



UNEP-GEF Projects on
Development of National Biosafety Frameworks &
Capacity Building for Effective Participation on the
Biosafety Clearing House



**Pacific Islands Workshop on the Regional Biosafety Clearing-
House (BCH) and Capacity Building for Implementation of
National Biosafety Frameworks (NBFs)**

Apia, Samoa, 2-5 November 2004

REPORT

In collaboration with:



Secretariat for the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme (SPREP)

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCH	Biosafety Clearing-House
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CNA	Competent National Authority
CBDBCH	Global BCH hosted by the CBD Secretariat
CNBCH	Canadian Node of the BCH
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
LMO	Living Modified Organism
nBCH	National BCH
NCC	National Coordinating Committee
NEA	National Executing Agency
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPD	National Project Document
NBF	National Biosafety Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PNBCH	Pacific Node of the BCH
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPREP	Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

INTRODUCTION

1. The UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit in collaboration with the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), organized a workshop on 2 –5 November, 2004, for Pacific Island Countries (PICs) participating in the UNEP-GEF Project on “Development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBFs)” to discuss capacity building for implementation of NBFs, and the establishment of a regional node of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) under the UNEP-GEF Project on “Capacity Building for Effective Participation on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) of the Cartagena Protocol, hereafter referred to as the BCH project.

UNEP-GEF Project on “Development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBFs)”

2. The UNEP-GEF Project on Development of NBFs is aimed at:
 - a) Assisting eligible countries to prepare their National Biosafety Frameworks, using a country-driven process. The NBFs will enable participating countries to meet their requirements under the Cartagena Protocol and to address their national priorities on biosafety.
 - b) Promoting regional and sub-regional collaboration and exchange of experience on issues of relevance to the National Biosafety Frameworks. This will help to make efficient use of financial and human resources, establish regional and sub-regional networks, and promote harmonization of risk assessment procedures and regulatory instruments; and
 - c) Providing advice and support to countries throughout the development of their National Biosafety Frameworks.
3. All fourteen (14) PICs eligible for the UNEP-GEF Project on Development of NBFs are participating in this project. The different PICs are at different stages of development of their NBFs. As at 1 November 2004, progress could be roughly categorized as follows:

Group A: *Tonga, Samoa, Palau and Niue.*

These PICs have finished drafting their NBFs ready for review and posting on the web before the end of 2004.

Group B: *Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, and Papua New Guinea.*

These PICs have completed surveys for baseline information and have analysed the survey results in preparation for drafting NBFs.

Group C: *Solomon Islands, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, and Fiji.*

These PICs are in the process of collecting baseline information through surveys.

Group D: *Tuvalu.*

Tuvalu is in the process of signing the National Project Document in anticipation of the approval of the Add-on project proposal by the GEF Council in November 2004.

Capacity Building for Implementation of NBFs.

4. As some countries are now coming to the end of developing their NBFs, it was thought that this would be an opportune time to bring everyone together to share experiences and lessons learned, and to discuss capacity building needs for implementation of NBFs.

UNEP-GEF Project on “Capacity Building for Effective Participation on the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) of the Cartagena Protocol”.

5. The UNEP-GEF BCH Project has the following objectives:
 - a) Strengthen capacity in eligible countries through training of key stakeholders. The training will cover (i) data entry and management; (ii) identification and access to information required for decision-making under the Protocol and (iii) access to, and registration of, information in the BCH,
 - b) Create an enabling environment for Parties to meet their obligations for implementation of the Protocol by providing participating countries with appropriate computer hardware and software for data storage and exchange (with the BCH) over the Internet and by other means; and
 - c) Support further capacity building through the development and dissemination of an interactive computer-based training package, which includes the BCH toolkit. This training package will be developed at the global level in close collaboration with the CBD Secretariat to ensure that input from national BCH components is consistent with the BCH central portal.
6. Prior to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP1), Malaysia, February 2004, five (5) PICs were eligible to be involved in the BCH Project. A decision by COP-MOP1 to expand the eligibility criteria to: (i) Parties of the CBD; and (ii) an indication of political commitment to ratify the Cartagena Protocol, means all 14 PICs in the Development of NBFs project will also be eligible for the UNEP-GEF BCH Project, subject to approval of the add-on project proposal by GEF Council in November 2004.

A Pacific ‘regional node’ for the BCH.

7. In numerous Pacific regional meetings on biosafety (including the Pacific regional meeting of National Project Coordinators and National Executing Agencies for the UNEP-GEF Project on Development of NBFs in November 2003 in Apia, and during discussion of sub-regional cooperation at the SIDS Workshop in May 2004 in Trinidad), it was recommended that a ‘Pacific regional node’ of the BCH should be established - to be hosted by a regional organization - as a means of optimising resources and to promote sub-regional cooperation on BCH capacity building.
8. In recognition of the special needs of SIDS, the BCH Project with support from Canada, is working in collaboration with SPREP to explore how the idea of a Pacific ‘regional node’ can be made into reality. The idea is to allow a regional BCH to be

interoperable with the central portal, and to be hosted and maintained by SPREP while allowing PICs to update information directly. The value-added of a system like this is to provide a country presence to all the countries and giving them the advantage of controlling country information and its appearance on the internet, while freeing them from the task of creating, maintaining and hosting a national BCH interoperable with the central portal.

9. This meeting was an opportunity to take the idea of a Pacific 'regional node' forward.

Participation

10. Each PIC was invited to send two participants for the workshop:
 - i. A person from the National Focal Point of the Protocol or CBD BCH Focal Point **who will be interacting with the system to manage data, and will be involved in designing and managing the BCH.**
 - ii. A person from the National Executing Agency **who will take the lead in the design and planning of Implementation of NBF Projects.**

(The Participants List is attached as Annex 1 to the present report)

OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

11. Dr Keneti Faulalo, Assistant Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit informed participants that due to prior commitments by the Minister of Environment of Samoa, the opening ceremony was rescheduled for after lunch. He instead invited the NPC from Niue to say a prayer before the start of the Workshop.
12. At the opening ceremony, Reverend Lotu Uele led the Workshop in prayer. This was followed by a welcome speech by Dr. Nizar Mohamed, Regional Coordinator for Asia-Pacific, UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit. Dr Mohamed, on behalf of the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit, thanked the Samoan Government for providing the opportunity to host this meeting in Apia. He thanked SPREP for their support in organising the meeting and in particular for hosting Dr Faulalo which has enabled the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit to coordinate the 14 PICs from within the region. He commented that due to time differences and the number of countries in the Project, it was very difficult to provide support for PICs from Geneva. He concluded by saying that the Pacific region was setting a good example for the rest of the world in regional cooperation, in particular the Small Island Developing States.
13. Mr Vito Lui, Deputy Director, SPREP delivered the key address. He stated that SPREP was delighted to host UNEP-GEF through Dr Faulalo. He commented that SPREP was aware of the importance of biodiversity in the region. He added that SPREP was especially aware that the environment could be ruined through the use of genetically modified organisms while at the same time being improved through the discovery of new cures for illnesses. He offered support for the concept of a regional mechanism for sharing information on biosafety.
14. Hon. Tagaloa Tuala Sale Tagaloa, Minister for the Environment, Samoa, then delivered the Opening Speech. He emphasised the importance of addressing the issue of biosafety within the context of each countries efforts to achieve sustainable development. He highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and in this regard, he offered full support to the idea of a regional node for the Biosafety Clearing House. He thanked SPREP for acting as the host and for providing the base for further support to the countries on the Cartagena Protocol. He thanked UNEP-GEF and Canada for their support. He wished everyone a fruitful and productive workshop.

Objectives and Work plan

15. Dr Faulalo introduced the objectives of the Workshop. He explained that the workshop was to build on the progress that has been made on biosafety in PICs over the past years, focussing on the following:
 - Better understanding of the BCH;
 - Better understanding of capacity building needs for effective participation in the BCH;
 - To discuss the establishment of a Pacific Regional ‘node’ of the BCH;
 - To identify capacity building needs for biosafety;

- Training on ways to address capacity needs for implementation of NBFs;
and To share experiences and to strengthen regional cooperation.
16. He introduced the agenda and work plan as set out in Annex 2 to the present report. He explained that from Day 2 to lunch on Day 4, there would be two parallel sessions on the BCH and capacity building for implementation of NBFs.

Ground Rules

17. Dr Mohamed set out some ground rules based on trust, courtesy, respect, and assertiveness, and requested participants to observe them in the next four days

Expectations and Concerns

18. Dr Mohamed invited participants to raise their expectations and concerns in connection with the outcome of the Workshop. Annex 3 to the present report summarises the comments from the participants, as well as the comments made at the closing session on the last day, assessing whether the expectations and concerns had been met.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BCH AND THE BCH PROJECT

19. Ms Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Task Manager of the BCH Project, UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit, gave an introduction to the BCH and the project, including options for national participation in the BCH. She covered the background and objectives of the BCH project; eligibility criteria for the project, including which five PICs were eligible prior to COP-MOP1 and the decisions of COP-MOP1 to expand the criteria to parties of the CBD and a show of political commitment to ratify the Protocol by the end of the project, which meant the rest of PICs are now all eligible subject to GEF Council approval in their November Meeting. She summarised the capacity building activities to be covered under the BCH Project, which were training and providing software and hardware equipment.
20. Ms Mathur-Filipp expressed hope that a Pacific regional node would be developed, one that would be maintained by SPREP thus relieving countries of the responsibilities involved with managing server and systems.
21. She outlined the four options set up by the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat (SCBD) that countries could choose from for setting up their systems to access the BCH. The options are:
- To enter own data into the central portal;
 - To send information to the Management Centre at the SCBD who will then enter the data, i.e., a non-internet option;
 - Set up national BCH, then 'push' information into the central portal; and
 - Set up national BCH, then allow the central portal to 'pull' information.

22. Ms Mathur-Filipp reiterated that all information entered into the BCH need to be cleared and approved by governments as determined by responsibilities under the National Biosafety Frameworks.

Canadian BCH – A Case Study

23. Mr Marcus Ballinger, Senior Policy Advisor for Environment Canada and Canadian Focal Point for the BCH, outlined Canada’s rationale for establishing a national node of the BCH, rather than using the central portal. Mr. Ballinger acknowledged the extensive and valuable work that has been done by the Secretariat in establishing the central portal and noted that the Canadian national node of the BCH draws significantly from that work, but also noted that the Secretariat’s flexibility to meet individual country desires is constrained to a significant degree in that it must create a system that is equally useable by all countries. Mr. Ballinger further noted that the Secretariat generally could not provide the means to report on information other than that specifically required by the Protocol or authorized in direction given to it by the ICCP and/or MOP. As a consequence, the central portal must by necessity restrict the amount of flexibility that can be offered to countries in presenting their biosafety information.
24. Mr. Ballinger outlined the following specific objectives for establishing a national node.
 - 1) It was noted that while the central portal permits searches for all records for an individual country, the search result lists records in the order in which they were entered rather than in logical subject groupings. This may not be critical if a country only has a few records, but it was noted that Canada has over 60 records currently on the central portal and anticipates having well over 100 in the near future. The lack of logical subject groupings makes it difficult to get a comprehensive view of the situation in a particular country. By establishing a national node of the BCH (nBCH) Canada can provide a “single window” or “one stop shop” for presenting all Canadian information in a structured format.
 - 2) Setting up an nBCH enables Canada to meet objectives beyond strict compliance with the Protocol’s information reporting requirements such as using the BCH for public awareness and public education as well as providing additional context or information not required by the Protocol and hence not easily possible using the central portal. It was noted by Ms. Mathur-Filipp that in Asia, a lot of countries were setting up nBCHs to enable them to translate and present information in their own languages. Mr. Ballinger noted that Canada faces a similar situation in that it is required to present all information in its two official languages, French and English.
 - 3) From an administrative perspective, Canada wanted to create a decentralized structure for approving records that reflects its domestic legislative authorities for approvals.

The ‘regional node’ concept

25. Dr Faulalo presented a brief summary of how the idea of a ‘regional node’ to the BCH came about. He pointed to the recommendations of the previous regional meetings on biosafety in 1999, 2000 and 2003 in which PICs recommended that regional mechanisms be established to share information on biosafety. This recommendation was further discussed by PICs during the SIDS Workshop in Trinidad in May 2004, which prompted the UNEP-GEF BCH Project to look at ways to make this a reality, in

cooperation with Pacific Regional organisations such as SPREP. He acknowledged with appreciation the willingness of Canada to partner with the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit and SPREP in this initiative.

26. Dr Faulalo briefed the participants on his discussion with SPREP Management in which they expressed support for establishment of a regional clearing-house. He reported that SPREP Management sees this initiative as being in line with all other areas of the SPREP Strategic Work Programme in which regional clearing-houses for sharing environment and sustainable development information have been proposed. He concluded that no decisions have yet been made, including whether SPREP will host a regional node. It was up to the participants of this meeting to decide over the next few days how we should proceed.
27. During discussion, the benefits of a regional node were discussed compared to each country establishing its own nBCH. It was noted that only five countries currently have web pages, where as SPREP has its site on the web 24 hours a day. The issue of how the regional experts for the BCH to be trained by the UNEP-GEF BCH Project would add value to the establishment of a 'regional node'. It was highlighted that the countries would not miss out on country support from the UNEP-GEF BCH Project. The issue of sustainability of capacity building was discussed. It was noted that the UNEP-GEF BCH Project was only going to run for a limited time, while organisations such as SPREP will continue to provide capacity building on biosafety to countries in the long term. There was general support for the idea of a 'regional node' of the BCH.

Using the BCH

28. Ms Mathur-Filipp took participants through the BCH via the Internet, explaining how to navigate through the web site www.bch.biodiv.org. She explained the different areas of the BCH site and gave examples of how to access information such as looking for someone on the 'Roster of Experts'. She also demonstrated how one could use the central portal to enter information directly.
29. The issues discussed following the presentation included, the complexity of the BCH, confidentiality within bilateral agreements, the BCH needing to cater not only for the Protocol but for implementation of biosafety policies which are being developed within the context of biodiversity and national development priorities, and how records should be validated at the country level before being made public on the BCH.

Demonstration of Canadian Node of the BCH

30. Mr. Ballinger gave a brief overview of the Canadian Node of the BCH (CNBCH) and then took the participants through a brief tour of the Web site (www.bch.gc.ca). Mr. Ballinger explained that the CNBCH uses the same "look and feel" of the central portal as much as possible to facilitate users moving between the central portal and the CNBCH. He noted that the core of the information on the Web site is the Canadian subset of the BCH data that appears on the central portal and then highlighted the additional Canadian content and contextual explanatory text related to the data that was

made possible by creating a national node. He then demonstrated how the Web site presents all Canadian information in both official languages, English and French.

31. During discussion, Dr Faulalo brought to the attention of the participants that in the global BCH, the options given for Competent National Authorities (CNA) were based on Protocol language (i.e. CNA for contained use, transit, release, etc.). In reality at the country level, the CNAs were based more on mandates of agencies across sectors (e.g. environment, fisheries, agriculture, etc.). Mr. Ballinger noted that Canada had also experienced difficulty with the options provided on the global BCH and had opted to add an additional field on the CNBCH to reflect the manner in which Canada's CNA responsibilities were categorized.

SPREP and environmental clearing-houses in the Pacific Islands

32. Mr Herve Dropsy, IT Manager for SPREP, presented an overview of SPREP's role in environment clearing houses in support of its mandate to promote cooperation in protecting the environment in the Pacific. He emphasised that SPREP was not a Party to the Protocol so could not generate any information. Its role was to provide the support countries need for effective participation on the BCH. They were therefore guided by what countries needed and by whatever support they request. He gave an overview of the SPREP web site, which was redesigned in 2003 (www.sprep.org.ws). He highlighted the role of SPREP in collating all environmental information about each country in one place, which would be a benefit for SPREP hosting the Pacific regional node of the BCH as each country could combine its biosafety information with information already available for that country on the SPREP database. He also pointed to SPREP being part of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), which meant that the regional BCH could be linked with any other capacity building activities in the region, delivered by other CROP agencies such as SOPAC and SPC.
33. During discussion, it was reiterated that the decision for which regional organisation to host the regional BCH was up to the countries to decide.
34. The participants were divided into two Parallel Sessions: Establishment of a Pacific Regional BCH and Capacity Building for implementation of NBFs.

Parallel Session A: ESTABLISHMENT OF A PACIFIC REGIONAL BCH

Development of a National Node of the BCH - the Canadian BCH experience.

35. Mr. Ballinger made a presentation on the seven-step process Canada went through in setting up their national node. The presentation was based on the participants' resource document "Managing the Development of a National/Regional Node of the Biosafety Clearing-House" (see CD ROM of Workshop resource documents). Mr. Ballinger explained that to establish its national node, Canada was required to:
- (i) Identify the stakeholders.
 - (ii) Establish management and decision-making structures and budgets.
 - (iii) Identify and interpret the information requirements of the Protocol.
 - (iv) Identify existing information and gaps compared to the Protocol's requirements.
 - (v) Determine what additional information will be provided.
 - (vi) Develop the infrastructure for the national node.
 - (vii) Modify or create data and metadata.
36. Mr. Ballinger noted that although the steps are presented as a sequence, the process was in fact not linear, but iterative and that in their experience, it was often necessary to revisit earlier steps before moving forward again. He also noted that the Canadian Node of the BCH was a "living" Web site and that as new requirements arise and need to be reflected on the Web site it may be necessary to go through the seven steps again. Mr. Ballinger suggested that this seven-step process could be adapted for use in developing a Pacific Regional Node of the BCH, but noted that each step except (v) and (vi) would need to be gone through to some degree even if a country chose not to establish a national node of the BCH and use the central portal instead.
37. Mr Alain Leduc, Information Systems Analyst, Environment Canada then gave a presentation on the IT infrastructure and different components of the CNBCH. He clarified that 'data' was the information resource described in the BCH. This could take the form of, for example, a legal document, an LMO or an organization such as a company. He observed that standardized metadata was necessary to properly describe data and to make the search process more efficient. Mr. Leduc explained the creation of metadata and its route from the metadata manager and/or collection manager, via Internet to the database, e.g., hosted on a SPREP server if it were chosen to host the regional node, then (after approval by the manager) to the Global BCH hosted by the CBD Secretariat (CBDBCH). The following explains the various roles in the metadata entry tool:

Metadata Manager	a user who is able to create, view and update records
Collection Manager	a user who may approve and archive records, as well as manage metadata manager accounts
System Administrator	a user who has all access permissions

38. The discussion that followed focused on the interaction between the metadata manager and collection manager giving approval, the need to have an email system to make this interaction possible, the need to make sure that the system enables the approval by the collection manager to be done in-country before information were allowed to be published. It was explained that the SPREP server will only serve like an ISP and that no one in SPREP will get to see the information before approval was given by a collection manager at the country level for the information to be published and made available on the BCH. Mr Leduc suggested that the database hosted on a SPREP server should be seen as part of each country's software.
39. Mr Leduc went on to explain that the database is a software used to store the information. He stated the web service was a key component for interoperability with the CBDBCH and was a very secure way to exchange information. Mr Leduc explained how to search for metadata. He explained that individuals in each country would be able to send a query to the database held at SPREP, if it were chosen as the regional node host, or could send the query straight to the CBDBCH database and would get the same results.
40. To demonstrate how the system would work, Mr Leduc explained the workings of the CNBCH web site, which was accessible to both stakeholders and the general public. Subjects included the search engine, whose job it was to efficiently find information, and style sheets which were used to improve the look and feel of the information on the web site. Mr. Leduc observed that all the components of the web site were developed with re-use in mind and could be used as part of a different information system. Mr. Leduc then explained, in response to the concerns of certain participants, that for each country to have its local copy of the database would require that they each had their own hardware and manage each of the system components, which would not be a practical approach and would be outside the scope of the Canadian involvement in this project.
41. The discussion that followed focused on ownership of information, the need to consider the regional database as part of each country's system and equipment, how the regional database would not remove ability of the collection manager to look at each record to assess granting approval or not. It was explained that even though the database was hosted on a SPREP server, no one could access each country's portion of the database until the collection manager has given approval.
42. The issue of how information would be updated was also discussed. Mr. Ballinger explained that an update to a record (e.g. a change of telephone number for a contact) would be considered a revision, with the change being denoted by a revision number associated with the existing record number. This revision number would appear in a "revision" field in the record but the record number itself would not change. Previous versions of the record would be archived and could be accessed if required.
43. There was also discussion concerning countries that might not want to be part of the regional database because of they had developed their own database already, such as Tonga. Mr. Leduc explained that it was possible for countries to map across the databases if they could identify which items of data corresponded to each other in the two databases, e.g. connecting the two different headings for the same record type, but

this is outside the scope of the Canadian involvement in this project. Ms Mathur-Filipp clarified that not all countries might want to be part of the regional database in the first place, and that countries were attending this meeting to decide whether they wanted to be so. She said that countries could always connect straight to the CBDBCH. Ms Mathur-Filipp added that if a country already had a database, it was possible that it did not want to be connected to the SPREP database. In such a case, a country could use this session of the workshop to find out about the BCH system and how it works

System Components for a regional node

44. Mr. Leduc presented an overview of the different functionalities of the entry tool, including the creation and update of records. He provided a diagrammatic presentation of the database and summarised the relationships between each common formats in the database. He then gave examples of search methods and stressed that the look of the website could be altered according to the needs of the individual country.
45. During discussion, the flexibility to add extra fields as required was discussed. There was clarification provided on the use of terms such as 'Metadata user' versus 'user', and was decided the term 'Metadata manager' might be better than 'user', i.e. those creating record in the database.
46. There was discussion on national versus regional systems and how each country could have their own identity within a regional system. Mr Ballinger explained that each participating country could have its own Web page through which the participating country's records could be accessed. For example, it would be possible to have a separate Fijian page, Tongan page, or Samoan page that could be accessed directly on the Web (e.g. www.bch.ws). The records of the individual countries could be accessed from these individual pages. In addition, or alternatively, it would be possible to have a SPREP regional BCH page with entry points for each country on it. The SPREP page could also be set up to permit searches across the database for information from all participating countries.

System Configuration

47. Ms Mathur-Filipp introduced the System Configuration workbook, which was provided as a participant's resource document (see CD ROM of Workshop documents). She stressed that the filling in of the workbook at the workshop would not mean that the information contained in it would be 'set in stone'. She explained that she knew that the workbook would have to be taken back to each country before any information was accepted.
48. Mr Leduc then took the participants through the workbook, questioning the participants about their understanding of each section of the workbook and providing examples of what information would be required for each section.
49. The questions and answers that followed focused on clarification of terms such as 'rights and privileges', which was clarified as the authority of each person in each position (i.e. the Metadata manager, Collection Manager, System Administrator). It was

explained that one person could act in all the roles and could collect, enter and authorise records if required.

50. The participants then went through the System Configuration workbook on the understanding that information they were providing at the workshop were only preliminary. It was explained that there were some information that would be useful to know, for instance, the contacts' names at this time, but that the information about the number of collections each country required was not needed at this point in time. Ms Mathur-Filipp explained that work done on the workbook during the workshop acted primarily as an exercise for the participants, and as an introduction for each country to the processes and flows of information involved.
51. The following were the results from participants going through the workbook:
- The group accepted that a collection manager would receive e-mail notification after a metadata manager had added a record to the database.
 - The option allowing notification to other people was a feature of the system whereby someone could subscribe to the information, or alternatively where all other national nodes could be notified.
 - There was no objection to having all records kept on a central database.
 - There was no objection to the record numbering system proposed.
 - Regarding the possibility of referencing another country's records (the country creating the record would not be able to modify the other country's record), it was explained that this facility could reduce the possibility of a duplication of records and also reduce the work required by each country.
 - On whether to include confidentiality information fields, it is possible to add them. As far as having records that only appear on the country's site, there is an option not to upload a record to the global BCH.
 - It was important to have the capacity building needs and priorities for the regional node.
 - Participants were to look at the controlled vocabulary provided by the CBDBCH at <http://bch.biodiv.org/thesaurus/> when they returned home, and that this information will be used to identify what vocabulary to be used for the drop-down menu. It was noted that each country might need other fields just for their own country, and that this was already a feature on the Canadian site.
 - It would be up to each country to decide what it wanted on its web site. For countries like Tonga who has developed its own site, it was possible to improve on the design by creating links that could extract information from the database, but this was outside the scope of the Canadian involvement in this project.

52. Mr. Leduc then explained the back page of the workbook, which provided a space for the participants to design the look of their own web site. Mr. Leduc stated that this section would enable each person in the group to put a few ideas down before asking for input from other people in their country. He provided an example sketch of a web page on the white board. He noted that the very beginning of the process was intended to give a rough idea of what was wanted on the web site.
53. Mr. Ballinger added that it was also important for participants to find out if they have any national laws or guidelines regarding the appearance of their government Web sites (e.g. whether the national flag has to appear on each page or whether a link would have to be provided to the national Web site, as is the case in Canada).

A Conceptual Regional Node

54. Mr. Ballinger developed a diagram to summarize the ideas expressed by participants regarding the components of a regional node of the BCH and how the participating countries would interact with them. At the core of the diagram was a “pie” representing the central database hosted on the SPREP server. This pie was divided into segments with each segment representing the collection of all of the records for a particular participating country. It was explained that countries could only add to, modify or delete the records in their own segment/collection. They cannot enter the collection of any other country. It was also explained that although the database was hosted on a SPREP server, SPREP would not be able to enter the collection of any participating country unless the country provided explicit approval for SPREP to do so.
55. Records would be entered into the collection of a particular country by a *metadata manager* using a computer-based metadata entry tool. Access to the metadata entry tool would be restricted to authorized government officials only and would be protected by the use of digital security certificates installed on the metadata managers’ computers. Although the record would be entered into the database, it would not be viewable by the public until it had first been approved by a *collection manager* and then officially approved to be *published* by someone within the government that had the authority to make a record public (e.g. a senior manager or the BCH focal point). An e-mail notification system would inform the collection manager that a metadata manager had entered a record and that it was ready for approval. A similar notification would advise the senior manager or BCH focal point that a record had been approved and was ready for publishing. Once the record was authorized to be published, a copy of it would be sent through the Internet to the database of the central portal. This ensures that the records on the regional node are the same as those on the central portal. The system for sending duplicate records to the central portal uses the same security features as on-line banking to ensure there is no opportunity for false records to be sent by “hackers”.
56. Each participating country in the regional node would have its own Web site. To access a published record for a country, one would open that country’s Web site (e.g. www.bch.fj) and use a search engine on the site to search for records based on different criteria. The search engine would search through the records in the county’s collection and return records that matched the search criteria specified. The data would be

formatted for presentation on the Web site using a *style sheet* that would add headers and titles for the data fields and set fonts and colours.

57. It was also suggested that a regional Web site could be established that would have links to all of the participating countries' Web sites as well as having a search engine that would allow users to search across the entire database to get a regional view of records rather than just an individual country's records.

Project Charter

58. Mr Leduc introduced the idea of a project charter for setting up a project. He said that, in the case of the regional node, the charter would be like an accountability charter between SPREP, each country, UNEP and the CNBCH. In this way, people would know where they were meant to be doing and be held accountable. Mr Ballinger explained that the project charter was like a very detailed Memorandum of Understanding for the stakeholders. He emphasised that the group should not expect to complete the project charter by the end of the workshop. It was accepted that everybody would have to go away and think about the charter before coming to some kind of agreement at a later date. He then outlined several 'key things to think about', including the project objectives, project scope, roles and responsibilities, and the key results.

Project Objectives

59. To start the process, Ms Mathur-Filipp asked each country to write one idea on a sheet of paper and to stick them on the board. The first page was headed 'project objectives'.
60. During discussion, Mr Ballinger described the project purpose and the project objectives in the CNBCH charter, which included having a national web site and providing additional information that was not possible through the global BCH.
61. The participants discussed various issues they would like included in the project purpose/objectives including to:
 - facilitate the exchange of information amongst participating countries;
 - inform (and involve) the stakeholders in the decision making process, noting that the use of 'involve' was up to the individual country;
 - use the information resources in each country to lift their profile;
 - facilitate networking amongst those responsible for Biosafety and Protocol related matters;
 - make the project available on each participating country's Web site;
 - exchange information related to national contacts, legal frameworks, CNAs, bilateral agreements, risk assessments, decisions;
 - establish a regional node of the BCH that would provide 'one' window or 'single' window access to the national web pages;
 - build capacity in national governments to access, use and enter information on the Pacific Node of the BCH (PNBCH); and
 - build awareness in national governments regarding the use of the PNBCH;

62. During discussion, it was suggested that handbooks should be produced to explain the workings of the process. It was also clarified that there would be duplication of the objectives of the CBDBCH, CNBCH and the PNBCH. It was noted that the PNBCH would be a subset of the CBDBCH so therefore the objectives would not have to be written down for the PNBCH if they were already elaborated for the CBDBCH.

Project Scope

63. Mr. Ballinger then talked about the project scope. Mr. Ballinger went through the CNBCH web site and its components and showed the group what each site could look like. It was agreed that the scope of the content for the PNBCH would be the same as for the CNBCH.

Roles and Responsibilities

64. It was noted that it would be necessary to decide on the respective roles and responsibilities of the different entities involved in the PNCBH including UNEP, SPREP, Canada, and the PICs.

Key Results

65. The key result for the PNBCH would be to provide individual participating countries with Web sites that give a 'single window' access to the information required by the Protocol and any other information they may want to provide to the public;

Outstanding Issues

66. Outstanding issues were then discussed, including:
- The metadata entry tool interface still being in development;
 - The participation of SPREP and the extent of its involvement;
 - The number of countries that would participate in the SPREP hosted regional node of the BCH.
67. During discussion, Ms Mathur-Filipp said the PNBCH could continue with four or five countries, but would not perhaps continue if there were only one or two in the regional node. She added that the CBD would still support the other countries not involved in the PNBCH, but would obviously like all the countries to be in the regional node.

Approval – Organisational Structure

68. Mr. Ballinger went through the Approval section of the Project Charter and provided examples from the Organisational Structure of the CNBCH which included a technical working group on the BCH; a science and policy working group on the BCH; an interdepartmental working group on the Cartagena Protocol; and a Director General Committee on the Cartagena Protocol.
69. Concerning a format of approval in the Pacific, Ms Mathur-Filipp thought that one focal point was needed per country with UNEP, SPREP and Canada to provide contact

information. She suggested that each country had a BCH focal point as this came from a MOP decision in February.

70. Mr Ballinger suggested that the group should think of the focal point as a mail-box from where and to where information was sent – thus one single contact would be used for people to access fisheries, agriculture, etc. Ms Mathur-Filipp said that the only safeguard for security of information that the CBD could find was to have one focal point.
71. Regarding contact names for the PNBCH project, Mr. Ballinger identified himself as the contact for Canada, UNEP (Ms Mathur-Filipp and Dr Faulalo), SPREP (Mr Dropsy), and each country needed to identify a focal point in each country. It was suggested that these names be sent to Ms Mathur-Filipp as soon as possible.
72. It was agreed that decisions should be approved by a consensus from all participating countries and agencies, and that the role of UNEP, SPREP and Canada was restricted to project mandates and IT functionalities.
73. Ms Mathur-Filipp suggested other things that could be worked upon, including the membership of the working group (including a chair for the project), timelines for decisions, and the process for decisions related to the project. She suggested that the chair of the working group would be the contact for all other agencies. The chair would then contact each country for a consensus of opinion. After consensus (or not) the chair would then contact the agencies with a decision.
74. Mr. Ballinger asked about the authority of the PNBCH working group and what it would be. He said that this was something that had to be decided upon. Mr. Ballinger then suggested that the CNBCH could provide each country with a copy of the Canadian Project Charter.
75. During discussion, it was agreed that a copy of the PNBCH Project Charter discussed would be made available on the CD ROM of documents for the Workshop.
76. Mr. Ballinger added that each participant would be given two versions of the Charter: one would be the CNBCH Project Charter; the other would be a draft version of the PNBCH Project Charter based on the discussions in the workshop. Participants were invited to refer to the CNBCH Project Charter for ideas on what could be included in the PNBCH Project Charter.

Parallel Session B: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NBFs

77. Dr Faulalo introduced the objectives of this parallel session which were to:
- i. to share experiences and strengthen regional cooperation;
 - ii. to identify capacity building needs for biosafety; and
 - iii. to do training on ways to address capacity needs for implementation of NBFs.

Sharing Regional Experiences

78. Ten countries presented their progress reports on the development of their NBFs. Dr Moeed then summarised common issues, different approaches, similarities and differences in choices for the NBFs, and gaps in NBFs in relation to obligations as Parties to the Cartagena Protocol. The main issues discussed were as follows:

Biosafety and biosecurity

79. In most of the PICs, legislation and administrative systems for biosecurity are currently either under review or are being developed. In the process of analysis for the development of their NBF, a number of countries are grappling the relationship between biosafety and biosecurity within their systems, as there are a number of areas of potential overlap and potential conflicts.
80. In some cases, both in terms of the development of appropriate legislation and systems for handling imports, there are conflicts between proposals for biosecurity and how biosafety systems will be implemented. Examples include the Cook Islands, Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, PNG, Niue and Kiribati. This has potential implications for the choice of the responsible agency, e.g. as the national competent authority (CNA) – between environment/conservation and agriculture/quarantine. As the mandates of these agencies are different – agriculture is more concerned with promoting agricultural development and/or trade whilst Environment is more interested in conserving biodiversity, the selection of the CNA is crucial. These different mandates have to be balanced against the practicalities of an existing operational system for border control, which offers the best option for a system to handle importation of GMOs in many of the smaller countries.
81. The discussions highlighted the need for clarity about the differences and similarities between biosafety and biosecurity. In some ways, biosecurity encompasses biosafety, yet in terms of potential impacts on biodiversity and the environment, biosafety goes beyond the parameters of biosecurity, particularly in terms of risk assessment.
82. The discussions at the meeting highlighted the need for harmonisation of the functions, roles and responsibilities of the different agencies involved. For example, Vanuatu is proposing this harmonisation between agencies exercising border control such as Agriculture (Quarantine and Inspections), Fisheries, Forestry and Environment in the development of its policy on biosafety and biosecurity.

83. There is also a debate on whether biosafety should be included under biosecurity legislation or under environmental legislation, e.g. in Cooks, Fiji and Kiribati. This option is up to countries to decide on during Phase 2 of their NBF project; the main issue is that under either legislation, the regulations on biosafety should be consistent with the Cartagena Protocol and meet the current and proposed biosafety priorities of the country.

Draft NBFs and the Cartagena Protocol

84. In the first batch of draft NBFs from the Pacific (Samoa, Niue and Tonga), the proposed legislation emphasises the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol, focussing on transboundary movement. The importance of following the toolkit on regulatory regimes as well as the Cartagena Protocol was emphasised. It was reiterated that the toolkit provides a useful check list of those issues that countries need to include in their NBFs so that they are able to handle requests for research and development of GMOs within the country, in addition to transboundary movement.

Public awareness and participation

85. There was a general lack of awareness of GMOs amongst the public and the difficulties of translating the difficult concepts about biotechnology, such as what is a GMO, in local languages was identified as an issue by a number of countries. All projects have produced public awareness materials but there will continue to be a need for greater capacity building efforts in this area.

Areas of possible Regional cooperation

86. The potential areas for cooperation were identified during discussions (Annex 4). Countries did not consider that it was necessary to harmonise national legislation but it would be useful to exchange information on each country's legislation through a regional mechanism.

Training in Identifying gaps at national level for implementations of NBFs.

87. To set the scene for identifying capacity building for implementation of NBFs, Dr Mohamed recapped the five components of a NBF, followed by an introduction to the main principles of logical framework analysis (logframe).
88. The participants then carried out two exercises:
- (i) identification of gaps (problem tree); and
 - (ii) developing a logframe for the main problem area identified, which was handling of applications.

COMBINED CLOSING SESSION

89. The two groups came back together for the final session to focus on 'future steps' both in the establishment of PNBCH and in implementation of NBFs.
90. Dr Faulalo summarised the exercises that the participants in the Capacity Building for Implementation of NBFs parallel session carried out. He concluded by saying that the objective for the participants to have an understanding of what the process was for designing an implementation project was well met, and the standard of the input from the participants was very high.
91. Ms Mathur-Filipp then gave an overview of the work carried out by the BCH group over the workshop period. She said that the aim had been to gain an overview of the BCH and for the participants to get a feel for it. She concluded that now the process had to be started properly when the group went back to their respective countries to decide on exactly what they wanted in the BCH and the Charter.
92. Mr. Ballinger then presented the diagram summarising the BCH Group's views on how a Pacific Node of the BCH could be structured and how it would operate.

Expectations and Concerns Revisited

93. The participants revisited the list of their expectations and concerns they put up on the first day of the workshop. Each item on the list was scored as a group, using a maximum score of 4 'smiley faces' for how well each expectation or concern was covered. (Annex 3)

Closure of Workshop

94. Dr Mohamed gave some closing remarks on behalf of the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Unit, thanking participants for their input and participation in the workshop. Mr. Konelio, the NPC for Samoa then made some remarks on behalf of the Government of Samoa.
95. Mr Palaki of Tonga then closed the meeting with a prayer.

ANNEX 1

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ANNEX 2

AGENDA

Day 1 (2nd November 2004)

- 9:00 – 9:30 Opening ceremony: Opening Statements by: UNEP-GEF Biosafety,
Ministry of Environment of Samoa, SPREP
- 9:30 – 10:30 Introduction to the workshop
- 10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee break*
- 11:00 – 12:00 Introduction to the UNEP-GEF Biosafety Projects
- 12:00 – 13:30 *Lunch*
- 13:30 - 15:30 Concepts, Benefits and the Obligations of the Biosafety Clearing House
- 15:30 – 15:50 *Coffee break*
- 15:50-18:30 Concepts, Benefits and the Obligations of the Biosafety Clearing House
(Continuation)

Day 2 (3rd November 2004)

- 9:00 – 9:30 Review of Day 1

<i>Parallel Sessions</i>	Biosafety Clearing House	Capacity Building for Implementation of NBFs
9:30 – 10:30	Introduction to the National BCH and the concept of a Regional BCH	Country Reports
10:30 – 10:50	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10:50 – 12:30	Introduction to the Canadian BCH proposal	Country Reports (continued)
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:30 – 15:30	Managing the Project	Synthesis of Country Reports and Areas for regional cooperation
15:30 – 15:50	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15:50 – 17:30	Managing the Project (continuation)	Break Out Groups to discuss regional cooperation (continued)

Day 3 (4th November 2004)

Parallel Sessions	Biosafety Clearing House	Capacity Building for Implementation of NBFs
9:30 – 10:00	Review of Day 2	Reports from Break out Groups
10:00 – 10:30	Interacting with the Canadian BCH System to manage Data	Recapitulate the 5 components of a NBF
10:30 – 10:50	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10:50 – 12:30	Interacting with the Canadian BCH System to manage Data (continuation)	Identifying capacity building needs for implementation of NBFs
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:30 – 15:30	Interacting with the Canadian BCH System to manage Data (continuation)	Training on how biosafety capacity building needs can be addressed
15:30 – 15:50	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15:50 – 17:30	Developing a Regional BCH concept for the Pacific Islands	Training on how biosafety capacity building needs can be addressed (continued)

Day 4 (5th November 2004)

Parallel Sessions	Biosafety Clearing House	Capacity Building for Implementation of NBFs
9:30 – 10:00	Review of Day 3	Training on identifying and meeting capacity building needs for biosafety
10:00 – 10:30	Developing a Regional BCH concept for the Pacific Islands (continuation)	
10:30 – 10:50	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10:50 – 12:30	Developing a Regional BCH concept for the Pacific Islands (continuation)	Training on identifying and meeting capacity building needs for biosafety (continued)
12:00 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	

(ALL PARTICIPANTS)

13:30 – 14:30 Presentation and discussion on Part A of the Workbook

14:30 – 15:30 BCH Handbook and Next Steps on BCH capacity building

15:30 – 15:50 *Coffee break*

15:50 – 16:30 Summarise Future Steps for Regional Cooperation

16.30 – 17.30 Closure of workshop

ANNEX 3

EXPECTATIONS AND CONCERNS

Expectations		Concerns	
Understanding of the BCH	☺☺☺☺	Know when to implement NBF, main components and how to start	☺☺☺
See progress of each country	☺☺☺☺	Legal framework to implement the NBF – learn from others	☺☺☺
How national database and regional node interoperability	☺☺☺☺	Learn from others about surveys	☺☺
Learn from each other	☺☺☺☺	Talk about how other international agreements such as trade agreements have an impact on NBFs	☺☺
Feel of how to integrate BCH into NBF implementation	☺☺☺☺		
Sharing experiences	☺☺☺☺		
How Canada model can be applied in the Pacific	☺☺☺☺		
See the Canada BCH model and see how it can be applied in the Pacific	☺☺☺☺		
Learn about Canada model	☺☺☺☺		
How does regional node link between existing national databases (Build on other info sharing mechanisms)	☺☺		
Learn how we can practically set up BCH in country	☺☺☺☺		
Share info from other participants and from Canada about BCH	☺☺☺☺		
Understanding of the focal point for the BCH	☺☺☺☺		
Feedback from participants regarding the Canadian proposals, presentations and to learn other peoples perspectives	☺☺		

ANNEX 4

Potential areas for Cooperation in Biosafety in the Pacific Islands

What are the potential areas for cooperation in biosafety in the Pacific Islands, focusing on:

(i) Risk Assessment and Risk Management

- Detection of GMO
 - can require applicant to carry out detection/testing (does it contain GMO?)
 - can test using overseas (Aust, NZ) to carry out testing
- Human resource/Expertise to do RA
- Specialists to do RA on a case-by-case
- Being able to ask the right questions
- PNG might have the expertise in universities
- RA to be done at national level but can tap into regional expertise
- Capacity building to build on existing capacity such as PRA (Pest Risk Assessment)
- Need to develop tools for RA, e.g., PRA
- CABI type tools?

(ii) Cooperation in regulations

- Labelling requirements, common standards
- Eg. Labelling to be in English
- PACER & PICTA obligations
- Regional BCH for sharing information on legislations