

NOTIFICATION
Launch of the new platform of the Biosafety Clearing-House

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am pleased to announce that the new platform of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) will officially launch at 12:00 p.m. EST on 29 November 2021.

As you may be aware, the new BCH platform was developed by the Secretariat in response to decisions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The work on the migration of the BCH constituted an enormous and complicated endeavor that required a complete re-design and recoding of the old platform. It also had to be done in a way that enhanced coherence and integration among the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention (CHM), the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABSCH) and the BCH, in accordance with the *joint modalities of operation*.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all the users of the BCH (representatives of Parties, non-Parties and stakeholders) who have actively participated in the testing process of the new platform. Users' support and feedback were instrumental in ensuring the functionalities and user-friendliness of the new website. Furthermore, I would like to extend my appreciation to the members of the BCH Informal Advisory Committee (BCH-IAC) for their invaluable support and guidance provided to the Secretariat throughout the migration process.

As you are all aware, the core functions of the BCH are *submitting* records and *searching* for information. These functionalities have been completely redeveloped and enhanced in the new platform. In addition, the new platform offers many new features such as a modern *Home* page, interactive *Country Profiles* page, *Knowledge Base* and others. The new BCH is also similar in look and functionality to the CHM and ABSCH, and, thus, is easily recognizable to national and general users, which facilitates the use and operation of the various clearing-houses of the Convention.

With respect to the upcoming launch of the new BCH platform, please take note of the following important dates and information:

Operation of the old BCH

Starting on 17 November until the launch date, the Secretariat will be performing the final migration of all the data and records from the current BCH to its new platform. During this period, the current BCH will be functional for viewing records and navigating the site only. Users will not be able to submit new records or content until the new platform has launched.

Availability of the new BCH

The new BCH platform will officially launch at 12:00 p.m. EST on 29 November at the following URL: <http://bch.cbd.int/>.

I would like to encourage all stakeholders to start using and exploring the new platform during the week of 29 November and to send any feedback to the Secretariat to facilitate timely resolution of any issues that may arise. Please send feedback to bch@cbd.int or through the "*BCH on BCH Forum*" at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_art20/nfps/newBCHforum.shtml.

To: Cartagena Protocol National Focal Points, CBD National Focal Points (where Cartagena Protocol Focal Points have not yet been designated), BCH Focal Points, relevant organizations

Introductory Webinar

The Secretariat is organizing a webinar on **7 December 2021**, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. EST (UTC-5) to introduce the new platform and demonstrate its main features, as well as provide an opportunity for users to ask questions on the new BCH. The webinar will take place virtually using the *GoToWebinar* platform and will be held in English only.

Those who wish to take part in the event can register using the following link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4259187407278647822>. Registered participants will receive a confirmation e-mail containing information on how to join the session. The webinar will be recorded and made available on the BCH website to accommodate those who will not be able to take part in it.

I look forward to your active participation in the webinar and thank you again for your continued support for the work of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

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

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary