



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



Ref.: SCBD/BS/MPDM/ABw/65142

2 October 2008

## NOTIFICATION

### **Nominations of observers to the Open-ended Online Expert Forum and Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group 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 meetings of the AHTEG and at least one real-time online conference per region prior to each AHTEG meeting.

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 organization who are actively involved in risk assessment and risk management, to participate as observers in this Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management. In accordance with the *modus operandi* for AHTEG meetings<sup>2</sup>, a limited number of observers will be selected by the Secretariat among those that have participated in the online process to take part in the meetings of the AHTEG as observers.

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

<sup>2</sup> Annex III of decision VIII/10 of the Conference of the Parties (COP).

To: Relevant Organizations



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United Nations  
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800  
Montreal, QC H2Y 1N9, Canada

Tel : +1 514 288 2220  
Fax : +1 514 288 6588

<http://www.cbd.int>  
[secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

Organizations wishing to nominate experts as observers to this process should do so by filling out the “Common format for the appointment of a biosafety expert” available for download at <http://bch.cbd.int/permalink/expertForum/riskAssessment/register><sup>3</sup>, and emailing it to the Secretariat at [riskassessment.forum@cbd.int](mailto:riskassessment.forum@cbd.int).

**All nominations for observers should be received by the Secretariat as soon as possible but no later than Friday, 31 October 2008. Please note that only pre-registered observers will be able to take part in the Forum.**

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

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<sup>3</sup> Organizations should use the field “Brief Profile” in the common format to provide a short description of the organization and its activities, as well as to specify in which capacity (e.g., personal or organizational) the expert is being nominated. Please note that the section “Record Validation” must not be filled out in the case of nomination of observers by organizations.

*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.