

Asian countries hold workshop on biodiversity info sources

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In Photo: The participants to the "Regional Workshop for Asian Countries on the Clearing-House Mechanism" in Bangkok, Thailand.

A regional workshop for Asia was held recently in Thailand to provide guidance on the establishment of Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) on information sources on biodiversity.

To assist countries from Asia in establishing and effective management of National Clearing-House Mechanisms, the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Asean Centre for Biodiversity's Biodiversity Information Management Unit (ACB-BIM) conducted the "Regional Workshop for Asian Countries on the Clearing-House Mechanism" in Bangkok, Thailand, from January 29 to February 2.

Representatives from eight the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member-states and participants from Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cook Islands, Maldives, Mongolia and Nepal convened at the United Nations Conference Centre of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Officials from the CBD conducted capacity-building activities to develop the faculty of countries from Asia who are interested in setting up a national CHM, or enhance the existing ones.

The five-day workshop had the CBD providing an overview of the CHM, highlighting the need for countries to understand its purpose and strategic content.

It was emphasized that the CHM started out as a platform for sharing information, and developed into a web of information sources through which biodiversity information is exchanged, and is now intended to support national planning and reporting, specifically National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan and National Reports.

Alexandre Rafalovitch, web-site officer from the CBD, introduced Bioland, an online tool that provides support to CBD member-countries who do not have national CHM web sites or still in the process of web-site establishment.

It was emphasized that Bioland support has numerous advantages, among which are free hosting and efficiency of translations.

As an exercise, each participant was assigned a Bioland test site to be able to experience the functionality of the tool, and design mock CHM web sites for their respective countries.

The participants presented the features of the mock CHM web sites they have created, as well as their feedback on their experience in using the Bioland tool.

On the other hand, ACB presented its programs, as well as its role in biodiversity management in the region. It also highlighted the availability of the Asean CHM, and how it supports the Asean member-states.

The Asean CHM was established to support the implementation of the CBD and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, through effective information services and other appropriate means in order to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, knowledge sharing and information exchange and to establish a fully operational network of parties and partners.

It is one of the flagship programs of ACB and managed by its BIM.

Image Credits: ACB photo