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NOTIFICATION

Online reporting tool of the Convention on Biological Diversity ready for use

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am pleased to provide Parties with updated information on the development and functionalities of the online reporting tool of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to invite Parties to begin using this tool.

The Conference of the Parties, in decision VIII/14, paragraph 10, decided that an online facility would be established to support national reporting, through the clearing-house mechanism, for use by Parties on a voluntary basis. The Conference of the Parties, in its decisions XII/29, paragraph 4, and XII/2 B, paragraph 18 (a), requested the Executive Secretary to make the online reporting tool of the clearing-house mechanism fully operational as soon as possible, and invited Parties and other Governments, on a voluntary basis, to make available information on progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and related national targets and on indicators and approaches towards assessing progress, including through the use of the online reporting tool of the clearing-house mechanism.

In response, the Executive Secretary has developed and improved the online reporting tool of the clearing-house mechanism, following the feedback and suggestions provided by some Parties, members of its Informal Advisory Committee and partner Convention Secretariats after they had tested the tool before the nineteenth meeting of SBSTTA in November 2015. I am pleased to announce that the online reporting tool is now ready for use by Parties and can be accessed at <https://chm.cbd.int/submit/online-reporting>. It is anticipated that further modules will be added to fully align the tool with the guidelines for the sixth national report once these have been agreed.

This online reporting tool allows Parties to provide national assessments on a periodical basis of their progress towards achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets and/or relevant national targets. This tool also allows Parties to submit national reports, national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), as well as provide information on national targets and indicators. Once published online, national reports, NBSAPs, and assessments are also viewable in map form at www.cbd.int/reports/map.

I would encourage all Parties to start using the online reporting tool to submit information as much as possible, particularly related to information on national targets. This information, once formally submitted, will be available for inclusion in documentation to be prepared for meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies until 2020, thus enhancing the decision-making processes under the Convention and supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020.

To: CBD and CHM National Focal Points



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In order to facilitate the management of national users' accounts, a new feature has been introduced on the clearing-house mechanism (available at <https://chm.cbd.int/management/national-users>). This feature allows CBD national focal points to directly manage the accounts of National Publishing Authorities (NPAs) and National Authorized Users (NAUs).

A user's manual is currently available at www.cbd.int/chm/doc/chm-latest-guide-online-reporting.pdf to assist Parties in using this tool. A detailed description for the workflow process of online submissions is provided in the annex to this notification.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate a better integration of national reporting to the Convention and its Protocols, as well as facilitate alignment in reporting among the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio Conventions, the functions of the online reporting tool will be aligned with the guidelines for the sixth national report so that Parties can submit sections of the report as soon as they have been completed. This will facilitate the timely preparation and submission of the sixth national report.

Considering that the online reporting tool is in its initial phase, I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on its use to help the Secretariat further improve the tool to facilitate its use by Parties. Parties can send feedback and suggestions to a dedicated e-mail address at onlinereporting@cbd.int. The Secretariat will summarize the experiences and lessons learned from the use of the online reporting tool and report to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Cancun, Mexico, on 4-17 December 2016.

We hope that you will find the online reporting tool useful and we are looking forward to hearing your suggestions to help improve this online reporting tool, and more importantly, enhance the national reporting process under the Convention. I thank you in advance for your cooperation and support to the work of the Convention.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary

Annex enclosed

Annex – Modalities for online submissions

Background

The purpose of this annex is to provide Parties with further information and clarifications on the modalities for online submissions to the central CHM, as advised by the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM-IAC) at its meeting on 30-31 October 2015.

This annex also shows how the online submission systems of the three clearing-houses hosted by the CBD Secretariat have been harmonized.

CBD user accounts

The CBD has consolidated user accounts from all CBD websites and has merged them into one CBD user overall account system for all clearing houses. Any user responsible for submitting information to one of the clearing-houses must first create their CBD user account at <https://accounts.cbd.int>.

A valid email address is required to create a CBD user account. For security reasons, it is advised to select a strong unique password different from the password used to access the email.

In the past, the national user accounts were assigned by the CBD Secretariat, with the information provided by National Users. In order to facilitate the management of national users' accounts, a new feature (available at <https://chm.cbd.int/management/national-users>) has been introduced on the clearing-house mechanism. This feature allows CBD National Focal points to directly manage user accounts themselves by enabling them to add or remove a user and their associated roles and country affiliation online without the need for the support from the Secretariat. More specifically, the following can be done depending on the national role:

- CBD National Focal Points (NFPs) can manage National Publishing Authorities (NPAs) and National Authorized Users (NAUs);
- National Publishing Authorities (NPAs) can manage National Authorized Users (NAUs)
- All National Users (NFPs, NPAs & NAUs) can view all users affiliated with their country as well as their associated user roles.

Please kindly note that changes of CBD National Focal Points cannot be designated using this new online feature.

General user roles

Once a CBD user account has been created, one or more user roles can be assigned to this account. Generally speaking, there are two types of roles related to online submission of national information by Parties:

1. The **drafting** role – This role is assigned to users called "**National Authorized Users**" (NAUs). It allows these users to prepare information records and save them as draft. When a draft is complete, these users can submit this draft to the publishing authority responsible to validate it and to make it publicly available.
2. The **publishing** role – This role is assigned to users who have been formally designated as the "**National Publishing Authority**" (NPA) for one or more information types (also called common formats). These users can also prepare information records, but in addition they have the authority to make them publicly available. Furthermore, these users are responsible for validating draft records prepared by national authorized users in order to make these records publicly available.

It is important to keep in mind that a user designated as a national publishing authority may have to get approval from his/her hierarchy before making some national content publicly available. This higher-level approval process fully depends on national institutional arrangements and is beyond the scope of the present document.

Online submission workflow for national records

The national workflow for record creation can be summarized as follows:

1. The user signs in with his/her account;
2. The user creates a new record of a particular information type (based on a common format);
3. The user edits the online form; this editing process can include several sections or tabs;
4. At any time, the user may decide to save the edited record as a draft record;
5. When the draft record is completed:
 - (a) A user who is the NPA can decide to make the record publicly available.
 - (b) A user who is a NAU can request the NPA to publish the draft record .
6. The user can then work on other records;
7. Finally, the user signs out.

In the case of 5(b), the workflow continues as follows with the user who is the NPA:

1. The user is notified by email that a new record requires validation;
2. The user signs in;
3. The user sees that the record(s) awaiting validation in the items requiring his/her attention.
4. The user reviews the the record and can decide to:
 - (a) Publish it directly if everything is OK;
 - (b) Edit it and then publish it;
 - (c) Reject it, meaning that the record goes back to its original drafter who will have to edit it again.
5. The user can then work on the validation/publishing of other records;
6. Finally, the user signs out.

Please do not hesitate to contact the CBD Secretariat (secretariat@cbd.int) for advice on suitable assignments of roles.

Where to get help

Apart from the user manual (www.cbd.int/chm/doc/chm-latest-guide-online-reporting.pdf) the Secretariat proposes now a live help button that is available at the bottom right of each CHM pages. During office hours (9AM to 5PM in Montreal) a staff member will answer your questions live and guide you further. When the Secretariat is closed, the same live help button allows you to send an email to relevant staff who will reply to you during office hours.