



Information Sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House

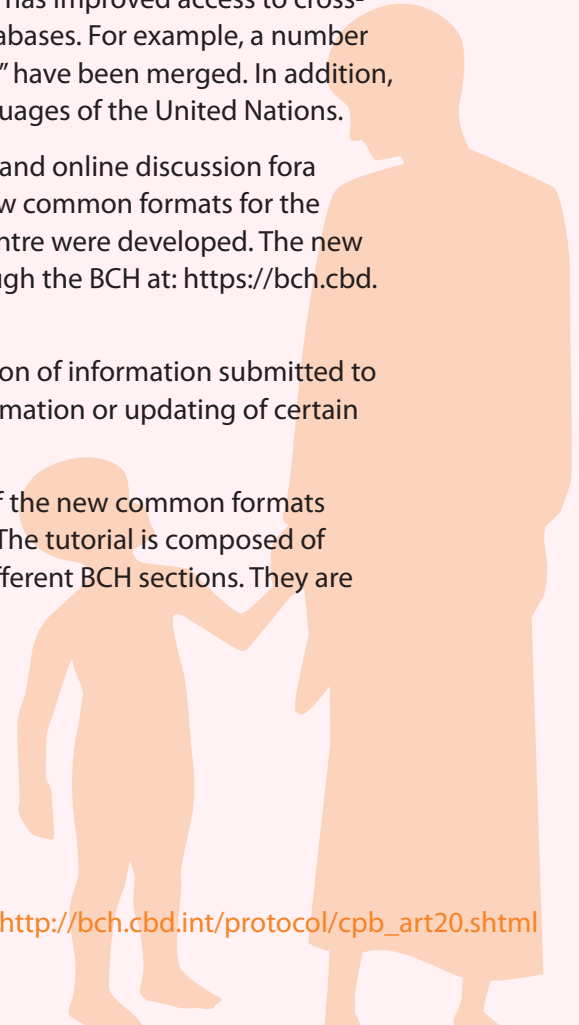
The Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) is a mechanism established by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms (LMOs) as well as to assist Parties to implement the Protocol. It is accessible at: <http://bch.cbd.int/>. A number of activities have been implemented to improve the user-friendliness, accessibility and the overall quality of the information in the BCH.

One of the activity is the re-design of the BCH central portal which has improved access to cross-referenced data and the retrieval of information from multiple databases. For example, a number of primary search interfaces in the section on "Finding Information" have been merged. In addition, the BCH Central Portal has been translated into the six official languages of the United Nations.

Recently, new common formats, a new Roster of Biosafety Experts and online discussion fora and real-time conferences were also developed. For example, 6 new common formats for the registration of records in the BCH and a new BCH Management Centre were developed. The new Roster of Biosafety Experts was also developed and available through the BCH at: <https://bch.cbd.int/database/experts/>.

Another activity is the introduction of a new procedure for validation of information submitted to the BCH. The new procedure establishes a timeframe for the confirmation or updating of certain categories of information.

In 2009, a new tutorial on the use of the BCH to facilitate the use of the new common formats for the submission of information to the BCH was also developed. The tutorial is composed of five modules that provide guidance on the basic features of the different BCH sections. They are currently available in English, French and Spanish.





Fast Facts

- The BCH is essential for the successful implementation of the Protocol. For instance, it contains key information that Parties are required to provide under the Protocol, including: their laws and regulations, final decisions regarding import or release of LMOs, relevant agreements and summaries of their risk assessments or environmental reviews of LMOs generated by their regulatory processes.
- Other information that is made available through the BCH's databases contain information which include (i) registries of LMOs, genes and parental organisms, (ii) a roster of biosafety experts, (iii) a directory of organizations involved in biosafety, (iv) capacity-building projects and opportunities and (v) biosafety publications and other resource materials and scientific papers on biosafety.
- The BCH provides easy, open and timely access to essential information which helps to foster transparency in the implementation of the Protocol and facilitates informed participation of the public and civil society in decision-making processes.
- Most of the information in the BCH is registered by designated government representatives and the Secretariat. However, records in some of the databases, such as those on capacity-building and the Biosafety Information Resource Centre (BIRC) can be registered by BCH users with general user accounts.
- The Cartagena Protocol requires all Parties to inform the public on how to access the BCH.
- To date, more than 70 experts have been nominated to the new Roster of Experts by Parties or other Governments.
- To date, the total number of decisions on living modified organisms (LMOs) submitted to the BCH - Food, Feed, Processing (FFPs) includes (approximately): maize (400), cotton (175) turnips (100), canola (100), soybean (50), potatoes (75), tomatoes (5), and rice (5).

Learn More

Information Sharing: http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art20.shtml

Biosafety Clearing-House: <http://bch.cbd.int/>

Online forums and collaborative portals: <https://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/>

Mailing List: <https://bch.cbd.int/resources/maillinglist.shtml>

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: <http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/>

Frequently asked questions: http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_faq.shtml

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