

**13 June 2025****EXTENDED DEADLINE AND UPDATED TIMELINE****Call for expression of interest:  
Independent, scientific study on synthetic biology**

Dear Sir or Madam,

In its decision [16/21](#) on synthetic biology, the Conference of the Parties established an ad hoc technical expert group to, among other things, (1) identify the current and potential benefits of synthetic biology in relation to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; (2) identify the potential positive impacts of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology in relation to the three objectives of the Convention and the implementation of the Framework; and (3) identify the potential negative impacts of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology in relation to the three objectives of the Convention and the implementation of the Framework.

To support the work of the Expert Group, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to commission an independent scientific study compiling and summarizing existing scientific studies, public research and development funding needs and priorities, as well as research road maps on synthetic biology applications that are relevant to achieving the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular its Targets 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 17.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the Executive Secretary invites the submission of expressions of interest from candidates or teams of candidates from governmental agencies, research and academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations to conduct this independent scientific study.

**Description of duties and expected outcomes**

The contractor(s)/consultant(s) will carry out the study in line with the request in paragraph 9(b) of decision [16/21](#).

In doing so, the contractor/consultant(s) should as much as possible guide his/her work based on:

- (i) Scientifically sound information that has been published in peer-reviewed journals;
- (ii) Regionally-balanced information gathering exercises, that may involve discussions to gather information from national competent authorities and stakeholders on public research initiatives and funding needs and priorities;
- (iii) Synthetic biology research roadmaps; and
- (iv) The potential contributions of synthetic biology applications to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (particularly Targets 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 17).

Any relevant data from during the course of the work should be extracted, analysed and synthesized in an objective and neutral manner.

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<sup>1</sup> See decision [15/4](#).

The scope of the study should be guided by the operational definition of “synthetic biology”,<sup>2</sup> which was developed by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology in 2015, and considered by the Conference of the Parties in decision [XIII/17](#) as useful as a starting point for the purpose of facilitating scientific and technical deliberations under the Convention and its Protocols. Further, the study must use a scientifically sound and documented methodology to conduct any relevant literature searches or analysis.

The study should be undertaken using systematic review methodology and include:

A description of (Boolean) search terms utilized when searching literature, a list of the literature consulted, the persons contacted to gather information, and any other relevant information that support the application of a comprehensive, neutral and transparent work. The study should consider that the varying capacities of countries to conduct research and development, and assessment within the field of synthetic biology.

The study delivered by the contractor/consultant(s) will be submitted for a peer review process. The contractor(s)/consultant(s) will then need to incorporate the comments received in the finalization of the study prior to the in-person meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology.

The study and formatting of the references should be aligned with the established United Nations Editorial Manual, which is available at: <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual>.

Expected outcomes:

- (a) Delivery of work plan made by the contractor(s)/consultant(s) including list of stakeholders, national competent authorities and others to be contacted. To be delivered as electronic document.

Indicators:

- Clear work plan indicating time frames, possible sources or search strings, a tentative table of contents, methodology to be followed and expected results. The work plan must reflect a neutral approach and the list of possible stakeholders and national authorities to be contacted reflects a variety of countries with different know-how and capacities in relation.

- (b) First draft of the study. To be delivered as electronic document. This is an intermediate result.

Indicators:

- A complete first draft of the study, including:
  - A list of the literature consulted;
  - Outline of the methodology used for the systematic review;
  - A list of persons contacted to gather information;
  - Any other relevant information that supports the application of a comprehensive, neutral and transparent work; and
  - An output incorporates the comments and suggestions provided by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- (c) Second draft of the study. To be delivered as electronic documents. This is an intermediate result.

Indicators:

- A complete second draft of the study, including:
  - An output incorporates the comments and suggestions provided by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity following their review of the first draft of the study.

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<sup>2</sup> Synthetic biology is a further development and new dimension of modern biotechnology that combines science, technology and engineering to facilitate and accelerate the understanding, design, redesign, manufacture and/or modification of genetic materials, living organisms and biological systems

- (d) Final output, a scientific study of minimum 25 pages with an executive summary of 5 pages and a spreadsheet or table detailing how peer review comments were addressed. To be delivered as electronic document. Two documents of the study should be presented: one showing the changes made in track changes, and a clean version.

Indicators:

- The final output incorporates the comments and suggestions received during the peer review process;
- Changes made in the document should be evidenced in a tracked version;
- A spreadsheet or table that summarises how the peer review comments were addressed in the final output.

## Timeline

The tentative timeline for the study is as follows:

Date	Activity
<b>May to July 2025</b>	Application, selection and contractual arrangements
<b>August 2025</b>	Selected contractor(s)/consultant(s) should provide a proposed work plan to undertake the study, including methodology, list of stakeholders, national competent authorities and others to be contacted.
<b>Late January/Early February 2026</b>	First draft of the study submitted to Secretariat
<b>February 2026</b>	Secretariat's review of the study
<b>Late February 2026</b>	Second draft of the study submitted to Secretariat
<b>March 2026</b>	Peer review process
<b>April 2026</b>	Final study submitted to the Secretariat

Due to the limited time available to carry out the activities requested by the Parties, the selected candidate(s) will be expected to commit to providing deliverables on time.

## Qualifications

It is expected that the selected candidate or team of candidates will have a combination of qualifications and experience in biological sciences or related disciplines, as well as deep knowledge and understanding of molecular biology, biotechnology and the environment. A familiarity and understanding of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Framework is also required. The incumbent should also have knowledge of the process to develop advanced biotechnological applications as well as conducting scientific literature searches or analyses.

## How to apply

Candidates should submit their application including the following:

- CV of the candidate(s) including description of their expertise with the issues relevant to this application incorporating a brief overview of the researcher's or researchers' expertise and resources
- Draft plan for the implementation of the study including a brief description of the methodology that the candidate(s) intends to follow in order to address the study requirements, a draft budget and anticipated number of pages.

Expressions of interest should be submitted by e-mail to [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) as soon as possible and no later than **20 June 2025**. Any questions may also be sent to the same e-mail address.

### **Selection process**

The candidate(s) will be assessed against the criteria under “qualifications” included in this call, the availability of the candidate(s) to comply with the stipulated timeframe and the approach proposed by the candidate(s) to undertake the study.