



Introduction to the Discussion Groups under the Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management

What?

Discussion Groups were made available under the Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management to allow the participants to debate about major issues related to specific aspects of risk assessment and risk management (for a full description of the Forum, please visit the page at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/aboutforum_ra.shtml).

When?

The first round of Discussion Groups will take place from 10 to 23 November 2008. The second round will take place from 1 to 14 December 2008. For each round, four (4) Discussion Groups will happen simultaneously, each on a different topic.

Where?

The Discussion Groups are publicly available on internet at the following address: http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/discussiongroups_ra.shtml . From this page, it is possible to access each individual Discussion Group by clicking on the respective links.

Who?

1. Everyone may read the messages posted in the Discussion Groups.
2. To post messages to the Forum participants must be registered either as National Experts or as Observers. For both categories a specific expertise in risk assessment and management is required.
 - **National Experts** must be nominated by their National Focal Points (a list of national focal point is available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/lists/cpb-bch-a17-fp.pdf>), preferably online at <http://bch.cbd.int/permalink/expertForum/riskAssessment/register> .
 - **Observers** wishing to be registered in the Forum may download a submission form (also known as a common format) at http://bch.cbd.int/resources/common%20formats/nationalrecord_07_biosafetyexperts.doc , fill it out and send it by email to the CBD Secretariat at riskassessment.forum@cbd.int .
 - Both National Experts and Observers are welcome to post messages in the Discussion Groups.

How?

➤ **How to have full access to the Forum?**

1. To have access to all features of the Forum, including the ability to post messages in the Discussion Groups, you must sign in to the BCH. To do so click on the “Sign in” link at the top right corner of any page in the BCH then, in the registration page, enter your BCH registered email and password.

➤ **How to read on the Web the messages that have been posted?**

2. Go to http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/discussiongroups_ra.shtml ;
3. Click on a link to be re-directed to one of the ongoing Discussion Groups. In the first round of discussions (10-23 November), these are:
 - *Risk assessment and risk management of transgenic fish*
 - *Risk assessment and risk management of transgenic trees*
 - *Risk assessment and risk management of transgenic microorganisms and viruses*
 - *Risk assessment and risk management of transgenic pharmaplants*

4. You are now at the main page of a Discussion Group. Please take moment to familiarize yourself with the different features in this page: “Introduction”, “Suggested points for consideration”, link to “Selected readings” and ”List of interventions”. You will be re-directed to any of this by clicking on the corresponding links
5. Click on the title of a discussion under “List of interventions” to be redirected to a page containing the list of messages that have been posted under the specific Discussion Group;

➤ **How to read via email the messages that have been posted?**

6. You may receive email alerts every time a message is posted under the Discussion Group. To do so click on the button “Watch forum” located at the bottom of the “List of interventions”. Please note that you need to click on the ”Watch forum” button in each Discussion Group you wish to “watch”;

➤ **How to post on the Web your messages to the Forum?**

Please note that you must be signed in to the BCH before posting messages on the Web

7. To start a new discussion under any Discussion Group: click on the button “Start new thread” (at the bottom of the “List of interventions”). The term “thread” refers to a sub-topic within the topic of discussion;
8. To reply to a particular message: click on the “Reply” button at the bottom right corner of a message;

➤ **How to post via email your messages to the forum?**

9. You may also post your message to the forum by email
10. To start a new discussion under any Discussion Group via email: please use the first message you received under the relevant the Discussion Group.
11. To reply to a particular message via email you must be “watching” the forum” (see point 6 above) and simply reply to the message you wish to refer to.

Should you have questions, comments or suggestions, please e-mail the CBD Secretariat at: riskassessment.forum@cbd.int