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MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY FOR WELL-BEING



Convention on
Biological Diversity



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Press Brief: COP-MOP 8

4-17 December 2016

Risk Assessment and Risk Management of Living Modified Organisms

Background

Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety are required to make decisions on the import of living modified organisms (LMOs) for intentional introduction into the environment in accordance with scientifically sound risk assessments. They are also required to adopt measures for managing risks identified during risk assessments.

Risk assessment and risk management has historically been an intensely discussed issue under the Cartagena Protocol, and it is expected that the eighth meeting of the Parties (COP-MOP 8) will continue that trend.

Key Messages

-The Secretariat has launched a technical series of the Guidance on Risk Assessment of LMOs for conducting actual risk assessments and capacity-building activities.

-The newly developed Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms and Monitoring in the Context of Risk Assessment (hereinafter referred to as Guidance) is the result of concerted effort by experts. It comprises a general roadmap applicable to all types of LMOs, a section on specific types of LMOs and traits and a section on monitoring of LMOs released into the environment.

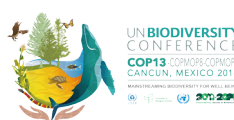
-The Guidance provides a reference that may assist Parties and other Governments in implementing the Protocol with regards to risk assessment. It is not prescriptive and does not impose any obligations upon Parties. It may be used by any stakeholder involved in the risk assessment process, including risk assessors and competent national authorities.

-The third national reports of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety show that many Parties (57 per cent) had already conducted risk assessments for LMOs, an increase of 9 per cent, from the second national reports.

-Most (60 per cent) Parties that have conducted actual risk assessments consider the Guidance useful.



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Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity

The development of the Guidance was mandated at COP-MOP 4, after which it underwent a testing process, as requested by COP-MOP 6. COP-MOP 7 then requested that it be revised and improved, based on the results of the testing process, which was carried out by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on risk assessment and risk management over the past intersessional period.

At COP-MOP 8, Parties will decide whether or not to endorse the Guidance in its current format and invite Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to use it for conducting actual risk assessments and for capacity building activities.

Furthermore, Parties will also consider the development of further guidance on the specific topics of the risk assessment of LMO fish and LMOs developed through synthetic biology, as well as whether or not an AHTEG will be established to carry out the necessary work. However, the need for guidance on synthetic biology with regards to risk assessment of LMOs will be up for discussion under the Convention on Biodiversity.

All information sourced from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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Important links

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

CBD Technical Series No. 2:
Summary and Comparative Analysis of Nine National Approaches to Ecological
Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms in the Context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Annex
III: <http://bch.cbd.int/database/record.shtml?documentid=103869>

CBD Technical Series No. 4:
Guidance on Risk Assessment of LMOs and Monitoring in the Context of Risk Assessment: http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_technicalseries.shtml

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