**Ninth Review Conference of the States Parties
to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Development, Production and Stockpiling
of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

14 December 2021

English and French only

Preparatory Committee
Geneva, 20 December 2021 and 4-11 April 2022
Item 7 of the provisional agenda
Comprehensive consideration of all provisions of the Convention

Proposal for establishment of an international platform dedicated to biosecurity and biosafety: SecBio
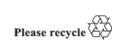
Submitted by France and Togo

I. Introduction

1.   The current pandemic, with its highly disruptive effect on our societies, has recalled the importance of the biological issue that the international community is confronted to. Due to its potentially worldwide impact, the biological issue is a global challenge that must be tackled in all its dimensions: sanitary, economic and social, safety but also industrial and innovative.

2.   In this regard, research, production and innovations in civil biological field induce biosafety and biosecurity stakes. Indeed, civil biological activities are rapidly growing, notably in the rearch field of biotechnologies.

3.   To face these challenges, France proposes to its partners of the Convention a collaborative project on law and documentary library. It could take the form of a multidisciplinary digital area dedicated to biosafety and biosecurity: SecBio.

4.   SecBio is intended to be a development support tool in the field of biosafety and biosecurity. In this respect, this project contributes to the implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). In particular, this project is in line with the provisions of Article X of the Convention in that it aims to facilitate the exchange of information for peaceful purposes.

II.   What is SecBio?

5.   SecBio is intended to be an international online platform for biosafety and biosecurity. It is an interactive tool to inform, train and connect biosafety and biosecurity stakeholders.

6.   There are three main features within SecBio:

        (a)   a searchable repository for biosafety and biosecurity legal framework, treaties, laws, regulations, case law, norms, standards and best practices, as well as scientific publications;

        (b)   a learning module for users to build a project and challenge their knowledge;

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(c)   a forum for expert's networking to exchange information, data and best practices.

7.   The online Platform will be accessible to all States Parties and international organizations which will be able to both use the Platform and nourish it.

8.   The use of this tool by States Parties could allow the Platform to become the international reference on the issue and therefore increase the global biosafety and biosecurity level playing field.

9.   The Platform is intended to be available in all six officials UN languages.

III.   What are the F.A.C.T.S for the implementation of SecBio?

10.   Funding: France is prepared, if the States Parties consider it appropriate, to assume the costs of developing the platform. Maintenance costs should be borne by all 183 States Parties.

11.   Administration and maintenance: It is proposed that the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the BTWC be entrusted with the administration of this online platform. The administration of this tool will not require additional human resources within the ISU, as it will rely primarily on information provided by States Parties and international organizations. Nor will it require the development of specific additional IT skills by the ISU, as it is already responsible for the administration and management of the Article X database.

12.   Content: The functionalities available within SecBio would be based on the information and documents provided by States Parties and international organizations on a voluntary basis. The active contribution of these users could then make the online platform as comprehensive as possible in terms of biosafety and biosecurity resources. The information and documents available on the platform would therefore be the responsibility of the user who uploaded them.

13.   Timeline: France is developing a prototype version of what the Platform could be, which should be available during 2022. This prototype version aims to illustrate what the tool could be and its main features and functionalities. On this basis, the States Parties could then agree, at the ninth Review Conference of the Convention, to adopt an online platform dedicated to biosafety and biosecurity: SecBio.

14.   Security: only unclassified and non-sensitive documents should be uploaded within the online Platform. States parties and international organizations will remain the core contributors on a free and voluntary basis.

IV.   Future steps

15.   France welcomes feedback and inputs from States Parties on the development of the tool and its main features.

16.   States Parties may agree at the ninth Review Conference to adopt a dedicated Platform in biosafety and biosecurity under Article X on the BTWC website and administered by the ISU.