



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



Ref.: SCBD/BS/MPDM/ABw/64638

5 September 2008

## NOTIFICATION

### **Nominations to the Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**

Dear Madam/Sir,

At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP) established an open-ended online forum on specific aspects of risk assessment through the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) as well as an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Risk Assessment and Risk Management according to the modalities of work and the terms of reference indicated in the attachment (Annex I) to this notification<sup>1</sup>. These include the development of a “roadmap” on the steps to conduct risk assessment. The modalities of work also call for the prioritization of the need for further guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment including particular types of (i) living modified organisms (LMOs); (ii) introduced traits; and (iii) receiving environments as well as monitoring of the long-term effects of LMOs released into the environment.

The Executive Secretary was requested, in order to realize the outputs of this decision, to convene *ad hoc* online discussion groups, two AHTEG meetings and at least one real-time online conference per region prior to each of the two AHTEG meetings.

In implementing this decision, an Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management will be established through the BCH where experts will have an opportunity to take part in the online discussion groups and the real-time online conferences.

Accordingly, I am pleased to invite you to nominate experts from your country, who are actively involved in risk assessment and risk management, to participate in this Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management.

Nominations of experts by Parties and other Governments should follow the criteria and minimum requirements for technical and scientific experts adopted for the Roster of Biosafety Experts and contained in the attachment below (Annex II). The nominations are to be submitted, preferably online, through the BCH at <http://bch.cbd.int/permalink/expertForum/riskAssessment/register>. In case of difficulties in submitting this information online, a common format for the appointment of a biosafety expert, which is available for download at the same internet address indicated above, should be completed and sent to the Secretariat<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Decision BS-IV/11

<sup>2</sup> Nominations that are not submitted electronically through the BCH must (a) be completed and signed by the Cartagena Protocol National Focal Point, (b) contain clear reference to the Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management and (c) be sent to the Secretariat via email ([bch@cbd.int](mailto:bch@cbd.int)), fax (+1-514-288-6588) or postal mail (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 413 rue Saint-Jacques, suite 800, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1N9, Canada)

To: Cartagena Protocol National Focal Points  
c.c.: Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Points



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**All nominations should be received by the Secretariat as soon as possible but no later than Friday, 10 October 2008. Please note that only pre-registered experts will be able to actively participate in the Forum. Outcomes of the online discussion groups and real-time conferences will serve as a basis for the deliberations by the AHTEG on Risk Assessment and Risk Management.**

Participants for the AHTEG meetings will be selected by the Secretariat from among those experts nominated by Parties on the basis of their expertise, participation in the online forum and taking into account geographic distribution and gender balance.

Further details regarding (i) the discussion groups and real-time online conferences in the Open-ended Online Expert Forum, and (ii) the meetings of the AHTEG on Risk Assessment and Risk Management will be made available in due course.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ahmed Djoghlaif  
Executive Secretary

*Annex I*

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

1. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Risk Assessment and Risk Management shall:

(a) Include experts selected on the basis of their expertise on the issues relevant for the mandate of the Group, based on a standardized common format for submission of CVs from experts nominated by Parties, respecting geographical representation, in accordance with the consolidated *modus operandi* of the SBSTTA of the Convention on Biological Diversity (decision VIII/10 of the Conference of the Parties, annex III);

(b) Include observers in accordance with the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol;

(c) Meet twice, pending availability of funds, with an interval of not less than ten months between meetings and prior to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, and perform necessary tasks between the two meetings to achieve the proposed outcomes outlined herein;

(d) During the first meeting, the Group shall:

(i) Develop a “roadmap”, such as a flowchart, on the necessary steps to conduct a risk assessment in accordance with Annex III to the Protocol and, for each of these steps, provide examples of relevant guidance documents;

(ii) Taking into consideration the identified need for further guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment, including particular types of (i) living modified organisms (for example, fish, invertebrates, trees, pharmaplants and algae); (ii) introduced traits; and (iii) receiving environments, as well as monitoring of the long-term effects of living modified organisms released in the environment, prioritize the need for further guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment and define which such aspects should be addressed first, taking also into account the need for and relevance of such guidance, and availability of scientific information;

(iii) Define an action plan to produce, prior to the second meeting of the Group, modalities for development of the guidance documents on the specific aspects that were identified as priorities and for testing of the roadmap. This action plan should include the details of a process for monitoring and reviewing the progress in each of the specific aspects;

(iv) Prepare an progress report containing a detailed summary of the terms and procedures for reviewing the modalities for the development of guidance documents to be followed prior to the second meeting of the Group;

(e) During the second meeting, the Group shall:

- (i) Revise and finalize the “roadmap” for the effective use of guidance documents on risk assessment;
- (ii) Make recommendations to the Secretariat on how to integrate the “roadmap” and tools for retrieval of guidance materials available in the Biosafety Information Resources Centre of the Biosafety Clearing-House that are relevant at the different stages of risk assessment;
- (iii) Review the action plan referred to in subparagraph 1 (d) (iii) of this annex on specific aspects of risk assessment and risk management developed in accordance with the terms and procedures established in the first meeting of the Group;
- (iv) Consider possible modalities for cooperation in identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health;
- (v) Prepare a report for consideration by the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol;

2. The deliberations of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group shall be based primarily on:

- (a) Submissions received in accordance with paragraph 5 of this decision;
- (b) The reports of the regional and sub-regional workshops on capacity-building and exchange of experiences on risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/INF/14-17) and the report of the Canada-Norway Workshop on Risk Assessment for Emerging Applications of Living Modified Organisms (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/INF/13);
- (c) Contribution received through the open-ended online forum, ad hoc discussion groups and real-time online regional conferences;
- (d) Guidance materials available in the Biosafety Information Resource Centre of the Biosafety Clearing-House;
- (e) Any other relevant materials made available by the Secretariat.

*Annex II*

**CRITERIA AND MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS**

*(Excerpt from annex I of decision BS-IV/4)*

Minimum academic and professional qualifications:

- A postgraduate degree and five years of experience;
- Demonstrated professional experience, including:
  - Peer-reviewed publications, including articles in internationally recognized journals;
  - Non peer-reviewed publications and reports;
  - Presentations at conferences, workshops and scientific/technical symposia;
  - Participation in relevant scientific and technical committees, expert panels or advisory bodies; and
  - Project-related experience.