

Concept note regarding the Network of Laboratories for Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms

At its fifth meeting, in decision BS-V/9, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP) mandated a number of activities for laboratories involved in the detection and identification of living modified organisms (LMOs). Specifically, the COP-MOP requested the establishment, through the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH), of an electronic network of laboratories involved in the detection and identification of LMOs and the organization of workshops for heads of detection laboratories. The COP-MOP also requested Parties and encouraged other Governments and relevant organizations to make available to the BCH, *inter alia*, methods for the detection and identification of LMOs.

In decision BS-V/16, the COP-MOP adopted the Strategic Plan for implementation of the Protocol for the period 2011-2020. Among the outcomes set out by the Strategic Plan, the following are relevant to LMO detection and identification:¹

(i) Easy to use and reliable technical tools for the detection of unauthorized LMOs are developed and made available (under Focal Area 1, Operational Objective 1.6);

(ii) Guidance developed to assist Parties to detect and take measures to respond to unintentional releases of living modified organisms (under Focal Area 1, Operational Objective 1.8); and

(iii) Personnel are trained and equipped for sampling, detection and identification of LMOs (under Focal Area 2, Operational Objective 2.3).

At its sixth meeting, in decision BS-VI/3 on Capacity-Building, the COP-MOP adopted a framework and action plan aimed at advancing the implementation of the capacity-building components of the Strategic Plan. The indicators, results and activities linked to outcome (iii) above as adopted in the capacity-building action plan are available in the annex to the decision.²

With a view to assisting Parties to address their capacity-building needs and to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan related to the detection of LMOs, and taking into account the activities and expected results of the Capacity-Building Action Plan, the Secretariat is reconvening the Network of Laboratories for Detection and Identification of LMOs and launching a process comprising online discussions and a face-to-face workshop to bring together representatives of laboratories performing LMO detection. The Network can be accessed at http://bch.cbd.int/onlineconferences/portal_detection/lab_network.shtml.

The objectives of the Network are to (i) develop a strategy to address Parties' needs regarding detection and identification of LMOs to be presented as a set of recommendations for consideration of the COP-MOP at its seventh meeting; and (ii) compile laboratory methods for the detection of LMOs, in particular those unauthorized or unintentionally released into the environment for publication in the Biosafety Technical Series.³

In line with the tentative timeframe developed by the Secretariat for the entire process and annexed hereto, a new series of online discussions will start in May 2013 and will focus on the following themes:

- (a) National regulatory context and current capacity for detecting LMOs;
- (b) Overview of existing networks for LMO detection and identification;

¹ The Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/issues/cpb_stplan.shtml.

² See decision BS-VI/3, annex 1, page 22 at <http://bch.cbd.int/database/attachment/?id=13599>.

³ Previous issues of the Biosafety Technical Series are available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_technicalseries.shtml.

- (c) Compilation of laboratory methods for the detection and identification of LMOs;
- (d) Access to DNA sequence information and reference material;
- (e) Specificity, sensitivity and costs of established methods for LMO detection;
- (f) Emerging techniques for LMO detection;
- (g) Challenges and progress in the detection of LMOs unintentionally released into the environment and unauthorized LMOs;
- (h) Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

An international workshop for representatives of laboratories involved in the detection of LMOs will be held tentatively in September 2013. Participants in the workshop will be selected from among those participating actively in the online discussion groups.

As per notification SCBD/BS/CG/KG/jh/77120,⁴ the nomination of LMO detection laboratories to the Electronic Network of Laboratories is ongoing and can be made online through the BCH at <http://bch.cbd.int/managementcentre/edit/organization.shtml> (sign in required).

For further information, please contact the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity at bch@cbd.int.

⁴ Notification SCBD/BS/CG/KG/jh/77120 is available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-146-bs-en.pdf>.

Annex

Tentative timeframe for the activities of the Network of Laboratories for Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms

Tentative dates	Activities
20 May – 2 June 2013	<i>Online discussions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National regulatory context and current capacity for the detection of LMOs• Overview of existing networks for LMOs detection and identification
20 May – Ongoing	<i>Online discussion:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compilation of laboratory methods for the detection and identification of LMOs
16 – 30 June 2013	<i>Online discussions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to DNA sequence information and reference material• Specificity, sensitivity and costs of established methods for detection of LMOs
14 – 28 July 2013	<i>Online discussions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emerging techniques for the detection of LMOs• Challenges and progress in the detection of LMOs unintentionally released into the environment and unauthorized LMOs
16 – 18 September 2013	<i>Face-to-face meeting:</i> Workshop on the detection and identification of LMOs
20 October – 3 November 2013	<i>Online discussion:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol – Part I
17 November – 1 December 2013	<i>Online discussion:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol – Part II