



## Information Sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House

The Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) is a mechanism established by Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms (LMOs) and to assist Parties to implement the Protocol. It is accessible at: <http://bch.cbd.int/>.

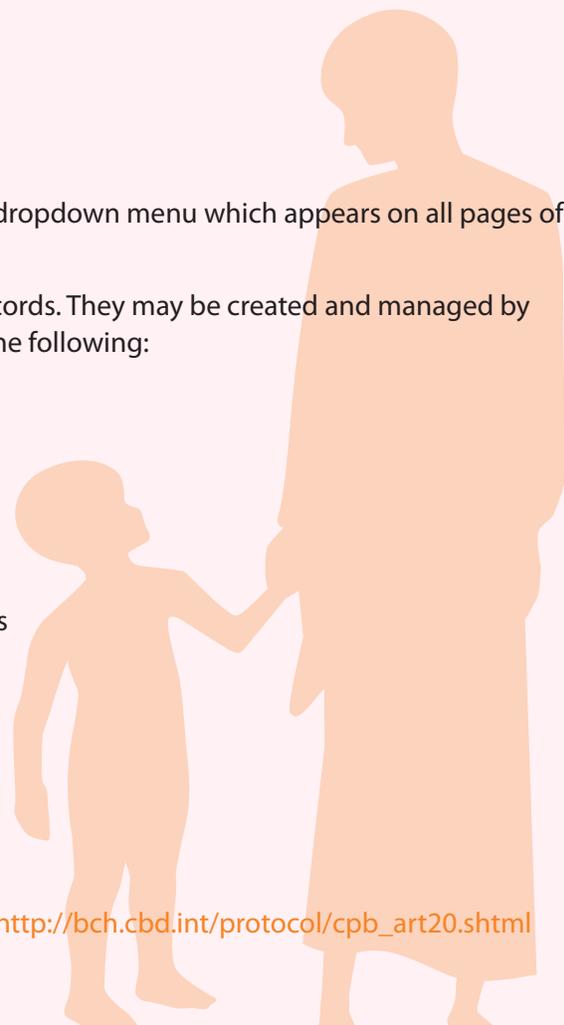
Each Party must designate one National Focal Point for the BCH (BCH-NFP) responsible for managing National Records registered in the BCH through the Management Centre. National Records contain information that Parties are required to provide under Article 20 of the Protocol. They may be created and managed only by BCH-NFPs and National Authorized Users (NAUs) and consist of the following:

- National Biosafety Website or Database
- Competent National Authority
- Biosafety Law, Regulation, Guidelines & Regional and International Agreements
- Country's Decision or any other Communication
- Risk Assessment Generated by a Regulatory Process
- Biosafety Expert
- Report on the assignment undertaken by the Biosafety Expert

The National Records of any country can be accessed from the 'Country Profiles' dropdown menu which appears on all pages of the BCH.

All other categories of information in the BCH are characterized as Reference Records. They may be created and managed by any BCH registered user, subject to validation by the Secretariat, and consist of the following:

- Contact Details
- Capacity Building Activities, Projects and Opportunities
- Capacity-Building Needs Assessment
- Biosafety Organization
- Biosafety Information Resource Centre (BIRC)
- BCH News
- Risk assessment generated by an independent or non-regulatory process
- Living Modified Organism (LMO)
- Genetic element
- Organism





In order to help BCH users familiarize themselves with the functioning of the BCH's Management Center, without altering the content of the official portal, a Training Site (<http://bch.cbd.int/resources/trainingsite.shtml>) is available. Other resources include (i) BCH Tutorials (<http://bch.cbd.int/help/tutorials/>) composed of five modules providing guidance on the basic features of the different BCH sections; (ii) a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (<http://bch.cbd.int/help/faq/>); and (iii) an extensive 'Help' section developed by UNEP-GEF.

As a result of extensive revamping of the BCH's Central Portal, access to cross-referenced data and the retrieval of information from multiple databases has been greatly improved. For example, in the 'Finding Information' section, a number of primary search interfaces have been merged and an 'Advanced Search' function has been implemented. In the 'Registering Information' Section, the Common Formats, intended to assist BCH users to gather and organize information prior to its submission online, have been extensively revised for greater ease of use.

## Fast Facts

- The Central Portal of the BCH is available in all the 6 official languages of the United Nations: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
- For countries that have limited Internet connectivity (<http://bch.cbd.int/resources/downloads/>), the Secretariat ships offline copies of the BCH in DVD-ROM format.
- To further facilitate information exchange, the Secretariat has established a number of Online Forums and Collaborative Portals on the BCH (<http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/>).
- LMO Quick-links (<http://bch.cbd.int/resources/quicklinks.shtml>) provide access to information relating to specific LMOs have been developed and made available through the BCH. They are small image files that can be easily copied and pasted and identify an LMO through its unique identifier, trade name and a link to the BCH where information on the LMO is available.
- The Cartagena Protocol requires all Parties to inform the public on how to access the BCH ([http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb\\_art23.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art23.shtml)).

## Learn More

Information Sharing: [http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb\\_art20.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art20.shtml)

Biosafety Clearing-House: <http://bch.cbd.int/>

Online forums and collaborative portals: <http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/>

Mailing List: <http://bch.cbd.int/resources/maillinglist.shtml>

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

Frequently asked questions: [http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb\\_faq.shtml](http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_faq.shtml)

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