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A horizontal silhouette strip containing various symbols related to biosafety and environmental science, including a DNA double helix, a person working in a field, a tree, a tractor, a windmill, and laboratory glassware.

Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety



Foreword

On 11 September 2003, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety entered into force. Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety established a Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) to facilitate exchange of information and as a mechanism to assist Parties to implement the Protocol. A functional BCH is thus an essential part of the information exchange, which will be required as countries engage in the notification, assessment and decision-making on transboundary movements of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) and will provide ready access to biosafety information in general.

UNEP, as one of the three Implementing Agencies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and in accordance with the Initial Strategy on Biosafety, adopted by the GEF Council, has committed itself to provide support for building capacity, at the national level, to enable countries to implement the Cartagena Protocol and to participate effectively in the BCH.

UNEP is implementing a global GEF project for Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), as an add-on to the UNEP-GEF Project for Development of National Biosafety Frameworks. UNEP-GEF will assist up to 50 countries to participate in the BCH by building human and institutional capacity and by providing countries with the minimum equipment required for the national participation in the BCH.

An effective BCH is an essential component of the successful implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, and an important step towards providing countries with the opportunities to participate in the safe use of biotechnology.



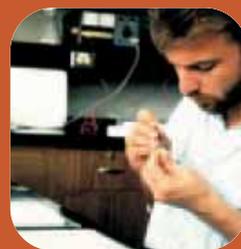
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klaus Töpfer', written in a cursive style.

Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director
UNEP

UNEP-GEF PROJECT FOR BUILDING CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL

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Abbreviations

| | |
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| BCH | Biosafety Clearing-House |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| COP | Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity |
| COP-MOP | Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the Meeting of the Parties of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety |
| CPB | Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GMO | Genetically Modified Organism |
| LMO | Living Modified Organism |
| MOP | Meeting of the Parties |
| nBCH | National BCH |
| NCA | National Competent Authority |
| NCC | National Coordinating Committee |
| NEA | National Executing Agency |
| NPC | National Project Coordinator |
| NPD | National Project Document |
| NBF | National Biosafety Framework |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan |
| PNBCH | Pacific Node for the BCH |
| SCBD | Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity |
| SIDS | Small Island Developing States |
| SPREP | Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNITAR | United Nations Institute for Training and Research |



1. Introduction

1.1 Agenda 21

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, was held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. At this conference, unprecedented in terms of both size and scope of its concerns, 172 Governments agreed on a number of key documents, among which were Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Chapter 16 of Agenda 21 deals with the environmentally sound management of biotechnology and recognizes two important facts: 1) although not a panacea, modern biotechnology promises significant contributions to sustainable food production, improved health care and environmental protection, and 2) the community at large can only benefit maximally from the potential of modern biotechnology, if it is developed judiciously and adequate safety mechanisms are in set place. With this context, Agenda 21 provides a blueprint for international collaboration for the further development and application of biotechnology and biosafety.

1.2 The Convention on Biological Diversity

One of the key agreements adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was the Convention on Biological Diversity. The objectives of the Convention are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Convention addresses, in two different articles, the issue of biosafety, namely in article 8 on in-situ Conservation, and in article 19 on Handling of Biotechnology and Distribution of its Benefits.

Article 8(g) lays down the obligation for Parties to establish or maintain means to regulate, manage or control the risks associated with the use and release of living modified organisms (LMOs).

Article 19.3 calls upon Parties to consider the need for and modalities of a protocol setting out appropriate procedures, including, in particular, advance informed agreement, in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of any LMOs.

On this basis, and after 5 years of negotiations, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was adopted on 29 January 2000 and entered into force on 11th September 2003.

Box 1

Text from the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety **Article 20 - Information Sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House**

1. A Biosafety Clearing-House is hereby established as part of the clearing-house mechanism under Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention, in order to:
 - (a) Facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms; and
 - (b) Assist Parties to implement the Protocol, taking into account the special needs of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and small island developing States among them, and countries with economies in transition as well as countries that are centres of origin and centres of genetic diversity.
2. The Biosafety Clearing-House shall serve as means through which information is made available for the purposes of paragraph 1 above. It shall provide access to information made available by the Parties relevant to the implementation of the Protocol. It shall also provide access, where possible, to other international Biosafety information exchange mechanisms.
3. Without prejudice to the protection of confidential information, each Party shall make available to the Biosafety Clearing-House any information required to be made available to the Biosafety Clearing-House under this Protocol, and:
 - (a) Any existing laws, regulations and guidelines for implementation of the Protocol, as well as information required by the Parties for the advance informed agreement procedure;
 - (b) Any bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements and arrangements;
 - (c) Summaries of its risk assessments or environmental reviews of living modified organisms generated by its regulatory process, and carried out in accordance with Article 15, including, where appropriate, relevant information regarding products thereof, namely, processed materials that are of living modified organism origin, containing detectable novel combinations of replicable generic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology;
 - (d) Its final decisions regarding the importation or release of living modified organisms; and
 - (e) Reports submitted by it pursuant to Article 33, including those on implementation of the advance informed agreement procedure.
4. The modalities of the operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House, including reports on its activities, shall be considered and decided upon by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Protocol at its first meeting, and kept under review thereafter.

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PARTICIPATION IN THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE
OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL**



1.3 The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Biosafety Clearing-House

To facilitate its implementation, the Protocol through Article 20, established a Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) as indicated in Box 1.

Thus BCH, which is a part of the Clearing-House mechanism of the CBD, is critical to the implementation of the Protocol and is intended to be a repository of up-to-date information on LMOs and biosafety in order to assist decision-makers in countries around the world, as well as civil society and the biotechnology industry.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) launched a Pilot BCH in March 2001 and governments participated in its development until the modalities of operation were adopted at MOP-1 and the fully operational BCH was made available in April 2004. This can be found at: <http://bch.biodiv.org/>.

The BCH comprises a central portal and a distributed network of external components. It is critical that Parties provide information to the BCH; therefore there is a need to focus on how Parties can develop their capacity to use and access, as well as, how Parties can participate in the nationally in the BCH.

National participation in the BCH can vary from a country choosing the option of using the Management Centre as supported by the SCBD. This will only require a desktop computer and an intermittent Internet connection. Other options can include the inclusion of a firewall, database server, web server and connections to many National Competent Authorities (NCAs). Thus national participation in the BCH could involve many different NCAs and a complex system of decision-making and could, thereby increase, by necessity, the number of computer connections, both via the intranet and to the Internet, security set up and other requirements. The SCBD, through its notification, *SCBD/BS/RH/jh/3840*, has provided guidelines for national participation in the BCH, and these are summarised in Box 2, from the SCBD's brochure on the BCH.

Annex 3 provides a quick reference guide to equipment requirements for the options mentioned in Box 2.

The Protocol requires that countries enter and manage their own data in the BCH. The notification *SCBD/BS/RH/jh/38460* from the SCBD gives the requirements that need to be fulfilled as at the date of entry into force of Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It is imperative, therefore, that all Parties have the basic infrastructure and technical capacity, including equipment, tools and practical know-how, in order to fulfil their obligations and also to take advantage of the benefits of the BCH. Annex 2, which is an extract from Decision BS-1/3 from the COP-MOP1, provides a minimum list of information Parties are required to provide through the BCH.

Box 2

Extract from the SCBD Brochure:

The Biosafety Clearing-House of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: A Guide to the BCH

Options for Participating in the BCH

There are different options available to Parties and other governments making information available to the BCH electronically. They may:

- (1) Register data directly in the Central Portal using the Management Centre;
- (2) Register data locally using database templates (i.e. the simplified forms that match those in the BCH) and send data to the Central Portal;
- (3) Make data available through a local website and allow the Central Portal search engine to retrieve it; or
- (4) Store data on national BCH databases, and actively make those data available through the Central Portal using BCH interoperability protocols.

These options are not mutually exclusive. A combination of options may be employed. For example, a Party may choose to register some types of information directly in the central portal using the Management Centre (Option 1), while choosing another option for other types of information. Alternatively, the same type of information may be registered using different options.

Parties may choose to use one or a combination of these options depending on their needs, also taking into account the minimum requirements and responsibilities for each option with respect to the required resources and technical capacity, such as the level of Internet connectivity. Guidelines for National Participation in the BCH, designed to assist Parties and other Governments in selecting options that are appropriate to their needs and capacities, are available on the CBD website at:

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_14309

