

MEDIA PRIMER

UN Biodiversity Conference virtual meetings to address key Cartagena Protocol Biosafety issues

- *The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity, provides international rules that seek to ensure an adequate level of protection to biodiversity and human health, focusing on transboundary movements of living modified organisms (LMOs).*
- *Risk assessment and risk management of LMOs will be considered by SBSTTA-24.*
- *Processes related to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol to be addressed by SBI-3.*

What: **Twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24); Third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI-3)**

When: **SBSTTA 24:** First plenary, 3-4 May; Second plenary, 23-26 May; Third plenary, 7-9 June;
SBI-3: First plenary, 16-18 May; Second plenary, 28-30 May; Third plenary, 11-13 June.
Plenaries to be held 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Montreal time (EDT, GMT/UTC - 4).

Where: **Media can view plenary sessions at: www.cbd.int/live**

Context: The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP-9) in 2018 stressed the importance of including biosafety in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. It thus requested the Protocol's Liaison Group to contribute to the development of the elements of the biosafety component in the post-2020 framework.

The COP-MOP-9 also established a process to identify and prioritize specific issues regarding risk assessment of LMOs. Consequently, requested SBSTTA to make a recommendation as to whether or not additional guidance materials on risk assessment are needed for LMOs containing engineered gene drives and living modified fish for consideration by COP-MOP-10.

The Cartagena Protocol's post-2020 implementation plan and capacity-building action plan are expected to be reviewed by SBI-3. The two set out the overall implementation objectives for Parties for the coming decade and outlines relevant capacity building activities to support Parties in their implementation efforts.

Issues discussed: **SBSTTA-24**



- [Review the need for guidance on risk assessment for organisms containing engineering gene drives and living modified fish;](#)
- [Consider a process for regular horizon scanning for synthetic biology.](#)

SBI-3:

- [Review the draft Implementation Plan and capacity-building action plan for the Cartagena Protocol \(2021-2030\);](#)
- [Consider the information provided and conclusions reached by the Protocol's Liaison Group and Compliance Committee in support of the fourth assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol and final evaluation of the Protocol's Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020.](#)

Documents: SBSTTA-24: www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-24 / SBI-3: www.cbd.int/meetings/SBI-03

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the intergovernmental body responsible for providing scientific, technical and technological advice related to the implementation of the Convention. It plays a key role in assessing the current status of the world's biodiversity, identifying solutions and in bringing emerging issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to the attention of the global community.

The Subsidiary Body on Implementation, the intergovernmental body responsible for providing scientific, technical and technological advice related to the **implementation** of the Convention. **The SBI has four areas of work:** (a) review of progress in implementation; (b) strategic actions to enhance implementation; (c) strengthening means of implementation; and (d) operations of the Convention and the Protocols.

Additional Notes

UN Biodiversity Conference – 11-24 October 2021 (Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity): www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-15; Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: www.cbd.int/meetings; COP-MOP-10 Fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing: www.cbd.int/meetings/NP-MOP-04

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Opened for signature in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and entering into force in December 1993, the CBD is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties, the CBD has near universal participation among countries. The CBD seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing are supplementary agreements to the CBD. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biodiversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 173 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. Entering into force 12 October 2014, it has been ratified by

130 Parties. **For more information:** Ulrika Nilsson ulrika.nilsson@cbd.int; David Ainsworth +1 514 561 2720 or david.ainsworth@cbd.int; Johan Hedlund johan.hedlund@cbd.int.