**Summary of the work and outputs of the AHTEG Sub-group from March to June 2015**

*Note by the Secretariat*

In decision BS-VII/12, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP) extended the Open-ended Online Forum and the AHTEG on Risk Assessment and Risk Management with a view to having an improved version of the Guidance on Risk assessment of Living Modified Organisms for consideration by the COP-MOP at its eighth meeting.

In accordance with the methodology set out in the decision, the Secretariat launched a process comprising activities and tasks for the Online Forum, AHTEG, AHTEG Sub-group and the Secretariat itself, as shown in the tentative calendar of activities (<http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/calendar_ra/>).

The following activities were undertaken to date: [[1]](#footnote-1)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Grouping of the original comments provided through the testing of the Guidance into matrices | Secretariat | 5 – 31 January 2015 |
| Feedback on the grouping of comments done by the Secretariat and way forward | AHTEG | 16 February –  2 March 2015 |
| Reviewing the grouping of comments done by the Secretariat and revising it as needed | AHTEG Sub-group | 9 – 23 March 2015 |
| Identifying which general issues highlighted in the testing of the Guidance may be incorporated or improved upon, as well as whether or not any of the topics prioritized by the previous AHTEG for additional guidance could also be incorporated during the revision process | AHTEG Sub-group | 30 March –  13 April 2015 |
| Feedback on the general issues identified by the AHTEG Sub-group that may be incorporated or improved in Guidance | Online Forum & AHTEG | 27 April –  11 May 2015 |
| Streamlining which suggestions for changes provided through the testing of the Guidance will be taken onboard during the revision of the Guidance, and providing a justification for each of the suggestions that will not be taken on board | AHTEG Sub-group | 25 May –  22 June 2015 |

During the work between March and end-June, the work focused on the comments provided through the testing of the Guidance, whereby, following the guidance and recommendations of the AHTEG and the Open-ended Online Forum, the Sub-group first considered the more general issues identified in the testing of the Guidance and progressively moved to more specific issues.

The AHTEG sub-Group identified general issues that could be prioritized during the revision of the Guidance, including the need to:

• Better explain the intended audience of the Guidance

• Better define the scope of application (i.e. for field trial and/or full release of LMO)

• Clarify when the ‘points to consider’ are relevant and why

• Link between the five steps of risk assessment and among the sections of the Guidance

• Clarify that risk assessors can draw on knowledge and experience gained from non-LMO risk assessments

• Improve the language of the Guidance

• Clarify consistency with the Protocol if needed

• Describe the role of the different actors in a risk assessment and mechanisms of communication

• Provide “real-life” examples of LMO risk assessment and/or effects

• Further elaborate on issues related to human health during environmental risk assessments

Following the general support from the AHTEG and Online Forum to the identified issues, the Sub-group made proposals of ways forward to address each of the issues above and prioritized which suggestions for changes provided through the testing of the Guidance will be taken onboard during the revision of the Guidance. These proposals are available as one of the background documents for this discussion (background document 1).

The Sub-group also considered the specific suggestions for changes provided through the testing of the Guidance and streamlined which suggestions may be taken onboard during the revision of the Guidance. An Excel document containing a table with the level of priority of each suggestion as assigned by the Sub-group,[[2]](#footnote-2) the section of the Guidance and line number which the comments refers to, and a justification for the assessment by the Sub-group is available as background document for this discussion (background document 2). The background documents are available in the page of the AHTEG discussion at <http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/ahteg_ra.shtml>.

In accordance with the tentative calendar of activities, after a discussion of the AHTEG, the next step by the Sub-group in the process of revising the Guidance is to draft proposals to address the substantive changes provided through the testing of the Guidance.

1. The discussions of the AHTEG Sub-group can be found at <http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/RA_ahteg_subgroup/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Members of the Sub-group assessed each specific suggestion for change provided through the testing of the Guidance. To reach a level of priority across the answers of members of the Sub-group, 1 was assigned to suggestions labeled with “take onboard”, and 0 was assigned to suggestions labeled as “do not take onboard”. The responses were averaged and resulting average was rated as follows: 0-0.33 = low priority; 0.34-0.66 = medium priority; 0.67-1 = high priority. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)