period.

E. Partners

22. Table 4 below reports on progress made on paragraph 3 of decision IX/30 addressed to relevant partners. The information is related to the following partners which have actively collaborated with the Secretariat on matters related to the clearing-house mechanism:

- (a) The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
- (b) The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF);
- (c) The European CHM (EU-CHM) with additional details in annex I of document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/5;
- (d) The Belgian CHM (BE-CHM) with additional details in document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/6;
- (e) The Dutch CHM (NL-CHM);
- (f) The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) with additional details in document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/7;
- (g) The Global Invasive Species Information Network (GISIN) with additional details in annex II of document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/5;

Table 4: Progress on decision IX/30, paragraph 3

3.	<i>Encourages the relevant partners holding biodiversity-related information to:</i>
3(a)	<p>Designate an appropriate technical contact or focal point for the clearing-house mechanism;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> In addition to CHM National Focal Points involved in partnerships (Europe, Belgium, Netherlands), Technical contacts have been established with UNEP/DELIC, GBIF, ACB, and GISIN.</p> <p><i>Additional details provided by GBIF:</i> In 2010, the GBIF Secretariat has nominated a permanent focal point to the clearing-house mechanism: Mr Samy Gaiji. The GBIF Secretariat Focal Point ensures in particular that informatics and scientific needs of the CBD-CHM communities related to GBIF mandate are captured and responses provided through the CHM Informal Advisory Committee. In addition, he ensures that the information, data, standards, tools, services and platforms developed by GBIF are promoted within the clearing-house mechanism community. Through other GBIF work area (e.g. nodes, training, outreach), collaboration will be sought in particular in better integrating the GBIF country participants and the CBD CHM National Focal Points.</p>
3(b)	<p>Investigate, in collaboration with the Secretariat, ways to make their information accessible through the clearing-house mechanism;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP has setup a knowledge management team to establish interoperability among Multilateral Environment Agreements. - GBIF has been developing Web 2.0 tools aimed at providing biodiversity data to be integrated on CHM websites. - EU-CHM has enhanced the European Portal Toolkit with integrated features that facilitate data exchange, such as feeds and cross searches. - GISIN has developed an interoperability protocol to exchange information on Alien Invasive Species. <p>The outcomes of these initiatives can be seen as tools or building blocks that can be used to automate the exchange of information. Next steps will include refining each tool whenever needed, and promoting its use through the CHM network.</p> <p><i>Additional details provided by GBIF:</i> In 2009 and 2010, GBIF Secretariat staff and the Clearing-House Mechanism Programme Officer had a series of meetings to identify and scope various areas of collaboration from informatics to the engagement of GBIF Nodes in the context of the clearing-house mechanism activities. A range of work areas were identified from the development of a toolkit for national Nodes, to the provision of summary biodiversity information for Parties (e.g. country summary statistics extracted from GBIF mediated data) in the context of their national reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to the development of services (e.g. for searching, extracting and mapping biodiversity data). Particular attention was given to assess country needs in the context of the national reporting to the CBD and how GBIF can support this process by supplying information from its network, as well as by intersecting such information with other relevant data (e.g. UNEP-WCMC World Database on Protected Areas, IUCN Red Lists). For example, a joint side event and informal consultation with countries at the fourteenth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-14) was held at the UNEP</p>

3.	Encourages the relevant partners holding biodiversity-related information to:
	Headquarters in Nairobi. Country needs were captured and these are now forming the basis for the development of a strategy to support these countries in the context of the development of national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
3(c)	<p>Contribute to the establishment of regional, subregional or thematic clearing-house mechanisms, with a view to provide support to national clearing-house mechanisms, to share knowledge and to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, including cooperation on science and innovation as well as the transfer of technology;</p> <p><i>Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU-CHM has contributed to the establishment of the European CHM network by providing tools and support to national clearing-house mechanisms. - BE-CHM has contributed to the establishment of the African CHM network by providing capacity-building and support on the use of the European CHM Toolkit. - NL-CHM has been supporting the establishment of national CHMs in Ghana, Grenada, and Palau. - ACB has established a CHM website for the ASEAN subregion and has provided capacity-building to ASEAN member countries in the development of their national CHM. <p><i>Additional details provided by GBIF:</i></p> <p>GBIF is creating a structure of regional subcommittees composed of all the biodiversity information network managers of the different countries in each region. These subcommittees meet at least once a year to exchange experiences, set regional priorities and provide recommendations on GBIF operation. They elect a representative to participate in a global committee and make sure that the region's interests are appropriately represented globally.</p> <p>The GBIF Mentoring Programme, “Capacity Enhancement Programme for Developing Countries” and Training Programme together with the Distributed Helpdesk system continuously promote collaboration between different countries with the objective to build capacity locally and foster the creation of permanent partnerships to ensure the transfer of capacity and technology in biodiversity informatics between countries.</p>

23. The European Union, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity have been contributing to the expansion of the network of national clearing-house mechanisms. These activities are essential to build capacity, particularly in developing countries. Additional similar initiatives should be encouraged to further expand the network. UNEP, GBIF and GISIN are partners working towards greater accessibility of biodiversity-related data. The corresponding processes are sometimes complex and lengthy, but they will eventually lead to new information services enriching the clearing-house mechanism.

V. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

A. *The clearing-house mechanism in the context of the updated Strategic Plan of the Convention*

24. The draft updated Strategic Plan of the Convention for the period 2011-2010 describes how the clearing-house mechanism should support the implementation of the Convention as follows (paragraph 21 of the annex to WGRI recommendation 3/5):

Table 5: Vision of the clearing-house mechanism

“Collectively those involved in implementing the Convention have a wealth of experience and have developed many useful good practice cases, tools and guidance. There is additional useful information beyond this community.

“A biodiversity knowledge network will be developed including a database and network of practitioners, to bring together this knowledge and experience and to make it available through the clearing house mechanism to facilitate and support enhanced implementation of the Convention.

“National clearing-house mechanism nodes comprising networks of experts with effective websites should be developed and sustained so that in each Party, all have access to the information, expertise and experience required to implement the Convention.

“National clearing-house mechanism nodes should also be linked to the central clearing-house mechanism managed by the Convention Secretariat, and information exchange between these should be facilitated.”

25. The rationale behind this vision is the feedback from most countries reporting that they lack sufficient human resources capacity for the implementation of the Convention and that responsible staff often have only limited access to the information they need and the means to analyse it. At the same time, the first round of NBSAP workshops has revealed that there is, in fact, a wealth of information, expertise and experience among the Parties to the Convention and partner organizations. The challenge is to marshal this knowledge to support implementation of the Convention.

26. The purpose of the biodiversity knowledge network is therefore to bridge this gap and enable all countries, in particular the developing countries, to access, use and apply high-quality information to allow them to respond to the biodiversity crisis by facilitating the implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

27. Establishing a worldwide biodiversity knowledge network is definitely a laudable goal, but is it realistically achievable given the current situation in a context where resources are limited and people are overly busy? A way to answer this question is to clarify how it is envisaged to gradually build this network:

(a) First of all, it is important to acknowledge that that this is a collective goal that requires a firm high-level engagement from major actors in the biodiversity community;

(b) Knowledge inventories need to be explicitly established and maintained by each contributing partner. By nature, knowledge is broad and includes not only various types of information and references, but also human expertise, experiences, and other types of tacit knowledge, which should eventually become accessible through the network;

(c) Knowledge gaps should also be identified at the level of the practitioners in charge of implementing the Convention. They are the primary target beneficiaries of the network and they will use it only if it is helpful. Also, those practitioners often have very valuable experience and expertise which should be captured, for instance in the form of short video interviews. Major programmes and initiatives should be setup to carry out these tasks that will gradually make up the substantive added value of the network;

(d) Experts should be involved in matching knowledge inventories to needs and gaps. At this level, information architecture and terminology are important to classify knowledge in a way that makes it unambiguously retrievable in a consistent way across the whole network. Whenever possible, such knowledge should also be packaged into training modules for easy transfer in a reusable manner;

(e) Existing communities of practices should be organized around common goals and interests (biodiversity themes and ecological/political regions). These communities of practices require active leaders that will promote knowledge sharing, collaboration, and human networking;

(f) Last but not least, the clearing-house mechanism must provide robust and effective information services to exchange knowledge across the whole network. An analogy can be made with a circulatory system where the blood carries the knowledge to the muscles performing the implementation. The central clearing-house mechanism is the heart powering the network. A strong central clearing-house mechanism is therefore vital to maintain the whole system active.

28. While the vision described above is consistent with the overall mandate of the clearing-house mechanism, it needs to be further elaborated in a way that takes into account past guidance from decisions VIII/11 and IX/30. The result should be a coherent consolidated set that clearly defines the mission, goals and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism in the context of the updated Strategic Plan of the Convention for the period 2011-2020.

29. The starting point is the mission of the clearing-house mechanism. For the period 2005-2010, this mission has been, in line with decision VIII/11, “to contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its programme areas and cross-cutting issues, especially the 2010 target, through the promotion and facilitation of technical and scientific cooperation among Parties, other Governments and stakeholders”. For the post-2010 period, the mission can be articulated as follows:

(a) At the highest level, the ultimate purpose remains to contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention;

(b) The clearing-house mechanism has been created to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation (Article 18), and has always played a major role in facilitating the exchange of information (Article 17);

(c) In the vision expressed in table 5, there is a broad notion of knowledge sharing which encompasses any exchange of experiences, good practices, know-how, and technology;

(d) Technically, a clearing-house provides information services, ranging from one-way publishing and dissemination to two-way exchanges such as collaboration tools and interoperability mechanisms;

30. Based on the above, the mission of the clearing-house mechanism can be aligned to the vision of the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the following concise statement:

To contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan 2011-2020 through effective information services and other appropriate means in order to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, knowledge sharing, and information exchange.

31. Regarding the strategic goals of the clearing-house mechanism for the post-2010 period, they should preferably be formulated as specifically as possible without rephrasing the mission. Given that the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism takes place at the central, national and partner levels, a logical approach is to define one strategic goal per level, as follows:

- 1) ***The central clearing-house mechanism provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention;***
- 2) ***National clearing-house mechanisms provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans;***
- 3) ***Partners significantly expand the clearing-house mechanism network and services.***

32. Such an approach has the advantage of facilitating the identification of actors in charge of each goal: the Executive Secretary for goal 1, Parties for goal 2, and partners for goal 3. Obviously, each actor is encouraged to contribute to the achievement of other goals, through technical support, collaboration, partnerships, or capacity-building programmes. Logically, such contributions should appear under their respective goal.

33. The next step is to define strategic objectives under each goal. A synthetic analysis shows that the following factors contribute to the achievement of each goal:

- (a) *Sustainability*: always a key factor;
- (b) *Website*: the main visible product;
- (c) *Information exchange*: the clearing-house engine;
- (d) *Networks of experts and practitioners*: the human dimension;
- (e) *Guidance and support*: to assist Parties and partners.

34. Recommended strategic objectives have been defined along these lines, and relevant elements of decisions VIII/11 and IX/30 have been incorporated with a reference. The final proposal is available in annex I with corresponding activities for the intersessional period in annex II. Annex I has also been included in the draft decision provided in the compilation of draft decisions for the current meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/1/Add.2).

B. National level

35. Over the years, capacity and sustainability issues have been major factors affecting the development of national clearing-house mechanisms. Although these factors are difficult to cope with, a sound approach can have a positive impact. This was the rationale behind paragraph 2 of decision IX/30 which included a series of strategic planning steps to create an institutional structure able to drive the process of planning, establishing, managing and sustaining an effective national clearing-house mechanism.

36. While it is hoped that paragraph 2 of decision IX/30 will gradually have its expected impact, some high-level decision-makers will legitimately question the allocation of resources to the clearing-house mechanism if they do not perceive its return-on-investment or added value for the country. In such a situation, the following could be tried:

(a) Make a strong case that an effective national clearing-house mechanism definitely adds value: (i) by being a one-stop shop providing access to a wide range of valuable information (news, national biodiversity, eco-tourism, references, organizations, contact network, experts, implementation initiatives, guidelines, scientific data); (ii) by enabling information exchange and collaboration among biodiversity stakeholders; (iii) by facilitating national and international cooperation; and (iv) by increasing the country's environmental image;

(b) Prepare a solid business plan that demonstrates how an effective national clearing-house mechanism can be established, possibly through an existing institution that may already have the potential to be a good national clearing-house mechanism.

37. In the long run, the quality and sustainability of a national clearing house mechanism website is in direct relation with the capacity of the team in charge of it. Such a team should typically include the following roles and expertise, at least on a part-time basis:

(a) A project manager, who could be the national focal point for the clearing-house mechanism;

- (b) A web content editor, in charge of keeping the content up-to-date and interesting;
- (c) A web designer, in charge of the visual look-and-feel and attractiveness of the site;
- (d) An IT expert, in charge of databases, online services, and website configuration.

38. Also, the community of national practitioners implementing the national biodiversity strategy and action plans can greatly contribute to the effectiveness of the national clearing-house mechanism:

(a) They should be represented in the high-level national coordination structure, so that their views and needs are well taken into account when planning the development of the national clearing-house mechanism;

(b) They should become familiar with the information services provided by the national clearing-house mechanism so as to use them, first for their own needs, but then also for the needs of the community, by sharing some of the valuable information and knowledge they hold (e.g. views, activities, methodologies, contacts, references, etc...).

39. In summary, the challenge is to achieve sustainability while not underestimating the human expertise needed to ensure quality and effectiveness. This reinforces the importance a high-level commitment to the clearing-house mechanism.

C. Regional and subregional level

40. There is a positive correlation between progress in the development of national clearing-house mechanisms and the existence of a regional or sub-regional cooperation initiative offering support and capacity building. Several reasons explain this correlation:

(a) A similar national context, not only in terms of biodiversity but also in terms of socio-economic and cultural aspects;

(b) A common language, or similar ones facilitating communication and exchange;

(c) A manageable size for both the supporting entity and the interacting partners;

(d) Synergies through knowledge sharing and the use of common tools.

41. The positive impacts of regional and subregional cooperation initiatives are well-known:

(a) By maintaining close contact with each country, there is a better understanding of the needs, and assistance can be adjusted accordingly;

(b) Regional human networking is significantly promoted through workshops, which stimulates further exchanges between neighboring countries;

(c) By comparing the evolution in each participating country, it is possible to generate a series of case-studies, best practices, lessons learned, and other valuable knowledge for dissemination through the clearing-house mechanism.

42. A reference can be made to goal 2.2 of the “draft provisional framework on capacity-building for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services for sustainable development and poverty reduction”, which is to develop “regional clearing-house mechanisms on biodiversity and ecosystem services for development and poverty alleviation” (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/4, annex, recommendation 3/3, annex II). Such regional capacity-building approaches should be encouraged particularly when strong regional institutions exist.

D. Central level

43. A fully functional clearing-house mechanism, as envisaged in the updated Strategic Plan, will rely heavily on the availability of an advanced and robust central information exchange platform, similar to the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH). This requires further investments in several essential aspects of the central clearing-house mechanism:

- (a) Web-based infrastructure for developing and enhancing key online services;
- (b) Knowledge management, including terminology and documentation management;
- (c) Information compilation and editing;
- (d) User support.

44. In recent years, activities of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity have been expanding tremendously, with increased requests on information and communication technology (ICT) services. While this has had a negative impact on the remaining ICT capacity available for developing the central clearing-house mechanism, the situation is now gradually improving. Resources remain needed for managing knowledge and compiling relevant information in a coherent and ongoing basis.

45. A lesson learned is that, over the years, too many information services have been established, mostly due to independent requests and ever-evolving technology. This has two negative impacts, first on the resources needed to maintain all systems, but second and more importantly, on the users who have difficulties in finding information scattered across various systems. A consolidation process has therefore been undertaken, and three core services have been identified to respond to most of user needs:

(a) *A knowledge base*: this should be the main repository of all information and knowledge in a way that allows easy access and cross-references; its content should include Convention-related information, reference documents, guidelines, training materials, case studies, best practices, implementation initiatives, online sources, organizations, contacts, events, multimedia resources, work programmes, partnerships, and other relevant items;

(b) *Collaboration tools*: they should be integrated in a user workspace encouraging Parties, experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders to maintain contact, share ideas, and work together, while providing quick access to information directly related to each user's role and activities;

(c) *A submission system*: this should be the update mechanism for the knowledge base and collaboration tools to enable Parties and all stakeholders to make contributions related to the Convention and its implementation;

46. The general principle to avoid duplication is that each information item should be maintained in a single master location. Then, it is up to appropriate information exchange mechanisms to make sure that this information is automatically accessible in the various locations where it is relevant. The clearing-house mechanism can benefit from such interoperability in at least two ways:

(a) To automatically retrieve valuable partner information, such as projects funded by the financial mechanism, information from other conventions, or information from thematic networks; this should be implemented in collaboration with each interested partner;

(b) To automatically bring more information to the national level, for instance through the creation of a Web 2.0 plug-in module able to retrieve relevant information from the central clearing-house mechanism and display it on national clearing-house mechanism websites.

47. The establishment of any information exchange mechanism first requires partners to agree on technical specifications that can be implemented by each of them. The use of open standards has always been recommended, but until recently, there was no comprehensive general-purpose open standard for exchanging structured data. Further to the increasing use Web 2.0 technologies by major providers of online services, such open standards are now emerging and maturing. This will facilitate the establishment of state-of-the-art information exchange specifications through the clearing-house mechanism together with tools and guidance for their implementation.

Annex I

MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM FOR THE PERIOD 2011-2020

MISSION

To contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan 2011-2020 through effective information services and other appropriate means in order to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, knowledge sharing, and information exchange.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: The central clearing-house mechanism provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the strategic plan of the Convention.

- 1.1. The CBD Secretariat has the capacity to sustain an effective central clearing-house mechanism.
- 1.2. A high-quality CBD website is available in all United Nations languages.
- 1.3. Effective information exchange services are fully operational.
- 1.4. The CBD Secretariat facilitates the development of a network of experts and practitioners among Parties and partners.
- 1.5. Guidance is available for Parties and partners to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.

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

- 2.1. All Parties have the capacity to sustain effective national clearing-house mechanisms.
- 2.2. High-quality national clearing-house mechanism websites are available.
- 2.3. National information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.
- 2.4. Parties collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.
- 2.5. Partners and the CBD Secretariat have contributed to the development of national clearing-house mechanisms.

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

- 3.1. Partners can sustain their participation in the clearing-house mechanism.
- 3.2. High-quality regional and thematic clearing-house mechanism websites are available.
- 3.3. Partner information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.
- 3.4. Partners collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.

*Annex II***PRIORITY ACTIVITIES OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD 2011-2012**

Notes:

1. The "Old Ref." column shows reference to past guidance in decisions VIII/11 and IX/30.
2. The section sign "§" is a reference to a paragraph element in decision IX/30.
3. A series of 3 numbers is a reference to an activity of the programme of work in decision VIII/11.
4. A combination of references indicates a consolidation of similar guidance.
5. The "Actor" column identifies who is in charge of the activity:
ES=Executive Secretary, Nat=Parties, P=Partners.

New Ref.	Old Ref.	Actor	Goals, Objectives, and Activities
1.			<i>The central clearing-house mechanism provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the strategic plan of the Convention.</i>
1.1.			The CBD Secretariat has the capacity to sustain an effective central clearing-house mechanism.
1.1.1.	§6(e)	ES	Consolidate the Secretariat's capacity in information technology particularly to further develop the website and other modern information services.
1.1.2.	§6(e)	ES	Strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to manage knowledge and information, including terminology and documentation management.
1.1.3.	§6(f)	ES	Optimize the process of maintaining the CBD website in all United Nations languages by making sound use of modern translation technology.
1.2.		.	A high-quality CBD website is available in all United Nations languages
1.2.1.	§6(f) 3.4.1. 3.4.3.	ES	Maintain and improve the CBD website and its related portals in terms of content, services, appearance, user-friendliness, usability, and accessibility.
1.2.2.	§6(f) 3.4.8.	ES	Make the CBD website available in all United Nations languages.
1.3			Effective information exchange services are fully operational
1.3.1.	§6(a) 1.1.8. 2.3.2. 2.3.4. 2.3.5. 2.3.6. 3.2.4. 3.2.5. 3.1.4. 3.3.1. 3.3.2.	ES	Expand the knowledge base by incorporating additional Convention-related information on reference documents, training materials, case-studies, implementation initiatives, online sources, organizations, contacts, events, multimedia resources, work programmes, partnerships, and other relevant items, in a way that allows easy access and cross-references.

New Ref.	Old Ref.	Actor	Goals, Objectives, and Activities
1.3.2.	6(b) 1.1.4. 2.3.4. 3.3.4. 3.4.1. 3.4.2.	ES	Integrate collaboration tools in a user workspace encouraging Parties, experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders to maintain contact, share ideas, and work together, while providing quick access to information directly related to each user's role and activities.
1.3.3.	§6(c) 1.1.4. 2.3.4.	ES	Implement the online submission system as the update mechanism of the knowledge base and collaboration tools, to enable Parties and all stakeholders to make contributions related to the Convention and its implementation.
1.3.4.	2.1.1.	ES	Create a Web 2.0 plug-in module able to retrieve relevant information from the central clearing-house mechanism in order to display it on national clearing-house mechanism websites.
1.3.5.	2.1.1. 2.1.2. 3.4.3. 3.4.8.	ES	Continue to develop and use information exchange services to make Convention-related information easily and widely accessible, in line with technological and social trends.
1.4			The CBD Secretariat facilitates the development of a network of experts and practitioners among Parties and partners.
1.4.1.		ES	Establish an interoperable global contact database with a user-friendly and open sign-up system to encourage participation.
1.4.2.		All	In collaboration with Parties and partners, identify existing experts and practitioners, and invite them to join the network.
1.4.3.		All	Organize communities of practices by common goals and interests and identify active leaders that will promote knowledge sharing, collaboration and human networking.
1.5			Guidance is available for Parties and partners to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.
1.5.1.	§6(d) 1.3.2. 2.5.1. 2.5.2. 2.5.3.	ES	Establish and publish specifications to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network, including interoperability protocols, common formats, controlled vocabularies, and other technical guidelines.
1.5.2.	2.5.1. 2.5.4.	ES	Provide guidance to Parties and partners on how to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.

2.			National clearing-house mechanisms provide effective information services to facilitate implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
2.1.			All Parties have the capacity to sustain effective national clearing-house mechanisms.
2.1.1.	§2(a)	Nat	If not yet done, designate, as soon as possible, a national focal point for the clearing-house mechanism, as requested by paragraph 7 of decision II/3, with the appropriate expertise to coordinate and implement the national clearing-house mechanism.
2.1.2.	§2(b)	Nat	Prepare a national implementation strategy for the clearing-house mechanism, where appropriate, preferably as a component of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, based on identified needs.
2.1.3.	§2(e)	Nat	Establish a national structure, as appropriate, to coordinate the development of the clearing-house mechanism, such as an inter-institutional steering committee with participation of relevant biodiversity-related organizations and stakeholders.

2.1.4.	§2(f) 3.1.5.	Nat	Mobilize and allocate resources for strengthening the institutional capacity to implement the national clearing-house mechanism and for sustaining its operations.
2.1.5.	§2(g)	Nat	Define roles and responsibilities for collecting, reviewing and disseminating information, managing website content, and for outreach activities.
2.2			High-quality national clearing-house mechanism websites are available.
2.2.1.		Nat	Maintain and improve the national clearing-house mechanism website in terms of content, services, appearance, user-friendliness, usability, and accessibility.
2.2.2.	§2(j)	Nat	Whenever applicable and feasible, make the national clearing-house mechanism website available in various national and local languages.
2.2.3.	§2(h) 2.3.9.	Nat	Identify relevant biodiversity-related information sources at the national level and promote them through the national clearing-house mechanism, and if not yet done, first provide basic information on national contacts and on biodiversity in the country.
2.2.4.	§ 2(c) 2.1.3. 2.3.7. 2.3.8.	Nat	Develop the national clearing-house mechanism as a key means for the implementation and review of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, including by providing information on implementation activities, scientific data, expertise, and technologies.
2.3			National information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.
2.3.1.	§2(d)	Nat	Whenever possible, develop information exchange mechanisms with relevant national databases, making use, whenever applicable and appropriate, of well-established open standards.
2.3.2.		Nat	Whenever feasible and appropriate, make use of Web 2.0 tools to exchange information with the central clearing-house mechanism.
2.4			Parties collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.
2.4.1		Nat	Undertake a national biodiversity knowledge management initiative that identifies knowledge needs and sources for the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
2.4.2.	2.1.3.	Nat	Develop a knowledge-sharing culture to ensure that information and knowledge from various national sources is effectively provided and published on the national clearing-house mechanism.
2.4.3.	§2(d)	Nat	Whenever possible, develop links between the national clearing-house mechanism and existing networks.
2.4.4.	§2(i)	Nat	Encourage the use of the national clearing-house mechanism as a tool to dialog with the civil society, major groups and stakeholders.
2.5			Partners and the CBD Secretariat have contributed to the development of national clearing-house mechanisms.
2.5.1.	§3(c) §6(g) 1.2.1. 3.1.2. 3.1.3. 3.2.1. 3.2.2.	All	Provide guidance and support to assist Parties in developing their national clearing-house mechanisms, including through organizations which are present and active at the national or regional levels, and based on the special capacity-building needs of developing countries and on the status of their national clearing-house mechanisms.
2.5.2.	1.1.1. 1.1.2. 1.1.3. 3.1.4. 3.3.3. 3.4.6.	All	Organize workshops to share experience and build capacity to develop national clearing-house mechanisms, preferably with training modules and expertise.
2.5.3.	3.1.6	P Nat	Make GEF funding available for establishing or strengthening national clearing-house mechanisms

2.5.4.	3.1.7.	P Nat	Assist Parties with less developed clearing-house mechanisms through partnerships and mentoring.
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3.			<i>Partners significantly expand the clearing-house mechanism network and services.</i>
3.1		3.1	Partners can sustain their participation in the clearing-house mechanism.
3.1.1.		P	Include a clearing-house mechanism component in the organization's corporate strategy.
3.1.2.	§3(a)	P	Designate an appropriate technical contact or focal point for the clearing-house mechanism.
3.1.3.		P	Mobilize and allocate resources for contributing to the clearing-house mechanism.
3.2			High-quality regional and thematic clearing-house mechanism websites are available.
3.2.1.	§3(c)	P	Establish or further develop regional, subregional or thematic clearing-house mechanisms which provide effective information services that contribute to the implementation of the Convention.
3.3			Partner information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.
3.3.1.	§3(b) §6(h)	P ES	Collaboratively investigate ways for partners to make their Convention-related information accessible through the clearing-house mechanism.
3.3.2.	§6(h)(i) 1.3.1. 1.3.2.	P ES	Establish, through technical collaboration, information services enabling global access to relevant information from the Rio conventions and other multilateral environment agreements.
3.3.3.	2.1.2. 3.1.1.	P ES	Develop, through technical collaboration between the GEF and CBD Secretariats, an interoperability mechanism that provides information on GEF-funded projects related to the implementation of the Convention.
3.3.4.	§6(h)(ii)	P ES	Develop, through technical collaboration between the GBIF and CBD Secretariats, a Web 2.0 plug-in module able to retrieve relevant biodiversity data from the GBIF repository in order to display it on the central or national clearing-house mechanism websites.
3.4			Partners collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.
3.4.1.	§3(b)	P	Contribute to the knowledge base by submitting information that can facilitate the implementation of the Convention, such as the organization profile, key expertise, major activities, case-studies, lessons learned, best practices, and other relevant resources.
3.4.2.	§3(b)	P	Whenever possible, undertake initiatives to generate, capture, organize, package or transfer information and knowledge relevant to the implementation of the Convention.
3.4.3.		P	Encourage experts and practitioners to participate in the communities of practice related to their expertise.
