



ESTADO PLURINACIONAL DE BOLIVIA

En atención a la notificación SCBD/BS/CG/ps/84239, relacionada a la solicitud para el envío de opiniones y comentarios de los “Elementos para una mayor claridad conceptual sobre las consideraciones socioeconómicas”, contenidos en el anexo del informe de la primera reunión del Grupo Especial de Expertos Técnicos sobre socioeconómicas, el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia tiene a bien presentar su posición al respecto.

Comments from the Plurinational State of Bolivia on the “Elements of a Framework for Conceptual Clarity on Socio-Economic Considerations”

The document “Elements of a Framework for Conceptual Clarity on Socio-Economic Considerations” is an important step forward to the achievement of the Strategic Operational Objective 1.7 and outcomes on socio-economic considerations. The indicated operational objective includes as a key outcome “Guidelines regarding socio-economic considerations of living modified organism developed and used, as appropriate, by Parties”. Accordingly, the current document under revision is an important but intermediary step in the completion of such endeavour. The descriptive approach applied by the AHTEG is adequate to move forward, and the elements to result from this process is a good start, yet not the final outcome.

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is rooted on following keystone premises clearly indicated in its Preamble: (i) the precautionary approach given the public concern over the potential adverse effects of modern biotechnology on biological diversity, taking into account human health; (ii) the crucial importance to human kind of centers or origin and genetic diversity; and (iii) that international agreements (e.g. environmental and trade) should be mutually supportive to achieve sustainable development. These premises apply to all provisions of the Protocol text, and it should be reflected in a consistent manner in all its decisions, and implementations efforts. Particularly on relevant aspects such as socio-economic considerations of living modified organisms (LMOs). In line of this, it will be of high importance that the “Elements of a Framework for Conceptual Clarity on Socio-Economic Considerations” and further documents on socio-economic considerations reflect the following:

- Precaution and the precautionary approach as guiding principle in the appraisal and decision-making with the goal of preventing adverse effects. To this, not only risks need to be considered, but also socio-economic uncertainties and ambiguities, particularly in the centers of origin and genetic diversity given the complex and intertwined Nature-Society relationships taking place.
- Following the previous, socio-economic considerations and environmental risk assessment are closely inter-related and complementary, then they need to be addressed an integrated manner.
- The particular importance in sustainable development and other visions of holistic welfare - such as respect and care to Mother Earth - of centers of origin and genetic diversity, the eco-social dynamics around biological diversity in megadiverse contries and hotspots of biodiversity, and the value of biological diversity to indigenous and local communities.

- Human health is a cross-cutting socio-economic aspect highly influenced by the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, particularly in countries center of origin and genetic diversity, and to indigenous communities.
- The Cartagena Protocol has as objective and scope the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Accordingly, the prioritized issues within its application, particularly in relation to other international responsibilities, should not be subordinated to purely economic aspects, such as trade.
- The value of biodiversity goes beyond quantitative and monetary valuations. Accordingly, comprehensive assessments need to be implemented, such as the appraisal of the ecosystemic (meaning eco-social) functions that depend on the conservation and sustainable use of biologic diversity, particularly in centers of origin and genetic diversity, and to indigenous and local communities.
- In several cases, particularly in relation to LM crops, specific technological packages are directly related to specific genetic modifications. The inclusion of such packages among the socio-economic issues to be considered is important for comprehensive assessments.
- Well and balanced informed public participation is crucial in all biosafety decision-making processes, but particularly in relation to socio-economic considerations.
- The “Elements of a Framework for Conceptual Clarity on Socio-Economic Considerations” and the further documents that will result from the process of achieving the Strategic Operational Objective 1.7 should not prevent the consideration of holistic approaches to welfare, such a Well Living and the rights to Mother Earth, which are of particular importance in countries center of origin and genetic diversity, countries with rich cultural diversity and indigenous communities.

The text suggestions included in the Annex (underlined as suggested text for inclusion, and ~~striketrough~~ as suggestions for deletion), are rooted in these aspects, which at the same time are in consistency with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety foundational principles.

Annex

ELEMENTS OF A FRAMEWORK FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARITY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group recalled operational objective 1.7 of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the Period 2011-2020: “To, on the basis of research and information exchange, provide relevant guidance on socio-economic considerations that may be taken into account in reaching decisions on the import of living modified organisms” as well as the outcomes for this objective, including the development of guidelines regarding socio-economic considerations of living modified organisms. The Group noted the mandate it had been given in decision BS-VI/13, i.e. to review the outcomes of the online discussion forum, the regional online real-time conferences and the global overview of information on socio-economic considerations, and, on this basis, to develop conceptual clarity in the context of paragraph 1 of Article 26.

The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group examined these outcomes as reported by the Secretariat and as contained in the documents prepared for the meeting, and recognized the challenges involved in the development of conceptual clarity on socio-economic considerations. Recognizing that there is no single agreed definition of what is meant by “socio-economic considerations”, the group decided to adopt a descriptive approach to reach conceptual clarity. In this regard, the group suggested the following elements of a framework, adapted as appropriate to national and regional specificities and consistent with international obligations, for addressing socio-economic considerations.

Objective

To assist Parties to achieve clarity in taking into account socio-economic considerations in the decision-making process on living modified organisms, by identifying and evaluating their potential socio-economic impacts, in accordance with the objective and scope of the Protocol.

General principles

1. Paragraph 1 of Article 26 provides that Parties may take socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making on living modified organisms. Ibis. Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity relies on a wide range of elements, including socio-economic ones, which support the application of sustainability principles.
2. Taking socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making on living modified organisms should be consistent with relevant international obligations, which include, inter alia, trade agreements environmental agreements, human rights agreements, and trade agreements.
3. Taking socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making on living modified organisms should be consistent with existing national regulatory frameworks and policies taking also into account holistic vision and approaches to achieve sustainable development, such as the acknowledgement of the rights of Mother Earth. .
4. In taking socio-economic considerations into account, Parties should consider their local, national and regional circumstances, cultural practices, priorities and needs, in particular those related to the intrinsic and relational values of biological diversity to indigenous and local communities.
5. Taking socio-economic considerations into account in decision-making on living modified organisms should be clear, transparent, and non-discriminatory. (Comment: This needs further explanation. It can be assumed that refers to trade, or access to recourses, rights, etc.)
6. Human health-related issues arising from impacts of living modified organisms on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity should also form part of socio-economic considerations, provided that they are not already addressed in the risk assessment. .(Comment: Do this refer to the current guidance on RA& RM under the CPB? or other international instruments? Need further clarification.)
7. A situation of uncertainty or insufficient information on socio-economic impacts should not prevent socio-economic considerations from being taken into account in reaching a decision.
8. Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity relies on a wide range of elements, including socio-economic ones, which supports the application of sustainability principles.
9. Planning, conducting and evaluating the outcomes of risk assessments and taking socio-economic considerations into account may be complementary in the decision-making process.
10. Public participation and consultation form part of the process of taking socio-economic considerations into account.

Methodological considerations

1) Scope

The scope of methodologies could include the following issues:

- Social
- Economic
- Socio-ecological and economic systems
- Cultural and traditional
- Ethical and religious
- Human health-related

2) Methodological approaches

A wide array of methodological approaches is available to address the complexity of socio-economic considerations, which could include the following:

- Situational analysis and baseline information
- Scenario planning
- Ex-ante and/or Ex-post studies
- Mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative studies
- Public information, consultation and participation modalities, using participatory methods and adapted to the local context
- Multi-criteria analysis
- Analysis of systems of life of Mother Earth
- Socio-economic impact assessments
- Assessment of socio-economic uncertainties and ambiguities
- Multi-dimensional Valuation of biological diversity and ecosystem functions
- Effects on the life systems and their components / biological diversity to indigenous people and local communities
- Effects on the sustainability of living systems and their components
- Holistic and indigenous and local knowledge based
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Any methodology selected should be based on, *inter alia*, the information needs of decision-making processes.

3) Factors affecting methodological approaches

- Socio-economic situation of the indigenous people, if applicable, and local communities
- Macro-, micro- or market structure levels of analysis, depending on the organism, trait and intended use, and its inherent technological package.
- Context and/or case specific at the level of the organism, trait and intended use and its inherent technological package.
- The different stakeholders timely involved in the design of the socio-economic assessment and the analysis of the corresponding results
- The variation and similarities of socio-economic considerations among States and at the subnational level.

Points to consider

1. Any list of elements of socio-economic considerations would be indicative and non-exhaustive.
2. Listing elements of socio-economic considerations based on existing experiences and as contained in the document that summarized the online discussions (document UNEP/CBD/BS/REGCONF-SEC/2/INF/1) would contribute to the future development of guidelines on socio-economic considerations.
3. Elements of socio-economic considerations may be classified using the dimensions below.
4. Elements of socio-economic considerations ~~could~~ should fall into more than one dimension for more comprehensive assessments, considering that socio-economic factors and effects are multi-dimensional.
5. Human health-related and ecological dimensions that are not addressed in risk assessment may be addressed when taking socio-economic considerations into account.

Dimensions:

- (a) Economic: e.g. impact of job creation and opportunities to indigenous people and local communities, impact on income;
- (b) Social: e.g. impact on food security;
- (c) Ecological: e.g. impact on ecosystem functions;
- (d) Cultural and traditional: e.g. impact on seed saving and exchange practices; access to local and traditional foods.
- (e) Religious and ethical: e.g.; ~~impact on seed saving and exchange practices~~ Impact of availability of alternatives and choice
- (f) Human health-related: e.g. impact on nutritional status; impact of the quality of food (e.g. chemical residues).
