

Regional Webinar on the legal framework for emerging biotechnologies in the plant breeding sector international experience in regulation of genetically modified seeds

29-30 November 2022

Virtual meeting (webinar)

Two days (3-3 hours)

Language: English-Russian interpretation

BACKGROUND

Agricultural biotechnology is built with competencies and technical skills that describe the fundamental use of it in plant as medicine and food and defined as a set of tools that use living organisms or parts of it to make or modify a product, improve plants, trees, or develop microorganisms to favor the expression of desired physiological traits or the generation of desired biological products, which includes some more modern biotechnologies such as genome editing, synthetic DNA components and artificial chromosomes, and targeted epigenetic modifications. Any new technology can pose risks and unintended effects, therefore, the precautionary principle needs to prevail to halt potential risks to current and future generations. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is an international legally binding treaty that aims to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by Living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology. The potential risks include transgene flow to wild relatives, loss of genetic diversity, invasiveness, changes in agricultural practice that may be unsustainable, and changes in ecosystem landscape and functions, among others. Therefore, the objective of the Protocol is to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of LMOs resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

The Protocol also established a *Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH)* to facilitate the exchange of information on LMOs and to assist countries in the implementation of the Protocol.

Procedures and mechanisms for assessing environmental and health risks of LMOs need to be developed at the national level and should include mechanisms, protocols and procedures established for risk assessment, management and monitoring, including contingency protocols for emergency response in case of accidents involving LMOs.

The issue of socio-economic considerations is critical for countries where small and family farmers constitute the majority of farmers, and where a policy decision has already been taken to promote organic agriculture, which excludes the use of LMOs. Analyze the potential socio-economic of the adoption of ethically modified organisms and emerging biotechnologies is essential when it comes to the seed sector.

OBJECTIVE

Raise awareness on the potential impact of emerging biotechnologies and genetically modified organisms in the region and the need for an adequate policy framework with a specific focus on genetically modified seeds.

Expected outputs:

- Increase awareness of the potential impacts of emerging biotechnologies and *genetically modified seeds and*
- Knowledge sharing among participants on the topic
- Increase understanding on how countries are implementing policy framework

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Policy makers from ECA region
- Academia and researchers
- CSOs
- FAO staff

THE MAIN AREAS OF DISCUSSION WILL BE:

Day 1:

- Regulation of biotechnologies world wide
- Definition of gm seeds and GMO in general in different countries, legislative framework.
- Cartagena protocol and how it works at different levels.
- Risks of GM plant varieties and related research

Day 2:

- Regulation of GMO seeds and other relevant biotechnologies
- Knowledge and experience sharing on existing systems
- GM regulations from different regions

PROGRAMME

Day 1 (3 hours)

| AGENDA | | | |
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| DAY 1 | | | |
| Link: https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HblI3yG-TBWV3YXK_ipQQA | | | |
| Session 1: emerging biotechnologies and genetically modified organisms/seeds and their international regulations Facilitator: Zsuzsanna Keresztes FAO | | | |
| Budapest | Moscow | | Speakers |
| 10:00-10:10 | 12:00-12:10 | Opening remarks | FAO: Vladimir Rakhmanin, ADG FAO REU EAEU: Artak Kamalyan, Minister in charge of Industry and Agroindustrial business |
| 10:10-10:30 | 12:10-12:30 | What are Genetically modified organisms and emerging biotechnologies? | Professor Jack Heinemann University of Canterbury |
| 10:30-10:50 | 12:30-12:50 | What are the socio-economic considerations and why they are important | Andreas Heissenberger, Umweltbundesamt, Head of Department of Land use & Biosafety, Austria |
| 10:50-11:10 | 12:50-13:10 | Risks of GMOs and emerging biotechnologies | Margret Engelhard Head of division, The Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Germany |
| 11:10-11:40 | 13:10-13:40 | Q&A | Carolina Rizzi Starr (moderation) |
| 11:40-12:00 | 13:40-14:00 | break | |
| 12:00-12:30 | 14:00-14:30 | Risk Assessment and Risk Management – what policymakers need to know | Sarah Zanon Agapito – Research Professor NORCE Research Institute |
| 12:30-13:00 | 14:30-15:00 | Introduction to The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Biosafety Clearing House | Marianela Araya Quesada Task Manager for UNEP-GEF Biosafety Implementation Projects (UNEP) |
| 13:00-13:25 | 15:00-15:25 | Q&A | Carolina Rizzi Starr (moderation) |
| 13:25 – 13:30 | 15:25 – 15:30 | Summary of the day | |
| DAY 2 | | | |
| Link: https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAud-CqrD0uHt0R3cpHAktvD531QO49NvHr | | | |
| Session 2: Regulations, legal frameworks Facilitator Carolina Starr FAO | | | |
| 10:00-10:10 | 12:00-12:10 | Opening of the second day | FAO: Mr. Oleg Kobiakov, Director of FAO Liaison Office with the Russian Federation EAEU: Mr. Armen Harutyunyan Director of the EEC Department on Agricultural Policy |
| 10:10-10:40 | 12:10-12:40 | Round table | Andreas Heissenberger |

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| | | <p>5 experts will debate and answer the below questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is important for a country to set up a regulation system for GMO seeds? • Which steps should countries follow when discussing and planning a regulation system for GMO? • What are the main constraints during this process? • What are effective measures to ensure a ban on the import of GM seeds? | <p>Margret Engelhard</p> <p>Sarah Zanon Agapito</p> <p>Michael Eckerstorfer</p> |
| 10:40 – 11:00 | 12:40- 13:00 | <p>Working group</p> <p>How is the implementation of the legal framework on genetically modified seeds and emerging biotechnologies work in different countries?</p> | <p>Carolina Rizzi Starr FAO Agricultural Officer</p> |
| 11:00- 11:20 | 13:00- 13:20 | Reporting process from the groups | Cont. |
| 11:20- 11:30 | 13:20- 13:30 | break | |
| 11:30- 11:50 | 13:30- 13:50 | EU case – how the EU regulation works for Genetically modified seeds and emerging biotechnologies | <p>Michael Eckerstorfer, Research Officer, Environmental Agency Austria</p> |
| 11:50- 12:10 | 13:50- 14:10 | China case - how the China regulation works for Genetically modified seeds and emerging biotechnologies | <p>Ms LU Yiqing from FECO of MEE (TBC)</p> |
| 12:10- 12:30 | 14:10- 14:30 | Japan case - how the Japanese regulation works for Genetically modified seeds and emerging biotechnologies | TBD |
| 12:30- 12:50 | 14:30- 14:50 | EAEU experiences and expectations on genetically modified seeds and emerging biotechnologies policy framework. | <p>Andrei Drobyshovski, chief of the agricultural subsidies sector of the Agricultural policy department of the Eurasian Economic Commission</p> |
| 12:50- 13:00 | 14:50- 15:00 | Q&A | Carolina Rizzi Starr (moderation) |
| 13:00- 13:05 | 15:00- 15:05 | Closing remarks | |