



2016

ANNUAL REPORT



ASIA BCH FAMILY

COOPERATION AND CAMARADERIE FOR SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY

FOREWORD



The spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among Asian countries began during the Fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 4) in May 2008 in Bonn, Germany. Initiated by the Republic of Korea, a sub-regional workshop was organized in December that same year to enhance the capacity in the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) in coordination with the United Nations Environment - Global Environment Facility (UNE-GEF) and support from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD).

Since then, the dynamic collaboration between and among countries flourished and made way for the creation of the Asia BCH Family (ABF). The ABF, composed of Parties across Asia, aimed to enhance compliance and hence the mechanisms for public awareness and understanding on the safe transfer, handling, and use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) in the region contributing to the protection of the biological diversity, human and animal health.

Eight years later, in the COP-MOP 8 held in Cancun, Mexico last December 2016, the experience of the ABF was reiterated to serve as an inspiration for other countries to promote cooperation among BCH Focal Points at the regional and sub-regional levels. The ABF also invited Parties to do similar initiatives in their regions to further the implementation of the Protocol. Indeed, the Family has come a long way since its inception as it continues to soar greater heights and actively promote the use of BCH worldwide.

The year 2016 has been an exceptional and exhilarating time of accomplishments for the ABF, for a number of visions that have been realized. I am proud to say that the Family has exceeded expectations as it gained international attention and formalized the path that it will take for the succeeding years. I am optimistic that this harmonious partnership among countries shall be sustained and strengthened through the years. These accomplishments are merely the beginning, and shall serve as an inspiration to continue their voyage to be "One Asia BCH Family" with the aim to become self-sustaining by 2020 and the years beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Min Jang'.

HO MIN JANG
Director
Korea BCH

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Executive Summary



The year 2016 has been a productive pursuit for the Asia BCH Family as it continues to strengthen its capacity and undertake initiatives to achieve its goal to become self-sustaining by 2020. One of the major accomplishments of the Family this year was to finalize its own Roadmap and secure its commitments for the attainment of its targets. The Roadmap embodies the goals of the Parties in the next five years to further its compliance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). It also aims to build capacity towards effective participation to the BCH, through the BCH Focal Points; and promote public awareness, education and participation in the decision making process in the region.

In addition, the Family was able to take timely and bold steps towards becoming globally recognized. During the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the CPB, the ABF successfully showcased their journey of collaboration for the past twelve years through a unique Side Event entitled “For a Successful Asia BCH Family”. Participants of the UN Convention and its Protocols from various regions partake and heard the story of camaraderie towards capacity building and unfaltering collaboration to further the implementation of the Protocol.

A video was made for the ABF to immortalize this significant milestone.

The member countries made painstaking efforts towards the completion of their respective national reports and updated their country records in the BCH portal. The region continued to empower those engaged in biotechnology activities by holding sub-regional workshop on the use of the BCH and GM detection. As the year closes, the ABF is even more energized for strengthening BCH implementation and conducting awareness raising on biosafety programs. On behalf of the ABF, we are very proud to present our accomplishments for the year 2016.

JULIETA FE L. ESTACIO

National Focal Point, BCH Pilipinas
ABF Roadmap Coordinator, 2016-2017

A Brief History of the Asia Biosafety Clearing-House Family

2008: 1st Sub-regional Workshop | Daejeon, Korea

In 2008, the first meeting of countries implementing the BCH I project of UNE-GEF materialized. It aimed to provide an initial understanding of the status of the BCH implementation across Asia.

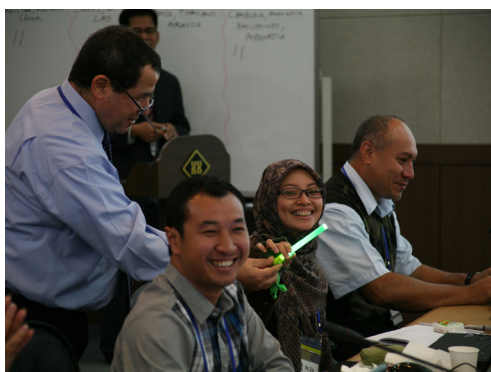
The key challenges for the BCH implementation in the ensuing years were identified. Specifically, these were the lack of interest and support for biosafety issues in other countries, as well as the lack of knowledge about the BCH and its requirements. Moreover, this meeting enabled familiarization between each country's biosafety regulatory systems and helped in identifying areas that need to be capacitated.



2011: 2nd Sub-regional Workshop | Daejeon, Korea

Given the existing challenges, the Asian countries recognized the importance of regional networking for a more effective BCH implementation. More straightforward concerns such as risk assessment problems and completeness of records were given action. Further, the desire to cooperate and collaborate was more evident among the countries at this stage.

With the Republic of Korea as the host country for this workshop, KBCH Director Dr. Ho Min Jang expressed his commitment to strengthen the ties of BCH Focal Points in the region.



**2013: 3rd Sub-regional
Workshop | Phnom Penh,
Cambodia**

The clamor for sustained regional cooperation was still apparent in 2013. The need to come up with a workable strategy then became a common call by all the participating countries and United Nations Environment (UNE). Given this, the Asia BCH Family (ABF) was born.

The outputs of this workshop were deemed to be the springboard to the implementation of the next phase of the BCH Project. As such, the need for continuous follow-up and monitoring of the status of the implementation of the action plans were given importance.



**2014: Experts' Meeting | Daejeon,
Korea**

In between sub-regional workshops, the Asian countries still found the need to enhance their existing cooperative mechanisms in order to be self-sustaining by year 2020. In 2014, the first Experts' meeting was done to conceptualize the 4th Asia BCH Workshop and the Asia BCH Roadmap.



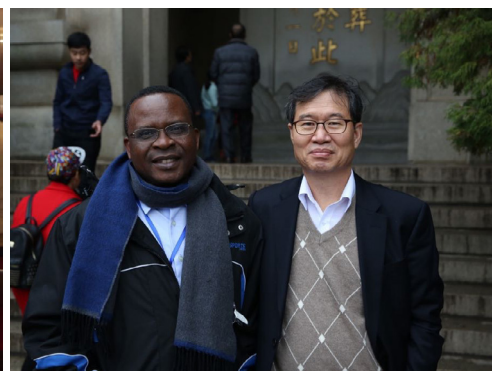
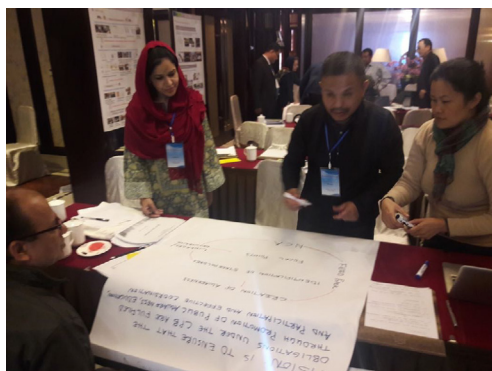
2015: Ad Hoc Experts' Meeting |
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Collaboration continued as the experts from Cambodia, South Korea, China, Malaysia, UNE, and Regional Advisors convened to finalize the concept of the 4th Asia BCH Regional Workshop with the aim to be a stronger regional network. Since then, the People's Republic of China joined the Republic of Korea as the main supporter of the ABF Activities.



2015: 4th Subregional Workshop
| Nanjing, China

Given so, the 4th training workshop for BCH National Focal Points was hosted in the People's Republic of China. Through this, the countries crafted and finalized their own regional strategy, also known as the Asia BCH Roadmap-- to enhance Parties' capacity to be self-sustaining by 2020 and beyond.



Asia BCH Activities

Development and Finalization of the BCH Roadmap

(November 17-20, 2015, Nanjing, China)

During the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 7), countries were called to undertake or support capacity building initiatives aimed at assisting developing country Parties, in putting in place facilities and technologies that will enable them to submit consistent, up to date, and complete information through the BCH.

In response to this, the “Fourth Asia BCH Regional Workshop” was held from 17 to 20 November 2015 in Nanjing, China where Parties in Asia, discussed, finalized, and approved the Asia BCH Roadmap. The Roadmap outlines the plans and goals of Parties in the region for the next five years (2016-2020) to further its compliance with the Protocol, build capacity for effective participation in the BCH, promote public awareness, education and information, and enhance regional networking and cooperation, which hopefully, if realized, shall bring Asia a step closer to the vision of one Asia BCH Family.

In a letter to the United Nations Environment dated 4 January 2016, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary and National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) Chairman, Fortunato T. de la Peña expressed the country's intent to take the lead and serve as the Asia BCH Coordinator. The decision was made in consideration of the country's extensive experience in the regulation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) for the past 25 years, its status of compliance with Article 20 of the Protocol and its ongoing initiatives to enhance its public awareness program on modern biotechnology and biosafety.



**Strengthening the
Implementation of the
Asia BCH Roadmap**
(April 5-7, 2016, Muntinlupa,
Philippines)

In line with the expression of interest of the Philippines to assume the role as Roadmap Coordinator, a small group composed of Republic of Korea, Cambodia, Malaysia, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, a representative from the UNE and UNE Regional Advisors convened on 5 to 7 April 2016 to brainstorm and discuss in detail the subsequent steps that Asian Parties should carry out to implement the Roadmap.

The group formally recognized the role of the Philippines as BCH Roadmap Coordinator of the region for the first two years of its implementation (2016-2017). Among the major concerns tackled were the details of implementing the Roadmap, the terms of reference for the coordinator of Asia BCH Family, the side event for COP-MOP 8, and the proposal for mainstreaming biosafety into the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP).

An Informal Consultative Committee (ICC) for the Asia BCH Family, composed of the aforementioned Parties, was constituted to serve as advisory body in facilitating the implementation of the Roadmap. The Republic of Korea volunteered to create a Regional Asia hub for easy access and sharing of information among Parties such as available trainings, resource materials for Public Awareness, Education, and Participation (PAEP), announcements, and news on the activities of the Asia BCH Family. The National Committee on Biosafety of the Philippines (NCBP) Secretariat shall provide the administrative and logistical support to the activities as the Asia BCH Coordinator. As recommended by the Department of Science and Technology Biosafety Committee (DOST-BC), funds to support the role as Coordinator shall be provided for the year 2017.



Developments since the Roadmap Adoption

(July 25-27, 2016, Daejeon, Korea)

A meeting between the Philippines, as the Roadmap Coordinator, and the Republic of Korea, as the lead Party of the initiative, was held from 25 to 27 July 2016 to discuss the developments and the subsequent steps to be carried out since the Roadmap adoption and the ensuing activities for the year.

During said meeting, the following were the identified accomplishments of the ICC since the Roadmap was implemented:

- Conceptualized the side event “A Successful Asia BCH Family” delivered in the margins of COP-MOP 8, Cancun, Mexico in December 2016;
- Supported the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences under the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People’s Republic of China in organizing and conducting the training on risk assessment, LMO detection, and the BCH on September 2016.
- Supported Asian countries in the preparation of a draft regional project proposal aiming to protect biodiversity and enhance food security taking in consideration the objective of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.
- In collaboration with UNE, assisted Asian countries who have yet to finalize and submit their Third National Report on the implementation of the CPB;
- Created a virtual forum at the BCH Central Portal aiming to support countries experiencing challenges in submitting their National Reports or other compliance issues.



China-ASEAN Training Workshop on Biosafety Capacity Building

(September 19-28, 2016, Nanjing, China)

The Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, with its tenacious aim to put scientific-based biosafety programs in place, supported and funded a training on risk assessment, LMO detection, and the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) with Asian countries as participants held on 19-28 September 2016 at the Nanjing Shanshui Grand Hotel in Nanjing City, China. This activity was supported by UNE, KBCH and the ABF.

The workshop's main goal is to strengthen the international cooperation of the associated countries of China-ASEAN-one Belt and one Road Initiative under the framework of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Cartagena Protocol Biosafety (CPB) to improve biosafety management and to promote information exchange and dialogue among the ASEAN countries. The workshop focused on the areas of questionnaire analysis, detection of GM crops and risk assessment and prevention from alien species, implementation of the BCH and ABF Roadmap, as well as priority topics and project concepts in biosafety cooperation among Asian countries. In addition, the achievements of the Asian countries in the field of biosafety were showcased, and the participants were also able to conduct a study and laboratory tour at the Key Biosafety Laboratory and the field trial base in Nanjing.



Preparatory Discussion for the Asia BCH COP-MOP 8 Side Event

(November 24-26, 2016, Daejeon, Korea)

Another meeting with the Korea Biosafety Clearing-House was convened for the preparations of the Asia BCH Family's COP-MOP 8 Side Event. Anchored on the theme "For a Successful Asia BCH Family", the side event endeavored to highlight the history and milestones achieved by the Asian Region leading to the development of the Asia BCH Roadmap and establishment of the ABF.



Eight meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 8)

(December 4-17, 2016, Cancun, Mexico)



For 2016, the Asian countries, as Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, participated to the biennial meeting of the Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of Parties (COP-MOP 8). One of the points deemed imperative by the ABF in the meeting was the public awareness, education and participation (PAEP); as well as capacity building activities that will promulgate the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH).

The Philippines cited the benefits gained from the grants given by the UNE thru the BCH I and BCH II projects and requested the GEF to provide funding for the BCH III to give other countries opportunity to build their capacities. The Republic of Korea, on the basis of experience with ABF emphasized the importance of regional collaboration among the BCH National Focal Points at the regional and sub-regional levels, which was supported by Malaysia and Indonesia. In addition, the need to finance ensuing activities during the finance deliberation was accepted and both proposals were reflected in the final decision of the COPMOP8.

In its final decision, The COP-MOP urged parties to register in the BCH, activities on capacity-building; final decisions on the first international transboundary movement of LMOs for international introduction; to notify and make available to the BCH and affected or potentially affected states, unintentional transboundary movement of an LMO that is likely to have adverse effect on the environment.

The COP-MOP further requested the Secretariat to continue collaborating with other biosafety databases and platforms, i.e. FAO and the OECD; make necessary improvements to the BCH central portal; and **promote collaboration among BCH focal points at the regional and sub-regional levels.**



The COP-MOP, *inter alia*, recommended the COP to include outcome-oriented elements in the four year (2018-2022) framework or programme priorities for GEF-7 and invited the GEF to continue to fund projects and capacity-building activities on issues identified by the parties to facilitate further implementation of the Protocol, including regional cooperation projects, sharing of experiences and lessons learned, and harnessing associated synergies. The GEF was also tasked to ensure that policy, strategy, programme priorities and eligibility criteria on access and utilization of financial resources are followed in an efficient manner.

Likewise, upon considering the report of the Compliance Committee, the COP-MOP took note of the progress of the countries' compliance requirements for the past 13 years. So far, the Asia BCH Family is leading the charts, in terms of compliance.

Excerpts from: IISD Reporting Services, Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) Vol 09 Number 678 "Summary of the UN Biodiversity Conference"



Telling our Story of Camaraderie to the World: The Asia BCH Family Side Event

(December 14, 2016, Cancun, Mexico)

With the Asian countries' participation to COP-MOP 8, the ABF had an opportunity to showcase their journey at a global scale through a Side Event entitled "For a Successful Asia BCH Family (ABF)". The said event endeavored to highlight the history and milestones achieved by the Asian Region leading to the developments of the Asia BCH Roadmap.

The milestones of the Family were highlighted, and among which are the following:

- Initiatives of the Asia BCH Family since its formation in 2008
- Implementation of the Roadmap
- Compilation of the lessons learned and the success stories of member countries and
- Developments of the BCH in the region

These achievements were presented by the Family through a series of talks given by the key people involved in the creation of the ABF. Dr. Ho Min Jang, Director of the Korea Biosafety Clearing-House, recounted the experiences of ABF since its inception in 2008, when he realized the importance and the need for a sense of cooperation among the Asian region. Meanwhile, Mr. Letchumanan Ramatha of Malaysia shared the Roadmap's contributions as an enhancer of regional cooperation to improve compliance to the Protocol. The Philippine BCH Focal Point, Ms. Julieta Fe Estacio, narrated the experiences of the ABF as a family reaching out to help one another, making sure that every country is capacitated in terms of the BCH implementation. Peoples' Republic of China, represented by Prof. Wang Changyong, then discussed the commitment of member countries in capacity building at all aspects of the Protocol, but more importantly in becoming a self-sustaining Family by 2020.

As a testament of a stronger and continued partnership of the Asian countries, the Republic of Korea also announced its hosting of the Asia BCH Regional Portal where information on the activities in the region can be posted and shared among the countries, specifically, those in need of assistance in fulfilling their obligations to the Protocol.

Aside from the talks, the event depicted the journey of the Family creatively through a series of photographs and anecdotes, and two song numbers lead by Dr. Ruel Maningas, UNE Regional Advisor from the Philippines. The warmth of the Asian culture was also felt by the participants through a hosted dinner and an exchange of tokens. As closing, Ms. Ileana Lopez of UNE invited the participants to do similar initiatives in their own countries to help less able parts of their region and to help the Convention on Biological Diversity to uphold biosafety.





Making innovations happen: The Asia BCH Family Regional Portal

The ABF's very own regional BCH was also launched this 2016, during the COP-MOP 8 Side Event. The ABF Regional Portal is the first of its kind in the history of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which allows exclusive regional collaboration among Parties. The website will serve as a common hub for the ABF countries to facilitate information exchange and provide assistance in implementation of their respective National Biosafety Frameworks.

The ABF Regional Portal has the following information:

- Status of Roadmap Implementation in Asia
- BCH Records of Asian countries (mirrored from the Central Portal website)
- Collection of PAEP materials from various member countries
- News, communication campaigns, and surveys
- Photo gallery and calendar of activities
- Online counseling feature

The screenshot displays the Asia BCH Family Regional Portal website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Asia BCH Family', 'Roadmap Implementation', 'CPB Implementation Level Improvement', and 'BCH Utilization Enhancement'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Asia BCH Family introduction:** Features a banner with the text 'One for Biosafety!' and a globe. Below it, a paragraph states: 'After genetically modified tomatoes were released in 1996, the planting area of living modified organisms (LMOs) has shown substantial increase, led by beans, corn, cotton and canola. LMO producing countries such as the United States, Brazil and Argentina'.
- CPB Implementation Level Improvement:** Includes a section for 'Submissions' with icons for '3rd National Report', 'Contained Use', 'Synthetic Biology', 'Socio-economic', and 'Unintentional'.
- National Focal Point:** Displays a grid of flags for various countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Thailand.
- FOCAL AREA 1:** Focuses on 'Compliance with the National Biosafety Framework and Cartagena Protocol'. It includes a table for '1-1. Existing national laws' and '1-2. Bilateral, multilateral agreements'.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
19%	4%	0%	0%	0%	

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

The right sidebar contains a 'BCH Utilization Enhancement' section with links for '1 National Focal Point', '1 Competent National Authority', '1 National Database', '1 Law, Regulation or Guideline', '1 Agreement or Arrangement', '1 Decision on LMO', '1 Decision on LMO-FEP', '1 Other Decision', '1 Biosafety Expert', '1 Report on Assignment', '1 Capacity Building Opportunity', and '1 Consultative Biosafety Protocol'.

Asia BCH Family Records

Third National Reports

Country	Third National Report	Country	Third National Report
Bangladesh	●	Kazakhstan	●
Bhutan	●	Kyrgyzstan	●
Cambodia	●	North Korea	
China	●	South Korea	●
India	●	People's Democratic Republic of Lao	●
Indonesia	●	Malaysia	●
Japan	●	Maldives	●
Country	Third National Report	Country	Third National Report
Mongolia	●	Turkmenistan	
Myanmar		Viet Nam	●
Pakistan		Afghanistan	
Philippines	●	Bahrain	
Sri Lanka	●	Iran	●
Tajikistan	●	Iraq	
Thailand	●	Jordan	
Country	Third National Report	Country	Third National Report
		Lebanon	
		Oman	
		Qatar	
		Saudi Arabia	
		State of Palestine	
		Syrian Arab Republic	
		United Arab Emirates	●
		Yemen	●
		Papua New Guinea	
		Total: 37 countries	22

Country Report



	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Cambodia	China	India	Indonesia	Japan	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	North Korea	South Korea	Lao	Malaysia	Maldives	Mongolia	Myanmar	Pakistan	Philippines	Sri Lanka	Tajikistan	Thailand	Turkmenistan	Viet Nam
Biosafety Expert	0	0	0	0	13	3	6	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	8	3	0	4	0	0
National Focal Point	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	2
Competent National Authority	0	2	2	3	1	5	3	3	1	1	3	1	5	1	2	0	1	5	7	1	5	1	3
Capacity Building Needs and Priorities	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
National Database / Website	0	4	1	1	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	0
News	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	30	2	8	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0
Country's Decision / other Communication	0	0	0	23	5	1	100	0	0	0	151	0	27	0	0	0	0	73	0	0	0	0	27
Law, Regulation or Guide	2	21	3	43	8	3	2	17	1	1	5	2	12	1	3	1	2	18	15	2	12	0	8
Report on Assignment	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Risk Assessment	0	0	0	0	5	1	101	0	0	0	153	0	27	0	0	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	23
Reports on Implementation of the Protocol	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	3	3	2	3	0	3
Total number of records	5	32	13	75	40	20	219	26	7	4	349	11	91	6	10	5	8	205	29	9	26	3	66



	Afghanistan	Bahrain	Iran	Iraq	Jordan	Lebanon	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	State of Palestine	Syrian Arab Republic	United Arab Emirates	Yemen	Papua New Guinea
Biosafety Expert	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
National Focal Point	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Competent National Authority	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	6	0	1	1
Capacity Building Needs and Priorities	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
National Database / Website	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
News	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0
Country's Decision / other Communication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Law, Regulation or Guide	0	0	6	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	2	1
Report on Assignment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Risk Assessment	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reports on Implementation of the Protocol	0	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	2	2
Total number of records	1	2	27	2	6	4	4	4	3	1	18	3	11	6



Way Forward

Asia BCH Roadmap

2016-2020

The roadmap embodies the goals of the Asian Parties in the next five (2016-2020) years to further their compliance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). It has the following 4 focal areas:

1 COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK AND CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

Strategic Objective:

To promote and facilitate compliance with the requirements under Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Key Result Area:

Enhanced sharing of information and participation through Biosafety Clearing-House

Target by 2020

At least 90% of Asian countries fulfilling their obligations under the Protocol to make mandatory information available to the Biosafety Clearing-House

Key Performance Indicators

Percentage of countries in Asia in full compliance with the following requirements under Article 20 of the Protocol:

- Existing national laws
- Bilateral, multilateral agreements
- Risk assessments
- Final decisions regarding Living Modified Organisms imported
- National reports



2 ENHANCEMENT OF REGIONAL NETWORKING AND COOPERATION

Strategic Objective:

To promote and facilitate the sharing and exchange of resources (e.g. expertise, information, technology, experience) in the Asian region

Key Result Area:

Ensuring participation of countries in the region (Asian) in the network system

Targets

- Conduct 15 trainings (2-week) in the region
- At least 34 new resource materials make available to the network
- Conduct at least 1 regional training for Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Point
- Conduct at least 2 workshops per country for National Authorized Users and target groups (as appropriate)
- Establish regional portal by 2017
- Update regional portal at least quarterly



For 2016 to 2020, the Asia BCH Family will continue adhering to its targets as outlined in its Roadmap.

Focal Area 1: Compliance with the National Biosafety Framework and Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

This aims to promote and facilitate compliance with the requirements of the Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. By 2020, the ABF targets 90% of its member countries to fulfill their obligations under the Protocol such as completing mandatory information in the BCH.

Focal Area 2: Enhancement of Regional Networking and Cooperation

Since the ABF was made to enable sharing and exchange of information resources in the Asian region, the Family will still continue in conducting workshops based on the training needs of the majority of its member countries. This will ensure a stronger participation among countries in the Asian network.

Asia BCe Roadmap

2016-2020

3 PROMOTION OF PUBLIC AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION

Strategic Objective:

To increase significantly the Asian policy makers' level of awareness, engagement and support for biosafety and related issues

Key Result Area:

Enhanced awareness, education, and participation of Asian policy makers in implementing biosafety issues.

Targets

- Conduct at least 1 regional training for Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Points
- More than 50% of the policy makers posting and sharing biosafety - related messages/ pictures via social media
- Generate at least 1 million views of posts by policy makers
- Conduct at least 20 debate/talk show on biosafety held through TV and/or radio in the Asia region



4 BUILDING CAPACITY TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION TO THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING-HOUSE

Strategic Objective:

To strengthen the capacity of Asian countries to implement Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety through Biosafety Clearing-House

Key Result Area:

Enhanced capacity of Asian countries to implement Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety through Biosafety Clearing-House

Targets

- 100% of countries in Asia region using the web-portal
- Identify at least 1 institution to serve as a regional center for risk assessment and risk management
- Forged at least 5 bilateral agreements
- 5 regional sessions / webinars
- At least 1 guidance / training material on resource mobilization



Focal Area 3: Promotion of Public Awareness, Education and Participation

To increase the level of awareness, engagement, and support of policymakers and other stakeholders in Asia, the ABF will continue to undertake activities that will popularize biosafety issues. Biosafety information, education, and communication materials shall also be crafted and disseminated to various stakeholders.

Focal Area 4: Building Capacity towards Effective Participation to the Biosafety Clearing-House

For the continued strengthening of the capacity of each member country in the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the ABF will conduct specialized trainings and online sessions addressing various technical issues related to biosafety. The official website of the ABF shall also be used as a platform for real-time information exchange and as a repository of learning modules.

Annex

One Asia BC2e Family

Where it all started

In December 2008, the first meeting of countries aimed to provide an initial understanding of the status of the BCH implementation across Asia.

The key challenges for the BCH implementation in the ensuing years were identified. Specifically, these were the lack of interest and support for biosafety issues in other countries, as well as the lack of knowledge about the BCH and its requirements.

Moreover, this meeting enabled familiarization between each country's biosafety regulatory system and helped in identifying areas that need to be capacitated.

2008

Daejeon, Korea



2011

Daejeon, Korea

Given the existing challenges, the Asian countries recognized the importance of regional networking for a more effective BCH implementation.

With Korea as the host country for October 2011 workshop, Korea BCH Director Dr. Homin Jang expressed his continued commitment to strengthen the ties of BCH focal points in the region.

More straightforward concerns such as risk assessment problems and completeness of records were given action. Further, the desire to cooperate and collaborate was more evident among the countries at this stage.



The clamor for sustained regional cooperation was still apparent in 2013. The need to come up with a workable strategy then became a common call by all the participating countries and United Nations Environment Program. Given this, the Asia BCH Family was born.

The outputs of the November 2013 workshop was deemed to be the springboard to the implementation of the next phase of the BCH Project. As such, the need for continuous follow-up and monitoring of the status of the implementation of the action plans were given importance.

2013

Phnom Penh, Cambodia



EXPERTS' MEETINGS

DECEMBER 2014

Daejeon, Korea



In between subregional workshops, the Asian countries still found the need to enhance their existing cooperative mechanisms in order to be self-sustaining by year 2020. In December 2014, the first Experts' meeting was done to conceptualize the 4th Asia BCH Workshop and the Asia BCH roadmap.

JULY 2015

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Collaboration never stops as the experts from Cambodia, Korea, China, Malaysia, United Nations Environment Programme, and Regional Advisors convened in July 2015 to finalize the concept of the 4th Asia BCH Regional Workshop with the aim to be a stronger regional network.





2015

Nanjing, China

In November 2015, the 4th training workshop for BCH National Focal Points was hosted in China. Through this, the countries crafted their regional strategy, also known as the Asia BCH Roadmap - to enhance Parties' capacity to be self-sustaining by 2020 and beyond.



APRIL 2016

Manila, Philippines



Aside from the regional workshops, the Asia BCH Family conducted follow-up meetings to ensure that they are on the right track in achieving the goals set in the roadmap. The first meeting of the Informal Consultative Committee (ICC) and the Regional Advisors was held in Manila, Philippines.



SEPTEMBER 2016

Nanjing, China

To further address compliance issues raised in the past years, China, with the help of Korea, again hosted a training-workshop in September 2016 with the aim to capacitate other countries in their implementation of the BCH and Genetically Modified Organism detection. Furthermore, the country-level programs and activities of the Asia BCH Family addressing the four focal areas of the roadmap were identified.



One for Biosafety

Building a Successful BCH Regional Network in Asia

Cooperation and Support

Support:

Korea BCH & UNEP

Concerns:

- Lack of interest and support for biosafety issues in other countries.
- Lack of knowledge about BCH and its requirements.

Outcome:

Familiarization between each country's biosafety regulatory system and identification of areas that need to be capacitated.

2008

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

DAEJEON, KOREA



2011

REGIONAL
NETWORKING

DAEJEON, KOREA



Support:

Korea BCH & UNEP

Concerns:

- Lack of support from the government and Competent National Authorities.
- Lack of knowledge about BCH and its requirements.
- Lack of public awareness.
- High turnover of staff due to government reconstruction.
- Lack of staff knowledge.
- Distribution of training materials including translation to local languages.
- Adjustment to the need of target audiences.

Outcomes:

- KBCH Director Homin Jang expressed his continued commitment to strengthen the ties of BCH focal points by providing [financial and logistical] support to future regional workshops.
- Raised awareness on issues, constraints, and challenges in BCH implementation across the Asian Region.

Sustainability

Support:

Korea BCH, UNEP & Cambodia

Concerns:

- Challenges of countries in promoting public awareness in biotechnology
- Inter-agency cooperation related problems
- Low priority and lack of government appreciation of BCH

Outcomes:

- PAEP was strengthened
- Inputs were used in the packaging of BCH III project
- Countries agreed to share IEC materials
- Clamor for sustained regional cooperation
- Sustain sub-regional meetings
- Asia BCH Family was coined

2013

ASIA BCH FAMILY
WAS BORN



Team:

Asia BCH Family, Korea BCH, UNEP & China

Outcome:

The countries crafted its own regional strategy, also known as the Asia BCH Roadmap-- to enhance Parties' capacity to sustain activities by 2020 and beyond.

2015

ASIA BCH
ROADMAP



Support:

Korea BCH, China, UNEP & Philippines

Outcomes:

- Philippines became the ABF roadmap coordinator.
- Informal Consultative Committee (ICC) of ABF was formed
- Identified the roadmap activities to be undertaken for the next 2 years
- China-ASEAN + Workshop was born
- Brainstorming of MOP 8 side event to highlight ABF
- Mainstreaming of biosafety into National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP)
- Recognition of the ABF by SCBD through the Compliance Committee Bureau (CCB)
- Further discussion on how compliance issues raised in 2015 were addressed
- Country-level programs and activities addressing the 4 focal areas of the roadmap
- Region-based capacity building/training on GMO detection

2016

INFORMAL
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
CHINA-ASEAN+



Camaraderie



For a Successful Asia BCH Family

The Cooperation & The Efforts For Asia BCH Family



ASIA BCH FAMILY
COOPERATION AND CAMARADERIE FOR SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY

Building a Successful BCH Regional Network in Asia



The Beginning

The story of the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among Asia countries began 12 years ago as an act of kindness from the Republic of Korea. This collaboration reflected in decision BS-IV/2 under Operation and activities of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) Para 9 at the 4th Conference of the Parties (COP-MOP 4) held in 2008 in Bonn, Germany. During that meeting, the Republic of Korea delegation offered to organize and sponsor a sub-regional workshop for enhancing capacity in the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) in coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme - Global Environment Facility (UNEP-GEF).

The genesis of the Asia BCH Family and the consolidation of a successful operational network of cooperation

The decision led to the creation of the Asia BCH Road Map and laid groundwork for collaboration in the region with the aim of increasing safety in the transfer, handling, and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) in Asia to protect

biological diversity from any adverse effects resulting from the introduction of LMOs into the environment.

Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) Activities

KBCH Workshops, Republic of Korea

In response to decision BS-IV/2 Para 9, the UN organized a sub-regional workshop to enhance capacity in the use of the BCH in the Asia Region in collaboration and with financial support from the Korea Biosafety Clearing-House (KBCH). The workshop took place at Korea Research Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology (KRIBB) in 2008 at Daejeon, Republic of Korea. It aimed to promote cooperation for the development and strengthening of human resources and institutional capacity on biosafety, as mentioned in the Article 22 (Capacity Building) of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). The agenda of the workshop was focused on technical aspects such as providing a general overview of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, introduction to the BCH central portal, as well as case studies and presentations by countries.

Two years after the first sub-regional workshop, UNEP-GEF Project on "Continued Enhancement of Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House" organized the 2nd Regional Training Workshop for Asia Pacific and CEE Countries in collaboration and with financial support on KBCH in Daejeon, Republic of Korea on October 24-28, 2011. The workshop's main objectives were to enhance the participants' knowledge of BCH

Obligations as Parties to CPB and more importantly, to strengthen collaboration and exchange experiences among participating countries.

In addition to the standard learning modules during BCH workshops, this particular workshop took a more creative strategy to find out the main impediments for registering information into the BCH. It was also able to identify the lack of internal processes and structures to comply with the CPB. All the participants agreed that Regional Networking can be continued and done more frequently through BCH tools such as online forum and conferencing. With Republic of Korea as the host country for this workshop, KBCH Director Dr. Homin Jang, expressed his continued commitment to strengthen the ties of BCH focal points in the Region. He also said that Republic of Korea will remain supportive to succeeding regional workshops ahead.

Siem Reap, Cambodia Workshop

As a fulfillment of its commitment, the KBCH in partnership with UNEP once again, organized the 3rd Asian Regional Workshop on the Biosafety Clearing-House on November 18-20, 2013, at the historic province of Siem Reap, Cambodia. It was organized in partnership with Cambodia's Ministry of Environment and the Secretariat of the National Steering Committee for Biosafety.

The workshop aimed to promote exchange of experiences and better



relationships within the region.

Another goal is for effective collaboration to take place so that countries can help one another in completing their BCH compliance. Specifically, the workshop primarily focused on seeking answers to three main questions-- "Where are we?", "Where do we want to be?", and "How to get there?"

There were a total of 36 participants who represented 13 countries as follows: Southeast Asia (Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Cambodia), South Asia (Iran, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka) and North East Asia (China, Mongolia, and Republic of Korea).

COP-MOP 7

During COP-MOP 7 held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, Decisions MOP7 BS-VII/1 and 2 Para 3 called on Parties, other Governments, as well as relevant international and regional organizations, to undertake or support capacity building initiatives aimed at assisting developing country Parties (in particular the least developed and small island developing States among them, and Parties with economies in transition) in the use of the BCH. The decision also called for putting in place facilities that will enable them to submit consistent, up-to-date, and complete information through the BCH; as well as their national reports. This will allow developing country Parties to access appropriate technologies for active participation in online activities.

Additionally, Para 4 MOP 7 Decision BS-VII/2 (b) invites the UNEP in its implementation of the BCH III project to promote, regional synergies with Parties that have participated in the BCH II project.

Experts' Meeting Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Once more, the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with UNEP and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) organized the Asia BCH Ad Hoc Experts' Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from July 1-2, 2015 as a response to the above mentioned MOP 7 decisions. This activity is also in support to the Korea Biosafety Capacity Building Initiative launched in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea which aims to implement the Protocol and capacity building.

The Experts' meeting brainstormed to draft a regional strategy supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for 2011-2020 using the framework of the Korea Biosafety Capacity Building Initiative. The delegation for this meeting also agreed to organize the 4th Asia BCH Workshop in November of the same year to be co-financed by UNEP and the KBCH/KRIBB in cooperation with the SCBD.

Nanjing, China Workshop

As follow-up action of the Experts' meeting, UNEP, in partnership with the KBCH/KRIBB and the SCBD, organized the 4th Asian regional training workshop for Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Points (BCH-NFP) which was hosted by the Institute of Environmental Sciences, Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China.

The workshop was held from November 17-20, 2015 in Nanjing and is part of the UNEP-GEF Project for Sustainable Capacity Building for Effective Participation in the BCH (BCH III). It was convened to build the regional strategy and Asia BCH Roadmap to enhance Parties' capacity to sustain their activities by 2020 and beyond. In addition, the workshop envisaged to build an operational network of cooperation among the Asia BCH Family to fulfill Article 20 of the CPB and other related COP-MOP decisions on the BCH. Finally, it also aimed to share and exchange information and resources by promoting East-South Cooperation.

The meeting was attended by 41 participants including representatives from the following countries: Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, PR China, Maldives, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Iran, and Mongolia, which are also participants from the upcoming UNEP-GEF BCH III project. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the former BCH II countries: Bhutan, Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, India, Lao PDR, and Vietnam.

The following countries, experts, and organizations also attended the meeting: Republic of Korea, KRIBB, Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES), CBD Secretariat, Regional Advisors and UNEP-Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC).

Achievements of the Asia BCH Family and Follow up Actions for Implementation



Manila, Philippines Meeting

As an offshoot to the Nanjing Workshop, a small Ad Hoc Experts' Meeting was held in Manila, Philippines on April 5-7, 2016 to brainstorm and discuss in detail the subsequent steps that must be undertaken to implement the Asia BCH Roadmap by Asian Parties.

The meeting was organized and financially supported by the Korea Biosafety Clearing-House (KBCH)/KRIBB in collaboration with UNEP and hosted by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) from the Philippines.

The objectives of the meeting were (1) to follow up the implementation of the BCH Asia Roadmap as agreed in Nanjing, China during 2015; (2) designate the Informal Consultative Committee (ICC); (3) elaborate the 2016 work plan envisaged to enhance Asia's Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) Family's capacities; and (4) to promote sustainable CPB implementation by 2020 and beyond.

The Philippines was elected as the Asia BCH Roadmap Coordinator for the first two years of its implementation (2016-2017) and was acknowledged by UNEP and attendees of the meeting to coordinate the implementation of the Asia BCH Roadmap.

Attendees to the meeting were from the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Cambodia, People's Republic of China and Philippines. The countries have shared their invaluable time and insights during the three-day meeting.

Among the major issues addressed were (1) the details to implement the Roadmap including the terms of reference (TOR) for the coordinator of Asia BCH Family; (2) the side event for COP-MOP 8; and (4) the proposal for the mainstreaming of biosafety into the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP).

Daejeon, Republic of Korea Meeting

A meeting between the Philippines (the Roadmap Coordinator) and Republic of Korea (the lead Party of the initiative) was held last July 25-27, 2016 in Daejeon, Korea. The meeting was organized and financially aided by the Korea Biosafety Clearing-House/KRIBB of the Republic of Korea.

The meeting was attended by the team of Dr. Ho Min Jang of the KBCH, the Asia Regional Coordinator and Dr. Seung-Hwan Choi, Republic of Korea representative member to the Compliance Committee of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The meeting was convened to discuss updates and progress of the agreements reached during the first meeting of the ICC in Manila on the Asia BCH Roadmap. It also aimed to identify the areas of concern that need to be addressed immediately, specifically the strategy to improve the level of compliance in the submission of the Third National Report. And finally, to finalize the plans for the ensuing activities for the year, most especially the Side event for COP-MOP 8. The side event's theme will be "For a Successful Asia BCH Family".

Discussions were focused on the assistance that must be given countries that have yet to submit their 3rd National Report during the China-ASEAN Workshop in September 2016 in Nanjing, China.

To date the following have been the accomplishments of the ICC:

1. Organized a side event entitled "For a Successful Asia BCH Family" to be showcased at the COP-MOP8 in Cancun, Mexico in December 2016. The Asia BCH Family's achievements and lessons learned.

2. Supported Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences under Ministry of Environmental Protection, the People's Republic of China in organizing a training on risk assessment, LMO detection, and the BCH in September 2016.
3. Supported Asian countries to prepare a draft regional project proposal aiming to protect biodiversity and enhance food security.
4. Assisted Asian countries to finalize the CPB Third National Report before MOP-8.
5. Created a virtual forum at the BCH Central Portal which aims to support countries experiencing challenges in submitting their National Reports or other compliance issues.
6. Prepared a brochure to interconnect Biosafety to Sustainable Development Goals and Biodiversity (Aichi Targets) to be distributed at MOP-8.
7. Disseminated a brochure describing the Asia BCH Family initiative as a tool to promote BCH sustainability and enhance regional compliance with the CPB.

The following served as the resource speakers/presenters during the side event:

- Dr. Ho Min Jang – Background of Asia BCH Family
- Mr. Letchumanan Ramatha – Roadmap as enhancer of regional cooperation to improve compliance
- Prof. Wang Changyong – China Support to the Asia BCH Roadmap
- Ms. Julieta Fe Estacio – Road Map coordination
- Ms. Ileana Lopez – Building Self-Sustainability, Application in other Environmental Matters

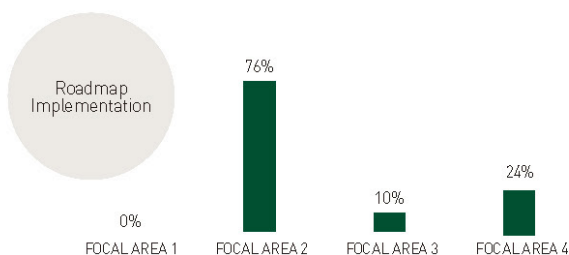


Timeline:

Meeting	Place/Date	No. of Participants	No. of BCH NFPs
1st sub-regional workshop	Daejeon, Republic of Korea, December, 2008	25	15
2nd sub-regional workshop	Daejeon, Republic of Korea, October, 2011	28	13
3rd sub-regional workshop	Siem Reap, Cambodia, November, 2013	36	13
COP-MOP 7	Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, September - October, 2014	10	3
Ad Hoc Experts' Meeting	Phnom Penh, Cambodia, July, 2015	41	22
4th subregional workshop	Nanjing, P.R. of China, November, 2015	11	4
Coordination Meeting	Manila, Philippines, April, 2016	9	2
Follow up meeting	Seoul, Republic of Korea, July, 2016	100	
Side Event-Asia BCH Family	Cancun, Mexico, December, 2016		

ABF Portal

This portal is developed to create a network for Asia BCH Family countries to enhance the utilization of BCH, to improve the CPB implementation level, and to implement the roadmap. Furthermore, it will be provided to the Asia BCH Family countries for the continuous preservation of biological diversity and the promotion of safe usage for LMOs through close communication.



One for Biosafety!

This portal will be developed to create a network for Asia BCH Family countries to enhance the utilization of BCH, to improve the CPB implementation level, and to implement the roadmap.

National Report

Counseling contact

<http://www.asiabchfamily.org>

Lessons Learned:

1. Building a regional network of collaboration is a long process that requires shared vision, leadership, trust, commitment, and resources.
2. Camaraderie, respect, unconditional commitment, and hard work from team members are essential to maintain alive the networking spirit.
3. Overall the most important is the generous, selfless, and self-giving spirit to create the conditions for all the member states to attain sustainable development at regional level.

For a Successful Asia BCH Family

Background of Asia BCH Family



Dr. Homin Jang

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The efforts towards enhancing the capacity of Asian countries to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, specifically Article 20, started in 2004 during the COP-MOP 4 in Bonn, Germany. This was initiated by the Republic of Korea, thru the Korea Biosafety Clearing-House (KBCH) in coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Environment Facility (GEF). As a take off point, a Subregional Workshop was held in Daejeon, Republic of Korea in December 2008.

From 2008 to present, the meeting of Asian countries took place aimed to provide a thorough understanding of the status and identifying challenges as well in assisting countries in BCH implementation across Asia. Given this, the countries in 2011, recognized the importance of regional networking for a more effective and efficient BCH-related endeavors. More straightforward concerns such as risk assessment issues, administrative matters, and updating of records were given utmost attention and corresponding actions.

The clamor for sustained regional cooperation was still apparent in 2013. The Asian countries realized the importance of enhancing their existing collaborative mechanisms in order to be self-sustaining by year 2020 and beyond. The need to come up with a workable strategy then became a common call by all the participating countries and UNEP. Because of this, the Asia BCH Family was born.

Today, the Asia BCH Family is undertaking bold steps to make this shared vision a reality. With the cooperation of member-countries, the Family aims to contribute to the effort towards enhancing safety in the transfer, handling, and use of living modified organisms to protect and sustain the biological diversity.

Asia BCH Roadmap as Enhancer of Regional Cooperation to Improve Compliance



Mr. Letchumanan Ramatha

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The Asia BCH Roadmap has been developed consistent with the aim of BCH for enhanced sharing of information and participation of member countries through a network system - Asia Biosafety Clearing-House (ABCH). It also aims to enhance the capacity of the Asian countries to implement CPB through ABCH by adopting various approaches including enhancing awareness, education, and participation of policy makers in Asia.

Due to varying degrees of mainstreaming biosafety, technical, finance, and manpower capabilities, some countries may neither be able to prepare the necessary documentation for funding nor in the position to meet compliance. We are one Asia family. Every country can contribute according to their capacity. The able ones can help the less able ones and the less able ones can help the least able ones. Let us work together, learn together, grow together, and accept each other with a bid to emerge the Asia BCH family as a shining example for cooperation in every aspect.



China Support to the Asia BCH Roadmap



Prof. Wang Changyong

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For participation in biosafety information exchange in Asian region, Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES) under Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (MEP) hosted "the 4th Asian Regional Training Workshop for Biosafety Clearing-House National Focal Points (BCH-NFP)" in Nanjing, China on November 17–20, 2015, which co-initiated and co-funded by UNEP and Korea BCH/KRIBB in partnership with the SCBD. At this meeting, the "Asian Regional BCH Roadmap" was developed. For a support of its implementation, NIES held "the China-ASEAN+ Training Workshop on Biosafety Capacity Building" in Nanjing on September 19–29, 2016 through a special financial support from MEP (KBCH also funded one trainee and resource person), attended by 19 foreign participants from 15 Asian countries and 10 resource persons from UNEP, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, and China. It covered implementation for the BCH and Asian BCH Roadmap, hands-on detection of GM rice, corn, soybean and cotton in lab and field, risk assessment of invasive alien species (IAS), and development of two project concepts centered on biosafety capacity building and IAS management. The training assessment showed that above 75% of the trainees grasped the basic knowledge and skills required for GM detection and about 90% trainees thought that its objectives are very clear and its contents are very useful, helpful, and relevant to their work.

Roadmap Coordination



Ms. Julieta Fe Estacio

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The Philippines affirmed its commitment to strengthen cooperation in Asia with regard to upholding the provisions of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety by taking the lead as Coordinator of the Asia Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) Roadmap.

The roadmap, developed and approved by the Parties in Asia during an earlier Workshop in Nanjing, China in November 2015, outlines the targets in the next five years (2016–2020) focused on the following areas:

- (1) Compliance with the National Biosafety Framework and Cartagena Protocol;
- (2) Enhancement of regional networking and cooperation;
- (3) Promotion of public awareness, education and information; and
- (4) Building capacity towards effective participation to the BCH

These targets, if realized, shall bring the region a step closer to the vision of a One Asia BCH Family. The fellow Parties who are at the forefront of the initiative—Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Cambodia, and China—together with a representative and consultants from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), discussed the subsequent steps to be undertaken to implement the Asia BCH Roadmap. Agreements reached were the creation of an Informal Consultative Committee (ICC) as an advisory body to promote and sustain activities espoused by the roadmap.

With a clear vision of a "One Asia BCH Family", the member Parties in Asia eagerly look forward to kick start the sustainable implementation of their activities to become self-sustaining by 2020 and beyond.

Building Self-Sustainability and Application in other Environmental Matters



Ms. Ileana Lopez

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The importance of capacity building to attain sustainable development goals has been widely recognized by the international community. In particular, a great deal of attention has been drawn to the specific capacity building needs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Eight years ago, the Republic of Korea offered to organize and sponsor a sub-regional workshop for enhancing capacity in the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH). As a result of this action, three more workshops and several ad hoc meetings were organized in coordination with UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Convention on Biological Diversity with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The collaborative capacity building efforts led by Republic of Korea and UNEP resulted in the genesis of the Asia BCH Family and the consolidation of a successful operational network of cooperation.

During the last four years, UNEP and Korea Biosafety Clearing-House/KRIBB, with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), the Institute of Environmental Sciences, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the P.R. of China, Ministry of Environment of Cambodia and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) from the Philippines have been developing an operational network of cooperation among the Asia BCH family that is envisaged to fulfill Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) and related COP-MOP decisions on the BCH.

Quotes from some Asian countries:

During the China-Asean+ Capacity Building Workshop on Biosafety, Sep. 20-21, 2016, Nanjing, China

- "I'm very glad to be part of the Asia BCH Family, for each country to share what they actually did and to learn from them."
- "It can be useful to our country because the countries of the region have experience in different fields which we can learn from."
- "I am very excited and interested to learn from the available knowledge in the Asia BCH Family. Also to network for public awareness, education, and capacity building."
- "I feel very happy to be the part of Asia BCH Family. It will be helpful for our country in advancing its work on Biosafety."
- "It is a good forum to discuss the country's concerns in biosafety. The regional approach will be easier to move ahead."
- "I feel great to be in the Asia BCH family. It is helpful for my country, in case of sharing experiences, knowledge, and helping each other, and working and developing together. I really want to support it with whatever facilities we have."
- "It's a good venue to help each other in the different issues on biosafety activities and regulation."
- "It's a great idea. The Asia BCH Family can provide information from "same condition" countries. We have the benefit of having information for enhancing our own capacity on biosafety. Support can be through providing good information about what we have, what we do and what the problems we face and how we tackle those problems."
- "Having the Asia BCH Family is an asset. It is providing the information, experiences and probably technical and financial support if needed."
- "It is good to have Asia BCH family because it is helpful to my country and we will support it for the sake of biosafety. We are better if we are together."

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ASIA BCH FAMILY

COOPERATION AND CAMARADERIE FOR SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY

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