

Norwegian submission on the Biosafety Clearing House of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Decision BS-III/2 – Biosafety Clearing House (BCH)

Paragraph 4 of Decision BS-III/2 on the operation and activities of the BCH of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol invites those Governments that have identified constraints on making information available to the BCH and /or implemented strategies to overcome these difficulties to share these experiences.

Norway appreciates the efforts made in the continuous development of the BCH Central Portal. The Management Centre of the BCH is easy to use, and the information is displayed in a user-friendly manner on the new version of the BCH.

Norway has provided the majority of information required to the BCH. No major constraints on making information available to the BCH have been encountered.

Norway has established a national BCH website at <http://bch.dirnat.no/> which can be viewed in either English or Norwegian. Our national BCH website contains links to information on Norwegian regulatory framework, decisions and contact points registered in the database of the Central Portal. The new option to register all information in a language of a country's own choice in addition to the six official UN languages is an important improvement for use of the information in the BCH-database at the national level in Norway.

We would nevertheless avail ourselves of this opportunity to point out obstacles with regard to lack of or outdated information that may hinder adequate use of the BCH.

We have noticed that the information available in some areas is limited, and that some information seems to be outdated.

We therefore draw attention to the solution related to lack of information suggested by the Informal Advisory Committee of the BCH at its third meeting according to paragraphs 3 and 4 of document UNEP/CBD/BS/BCH-IAC/3/2. The solution entails a request to the Secretariat to analyse regularly the quality and completeness of the information made available through the Central Portal and present this information to the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP) for appropriate action. In cases of incomplete, inadequate or unavailable information, the Secretariat should check whether information does not exist or has not been reported. Furthermore, the Secretariat is requested to liaise with Parties in order to ensure that the information registered in the Biosafety Clearing-House is accurate, complete and in conformity with the appropriate common formats. Finally, the Secretariat is recommended to monitor regularly the information registered by countries, so as to ensure its usefulness and further recommends that the Secretariat continue in its efforts to identify missing data from countries that are non-compliant with regard to meeting their obligations to the BCH.

As regards outdated information a procedure along the lines of the one suggested by the Capacity Building Liaison Group for management of information on Roster of Experts could be considered by the COP-MOP. The type of information that could be covered by such a procedure and the timeframe for confirmation or updating of information would have to be considered. The procedure suggested was that governments require their experts to keep their

information on the Roster updated and to review and update the information in general every two years. Experts should be maintained on the roster for up to 4 years, with the possibility of re-nomination by governments in accordance with criteria and minimum requirements. In cases where experts are not re-nominated despite two reminders to the respective National Focal Point, the names of the experts should be automatically removed from the Roster.

The online survey on the recently revamped BCH launched by CBD Notification of 7 December 2007 in accordance with requests made by both the COP-MOP and the Informal Advisory Committee of the Biosafety Clearing-House should provide useful feedback to the COP-MOP on the user-friendliness of and the quality of the information registered in the new and improved BCH. We will certainly do our best to contribute to the usefulness of this survey.